

Several changes to SBDM law in SB 3 are sufficient, however our comments will be specific to noted sections of concern to the Kentucky Education Association.

Page 2 line 12- KEA believes that the council make up should maintain an educator majority. The employees of the building are the ones responsible for ensuring SBDM policies are carried out, analyzed, and maintained. We believe that an addition of a classified school employee elected by the classified employees in the building, would be an agreeable compromise, if a reduction of one teacher is something deemed necessary. If two teachers and one classified school employee are on the council, this would still maintain an educator majority. It is vital to the success of each individual school to have parent, employee, and administration work together to ensure policies and procedures support and continuously improve the education of every child in that community.

Page 2 line 16- Educators are parents too. Perhaps eliminating the exclusion of educators in a building from being elected as a parent representative would also help in enhancing the knowledge level of SBDM Council members and allow for continued strong educator voice.

Page 2 line 24- To strike the language that gives protections to teachers elected to councils is not in the best interest of school democracy. Teachers are elected by their peers. They should not be in fear of being involuntarily transferred for their comments, questions, or actions as a member of the council.

Page 3 line 24- SBDM was created nearly 30 years ago as part of the KERA. This innovative approach to school governance was to help schools tailor educational practice to the needs of the students in each school. No two schools are alike. Each school requires thoughtful approaches to budgeting, staffing, and curriculum that best fits the student needs of the individual building. Requiring SBDM councils to “be consistent with district policy” could be interpreted as giving school boards permission to require SBDM’s to use a “broad brush” to dictate curriculum and promote a “one size fits all” approach to teaching and learning. School boards should support innovation and unique approaches to learning used by SBDM Councils. Of course these things would support the goals of the school district, but they should also be given the autonomy to use approaches best suited for individual student populations.

Page 5 line 20- Before 1990, hiring processes in schools were full of political nepotism and bias. KERA, through its creation of SBDM, created a better way for fair hiring practices of both principals and educators. Public school success today is dependent upon the collaboration among, students, parents, community and educators. Taking away the voice of the community, parents, and educators from selecting its leadership will only be setting us back to pre-KERA days. We should be learning from our past and setting a new standard forward that continues to value the voice of employees, and parents to choose who will best lead their school community. Superintendents (especially in large districts with many schools) generally do not have the time necessary to understand the culture and climate and specific needs of every building. Therefore, including direct stakeholders in principal selection is imperative. Simply “consulting with council members” as stated in the new language of the bill is subject to broad interpretation. It would create inconsistency in hiring practices and makes it especially difficult for potential principal candidates to try and have an equal opportunity for employment.