



Testimony before the House K-12 Education Budget Committee

in opposition to

House Bill 2662 – AN ACT concerning education; relating to schools and school districts; ...amending K.S.A. 72-2410 and K.S.A. 2021 Supp. 21-6402 and repealing the existing sections.

by

Judith Deedy, Executive Director **Game On for Kansas Schools**

February 15, 2022

Madam Chair, Members of the Committee:

[Game On for Kansas Schools](#) is a nonpartisan grassroots effort among Kansans who share a belief in high-quality public education as a right of all Kansas students. We advocate for Kansas public schools to ensure our teachers, principals, superintendents, and school board members have the resources necessary to deliver quality education to all Kansas students. We inform communities across the state about issues and legislation affecting their students, and our membership extends statewide.

At the outset, we object to the characterization of this bill and note that it is part of a national effort to score political points and bring our schools into a culture war. This is not helpful as we emerge from a decade of unconstitutional school funding and a global pandemic. Our children need their schools and teachers focused on helping them learn and not defending against accusations they lack transparency.

We object to the characterization of opponents to this bill as opposing parent rights or transparency and deem these accusations as evidence that this bill is really about neither. We support transparency and parent rights. We note that parents already have more access to their children's education than they ever have. Parents have

- Electronic access to their children's curriculum through Google Classroom, Canvas and other similar programs (see attached screen shots from one parent's access to Canvas)
- Access to their children's laptops and backpacks which they bring home
- Email addresses and phone numbers for their children's teachers, principals and counselors
- Ability to attend back to school nights where teachers share syllabi and curriculum
- Ability to attend parent teachers conferences each semester and ability to schedule meetings with teachers, principals and counselors at any time.

Our students also recently completed a year of remote learning in which parents were able to directly observe their students' classes.

Specifically with respect to this bill, we do not take issue with multiple of these sections other than noting they are already law or practice and don't need to be legislated. We object to legislators taking credit for ordering school districts to do what they already do. We object to 1(c)(5) in that we support our local boards placing reasonable restrictions on the conduct of participants in school board meetings. We have seen unacceptable behavior and school board meetings used to share inaccurate information and support appropriate limits on both.

We object to 1(c)(6) to the extent that it seeks to change immunization laws in Kansas. We support appropriate immunization requirements and don't think changes to important public health policy should be buried in a bill in the K-12 Education Budget Committee. For the record, we believe immunization requirements are essential to protect the wellbeing of our children.

We note that our school districts are already required to comply with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, but we believe these sections are included as a baseless accusation that such violations are occurring in our schools. We find it particularly troubling that the civil rights act is being used to attack DEI initiatives which seek to make sure every child has a sense of belonging at their school.

We object to Section 2 so long as it does not include an exception for schools to utilize Google Classroom, Canvas or other similar programs for parent access. From what we have seen, most parents in Kansas already have extensive access to their children's education materials. The failure to have such an exception leads us to question whether the purpose of this section is to increase parent access or to provide access to people who are not parents. In that case, it should not be titled the "parent transparency portal." There are obvious copyright and academic integrity issues with multiple of the specific requirements for the so-called "parent transparency portal." To the extent districts are not allowed to use their existing parent access tools, this section creates a new diversion of district personnel and teachers from the essential work of educating our children. As we explained above, there are already many avenues for parent access, and particularly at this time, we want efforts focused on teaching our children rather than compiling information for a website that we believe few parents will ever access. The fact that residents of the school district rather than just parents may get attorney fees further supports our concern that this bill isn't really about parent access.

We also express our support for appropriate library collections. We note there are already processes for review of library materials. Children range in age, maturity and life experiences, and one parent's desire to limit their child's access should not limit the access for other children for whom such material may be appropriate. Our librarians are professionals and should be treated as such.

We oppose the removal of the affirmative defense as well. We remember when this was raised in 2015 during a time of repeated attacks on educators. An affirmative defense is not an absolute defense, and we find this provision unhelpful at a time when we know we are facing a looming crisis with educators due to ongoing issues with pay, workload demands and extra pressures created by the pandemic. We need to be supporting our educators, thanking them for helping us get through the past two years, and we would appreciate our legislators not giving our teachers more reason to leave our classrooms.

