

Testimony before the
House Committee on Health and Human Services
on
HB 2094
by
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Madame Chair, Members of the Committee:

Thanks you for this opportunity to testify on HB 2094. We appear as opponents of the bill based on policy language adopted by our Delegate Assembly, which reads “KASB supports programs to **ensure** (emphasis added) that students receive immunizations and other health services necessary to keep children ready to learn and minimize health risks to other students and staff.” In order to help promote this policy, KASB has developed a policy recommendation for our members on the subject, **JGCB Inoculations**, which districts, for the most part, adopt as their own.

The policy starts, ‘All students enrolling in any district school shall provide the building principal with proof of immunization of certain diseases or furnish documents to satisfy statutory requirements. Booster shots required by the Secretary of the Department of Health and Environment are also required.’ Both the KASB policy and policy recommendation have been in force for at least the last 12 years, the time I’ve been at KASB, or longer.

Our policy also recognizes some parents legally opt out of immunizing their child(ren) for medical or religious reasons. Therefore our policy also states, “Students who fail to provide the documentation required by law **may** (emphasis added) be excluded from school by the superintendent until statutory requirements are satisfied. Notice of exclusion shall be given to the parents/guardians as prescribed

by law. Students who are not immunized against a particular disease(es) **may** (emphasis added) be excluded from school during any outbreak.”

It is clear our organization recognizes both the positive impact of having children in the district who have been immunized while noting current exemptions create a need for some flexibility in dealing with the issue. To add another exemption doesn't not necessarily change how our members will operate.

But adding another exemption does make our members' job of ensuring equity more difficult. Our members have to be cognizant of protecting the health of those who have been immunized with the rights of those who choose not to do it for their child. Curriculum decisions often fall in the same conundrum. By offering more choices to meet individual needs, districts are expected to ensure a quality curriculum but have to decide what works best for both parties, which generally increase demands on staff time and other resources, hence lowering efficiency.

Schools will continue to work with parents who choose not to immunize their children, but offering an even broader, more nebulous exemption has the potential of both making schools even more at the epicenter of the spread of dangerous infections as well creating more management issues for schools that are already experiencing diminished resources spread thinly as it is.