

Blossom Brosi

616 Iroquois Road, Danville, KY 40422

859-319-3654

blossom.brosi@boyle.kyschools.us

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Senator Mike Wilson, Chair, 2014 Standing Committee on Education
702 Capitol Ave.
Annex Room 204
Frankfort, KY 40601

Dear Senator Wilson,

I'm an English teacher at Boyle County High School in Danville, and also a mom. I felt first-hand the heavy toll the winter of 2014 had on students, teachers, and families in Kentucky. I am writing to ask you, as chair of the Standing Committee on Education, to initiate some changes regarding snow days in our public schools. First, I ask that you revoke the Kentucky law that permits school districts to use only five one-hour delays. In addition, I ask the Committee on Education to explore other measures to help with the snow day problem.

My district's 15 snow days were few compared to the number of school days that some districts missed due to inclement weather during the 2013-2014 school year. As you know, these days out of school wreaked havoc on teaching and learning. Some problems snow days created were relatively small, like child care conundrums and altered vacation plans; others were more severe, like loss of continuity in the classroom; and the most severe were the loss of instructional time and the missed educational opportunities for students. Those who suffered were Kentucky's kids. Anything our lawmakers can do to lessen the likelihood that another hard winter will result in so much missed school would be greatly appreciated.

One simple way I see to help with the problem is to reverse the existing state law that permits school districts to use only five one-hour delays for emergencies, such as inclement weather, each school year. I can understand the premise behind this law: allowing schools to miss one hour multiple times could add up to a lot of missed instructional time for our kids. But the winter of 2014 proved this policy to be actually detrimental. At Boyle County this winter we quickly used up those five one-hour delays. Any other time that a one-hour delay was appropriate we had to instead miss the entire day of school. There were too many days this winter that parents got the call at around 6:00 a.m. that school was cancelled, and to our dismay saw that around 9:00 or so the roads were fine. This problem wasn't isolated to Boyle County. Many fellow teachers and parents around the state expressed the same sentiments. Missing an hour of school is less than ideal, but missing an entire school day is worse. Reversal of the only five delay

days law will result in more instructional time for our students, and in turn, a better educated commonwealth.

In addition to reversing the delay law, I would love to see the Committee on Education entertain other ideas to fix the snow day problem. A preventative approach would be advantageous to a corrective approach, which is what lawmakers have done in the past when they've passed quick bills to forgive snow days. I do not see a clear and easy solution. However, I do know that some areas are considering ideas such as starting school an hour later each day during the winter months, assigning work for kids to do at home, or allowing portions of districts to miss while the majority has school. Kentucky is a leader in the field of education and it would be fitting for Kentucky to lead in preventative measures to avoid inclement weather days.

Thank you so much for your time and your consideration of my requests. Please don't hesitate to contact me. I am grateful for everything you do for the Commonwealth, especially for our youngest Kentuckians.

Sincerely yours,

Blossom Brosi