

Testimony in Support of HB2513
The Massive Collection of Student & Family Data Must Stop
by
Dr. Walt Chappell, Former Member of State Board of Education

In 2014, the Kansas legislature finally voted to make sure that parents have more control over their family and child's personal data. Over 200 Kansans packed the hearing room and first floor rotunda. The Student Data Privacy Act requires school districts to provide a copy of any survey to parents FIRST. If, after reading the survey, they chose to allow their child to answer the questions, then they can sign a form to **Opt-In**. (See K.S.A. 72-6316)

Since then, HB2099 in 2015 and HB2316 were introduced in an effort to fool the Legislature and parents into thinking that some bureaucrats and contractors should be trusted with private student and family data without the parent knowing how the data will be secured or used. Those bills did not pass but school districts are still forcing parents to make quick **Opt-In** decisions when they enroll their student in the Fall without ever seeing the questionnaires which their child will be given to complete.

These surveys are not valid or reliable, but they provide pseudo data for contractors and districts to ask for millions in Federal grants—whether any students actually benefit or not. Most of the money received goes to hiring staff, sending them to conferences and writing good sounding reports and grants.

How much longer will Kansas parents and the Legislature tolerate the massive amount of data being collected on every public and private school student and their family?

The Kansas Individual Data on Students (KIDS) database in the State Department of Education was initially funded by the US government in 2007. It is based on 28 pages containing 90 data elements which Federal bureaucrats want collected on each public and private school student in Kansas all the way through the next 23 years of their life.

Not only does it cost taxpayers millions of dollars every year for local school districts to report these data to the KSDE, but it also costs millions of dollars to maintain the database at the state level. Each data element is coded, yet there is no way to verify if the information entered is accurate.

Even worse, most parents have no idea that the data which they provided in good faith at the time of enrollment or from these surveys about their child is being sent outside the school district. So clearly, once collected, parents have no control of their child's personal information.

The KIDS database managers reported to the State Board of Education that there are nearly daily attempts by hackers to break in and steal these personal files. They do not know if files have already been stolen. But two attacks on data being collected about each student who took the Common Core state assessments were successful. The servers crashed and none of the test scores were valid or reported—but the data was hacked. It cost the state millions of dollars to fix plus student data was stolen.

The results from these surveys and questionnaires are not used by the State Board of Education to make any decisions. The descriptors allow easy identification of individual students and their families. The questions asked are no one else's business and cannot be verified as accurate—yet bureaucrats want to keep giving the surveys so they can ask for more funding.

Please pass HB2513 ASAP so parents will be allowed to see these surveys and make an informed decision yet this Spring about whether to allow their child to participate. Otherwise, Districts will administer these surveys based only on the parent signing enrollment forms.

Respectfully submitted,

Walt Chappell, Ph.D., President
Educational Management Consultants, LLC
(316)854-0877 / educationalmanagers@cox.net