



January 27th, 2023

Senate Education Committee
Kansas State Capitol
300 SW 10th St.
Topeka, KS 66612

Honorable Senator Molly Baumgardner and Members of the Committee on Education:

I am reaching out today in regards to SB82. I am both an educator and an athletic trainer at Tonganoxie High School. I am also fortunate enough to serve as a football medical observer for the Big 12 and an ATC Spotter for the NFL. In 2011, I was just beginning my tenure with our professional organization when the original legislation was proposed. Mild traumatic brain injuries (mTBIs) have always been an area of professional focus for me.

We have come far in our understanding of mTBIs. It is now standard protocol to complete a five step return to play progression. However, in some Kansas schools, concussions are not considered with regard to classroom performance. It is time to help protect our students academically as well as physically. We need to establish a return to learn protocol in our schools to complement the existing RTP protocol.

I have been at THS since 2005. As one of the old guard, I am afforded a fairly unique position as an AT and am rarely questioned by colleagues about the legitimacy of necessary temporary classroom accommodations in the wake of one of our student-athletes suffering a concussion. This spills over with our other students as well when they present with a concussion following an automobile accident, work injury, or any other mechanism that leads to an mTBI unrelated to the athletic fields.

Most schools that are served by an athletic trainer are likely already protecting these students in the classroom. Unfortunately, 41% of Kansas schools do not currently have access to an athletic trainer. As proposed, SB82 will establish, without adding cost to schools, a concussion team. This will ensure our students athlete or not, are given the support they need in the classroom as they heal from mTBIs. I truly hope that you as legislators will join me in supporting Senate Bill 82. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Mark J. Padfield', written in a cursive style.

Mark J. Padfield, MS, LAT, ATC
Teacher and Athletic Trainer
Tonganoxie High School