

My name is Melinda Holmes; I am the principal of Maize Virtual Preparatory School. I would like to speak in support of HB 2506. This bill is a step toward allowing virtual students the same opportunities as other Kansas kids. Currently our virtual students cannot participate in KSHSAA sanctioned activities unless they are dually enrolled in a brick and mortar building. For our students, the part-time funding penalty prevents us from being able to allow dual-enrollment. HB 2056 would allow our students to participate in non-class related KSHSAA activities without dual enrollment.

Currently, even students who attend a virtual school in their own district are not allowed to participate in their district's KSHSAA activities. Just last week, I received an email from a parent asking if they could attend virtual school, which the parent feels would be best for the student's academic needs, and still play sports at their local middle school. I explained that the student cannot attend virtually and participate in KSHSAA sports. Similar conversations occur weekly. One parent voiced that they stayed with Maize Virtual School because the academics were more important than their child participating in sports. Why do we force virtual school students and parents to choose between academics and sports? HB 2506 would allow both.

Virtual students are Kansas kids and deserve the same opportunities as other Kansas kids. I count it a privilege to work with these amazing students. They work hard on their academics and should be allowed to join their community through participation in KSHSAA activities. Virtual students will not only benefit from participating, but the local community will benefit from their participation. I urge you to support HB 2506 in support of our virtual kids.

Melinda Holmes

Maize Virtual Preparatory School K-12 Principal