



Testimony before the

House Committee on K-12 Education Budget
on
HB2048

Jim Karleskint Lobbyist - USA-Kansas and Kansas School Superintendents Association providing oral testimony.

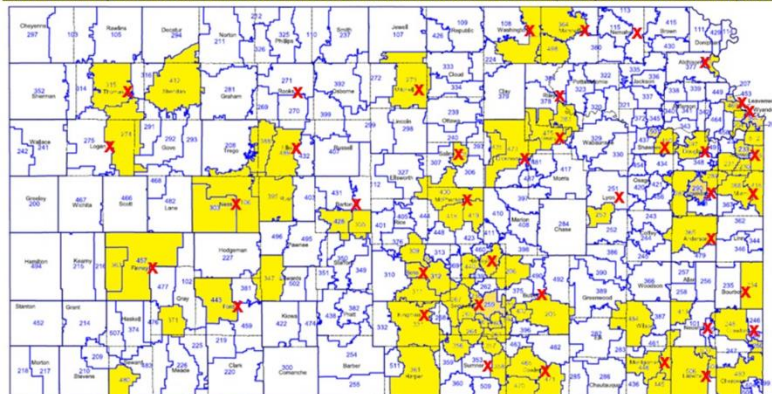
Committee Chair Williams and K-12 Committee Members

Thank you for allowing USA Kansas and KSSA to provide oral testimony on HB 2048. As written, we stand opposed to this bill.

This bill suggests it's how low income students kids have a better educational opportunity. The contents of this bill makes it more about how individuals and business can avoid paying Kansas taxes, it even provides a seven year retro tax credit increase from 30% to 70%, and after December of 2022 a 100% tax credit for certain individuals It also removes the \$500,000 cap per tax year. Instead of these protentional tax dollars going to the entire state, they are directed to a few schools who are allowed to hand pick their students, who are not required to report results, and are not required to provide any evidence of how these dollars are being allocated. Achievement isn't even discussed in the bill, as it was original when this bill was revised seven years ago.

The map below shows where the current usage of these scholarships is currently being used, it prominently shows it does not benefit the entire state, and in many situations only a single family or student are allowed to participate due to the acceptance policies of many of the private schools.

Districts with eligible students for the Tax Credit for Low Income Students Scholarship Program shown below in yellow



Annual report on Tax Credit for Low Income Students Scholarship Program (January 2023)

To add to the challenge of expanding this program there is no significant data demonstrating if these students are performing any differently than they did in their previous school. With the open enrollment bill passed last session and the restructuring of this bill appears it's no longer about a student moving from a school who is underachieving it's just about allowing a student to move to a different school.

The cost of attending a private high school can be much higher as an average than public school. Recent data indicates the average cost of tuition at an accredited private high school is about \$9,111 per year. With \$8,000 limit per student, most would still need to account for the difference in tuition. This tuition also does not include additional fees such as, transportation, activities, athletic, and supplies.

Private schools are allowed to create their own acceptance criteria for students, that might include academic ability, religion, physical talents, or parental background. **This actually allows makes it a school's choice, not parent choice.** We have individuals who have shared students being removed from private school for reasons beyond what is allowed in a public-school expulsion. These removals often don't include a formal due process hearing, but are triggered for low academic performance, below average attendance, lack of credits to graduate, and in a few cases the student was just not invited to enroll the next semester. Again, not parent choice.

The other part of this bill that is alarming is once the \$10,000,000 in tax credits is met, a trigger is hit, and the fund can increase to \$20,000,000 without a hearing or a vote of the legislature. Again, no public oversight

USA-Kansas has been consistent that public taxpayer money should not be spent without public oversight, private schools managed by private boards, not elected by the community, and do not require public access to information. You can call these tax credits, but they are potential tax dollars diverted by the legislature for education and put money back in the pockets of the original donors. Therefore, should be considered public dollars.

A sign in the basement of the capital states, **"All political power is inherent in the people"**. It seems that outside agencies from education are trying to influence the decisions made by our legislators.

Thank you for your consideration.