

Testimony of Rep. Mary Martha Good
In Support of SB 257
January 30, 2018

I have been a teacher for 27 years, teaching Special Education and Kindergarten. I am here today to support SB 257 on Kansas Shared Parenting.

As a teacher, I have seen divorced parents come to me every school year with their child. Each parent usually takes time to tell me their child's strengths/weaknesses. But at Parent/Teacher conferences, each parent wanted their own conference. After a few years, I suggested to the divorced parents, we would meet as one unit. Why? Because inadvertently, I would tell one parent one remark and forget to tell the other parent the same remark. It soon became a game, and not one I played well.

It was much easier to meet with both parents in my classroom with or without their child. I reviewed grades and progress. If questions were asked, I made a note of them and slipped them in the child's folder for later reference for me. I encouraged each one of them to come to school and eat lunch with their child. Volunteer for a class party or help make cookies for a special event would make their child feel even more important. As a teacher, for me to look at that child when either parent arrives, made my heart joyful!

As technology improved, I began emailing both parents on a weekly basis to let them know what the next week entailed. Then, there was no excuse of, "Well, I didn't know..." Now both parents played an active role in their child's daily life.

Two people made this very special child. Together, they need to meet with their child's teacher(s) for updates. Not only is this a sense of pride for their child, but also shows the child the importance of getting along with others. Research suggests that the quality of the relationship between co-parents can also have a strong influence on the mental and emotional well-being of children....and the incidence of anxiety and depression. Children should be the importance of this law!