

Comment Report

HSB 706

A bill for an act relating to education, including requiring the boards of directors of school districts to publish certain specified information and modifying provisions related to required social studies instruction.(See HF 2499, HF 2577.)

Subcommittee Members: Thompson-CH, Ehlert, Wills

Date: 02/17/2022

Time: 12:00 PM

Location: House Lounge 2

Name: Chris Rolwes

Comment: Transparency Division:This bill Creates needless duplication. Most teachers already post their daily lesson plans, articles, and materials to Google Classroom or another Learning Management System such as Canvas. Parents have access to this now. Teachers are constantly adjusting lesson plans and content to what the students know or don't know. I am always coming across articles, activities, and new lesson plans that are relevant to what we are studying. Instead of working to improve our instruction and lesson design, this bill will stifle creativity in the classroom. If I wanted to show Governor Reynolds Condition of the State Address, I would have to post a link to the District site. If I wanted to show part of President Biden's upcoming State of the Union address, I would have to post the link and activity to the District website. We recently added an elective course called "Current Issues". The material used for this class changes by the week. As written, this bill would make this course impossible to teach effectively. Having to post every article, video, book, etc would be too burdensome to teach this course. We would have to hire additional staff just to comply with the data entry portion of this bill. As a professional that has had 28 years of experience, it is disheartening to see that there is a lack of trust about what we are teaching in our classes. For example, this past week I had several students mention that they know little of the Holocaust. I spent approximately two hours looking for resources and lessons from the U.S Holocaust Museum Website that are peer reviewed and age appropriate for my students. According to this bill, I would have to post this lesson plan, article, and video to the District website. Legislators are going to needlessly complicate educators' jobs with this requirement. Most, if not all of our fall preservice professional development will spent doing this work instead of the important work that is necessary to get ready for the school year. We struggle now getting most of our parents to check Infinite Campus to monitor student attendance and grades. Challenging MaterialsCRCS has a procedure in place for challenging educational materials now . Is it the Legislature's intent to tie up school board meetings with parents arguing over books, articles, and videos that are shown in class? Social Studies Instruction (Civics Test)A oneshot test doesn't really prove what students know. We've been practicing summative and formative assessments with students for years where they have to truly demonstrate what they know and apply it.From what I can gather from looking at this test online, is that it is a100 question fillinblank exam. The exam and the answers are posted for all to see. Are we to use all 100 questions when assessing students? Can we design our own multiplechoice test? Or, are we to use the 10 question test that is given to those that are applying for citizenship. Is the Iowa Legislature going to become the defacto school board for every district in the state?As you can see, this bill is problematic on many levels and does not deserve to pass out of committee. If any of you are interested in discussing this further, my contact information is listed above.

Name: Rita McCord

Comment: This is my 18th year teaching. Over 15 years of my teaching career has been spent at the K1 level. Additionally, I am the mother of two teenagers. This legislation does not allow for a studentcentered learning environment. As there is no way to know ahead of time what will be the new favorite interests of children, we cannot possibly account for that in posting lessons this far in advance of teaching them. We need the autonomy to include the interests of our students. Furthermore, I do not wish my childrens education to be impeded by rules that do not apply universally to public and parochial or private schools.

Name: James Dostal

Comment: The reality of this legislation is not transparency but intended oversight into the micro aspects of teaching in the Iowa classroom. I teach a class entitled Current World Issues, how do I communicate the curriculum on things that are happening daily in Cedar Rapids, Linn County, the state of Iowa, the United States of America, and the world through the proposed legislation?There is no sinister plot to teach outside the curriculum and parents that want to be informed on our lessons have ample resources to educate themselves either through google classroom, the district curriculum director, the teacher, and/or the student or combination of all stated resources.What's worse than no legislation? Bad legislation, and this is just that, bad legislation.

Name: Julie Schnebbe

Comment: I have been using a Learning Management System for the past six years, Canvas initially, and for the past three years, Google Classroom. Last year when we were moving back and forth between in person and remote learning, I began posting everything we used for class on my Google Classroom site. Parents can join the course and have the same access to all of the materials that my students have. This legislation would require teachers to duplicate their work in posting materials which are already open to parents for access at any time.

Name: Jennifer Harris

Comment: I am against the transparency in education bill. Parents can already access curriculum and standards on the Iowa Department of education website as well as specific district websites. MS/HS teachers already send out syllabus via email at the beginning of each semester/trimester/quarter. If parents choose not to read those emails that is on them. To ask a teacher to post a years worth of curriculum and materials used before school starts would be like asking a chef to post every single ingredient for every single meal they plan to cook for an entire year for people to criticize. If a parent has a question regarding assignments they need to ask the teacher! Too many parents are not involved in their childs education until they happen to come upon material they just happen to see at home. These bills will not make parents happy. Instead, they will add to the teacher shortage that already exists. Who wants to work in a field where you are literally under a microscope all day and your college degree, and profession is questioned daily! Please dont throw our teachers under the bus with this bill!

Name: Amber Ferriss

Comment: I have never not been able to access every detail of my children's circullum. This is a wasted bill with way to many flaws. I am absolutely disgusted as there are many other areas of education to focus on. What a waste of resources and time.

