

SESSION OF 2023

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTE ON HOUSE BILL NO. 2304

As Recommended by House Committee on
Federal and State Affairs

Brief*

HB 2304 would create law related to firearm safety education programs conducted in public school districts.

The bill would allow local school boards (local board) to provide firearm safety education programs. The State Board of Education (State Board) would be directed to establish curriculum guidelines for a standardized firearm safety education program, which would be required to include accident prevention.

The bill would provide that specific programs would be used based on the grade level of students, as follows:

- Kindergarten through grade five guidelines would be based on the Eddie Eagle Gunsafe program (Eddie Eagle program) offered by the National Rifle Association (NRA) or any successor program;
- Grades six through eight guidelines would be based on either the Eddie Eagle program, or any successor program, or the Hunter Education in Our Schools program (Hunter Education), offered by the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP), or any successor program; and
- Grades nine through twelve guidelines would be based on Hunter Education or any successor program.

*Supplemental notes are prepared by the Legislative Research Department and do not express legislative intent. The supplemental note and fiscal note for this bill may be accessed on the Internet at <http://www.kslegislature.org>

The bill would provide that if a local board elects to provide firearm safety education, such instruction must be in accordance with the guidelines established by the State Board. Further, if a local board elects to provide firearm safety education courses, such instruction would be offered to ensure that all students are provided the opportunity to take the course.

Background

The bill was introduced by the House Committee on Federal and State Affairs at the request of Representative Penn. [Note: A companion bill, SB 116, has been passed by the Senate.]

House Committee on Federal and State Affairs

In the House Committee hearing, **proponent** testimony was provided by Representative Penn, Representative Schmoie, representatives of the Kansas State Rifle Association and National Rifle Association, and a private citizen. The proponents stated the bill would standardize firearm safety education across the state and could prevent accidents involving children and firearms.

Written-only proponent testimony was provided by a representative of Safari Club International.

Opponent testimony was provided by a member of the State Board and a private citizen, stating concerns with a legislative mandate on curriculum due to the State Board's powers under the *Kansas Constitution* and caselaw. The opponents also stated the effectiveness of the Eddie Eagle program at preventing gun accidents involving children is unclear.

Written-only opponent testimony was provided by representatives of the Kansas National Education

Association, Kansas Parent Teacher Association, and nine private citizens.

No other testimony was provided.

Fiscal Information

According to the fiscal note prepared by the Division of the Budget on the bill, the State Department of Education indicates enactment of the bill would require the creation of a Standards Development Committee, which would meet multiple times over the course of a year to develop the required standards. Costs for the process would include development and review of materials, transportation reimbursement for some in-person meetings, and other development costs at an estimated cost of \$70,000, all from the State General Fund. The Department notes that local school districts would incur costs to train teachers and purchase new curriculum materials; however, the cost of these materials would not be known until the standards are developed. Any fiscal effect associated with the bill is not reflected in *The FY 2024 Governor's Budget Report*.

K-12 education; firearms; firearms safety education; curriculum guidelines; State Board of Education