



Testimony before the  
House K-12 Education Budget Committee

On

**HB 2511** - Authorizing certain students to participate in activities regulated by the Kansas state high school activities association and making members of or persons employed by the Kansas state high school activities association mandatory reporters of child abuse and neglect

by

Mark Tallman, Associate Executive Director

January 31, 2022

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on **HB 2511**. As we understand the bill, it would require that students in virtual schools, non-accredited private schools and home schools who are not otherwise enrolled in public schools be allowed to participate in school district activities supervised by the state high school activities association.

KASB appears in opposition to this bill primarily based on a policy adopted by our member school boards this past December: "Responsibility for governance of student activities is assigned to the Kansas State High School Activities Association (KSHSAA)."

KASB has no objection to the provisions on KSHSAA mandatory reporting.

As we have discussed issues of student activities, our members have taken the position that the organization which the Legislature established to supervise those school activities should be allowed to do that job. The Legislature created the association's governance structure and give it authority. The governing body includes representatives of the State Board of Education, which has constitutional responsibility for general supervision of education; public members appointed by the Governor; local school board members representing the boards constitutionally charged with operating public schools; and the member schools themselves, both public and private.

The KSHSAA has addressed ways for nonpublic school students to participate in activities and can continue to consider this issue in the future. Therefore, we do not believe the Legislature should override those decisions.

There are several other concerns raised by this bill.

First, allowing additional students to participate in public school activities could increase costs for equipment, travel and potentially even staff. However, unless these students enroll as part-time

students in districts' courses or pay fees, they would not provide any additional revenue for the district. Districts could only require such students to enroll in courses or pay fees if all other students were so required, which is usually not the case.

Second, this approach changes the concept of school-based "teams" and activities. The tradition has been that school activities are extensions of student learning, where students participate alongside classmates. This bill would allow students to participate for a single activity only. There may be a place for such an approach, but it is very different from how school activities are currently structured.

Third, we believe there will be concerns about whether students in home schools are actually held to the same standards for academic progress, time for practice, etc. While many home or other non-accredited private schools may enforce rigorous standards, there simply is not the same degree of public oversight.

The biggest concerns may actually come from fully enrolled, traditional students and their families, who will compare the requirements on their students. If passed, this bill may please some parents and students who want the option to participate in public school programs, but I suggest that local boards – and legislators – will hear from another group of parents, who may feel their child lost an opportunity to student who isn't enrolled in the same school, or who isn't held to the same requirements.

Thank you for your consideration.