

Testimony before the

Children and Seniors

on

HB 2361

by

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Kansas School Superintendents Association**

**Testimony provided on behalf of the United School Administrators of Kansas, Kansas School
Superintendents Association, and the Kansas Association of School Boards**

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Madam Chair:

Thank you for this opportunity to address the committee.

Our organizations stand in support of House Bill 2361.

Both organizations I represent have a deep understanding of the importance of gathering data for a multitude of purposes. For example, for many years a large number of Kansas school districts administered the “Communities that Care” survey. The results of this survey served as a valuable tool to build support programs, interventions, and support for students. When the law was changed requiring parents to opt-in rather than opting out, the number of survey’s completed was drastically reduced, hurting the number of schools which participated in survey.

Information gathering is a valuable tool as organizations look at the needs of our students over the coming years. The opt-in option for many of these surveys just doesn’t provide the amount of information to gather the statistical relevance needed to create, support, and service the unique needs of our students. Although it might appear students share their entire life online, some of the most important health data they keep secret from many adults and even close friends. Although anonymous surveys don’t pin-point individual student issues, they do provide trend data for professionals to review and help understand what the prevalent issues and challenges are in a school or district.

In the full speed society that we live in, it is difficult for schools to get information back from parents and this can cause an additional challenge with an Opt-in requirement. I believe from my own experience that often times it’s not that parents didn’t want students to complete the survey or questionnaire, it was more about receiving the information and getting the required paperwork back to the school. If this bill can maintain privacy and help schools and organizations gather the valuable information they need, we are in support.