



M I R R O R

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Testimony in Support of House Bill 2361

Chairwoman Concannon and members of the House Children and Seniors Committee,

My name is Desiree Martens and I am the Director of Prevention Services for Mirror Inc. As a prevention professional my work involves empowering youth to avoid the pitfalls of drug and alcohol use and mobilize community members to be involved in evidence-based practices and programs that build a brighter future for young people. Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to weigh in on this important decision. It certainly takes all of us working together to make our communities a better place for all citizens.

Since 1995, Kansas schools have participated in the Kansas Communities That Care Survey (KCTC). This survey is research-based and has been used to collect data related to youth substance use and other problem behavior. Here in Harvey County we have used the data to strengthen our application for community, state and federal grants as well as to prioritize a strategic plan that will reduce substance abuse in youth. The survey provides communities with data necessary to monitor, evaluate and plan strategies to impact this issue favorably.

For years, participation rates for this survey in Harvey County was 70% or above. These rates declined significantly when the type of parental consent was changed. In 2015 the rates plummeted to 38% because of the difficulty of implementing the law. Our county worked diligently in 2017 and we were successful in increasing participation in 2018 but as we all know battles don't stay won and changing the law would secure the data that we so desperately need to be effective stewards of our time and resources.

Current Law: As passed in Senate Bill No. 367, the provisions of Section 5 in K.S.A. 2013 Supp. 72-6214, required written parental consent for student surveys. This made it difficult for schools to obtain "opt-in" parental consent for participation and makes effective measurement of our program challenging.

Important Facts About the Survey:

1. It is completely *anonymous*
 - Students are not asked for their names or other personally identifiable information on the questionnaire, and there is no way to connect any student to his or her responses
 - School staff do not see any one student's responses.
 - Only aggregate results are presented. To further guarantee anonymity, results are not reported on any singular question without responses from enough students.
2. Participation is entirely *voluntary*
 - Parents are informed well in advance and can opt their child out of the survey.
 - Youth may decline to participate in the survey on the day administered they or may simply skip any questions they do not wish to answer.
3. Data are *confidential*
 - District- and building-level data are password protected, with the password only given to the school Superintendent.
 - County- and state-level data are available for reporting outcomes, tracking trends, and obtaining grant funding.
 - Data are always reported as an aggregate or group, never at an individual level.