

**February 25, 2021**  
**Committee on Education**  
**Proponent Testimony on SB 235**

I am writing you this evening to urge you to pass the Back to School Act (SB 235) this Thursday. As a parent of 2 boys, one in middle school and one in high school in the Blue Valley School district I can say that this year of remote & hybrid learning has been detrimental to their learning and sadly my sophomore's GPA suffered last semester.

My husband and I both work from home and have been extremely supportive of our boys and helping them as much as possible. We are blessed to be in this situation. Regardless, my son is taking a challenging workload and we are unable to help him with some of the questions he needs answered. I do not blame teachers – they all tell my boys that they want to be in person full time because this hybrid learning model is double the workload for them. The lack of access to teachers is what makes learning so challenging. My boys have attended school on average 2 days per week since October and the other 3 days of the week they attend a 10 minute zoom for attendance and then do asynchronous learning activities. They cannot ask a question because the teacher is teaching his/her in person students. There is no opportunity to see a teacher before or after school. You cannot raise your hand when you have a question. There is simply not enough access to teachers.

I have been actively involved in speaking at the last 5 Blue Valley School board meetings advocating for our middle and high school students by providing data from all across the country given to me directly from school districts that have been in person full time since August. I included data from some of the largest school districts in the country (with far more students than BV I might add) that house so many students they are unable to social distance, yet with masks they have low to no spread within the school or the community. Sadly this data has fallen on deaf ears.

It is criminal to me that our schools have been forced to stay closed for middle and high school students while private schools right in our own county have been open full time in person along with multiple public school districts in KC on the Missouri side. It is the children who are suffering. Children, parents AND teachers are all asking to return to school full time in person in Blue Valley, but our school board has been influenced by the Teachers Unions and specifically the lobbying by the NEA. This is highly concerning. All teachers who want to take the vaccine will have received either 1 or both shots by the end of March. What else could possibly keep us from opening our doors?

I urge you to pass this information along and immediately return our students to the classrooms. They are NOT receiving the education they deserve. Finally, even though this may pass the senate and the house, how will we be able to get this past the Governor?

Please allow our middle and high school students to receive the education they deserve in the state of Kansas. Every day we continue to have virtual learning is another day our children fall further behind. Please open our schools and please do not allow this atrocity to happen again to Kansas Schools. Please do not allow the Teachers Unions & specifically lobbyists from the NEA to control decisions that are not in the best interest of students. We are counting on you to ensure our voices are heard and ensure our children do not fall further behind.

I appreciate your time and consideration.

Best Regards,  
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