

## MINUTES OF THE HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Ron Highland at 1:50pm on Wednesday, March 09, 2016, 112-N of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Representative John Barker – Excused  
Representative Marc Rhoades – Absent

Committee staff present:

Tamera Lawrence, Office of Revisor of Statutes  
Sue Mollenkamp, Kansas Legislative Committee Assistant  
Sharon Wenger, Legislative Research Department  
Edward Penner, Legislative Research Department  
Nick Myers, Office of Revisor of Statutes

Conferees appearing before the Committee:

Matt Lindsey, Kansas Independent College Association  
Cathy Housh, concerned parent  
Meena Allada, concerned student  
Amy Hutchens, concerned parent  
Elaine Adair, concerned parent  
Allison Doss, concerned parent  
Helen Rentz, concerned grandparent  
Deb Peterson, concerned parent  
Betty Brennan, concerned parent  
Mark Desetti, Kansas National Education Association (KNEA)

Others in attendance:

[See Attached List](#)

Chairman Highland opened the meeting and asked conferees to limit their comments to no more than five minutes.

### **Hearing and possible action on: SB358 — Amending the nurse educator service scholarship program act.**

The Chairman opened the hearing on **SB358** and asked Nick Myers to provide an overview of the bill. Mr. Myers answered questions from the committee. ([Attachment 1](#))

Matt Lindsey spoke in support of **SB358**, detailing regulations under the bill and indicating the bill has been vetted with the Board of Regents, who have maintained a neutral position on the bill. Mr. Lindsey answered questions from committee members. ([Attachment 2](#))

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES of the Committee on Education at 1:50pm on Wednesday, March 09, 2016 in Room 112-N of the Capitol.

---

The Chairman closed the hearing on **SB358**.

**Hearing and possible action on: SB323 — Substitute for SB 323 by Committee Education - Creating the Jason Flatt act; requiring suicide prevention training for school district personnel.**

Vice-Chairman Lunn opened the hearing on Substitute for **SB323** in place of Chairman Highland, who excused himself to attend another meeting. Tamera Lawrence provided an overview of the bill and answered questions from the committee.

The Vice-Chairman invited conferees to speak on the bill.

Cathy Housh spoke in support of Substitute for **SB323**, indicating suicide numbers for youth aged 10-24 in Kansas are higher than the national average and in states where the Jason Flatt act has been enacted, a significant decrease in teenage suicides has been noted. ([Attachment 3](#))

Meena Allada supported Substitute for **SB323**, recounting her personal experience in losing a friend to suicide. ([Attachment 4](#))

Amy Hutchens spoke in favor of Substitute for **SB323**, providing facts about suicide in Kansas and commenting on the establishment of mental health evaluations by Children's Mercy Hospital in Kansas City after three patients committed suicide in November of 2014. One of those patients was her daughter. Ms. Hutchens also commented on the financial expenses of suicide survivors. ([Attachment 5](#))

Elaine Adair supported Substitute for **SB323**, telling of her son's death by suicide at age 21 and of the suicidal death of her friend's son at age 12. ([Attachment 6](#))

Allison Doss gave support for Substitute for **SB323** asking the committee to give school personnel what they need to help students like her daughter who committed suicide at age 16. ([Attachment 7](#))

Helen Rentz spoke in favor of Substitute for **SB323**, speaking of the high percentage of deaths by suicide among family members of those who take their own lives. She told of experiencing the death by suicide of two husbands who developed Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) after military service and went on to speak of the suicide death of her granddaughter. She believes suicide is a disease and that it is important for school personnel to learn to recognize the signs evidenced by a potential suicide victim. ([Attachment 8](#))

Deb Peterson talked of her son who committed suicide at age 33 and of her granddaughters who were traumatized at an early age by his death. She believes school personnel trained under Substitute for **SB323** would know better how to be helpful to her granddaughters. She supports the bill. ([Attachment 9](#))

Representative Macheers took charge of the meeting at the request of Vice-Chairman Lunn, who

---

Unless specifically noted, the individual remarks recorded herein have not been transcribed verbatim. Individual remarks as reported herein have not been submitted to the individuals appearing before the committee for editing or corrections.

## CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES of the Committee on Education at 1:50pm on Wednesday, March 09, 2016 in Room 112-N of the Capitol.

---

excused himself.

Betty Brennan, who lost her 15-year-old son to suicide, commented that her reason for testifying changed after appearing before Senate Education Committee on Substitute for **SB323**. At that time she appeared to tell her personal story; now she is motivated to have an influence in suicide prevention. She expressed that she does not want teachers to be held liable or to feel they need to parent their students. She does want them to have training in suicide similar to other medical training they receive to deal with emergency situations. She supports Substitute for **SB323**. ([Attachment 10](#))

Mark Desetti gave wholehearted support for Substitute for **SB323**, stating he does not see the required training as burdensome for school districts. ([Attachment 11](#))

Conferees answered questions from the committee.

Representative Macheers asked committee members to note written testimony in favor of Substitute for **SB323** submitted by:

Marcia Epstein, Licensed Independent Social Worker ([Attachment 12](#))

Clark Flatt, President, The Jason Flatt Foundation ([Attachment 13](#))

Kim Romary, Mental Health Coalition Coordinator ([Attachment 14](#))

Andrew Brown, Executive Director, Headquarters Inc. ([Attachment 15](#))

Derek Schmidt, Kansas Attorney General ([Attachment 16](#))

Amy Campbell, Kansas Mental Health Coalition ([Attachment 17](#))

Colin Thomasset, Director, Association of Community Mental Health Centers of Kansas ([Attachment 18](#))

Rick Cagan, Executive Director, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) of Kansas ([Attachment 19](#))

Sarah Fischer, Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services ([Attachment 20](#))

Sydney Campbell, concerned student ([Attachment 21](#))

Representative Macheers closed the hearing on Substitute for SB323.

The meeting adjourned at 2:56 p.m.

The House Education Committee will meet next on Thursday, March 10, at 1:30 p.m. in Room 112-N of the Capitol.