

My name is Joel Addis, and I am providing this testimony in opposition to SB 496. I am a veteran educator with 20 years of experience in a variety of roles with the Derby Public Schools district. The majority of my experience within Derby public schools has been in the role of an elementary special education teacher. In this position, I worked with kindergarten through 5th-grade students with a variety of mild to moderate exceptionalities.

Like many other districts across the state of Kansas, Derby Public Schools provides transparency to its' patrons in a variety of ways. Detailed descriptions of the district curriculum for K-12 language arts, social studies, science, and math are available on the district website. Patrons are also able to see the academic tasks their students are being assigned through the district's online portal. Links to the Kansas State standards for each content area are made available. Patrons can review these standards, and their students' progress, quarterly through their students' standards-based report cards. Professional educators throughout the district make themselves available to patrons daily, through email, meetings that take place before, after, and during the school day, and through phone calls with their students' families. District patrons who have students with exceptionalities are able to review their student's progress quarterly through progress reports specific to their Individualized Education Plan's goals, as well as through annual IEP meetings. Patrons also have multiple avenues to become involved in their student's school, including volunteer work, parent-teacher organizations, and site councils at each building.

In my experience as both a professional educator and a parent, the most impactful educational moments can be those small, teachable moments, when an educator can adapt from their Lesson plan to meet the needs of the students in front of them. In those moments, a professional educator can assess where their students are at and adjust their instructional approach to maximize their impact at that moment. This bill with all of its requirements makes it difficult if not impose to allow professional educators to deviate from their prescribed lesson plans. The bill as written restricts our ability to adapt instructional approaches to their students' needs and steals learning time from students as we are left to choose whether or not to do what students need or to spend our time duplicating work. My colleagues and I will always choose what's best for kids.

Adaptability allows professional educators to adjust their lesson plans to the learning styles of their students. Within a content area, professional educators can group students by interest, ability, or topic in a variety of ways for each assignment. They can conduct ongoing assessments of student learning, and then adjust their instructional approaches to improve student outcomes. Collectively, these differentiated approaches form the core of educators' ability to provide academic intervention to students as their needs develop and change throughout a school year. This bill as written makes communication with parents more difficult as it puts a barrier between the parent and teacher and ultimately it makes teachers less able to adapt to individual need.

Not allowing professional educators this freedom is ultimately harmful to students. Effective teaching is built upon genuine relationships between students and staff. These relationships are built in those moments where students see their teachers identifying what they need in a moment and then adjusting their approach to meet that need. This professional practice is at the heart of effective teaching. Ultimately, the impact of putting restrictions on professional educators' ability to do this is to limit students access to responsive, personalized instruction. It is harmful to students.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joel Addis', with a stylized, cursive script.

Joel Addis