

Testimony on
SB 281 – Special Needs Scholarships

Before the
Senate Committee on Education

By Mark Tallman, Assistant Executive Director/Advocacy

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Madam Chair, Members of the Committee:

KASB supports the goal of improving student health and wellness, in part because it impacts other student academic issues. However, we cannot support **SB 281** for the following reasons:

Section 1 does the following: (a) States a goal of promoting a healthier school environment and children, including an “appropriate amount of physical education.” (b) Directs the Kansas State Board of Education to collaborate with Kansas State Department of Health and Environment to develop curriculum, materials and guidelines that schools may use to reach the goals of the bill. (c) Requires specific times for physical activity to be provided at each grade, and that physical education teachers be fully endorsed teachers. (e) Requires the State Board and KDHE to develop standards and objectives for physical education programs for all grade levels.

KASB supports state goals and allowing local districts to determine how to meet those goals. We oppose specific curriculum requirements, such as minimum hours for physical education or activities. Furthermore, we believe the bill should require assessment of the financial impact of the proposed standards, objectives and guidelines, such as the impact on and availability of staff, and the impact of more physical education requirements on other academic requirements. If the school day and year remain the same and we do more PE, what should we do less of? How will the state ensure “suitable funding” is provided for this additional outcome?

Sec. 1(d) requires a physical fitness test for every student in grades four, seven, nine, and 12. Who must conduct the test? If the school, who is responsible, since many schools do not have nurses? If other health providers, who pays and how is this enforced? In any case, this creates a new mandate on either schools, families or local health providers, with no provision for funding.

The bill creates an incentive grant program to promote teachers gaining endorsement in physical education; however, it is subject to appropriations.

In conclusion, KASB opposes **SB 281** because it goes far beyond the development of state goals and outcomes to require specific program mandates without any provision for the additional costs. As an alternative, we would provide additional professional development funding, identification of best practices, and state incentives to adopt those practices.

Thank you for your consideration.