

February 23, 2025

Gus Peine
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RE: Support for SB 114

Hello Chairwoman Estes,

My name is Gus Peine, and I am writing today to seek your support of SB 114. The Kansas Legislature created Kansas Academy of Math and Science (KAMS) as a premier early college program designed to provide a STEM-focused education experience for gifted 11th and 12th grade students. As KAMS students, we live on the Fort Hays State University campus and take classes along side of the FHSU students. The program allows students like me to take higher level classes that count as both college credits and are also applied towards my high school diploma. At the end of the 2-year program, I will graduate from Ellis High School and will have accumulated more than 60 hours of college credits. Unfortunately, the Kansas State High School Activities Association (KSHSAA) denied KAMS' request to allow KAMS students the opportunity to fully participate in KSHSAA activities. SB 114 will grant KAMS students the right to fully participate in all KSHSAA events.

Throughout my years in school, I have been blessed with being able to get good grades and to participate competitively in sports. However, I have often felt unchallenged in school. As I entered Ellis High School as a freshman, I had to seek special approval to take an online college course. I then followed that by taking additional online college courses during both the school year and the summers. During my sophomore year, I visited the KAMS program at FHSU where I found a program that I felt would provide me with an opportunity to finally challenge me in the classroom. The one hesitation that I had with joining the KAMS program was that I learned that I would have to give up participation in sports. As a sophomore, I just barely missed qualifying for State in long jump, and I was really looking forward to finding myself at the state track meet as a junior and senior. So, I made the decision to make my education the priority, with the intent of maybe finding a way to also be able to participate in track.

This is my first year in the KAMS program, and I really enjoy the program. I feel like the level of the academic curriculum has been good for me. I have also been working with other KAMS students and our parents to see if we could find a way to allow us to participate in sports and other KSHSAA activities. Recently, KSHSAA approved KAMS as an "approved school", which going forward allows KAMS students to participate in KSHSAA activities during the regular season. This is really exciting, and we are currently working through the process to participate this spring. Unfortunately, the "approved school" status under KSHSAA will not allow us to participate in post-season activities, such as regional and state activities. Fortunately, SB 114 would allow KAMS students to fully participate in all KSHSAA activities, including post-season.

In closing, I ask for the opportunity to provide both written and oral testimony at a House Education Committee hearing. SB 114 would have no cost to the state of Kansas, but it will allow me and my fellow KAMS students to fully participate in KSHSAA activities, the same as all other students in the state of Kansas.

Thank you for your consideration,
Gus Peine