



House Children & Seniors Committee
February 20, 2019
Testimony in Support of HB 2361

HB 2361 – Changing the requirements for surveying youth across the state.

Chairwoman Concannon and members of the House Children and Seniors Committee:

On behalf of the Kansas Association of Addiction Professionals (KAAP), I am here to support HB 2361. As a statewide association whose mission is to advocate for substance abuse treatment and prevention services and providers, this bill is critically important for not only the work of our members, but also the work of community and youth service agencies and coalitions throughout the state.

Prior to 2014, student surveys in Kansas required an “opt-out” for student participation. From 1995 – 2014, Kansas youth survey data was the envy of many states and the participation rate averaged 70%. Kansas had a reliable county wide data system that was free, comprehensive, and research-based. It provides local communities and schools with annual data to assess needs and trends about youth substance abuse. The data provides risk and protective factor information used in designing appropriate programming and strategies to reduce use. In more recent years additional questions have been added including bullying, prescription drugs, and e-cigarettes/vaping.

As a result of passing the Student Privacy Act, many school districts did not participate because of how unwieldy the logistics were to administer the survey. As a result, the 2015 statewide data is not considered valid. Since that time extreme efforts have been made by school districts to increase the participation rate, yet the state participation rate in 2018 hovers at 42%.

A vote for HB 2361 will restore usable data from actions previously taken while protecting student privacy. It will allow that state to provide data needed to justify the use of Substance Abuse Block Grant funding and to track progress and will provide opportunities for local coalitions to be competitive in applying for and receiving funding to address youth substance use in their communities.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments and this important piece of legislation for Kansas.