

Kansas Educators Support Foundation

McPherson, KS 67460

620.755.1142

OPPONENT Testimony on HB 2662

For the House Committee on K-12 Education Budget

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Erica Shook

Chair, Kansas Educators Support Foundation

Chairperson Williams and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide **opponent** testimony related to House Bill 2662.

I am the founder and chair of the Kansas Educators Support Foundation. I am also the Director of Kansas public virtual academy, an adjunct professor, the vice-president of the Kansas Association of Teachers of English, a licensed 6-12 ELA teacher and PreK-12 building administrator, and a 2019 Kansas Teacher of the Year nominee. And, I am a mother.

I don't know of anyone who would dispute that "quality education is central to a child's development and long-term success in life and that a parent has a right to direct the upbringing, education and care of the parent's child" or "that a parent shall have the right to play a central role in a child's education" (section 1(b), HB 2662). As both an educator and a parent of 6 children, I certainly would not. This ideology is precisely why teachers send home class expectations at the beginning of the school year, provide their contact information to parents, and offer parent-teacher conference opportunities. This is why, to my knowledge, every district in Kansas has an opt-out policy in place. Educators want parents to play an active role in their child's education. We welcome a partnership with our students' families because we know that provides the best possible opportunities for student success. I do not know of any school district that would refuse to provide the information requested in this bill to the best of their ability should a parent ask for it.

That said, this bill, HB 2662, puts an undue burden on already overburdened and overwhelmed Kansas teachers. I walked into my high school classroom every day for eleven years with a plan in mind for the day for each of the different classes I taught (at least 4 preps every semester). And every day, in every class, that plan got derailed—for good or bad—by any number of things (or baggage) that students brought with them to the classroom: from home, from friends, from boyfriends and girlfriends, from community, from jobs, from other classes. All of these things, though, were real-world opportunities for teaching, learning, and relationship-building. They were opportunities for us to share in the perspectives and experiences of others, to learn about new things, to consider how we fit in the world around us, to understand what it means to be human. Those things cannot possibly be anticipated and written into a lesson plan because we are dealing with people with an endless number of differing needs and experiences that change every day—just as is true of adults. The adage about teachers making more minute by minute decisions than do brain surgeons is entirely accurate. It is absurd to think that teachers would have time to log every single resource, assignment, quiz, test, video, or anything else they use on a daily basis (a number that is surely almost incalculable for a school year) and even more absurd to think they would be able to do this before the school year begins—when they have not even met their students to know what needs and baggage they will be bringing with them to the classroom over the course of a school year. And none of this, mind you, accounts for when teachers have to make last second pivots from the lesson "plan" because the internet is down or the copy machine is broken or half the class is out sick...or they had to go into a lockdown that took class time and sent several of their anxiety-ridden students into a spiral. Further, the information required by this bill to be made publicly accessible on open district websites would put educators in violation of any number of copyright laws.

Finally, as a parent, I support parents' rights to advocate for the needs of their students, but I do **not** support select groups of parents being allowed to dictate the learning experiences of **all** students in a public school setting. As a registered Kansas voter, a Kansas educator, and a Kansas parent, I respectfully request that you **not** advance this bill out of committee.

Thank you,

Erica Shook