

Written Testimony before the
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

February 8, 2018

SB 333

Presented by:

Jim Porter, Kansas State Board of Education, Chair
Kathy Busch, Kansas State Board of Education, Vice Chair and
School Mental Health Advisory Council, Chair

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony concerning alterations to the Jason Flatt Act. Kansas is the first state in the Union to develop Social/Emotional Standards recognizing that the social and emotional health of our students is a major factor for their success.

There are a couple of issues that we would like you to consider concerning this proposed legislation.

- We believe that a comprehensive approach to addressing the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences is more effective than addressing ACEs separately. This statement in no way diminishes the critical nature of identifying students in danger of suicide. Identifying and helping students who are experiencing Adverse Childhood Experiences in a comprehensive manner may very well address problems well before suicide is contemplated.
- Based on experience with current mandatory annual trainings, it is noted that these annual trainings soon become routine and routine becomes ineffective. The one-hour requirement only addresses quantity and ignores quality.

Although we are relatively neutral on this particular legislation, we believe that the students of Kansas would be better served if, instead of individual mandates, Adverse Childhood Experiences and Trauma Informed Care were addressed with a comprehensive approach under the guidance of the School Mental Health Advisory Council, which is made up of a wide variety of education and mental health professionals including members of both the Kansas House of Representatives and Kansas Senate.