

January 24, 2022

To the K-12 Budget Committee

Testimony Re: HB 2513

Social Emotional Learning as the primary focus of education is beyond what my mind can grasp. What happened to academics; Reading, writing, math and science?

Who decided the buildings we call schools should become mental health clinics instead of education centers? And now through covid, medical facilities as well!

As a voting citizen of the State of Kansas I respectfully submit this testimony for consideration by the K-12 Budget Committee.

I have been attending our local school board meetings, USD 489, since last summer and have been amazed about their enthusiasm for Social/Emotional Learning. This is definitely a topic that receives a lot of promotion—not academics.

I am reporting regarding what has happened in our school district within the last month. The high school students were told they would no longer have their two-hour study hall to work on assignments, go to teachers in a subject where they need assistance, or prepare but rather they would be doing “Mindful Mondays”.

Here is a direct quote from the parent. “I was not informed. No idea what this is. Kids told to participate or be subject to disciplinary action. Sent to office, etc. “consider it a disciplinary action” said the teacher. This will be the third week. Last week was cancelled and I can't remember why. Hannah was told by a teacher that the school had to participate or they would lose their accreditation. ??? Her teacher essentially lectures on the “be happy” subject and then they take a survey. Or journal their thoughts.”

The parents were not informed of this change in their student’s class schedule; no information has been communicated to parents on the purpose of this “class” or what the tests/surveys are for and what is done with the information.

HB 2513 is definitely a move in the right direction so parents are at least informed of the intent of SEL and have the choice to opt their student in or out. Parents have the right and responsibility regarding the education, not indoctrination, of their children.

Hopefully the final result will be the Tossing out of SEL completely so we can once again go back to actual education.

I also want to state that it is my understanding that since SEL began test scores have steadily gone down in Kansas in academics in our graduating high school seniors. Hmmm

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my thoughts and concerns. Please pass HB2513 quickly and enforce this in our state. Also, it is my understanding that 20% of all ESSER funds dished out to school districts must be used to promote SEL in our schools. All ages. NOT OKAY! We need government out of our children's hearts and minds so parents can continue to do what is their right and responsibility. Raise their children.

Thank you,

Cathy Hopkins

Hays, KS