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House Education Committee HB 2142 Proponent February 14, 2023

Chair Thomas and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share this testimony in support of HB 2142. My name is Tanya Dorf Brunner, and I am the Executive Director of Oral Health Kansas, Inc. We are the statewide advocacy organization dedicated to promoting the importance of lifelong dental health by shaping policy and educating the public, so Kansans know that all mouths matter.

Why water?

Students who are hydrated are better able to concentrate and learn during the school day and are more prepared for physical activity and sports.

Drinking water prevents headaches and migraines. Research has shown that a headache is one of the most common symptoms of dehydration, and Kansas school nurses tell us that one of the reasons students come to them most often is because they have a headache. After the nurse encourages the students to drink water they feel better.

Water is also fundamental to oral health because it is calorie-free and helps children avoid health problems such as obesity and dental cavities when it is chosen over high calorie, sugar-sweetened drinks. The CDC says, "Drinking water can contribute to good health, and schools are in a unique position to promote healthy, dietary behaviors, including drinking water."

Thirsty for Health

In 2015, Oral Health Kansas began an initiative called Thirsty for Health to help school districts make water more accessible to K-12 students. Over the course of the project, we worked with thirteen school districts on assessing their buildings and policies, designing messaging for students about the importance of drinking water, developing water lesson plans, and surveying students' attitudes about drinking water. 85% of the students who were surveyed reported that they drank more water by the end of the project. Through the project, we encouraged school districts to install bottle filling stations, and one superintendent who embraced this model told us that he observed students choosing to drink water far more often after the district began installing the filling stations. **Studies even show that students who have access to bottle filling stations drink at least three times as much water than those who have access to only a water fountain.**

Since 2021, we have been proud to partner with USA-Kansas and Community Action, Inc. to grow Thirsty for Health and work with more school districts on policies that prioritize installing bottle filling stations. Our conversations with schools over the past two years have shown that schools are prioritizing the importance of keeping kids hydrated and of making sure they have access to safe drinking water at school. A survey of school administrators late last year showed that the majority of districts have been installing bottle filling stations since 2020, and the majority of those have filters. One district administrator said, "We are pretty much doing away with the water fountains and only have a bottle filling station. It has really cut down on spreading germs."

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HB 2142: Access to safe drinking water

Filtered bottle filling stations filter out impurities like lead at the point of dispensing. Oral Health Kansas stands in support of HB 2142 with the amendment proposed by the National Resources Defense Council (listed below) to make this a filter first policy change. This legislation has the capability to not only protect students from the harmful effects of lead, but also ensure they are hydrated and ready to learn. We ask this Committee to support amending HB 2142 and passing it favorably.

Sincerely,



Tanya Dorf Brunner
Executive Director
tdorf@oralhealthkansas.org

NRDC Proposed Amendment

HB 2142

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- 1 (h) "Private school" means an organization that:
2 (1) Regularly offers education at the elementary or secondary level;
3 (2) is exempt from federal income taxation under section 501 of the
4 federal internal revenue code;
5 (3) conforms to the civil rights act of 1964; and
6 (4) attendance at which satisfies compulsory school attendance laws
7 of this state.
8 (i) "Public school" means any elementary or secondary school
9 maintained and operated by a school district organized under the laws of
10 this state.
11 (j) "Remediation" means decreasing the lead concentration in water
12 from a drinking water outlet to less than one part per billion, including, but
13 not limited to, using methods such as the replacement of a drinking water
14 outlet with a filtered drinking water outlet or the replacement of lead-
15 containing pipes, solder, fittings or fixtures with lead-free components.
16 "Remediation" does not include sole reliance on flushing practices.
17 (k) "School" means any public or private school or any provider of an
18 early childhood education program that receives state funding.
19 (l) "Secretary" means the secretary of the department of health and
20 environment.
21 Sec. 3. (a) Commencing in the school year 2024-2025 and for each
22 school year thereafter, each school shall provide drinking water with a lead
23 concentration level below one part per billion in sufficient amounts to
24 meet the drinking water needs of all students and staff in accordance with
25 this section.
26 (b) On or before January 1, 2025, each school shall:
27 (1) Conduct an inventory of all drinking water outlets and non-
28 potable water fixtures in each building of the school;
29 (2) remove any drinking water coolers that are not lead-free as
30 determined by the United States environmental protection agency under
31 the federal lead contamination control act of 1988;
32 ~~(3) install a filter that reduces lead in drinking water on each drinking~~
33 ~~water outlet;~~
34 (4) post a warning sign at each non-potable water fixture that such
35 fixture shall not be used for cooking or drinking water purposes;
36 (5) prepare an annual schedule for the testing of drinking water
37 outlets and drinking water coolers. Such schedule shall be provided to
38 employees of the school and parents or legal guardians of students enrolled
39 at such school upon request; and
40 (6) prepare general information on the health effects of lead
41 contamination and additional informational resources regarding lead
42 contamination. Such information shall be provided to employees of the
43 school and parents or legal guardians of students enrolled at such school

installing a filter that reduces lead in drinking water on each drinking water outlet and maintaining such filters, replacing a drinking water outlet with a new lead-free drinking water outlet or

(2) install a filter that reduces lead in drinking water on each drinking water outlet, maintain such filters to ensure that lead concentration levels are below one part per billion and replace such filters as least as frequently as provided for in the manufacturer's instructions, or replace a drinking water outlet with a new lead-free drinking water outlet; [reorder remaining]

or drinking water outlets