

**Written Testimony to the House Committee on Education
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Name: Melanie Scott

Email: melanie.d.scott78@gmail.com

Kansas constituent in Dodge City, a parent of two students attending Kansas public schools, and licensed as a Kansas school counselor

Proponent of HB 2719-*extending the time* that school districts may provide notice to parents of the administration of any nonacademic test, questionnaire, survey or examination *and* requiring school districts to contact parents if any such test, questionnaire, survey or examination indicates concerns.

Written testimony only

Dear Chair Thomas and Members of the Committee,

School staff and parents have one thing in common-we all want our students to be resilient learners as they move throughout pre-k-12 and beyond. Some of our students will need extra support as they encounter academic or behavioral obstacles. School staff and parents can use both academic and non-academic tests/surveys/questionnaires to make informed decisions to support each student throughout their school career.

HB 2719 stems from HB 2567. Because of passing HB 2567 (specifically section 27), several restrictions now impact how educators and school mental health staff serve and assess the well-being of students. HB 2567 requires the school to provide written notification prior to the administration of any non-academic test/survey/questionnaire to the parent or guardian **no more than four months** in advance of the administration of the same survey.

Please allow me to share examples of how the four month window timing negatively impacts a school community.

Some districts give academic screeners three times a year to monitor and check student progress in subjects such as reading and math. Schools use this data throughout the year to make decisions on how to provide tiered supports for each student. This data is shared with parents to inform them of their student's progress. Districts can also give a screener used to identify students who might have behavioral risks that impact learning. It might ask questions like, "I participate in class," "I have trouble waiting my turn," and "I argue with others." Universal screeners allow student voice, to allow opportunities to share how they feel (internally and externally) and how it is impacting their ability to learn and get along with others.

The issue with a window for the same test/survey/questionnaire-If a parent signs specific permission slips during June/July/August when local districts finalize enrollment, it only covers those specific tests if given within the first four months of school. Parents must resign the

permission for the **exact same** survey/test/questionnaire if it is given outside of that four month window. Remember, like reading and math, the behavior screeners can be given three times a year. To ask parents to sign a permission slip again (and possibly again) for **the exact same** non-academic screener takes time and resources from both school staff and parents. Some school districts have opted out of certain non-academic tests/surveys/questionnaires as they do not have the time or resources to keep asking for parent signatures.

- It is critical that we remove barriers to student voice, such as repeated signatures, to provide opportunities for educators/parents to make informed decisions on how to help their students.
- Many communities depend on the aggregated data of certain surveys to understand current teen issues/trends and provide funding for interventions. When districts do not administer these surveys or there isn't enough sample size, students are not able to provide this information, and imperative program funding is cut.

Best case-please allow the signing for the **same** test/survey/questionnaire to happen just once and please let that signature be valid for the academic school year. If that is not an option, moving from 4 months to 6 months is much more reasonable in a school setting.

Parent notification of behavior concerns:

HB 2719 also proposes that if a parent gives permission for a student to be screened for social-emotional behavior risks and the results show concern, school districts should notify parents. Parents are a vital part of a student's educational team and should be involved and informed in their child's progress. It is our ethical duty to inform parents. If we share results of the math and reading scores, we should also just as importantly share behavioral results with parents and collaborate for support and share resources.

Thank you for allowing me to share my written testimony of HB 2719. Please consider the change of one parent signature for the same test/survey/questionnaire for the entire academic year. If no changes will take place, please vote yes on HB 2719.

Melanie D. Scott