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Kansas private school students and home-schoolers joining in public school sports under new law

BY: RACHEL MIPRO - OCTOBER 3, 2023 9:09 AM



📷 Kansas State High School Activities Association executive director Bill Faflick said 205 nonpublic students are enrolled in public school activities. (Kansas Reflector screen capture from Kansas Legislature YouTube channel)

TOPEKA – More than 200 nonpublic students are taking advantage of a new provision in state law allowing them to participate in public school sports and activities.

Lawmakers passed the provision in [Senate Bill 113](#) during the 2023 legislative session as part of a K-12 education package setting out public school funding for the next three years.

The provision allows private school and home-school students to participate in all public school activities, such as sports and debate programs, overseen by the Kansas State High School Activities Association.

In a Monday presentation to lawmakers, KSHSAA executive director Bill Faflick said 205 nonpublic students were now participating in public school activities. Of these students, 95 are high schoolers and 111 are at the middle school level.

Committee chairwoman Rep. Kristey Williams, R-Augusta, said the legislation was a good move.

“I really want to applaud the Legislature for passing this and our governor for signing it into law, because we’re about helping kids, and getting kids connected is a wonderful thing, so that is tremendous,” Williams said.

At the time of the bill’s passage, several lawmakers questioned why nonpublic students should be allowed to join these activities, as the students aren’t held to the same standards for extracurricular eligibility as public school students.

During his presentation, Faflick said nonpublic students were encouraged to turn in transcripts or report cards, but the organization has to take parents at their word that their children are eligible if academic records aren’t available.

“It is a little bit of a different standard than what we’re used to because we’re used to seeing a teacher report card and we have many, many of our schools that do weekly eligibility checks or biweekly eligibility checks,” Faflick said.

Sen. Molly Baumgardner, R-Louisburg, said public school eligibility standards are already lax. Students have to pass five subjects per semester to remain eligible for the next semester’s sports, among other

requirements.

Baumgardner said hypothetically, students could take eight courses, fail three of them, and still remain eligible.

“I think the bar’s relatively low in some ways,” Baumgardner said.



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A graduate of Louisiana State University, Rachel Mipro has covered state government in Baton Rouge and New Orleans. She and her fellow team of journalists were 2022 Goldsmith Prize Semi-Finalists for their work featuring the rise of the KKK in northern Louisiana, following racially-motivated shootings in 1960. With her move to the Midwest, Rachel is now turning her focus toward issues within Kansas public policies.

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