



Testimony before the
House Committee on Local Government

on

HB 2247 - Concerning Authorizing Legal Publications on Internet Websites

by

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Madam Chair, Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear today as a proponent of **HB 2247** on behalf of the Kansas Association of School Boards.

Understanding that this legislation has been discussed on numerous occasions in the past, KASB feels that a few factors would indicate now is a good time to make this change and allow local government entities to utilize these tools for better, more effective communication with their constituencies.

More Americans are getting their news and information on a screen.

According to a 2016 Pew Research Center survey, “The Modern News Consumer,” as of early 2016, just two-in-ten U.S. adults often get news from print newspapers. This has fallen from 27 percent in 2013.

While this decrease occurred across all age groups, the age differences are still stark: Only 5 percent of 18- to 29-year-olds often get news from a print newspaper and only 10 percent of 30-49-year-olds indicated they often get news from print.

This new policy would be more consistent for school districts.

In 2013 the Kansas Legislature adopted The Kansas Uniform Financial Accounting and Reporting Act – K.S.A. 72-8254 which requires every school district to publish specific budget information for the current school year and actual expenditures for the immediately preceding two school years, and stipulates that the report “shall be published with an easily identifiable link located on such district's website homepage.”

The Kansas Department of Education provides the following information for school districts in regards to the Kansas Uniform Financial Account and Reporting Act per K.S.A. 72-8254:

- a) “form 150, estimated legal maximum general fund budget, or any successor document containing the same or similar information;” (Form 151 replaced Form 150 for 2015-16 and 2016-17)
- b) the Budget-at-a-Glance; and

c) the one-page Budget Summary (open sumexpen.xlsx from the budget – this worksheet is labeled “1 Pg Summary”)

Publications required by this statute “shall be published with an easily identifiable link located on such district’s website homepage.”

These publications “shall be made available to the public at every meeting held by the board of education of each school district when the board is discussing the district’s budget or any other school finance matter”.

In addition, K.A.R. 91-42-3 adds additional requirements for publishing Emergency Safety Interventions (ESI) policies on each school’s website:

K.A.R. 91-42-3(b) requires that the district’s emergency safety intervention policy be posted on each school’s website, rather than just the district’s.

K.A.R. 91-42-4(c)(2) requires that after emergency safety intervention incidents other than the first of the school year a parent must receive a full website address for the following information:

- a) A copy of the standards of when emergency safety interventions can be used;
- b) a flyer on the parent’s rights;
- c) information on the parent’s right to file a complaint through the local dispute resolution process and the complaint process of the state board of education; and
- d) information that will assist the parent in navigating the complaint process, including contact information for Families Together and the Disability Rights Center of Kansas.

This information can be placed on a website of the district’s choosing, whereas the district’s emergency safety intervention policy must be posted on each school’s website.

This requirement in effect designates the Unified School District’s website as an official publication space for information that may be of interest or concern to the local community. Adoption of HB 2247 would allow for consistency in this action by authorizing schools to designate the same internet website for official publication requirements.

HB 2247 will be more economically efficient for local government entities

By removing the requirement of paid publication cost, and administrative responsibilities to track and verify the publications in a locally designated newspaper. Local entities will be able to realize both operational efficiencies as well as financial efficiencies.

As time and technology changes, the operations of local government agencies should be allowed to change with it and the favorable passage of HB 2247 would be a step in that direction.

Thank you for your consideration; I will stand for questions at the appropriate time.