



Holton High School

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TO: The Kansas House Committee on K-12 Education Budget

FROM: Rod Wittmer

DATE: January 28, 2022

RE: House Bill 2511

I am writing to express my concerns with House Bill 2511 and the inclusion of language that would provide eligibility for home school students at all member public schools.

Through my experience, the most influential piece of public-school activities is that they give purpose to our students to keep their grades up, striving to do well in the classroom and the court, field or performance area. Students have a sense of belonging and purpose when working side by side with the same students that they have attended class with and participated in extra-curricular activities with since childhood. The public school builds a community experience by holding everyone to the same set of standards and policies.

Non-accredited private schools are required by law to register the name and address of the private school (home school). They have no legal requirements for licensed personnel or specific curriculum, just recommendations. They have no required audits to insure state legislative compliance or review teams to oversee continuous school improvement. They do what they want, how they want, and that is why they chose to homeschool.

In the public school we are required to have licensed teachers, specific courses and curriculum that follow state standards. We are required to have audits and outside review teams that insure we follow legislative laws and KSDE policies. We have local Boards of Education that adopt additional policies that meet the needs and expectations of our local community that often exceed the state level expectation. The KSHSAA sets the minimum scholarship requirement for activity eligibility by semester and most schools then take it a step further and add weekly eligibility requirements based upon current grades.

Do not get me wrong. I have family and friends that chose to home school their children and they have done a great job providing a top-notch education for their children. But I have also seen parents pull their children out of school prior to the age of sixteen (the state legal age to drop out with parent consent) and utilize the "Non-accredited private school" registration paperwork to by-pass the state law for compulsory attendance and academic requirements.

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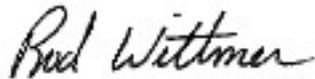
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It is my concern that with so little oversight of “Non-accredited private schools,” some will utilize this law to by-pass the necessary eligibility guidelines to become a sport first and sports only environment. If this is what parents want, then they already have club sports at their disposal.

If parents and students want to participate in public school activities and want to have the sense of community with classmates and teammates, then our doors are always open for their enrollment and participation.

Without further criteria and regulations for “Non-accredited private schools,” we ask that you keep club level activities and sports separated from public school activities and sports.

Sincerely,



Rod Wittmer