



February 27, 2025

Terri Moses

Division Director, Safety & Environmental Services, USD 259 - Wichita
Public Schools

Chair Erickson and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments in opposition of SB263, amending K.S.A 31-133. The safety of our students and staff has long been a cornerstone of our district goals and shared beliefs. A safe, quality learning experience is essential for every child, every day, everywhere. We further recognize that parents and guardians need to similarly feel their students are safe, valued, and connected, understanding all the measures we take to ensure a safe environment exists at their child's school. Current law provides an adequate framework for the standards for Safe and Secure Schools, whereas several provisions in this bill add complication, confusion and mandates without necessary resources to school districts.

House Sub for Senate Bill 109, Section 76, passed May 31, 2018, provided the framework for developing standards for school safety. The State Board of Education adopted nine standards as a result of this law. From those standards, the Wichita Public Schools developed crisis plans, crisis drills, communication strategies and regular collaboration points with local law enforcement and emergency responders in response to these standards. We believe current law is sufficient. Specifically, our, our issues with this bill are as follows:

1. Standards for active shooter drills could be added, but current law and standards allow schools to choose what type of crisis is covered in a drill, leaving decisions to local control.
2. We oppose the notification requirement to "each parent" language. We send communication to parents and guardians for whom we have contact information for text notifications and email. We do not try to track down parents who have failed to provide those contacts or failed to update contact information.
3. We oppose any additional requirements of the State Department of Education to establish criteria for alternative safety education for students who do not participate in active shooter drills. This can be managed locally.
4. We oppose that the drills be reviewed by the local Board of Education; it would be burdensome and time-consuming to attempt to gather the necessary data for meaningful review, as well as the local Board having no expertise in areas under review.
5. We oppose the requirement of publishing a list of vendors on our website. The list of items that must be published on the website continues to grow; a list that could go two years without being updated seems to have no significant purpose.
6. We oppose the wording of "evidence-based" in regard to violence prevention training. Much of our training is developed in response to actual issues occurring in our schools, typically by former law enforcement we have on staff. A prescribed "evidence-based" list that may or may not apply to our situations and may not be updated timely just creates roadblocks to enacting solid safety programs that work for our district.

There are other parts of the bill that we do not oppose, such as eliminating use of active shooter simulations. However, as several items in this bill are burdensome, infringe upon local control, and add requirements that do not come with additional resources, we oppose SB 263 as written.