



Oral testimony on HB 2494

School safety and security; cardiac plans and AEDs

By

Leah Fliter

Assistant Executive Director for Advocacy

Kansas Association of School Boards

lfliter@kasb.org

In

House Education Committee

January 17, 2024

Good afternoon, Mr. Chair, and members of the committee.

Thank you for this opportunity to appear as neutral on HB 2494.

KASB's member-approved legislative policies support efforts to keep our students, staff, and patrons safe and healthy. We appear as neutral today, however, for several reasons.

First, we're concerned about the bill's direction that the State Board of Education establish school safety building standards as well as health standards regarding CPR training and the use of AEDs. This is clearly beyond the State Board's expertise and purview.

Second, our legislative policies oppose unfunded mandates. We appreciate that the current draft of the bill provides grant funding to assist school districts with the purchase of AEDs and with the costs associated with establishing cardiac arrest teams; however, we'd prefer a dedicated budget line item for these ongoing expenses, which could include:

Ongoing maintenance of CPR certification for an expanded number of staff members; ongoing equipment and training costs; and the likelihood of increased salary costs associated with having a cardiac-emergency certified staff member in attendance at all practices and games. We'd prefer a dedicated budget line item for these expenses.

Additionally, HB 2494 separates cardiac events from all other potential security or safety issues. We suggest a good emergency response plan should be comprehensive, rather than having different plans for each situation.

Kansas Association of School Boards

1420 SW Arrowhead Rd, Topeka, KS 66604 • 785-273-3600 • www.kasb.org

We also have serious concerns about the broader school safety and security language in HB 2494. In many cases it's duplicative of existing law on school safety and security. Districts already have plans that comply with the law while reflecting local circumstances. This bill appears to envision a single, cookie-cutter security plan that won't address the numerous situations statewide. Additionally, we're concerned that mandating all schools use a single plan makes our schools LESS safe, not more.

At a minimum, we suggest splitting the school safety and security language in HB 2494 away from the language on AEDs and CPR training and urge the committee to hold at least one additional hearing before working either bill.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide this brief, initial testimony on HB 2494 and look forward to working with the committee to improve the legislation.

Thank you.