



# KANSANS FOR EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

Opponent Written Only Testimony on SB 47

Senate Committee on Education

Tuesday, February 11, 2025

By Ben Jones

Representative of Kansans for Excellence in Education

Chair Erickson, Vice-Chair Thomas, Ranking Minority Member Sykes and members of the Senate Education Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony on SB 47.

Kansans for Excellence of Education stands for local control of public schools. This bill oversteps the balance of a local board and empowers a single member to essentially usurp an entire board meeting. Under this bill, one member can place a discussion item under new business with no prior clearance of the president and vice president whose responsibilities are to plan the meeting. A meeting that already runs 90 minutes can be doubled by adding 4 or 5 items that the 6 other members don't agree with or are prepared to discuss on the fly. We support the opportunity of all board members to be prepared ahead of the meeting for all discussion items. This prevents other members from doing their due diligence prior to the meeting.

We do encourage local boards having a public comment period during their meetings. However, we support local boards setting in policy how public comment is handled. This bill sets in a provision that requires that members may interact with individuals speaking during public comment. A locally elected board should decide for themselves what policy appropriately reflects their community.

We also have some concerns regarding Section 3 requiring full access to buildings by school board members to school district property during hours or when community activities are occurring utilizing the building. There are some security concerns that a board member may be in a facility without knowledge of building administration which is tasked with building security. We encourage board members to visit the buildings with prior notification of building administration. This is important in the event of an emergency that requires evacuation or taking shelter that way all individuals are accounted for. There are no provisions here that keeps board members from bringing

other people with them or scheduling to avoid some sensitive times of the year such as when state assessments are taking place when building administrators go to great lengths to provide a conducive environment for students to do well.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SB 47.