

January 31, 2022

Testimony before the House Committee on K-12 Education Budget

RE: House Bill 2511

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Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Kansas State High School Activities Association

Chairman Williams and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide perspective regarding House Bill 2511

The Kansas State High School Activities Association and its 354-member senior high and 404-middle/junior high schools oppose House Bill 2511 based on the following concerns:

1. Annually, more than 100,000 Kansas students who elect to attend accredited private and public schools that are members of the KSHSAA, earn their eligibility and participation privileges by meeting their school's enrollment, attendance and scholarship rule requirements. The process of earning eligibility is ongoing for students each semester. To statutorily provide eligibility for students electing to home school without regard to accountability to the same standards is a disservice to those 100,000+ students. Parents of these students will be justifiably concerned for the inherent unfairness since their students earn eligibility for school activities by being accountable to specific and measurable academic standards in schools which are accredited by the KSDE. House Bill 2511 imposes eligibility for students choosing home school without regard to those students being accountable to the same standards.
2. To grant automatic eligibility to home school children to play on another school's team where they have no standing or connection, fundamentally changes the nature of school activity groups and teams as extensions of the sponsoring school. The philosophical basis of all KSHSAA activities is that the student responsibilities come before being an athlete. This bill changes that foundational principle. School teams will no longer be school teams, but rather community teams more like recreation or club teams. Will the Legislature grant eligibility for non-students to play on Kansas junior college, college, or university teams in the same manner?
3. Parents and students elect to home school by choice. Like all choices, that decision provides certain opportunities and eliminates others. KSHSAA makes no judgment about home schooling except to point out there is no oversight, auditing, or accreditation of home schools in Kansas. To afford participation eligibility without regard to those same requirements is an injustice to 100,000+ Kansas students' grades 7-12.
4. Current KSHSAA policy offers two remedies providing relief for athletic endeavors for students taking classes outside of member schools:
 - A. Since the late 1970's the KSHSAA has administered a category for small, non-accredited private schools and home school organizations known as the *Approved School List*. As of today, there are 30 schools currently on the list for the 2021-22 school year. KSHSAA Approved Schools can and do compete with KSHSAA member schools in regular season and invitational competitions. These Approved Schools are then free to compete in their private school and home school association post season events on the state and national level. It

affords them the best of both worlds. Throughout the state there are associations and networks of home school families who are successfully using the Approved School listing as a way to serve the interests of their students.

- B. The KSHSAA maintains a Virtual Student Eligibility policy which provides an opportunity for students to meet the enrollment and attendance requirements for individual eligibility. Specifically, students are eligible at the public school where they live if they take a total of five or more classes as a student dually enrolled in a KSDE accredited virtual school and at least one class in the brick and mortar setting of the school they will represent in interscholastic activities.
5. The KSHSAA appreciates the expectation detailed in HB 2511 which requires payment of fees commensurate to “fees required by the school district for participation in such activity if such fees are generally imposed upon all other students who participate in such activity”. As school leaders consider activities as an extension of the classroom where learning is taking place, they recognize the lessons learned support the educational mission of school. Those lessons reflect growth in areas including but not limited to accountability, leadership, perseverance, communication, collaboration and many more foundational social-emotional skills, all while positively impacting student achievement, daily attendance, graduation rates, and success in post-secondary endeavors. Typically, schools do not charge fees for general participation in activities as they see activities as an extension of the classroom. Fees are not charged to students for covering expenses related to teaching salaries nor supplemental sponsor/coach stipends. A few schools have participation fees, but those typically minimally represent travel, equipment, and specific operational needs, but they fall woefully short of the true cost of participation.
6. The KSHSAA has no reservations regarding the expectation of mandatory reporting but would respectfully ask that reporting be limited to administrative staff, congruent to expectations at Kansas schools. As part of an administrative staff comprised primarily of lifetime educators, that is what we know and maintain as our current practice.

The KSHSAA asks that you not report HB 2511 out of your committee.