

HB 2030 Proponent Testimony – WRITTEN-ONLY
House K-12 Budget Committee
James Franko, president
24 January 2023



Madam Chair and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present **written-only proponent testimony** on HB 2030. Simply stated, this bill recognizes the reality that education has changed. Be it pandemic-driven innovations or longer-term trends, education is no longer delivered merely from 8:00 to 3:00 in a public school setting. Like so much else in our modern lives, education is increasingly customizable regardless of if a child's "classroom" is at home, in a public school, or a private school.

Indeed, many dedicated educators in Kansas public schools are committed to the educational and extracurricular pursuits of Kansas kids. They operate in a system with nearly half a million public school children. Still, one need look no further than this body, the Kansas State Department of Education, or local districts to see efforts being made to customize each child's education. Despite the best effort of those educators, more can be done and the bill before you today is a step in the right direction.

The legislature obviously recognizes this new educational reality with your passage of Open Enrollment and "learn anywhere" legislation in recent years. What's more, the long-standing reality of Kansas' virtual education programs further demonstrates that educational innovation is currently taking place in public, private, and homeschool classrooms across the state.

States across the country have similar laws on the books. They've existed for years, and the nature of "student-athletes" or public schools is no worse for the wear.

The primary beneficiaries of this proposal would likely be children in rural areas and small towns as they currently have fewer options for extracurricular activities. The proposal before you today can help enrich rural communities by connecting families across different educational environments as those same communities deal with the reality of declining population and associated trends.

The reality is that the overwhelming majority of public educators and homeschoolers, to say nothing of private school educators, are in it for the right reasons – they want to help kids by finding them the right educational fit. There may be bad actors in all fields but we cannot let those examples prevent us from providing more opportunities and recognizing the educational, and by extension extracurricular activities, are no longer delivered in a conventional "school" setting.

KSHSAA-sponsored activities or not. Home, private, virtual, or public school enrollment and courses. These are artificial distinctions that ignore the innovation in how children are educated today. We should be removing these all-or-nothing barriers to educational opportunities in Kansas. The next step in moving past these arbitrary hurdles is to support HB 2030.