We also object to Section 5(g). We expect teachers to teach required curriculum. As written, this provision would seem to exempt a teacher from teaching evolution if it contrasts with their sincerely held religious beliefs. Our children's access to accurate educational content should not be limited by their teachers' religious beliefs.

We are wary of the optics of this bill. We believe it may be used to accuse opponents of opposing parent rights or educational transparency. To be clear, most of us are parents, and we support both, but we cannot support this bill. We believe it will not increase the quality of our children's education and is an unnecessary diversion of resources at a time when we need focus on the real work of educating our children. We urge you to vote no on this bill.

Dashboard

Coming Up [View Calendar](#)

- Momentum Video Discussion
PHYSICS1-Martin
9 points • Jan 31 at 2:40pm
- 2.3 Lectura 1. La tentación del bebé perfecto- actividades en papel
AP-Spanish Language-James
10 points • Jan 31 at 11:59pm
- SC4B 6.1-2 (13 Items)
PHYSICS1-Martin
13 points • Feb 1 at 2:40pm

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IB English HL2 H-Sternberg

SM East HS-SEM. IB English HL2 H-Sternberg

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Course Name: IB English HL (Language A: Literature)
Teacher Name: Meredith Sternberg

Welcome to your second year of IB English HL. We are continuing on with your literature studies and focusing on the art forms of a play, poetry, short story, memoir, and the novel. Last year you started a reader response journal and we will be continuing with those as well, but I hope to utilize the Discussion thread (located on the left side of your screen) and even the Pages section where I will assign you a personal page to act as summative journals at the end of each work.

As per the IB handbook for Literature A: Literature Guide...

...students will learn about the manifestations of literature as a powerful mode of writing across cultures and throughout history. They will explore and develop an understanding of factors that contribute to the production and reception of literature, such as:

- the creativity of writers and readers
- the nature of the interaction with the writers' and readers' respective contexts and with literary tradition
- the ways in which language can give rise to meaning and/or effect
- the performative and transformative potential of literary creation and response

Through close analysis of literary texts in a number of forms and from different times and places, students will consider their own interpretations, as well as the critical perspectives of others. In turn, this will encourage the exploration of how viewpoints are shaped by cultural belief systems and how meanings are negotiated within them. Students will be involved in processes of critical response and creative production, which will help shape their awareness of how texts work to influence the reader and how readers open up the possibilities of texts. With its focus on literature, this course is particularly concerned with developing sensitivity to aesthetic uses of language and empowering students to consider the ways in which literature represents and constructs the world and social and cultural identities' (21).

To that end the works we are examining this year are:

1. Fathers and Sons by Ivan Turgenev (Work in Translation/Summer: 19th century Russian)
2. Seamus Heaney poetry and Beowulf (epic poem: translation by Headley)
3. Dubliners by James Joyce (short stories: 20th century)
4. Macbeth by William Shakespeare (play: 17th century)

Candidate Q&A Starkville-Oktibbeha School District - The Parents Campaign

3. Seamus Heaney poetry and Beowulf (epic poem: translation by Headley) (short stories: 20th century)
4. Macbeth by William Shakespeare (play: 17th century)

5. Sula by Toni Morrison (novel: contemporary American)
6. Wuthering Heights by Emily Brontë (novel: 18th century)
7. Running in the Family by Michael Ondaatje (memoir: 20th century)

Your IB assessment outline:

External Assessment
Paper 1: Guided literary analysis (May 2022)
The paper consists of two literary passages, from two different literary forms, each accompanied by a question. Students write an analysis of each of the passages.

Internal Assessment
Individual Oral (15 minutes)
Supported by an extract from one work written originally in the language studied and one from a work studied in translation, students will offer a prepared response of 10 minutes, followed by 5 minutes of questions by the teacher, to the following prompt:
"Examine the ways in which the global issue of your choice is presented through the content and form of two of the works that you have studied."

Image: Morgan Library in New York City, NY