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Written Neutral Testimony

HB 2659 – Enacting the sudden cardiac arrest prevention act

Presented to the
House Education Committee
Tuesday, February 15, 2022

By
Deena Horst and Ben Jones, Legislative Liaisons
Kansas State Board of Education

Chairman Huebert, Vice-Chairman Thomas, Ranking Minority Member Stogsdill and members of the House Education Committee:

Thank you for allowing our input on HB 2659.

This bill requires the State Department of Education to develop and publish on its website guidelines and other relevant materials to inform and educate students, parents, and coaches about the nature and warning signs of sudden cardiac arrest, including the risks associated with continuing to play or practice after experiencing the symptoms identified on the website. It also requires students and parents, prior to the student participating in an athletic activity, to sign and return to the school an acknowledgement of receiving the information regarding the symptoms of sudden cardiac arrest and warning sign information. HB 2659 also suggests that schools, prior to the beginning of each sport activity season, hold an informational meeting for students, parents/guardians, coaches and other school officials. The bill also specifies that a student exhibiting symptoms be removed from the activity at least until the student is evaluated and cleared by an appropriate medical professional to return to the activity. HB 2659 also requires coaches to annually complete a sudden cardiac arrest training prior to coaching the activity. Local Boards of Education or school governing bodies will be required to set prescribed penalties when a coach does not complete the training.

The State Board of Education stands firmly in ensuring our schools are the safest environment for Kansas students. In so doing, we rely on experts to fulfill this function and support the statute that has delegated student athlete safety to the Kansas State High School Activities

Association (KSHSAA) with its rule-making authority. It is our belief that the proper entity responsible for developing the guidelines and information is KSHSAA. KSHSAA already has some guidelines and requirements which address some of the issues surrounding Sudden Cardiac Arrest such as a requirement that all sponsors and coaches must be bi-annually trained in CPR and AED. Coaches, who are not educators, are required to complete a KSHSAA provided coaching course during which cardiac issues are discussed. In addition, KSHSAA has an advisory committee made up of medical professionals, Sports Medicine/Student Safety & Wellness, which advises the association on medical issues. KSHSAA has staff and members of its Boards and Committees who have the expertise and knowledge needed to ensure that all relevant information and requirements are successfully communicated and implemented.

We highly recommend that this bill be amended in Section 1(c)(1) by requiring KSHSAA, rather than the Department of Education, be responsible for the development and publishing on the KSHSAA website the guidelines and relevant materials which will inform students, parents/guardians, coaches and school officials about Sudden Cardiac Arrest. The association needs the regulatory flexibility to ensure that Kansas has the best possible information and policies regarding student athlete safety and can quickly be changed and disseminated in a timely manner. Therefore, we would ask that the bill's language reflect the needed flexibility so changes can be implemented without having to wait for the Legislature to be back in session.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share our thoughts regarding HB 2659.