



**KANSAS ASSOCIATION
OF SCHOOL BOARDS**

Serving Educational Leaders, Inspiring Student Success

www.kasb.org

Testimony before the
House Committee on Education
on
**HB 2540 – Authorizing participation by certain students in activities regulated by the Kansas State
High School Activities Association**
by
Leah Fliter, KASB Advocacy/Outreach Specialists
Wednesday, January 31, 2018

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to appear today on behalf of the Kansas Association of School Boards as an opponent of [HB 2540](#).

KASB's member-adopted policy confirmed in December, 2017, supports the authority of the Kansas State High School Activities Association (KSHSAA) and local boards of education to establish and enforce academic standards of participation for all students.

While we appreciate this bill's nod to local control, we also note that it allows schools registered with the State Board of Education to "attest" that their students are meeting qualifications established by the local board.

Accredited public and private schools in Kansas are required to meet academic standards and accountability benchmarks established by the State Board and regional or national accrediting organizations. Schools that are merely "registered" with the state are not subject to the same accountability standards; in fact, they are not subject to any oversight, academic or otherwise.

Our members feel it would be fundamentally unfair to hold highly-regulated, accredited public schools to different standards of KSHSAA participation than non-accredited ones that would merely need to "attest" that their students are in fact meeting proper academic and other standards established by local school boards and KSHSAA rules.

The bill provides for a scenario in which a school that requires students to be enrolled in classes for most of a school day must compete against schools whose participants are free to practice many additional hours because they are not required to be "in class." Our members support local control and the ability to offer services to students in home and private schools, but we also believe there should some common academic standards to make sure competition is fair.

We also note that non-accredited schools have a wide range of participation options under KSHSAA's Approved Schools List. Those schools may compete against KSHSAA-member schools in regular-season

and invitational activities and athletic events; in the post-season, they may compete against other non-accredited schools in statewide and even national competitions.

As the state moves forward with the Kansans Can School redesign process, it may be appropriate to discuss how public schools could accommodate — with appropriate accountability — participation by non-public students in the activities and athletics that contribute to student success. For the time being, however, we oppose HB 2540 as written.

I am happy to stand for questions at the appropriate time.