To Whom It May Concern,   1-24-22

I am writing regarding the proposed HB 2513 being presented to the House K-12 Education Budget Committee on January 25, 2022. I am a concerned teacher and parent of children in Kansas public schools. I would like to voice my concerns regarding the Social-Emotional Learning trend in our Kansas public schools, and subsequent data mining that is taking place.

As with many things in education, I noticed several years ago the public-school pendulum (or focus) in our state swung widely towards the idea that our schools somehow need to provide everything that is required of successful, contributing members of society. I do not agree. Social-emotional learning should not be the primary focus of our schools. Public schools cannot possible handle all the social and emotional needs of our students and their families, nor should this be the responsibility of schools. Furthermore, I feel this exaggerated focus on the social-emotional needs of every child in the state has taken away from academics. This has been proven year after year, by declining state testing scores in basic reading and mathematics across age groups.

In addition, I do not agree with the trend of surveying students on social-emotional needs solely for the purpose of collecting massive amounts of data on our children. Parents need to be more in charge of what data is collected on their children and need to be made aware ahead of time of exactly what the data is being used for. I believe that parents must give permission before any behavioral test is given on their children.

I am a proponent of HB 2513 because I think it will provide more transparency to the 2014 Student Data Privacy Act. Our schools need to return their focus to academics and look towards other community organizations, non-profits, etc. to provide parenting classes, counseling, and family therapy services. Our schools (and their budgets) are not designed to fix all of society's social and emotional problems.

Please feel free to contact me at brenna.haines@gmail.com if you have any questions.

Best regards,

Brenna Haines, EdD.