Name: Chad Thomas

Comment: The transparency requirements are nothing more than is normally supplied to any college student on the first day of any class. Any school district not already doing something similar is failing the public they want to serve.Basing a graduation requirement on the US Citizenship test is going to be a shock to the system. I don't believe that 50% of current high school graduates could satisfy the requirements of that section.

Name: Jenn Dreier

Comment: We already have transparency in our education system. This bill is a waste of time and money.

Name: Kathy Graeve

Comment: Vote no on HSB 706. Anyone paying attention knows teachers and districts have posted their curriculum online for years. Parents already have access to what books their children are reading and can opt out if they would like and another book is selected. This bill is yet another to undermine and create a solution for a problem that does not exist. Vote NO

Name: Amber Evans

Comment: Teachers are PROFESSIONALS and they know how and when a lesson plan needs to be changed to meet the needs of their students. When a group needs to dive deeper into a topic or a concept, teachers adjust accordingly. When students get the material in less time than planned, teachers will move on at a pace that matches what the students need as well. Teachers are not robots. Curriculum cannot be canned and planned to the point of no flexibility. Good teachers are flexible and meet the students where they are. They give the students what they need. They introduce new things to get kids excited about learning. They tie the curriculum to things that help the kids understand and grow. Teachers plan field trips, invite guest speakers, and introduce the newest Pete the Cat book. Teachers adjust lessons for snow days, sick days and fire drills. This bill doesn't allow the flexibility that students need to maximize their potential. And this bill does not give teachers the credit or respect they deserve as professionals.

Name: Sandra Bild-Kacena

Comment: As a parent and guardian of three students who when through two different public schools between 1984 and 2021 (37 years!), I have never ever been denied access to my students' curriculum and what was being taught day to day. I sat and worked with my children every night going over what was taught and what they were learning. If I had a question, I went to the teacher and perhaps the principal. Each school worked with me one on one as a parent. I was a hands-on parent. I also attended my students' classes helped in the classroom brought treats when asked and attended school functions. The teachers and schools were my friends. So, instead of searching the internet as a nonparticipant of a child's school day and being hands-off of what is being taught in the schools, perhaps parents and those interested should participate and help. I'm sure the school would appreciate the help. Please do not support this bill. I would much rather have teachers concentrate on their classes and the children than this busy "paperwork". Oh, one of my children is actually thinking about going into teaching music no less. I am not discouraging her from the profession, but because of these and other bills, I am warning her to seriously consider teaching out of state when she gets her certificate. If she did want to stay in-state, I suggested she choose a different profession. Thank you for your time.

Name: Mary Hayward

Comment: For a legislature which claims to be SO busy, this bill is a waste of time and energy. Teachers already do this!! Parents already have access to this information. This bill is an example of a solution looking for the problem.

Name: William Perrott

Comment: I do not feel the need to have duplicity in public education.

Name: Kris Mesicek Anderson

Comment: So where did this bill actually originate? ALEC...Texas...the RNC...Tucker Carlson? Why do Iowans allow our state to be governed by outside forces? This bill attempts to solve a problem that does not exist in Iowa. Parents already have access to state

standards, curriculum, and information regarding day to day instruction. Given the fact that the Iowa Legislature only approved a 2.5% SSA, it is apparent that some Legislators are only interested in hamstringing teachers and starving our public schools with this type of mean and petty legislation. Respect the professionalism and expertise of our teachers. Focus on REAL problems in Iowa, such as the fact that 76% of our young children have lead in their blood which can lead to learning problems in the future. Please focus on real issues...issues that focus on children and their learning. Please vote NO on HSB 706. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Name: Mary Scheve

Comment: As a district parent of 3 iowa k12 graduates, Ive never been denied access by teacher to understand my kids education. Plus as a Republican, Im concerned that we have become a party that wants more regulation? Stop.

Name: Todd Hodgkinson

Comment: This bill requires unnecessary government oversight and is a slap in the face of teacher professionalism. It should be killed.

Name: Linda Linn

Comment: Vote No on this bill. Educators already have their standards, and benchmarks available to the public. Good and great educators would not ever stick to a fixed curriculum as the needs of students come first. Show Iowans that public education and educators are professional and vote NO.

Name: Carol Chesterman

Comment: OPPOSE this bill. Teachers are the experts, not parents. Thats why we hire them. Oversight already exists to validate curriculum content. If parents want to control what is being taught in school then they have the choice to home school their child/children.

Name: Julie Zaugg

Comment: Imagine you have been told to list every resource, lobbyist, and other source of information you will consult for the entire legislative session in advance. You have no way of knowing as new situations and concerns arise what resources you will need. If a student asks for more information on a topic are teachers supposed to tell them sorry I have not been preapproved to help you with that? I call on Rep. Wills to fulfill his promise made to the public in Emmetsburg on 2522, that this portion of the bill will not move forward. The standards and content of social studies classes are the Department of Education's domain. Go to their web site; they are already there. If legislators have concerns about the standards, these should be addressed with that department, not start a tugofwar with teachers. I do support the posting of course syllabi and a list of books in school libraries. Schools already have a process for selecting new books and that should be communicated with parents as well.