



**Oral Neutral Testimony on
HB 2103
House Education Committee**

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Chair and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide neutral testimony on HB 2103. KASB's member-adopted legislative policies and permanent policies express full support for the constitutional authority granted to boards of education over maintaining, developing, and operating local public schools. This includes local board authority over "policies, so that such schools can progress and meet State Board standards."

KASB appreciates the important educational experiences and real-world skills that public school students earn through participation in 4-H, FFA, and other agricultural science activities. Such activities help develop the very skills that are integral to students' preparation for college and careers, the very skills that the State Board of Education's Kansans Can vision is designed to foster in Kansas public school students.

At the same time, KASB members recognize that chronic absenteeism has become a significant challenge for many students across Kansas, owing to the continuing impacts of the global pandemic, and that chronic absenteeism impacts student success in school. The State of Kansas defines chronic absenteeism as missing 10% or more of the days school is in session, whether the absences are excused or unexcused. In other words, a student who misses as few as 2 days of school each month of the school year, even if those days are "excused" absences, is considered chronically absent and may be missing critical academic instruction.

Balancing the importance of the "learning experiences" envisioned in HB 2103 with the need to protect instructional time and the fact that decision making about such matters falls squarely within the constitutional authority of local boards of education is challenging and requires

flexibility for school districts and local boards to partner successfully with parents to ensure that students succeed. For these reasons, KASB is neutral on HB 2103. The bill's protection of local decision-making authority would be improved by inserting the words "may include, but not be limited to" on page 2 line 25 of the bill, and by deleting the words "Includes, but is not limited to" from that same line. We encourage the committee to amend the bill to provide this additional flexibility in defining learning experiences that are appropriate for recognition as excused absences by a local district.

KASB is a non-profit service organization built on an abiding belief in Kansas public schools. We have put the needs of students and K-12 leaders first since 1917.