



Kansas  National
Education Association

Making public schools great for every child

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Testimony; Senate Bill 323
House Education Committee
March 9, 2016

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to express our support for Senate Bill 323.

Suicide is a critical problem and very often when you read of a suicide, people will say they never saw any sign that it was coming. This is because very few of us are really trained to see the warning signs.

Teachers and principals spend a lot of time with young people - only their parents have more time. Just as we train teachers and principals to watch for signs of abuse and make them mandatory reporters of suspected abuse, it is proper to consider that a teacher or principal could notice some behavior or change in behavior that might be a warning sign of suicide.

As this bill is written, it is not an excessive burden on the employee or the district. There is wide latitude on how such a training requirement could be met. We also know that some resources based on best practices are now available at no cost online.

We feel the Senate amendments improved the bill further by providing for liability protection for school employees.

If the committee should decide to work this bill, we would only ask that you consider one other possible issue.

While training that meets the requirement of the bill is available at no cost now, there is no telling what might happen in the future. We ask that you ensure that the professional development in our schools is funded such that this could not become an unfunded mandate.