



January 25, 2023

Daniel Klaassen, Education Policy Advisor  
Kansas Action for Children  
Opponent Testimony for HB 2048  
House Committee on K-12 Education Budget

Chairperson Williams and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to HB 2048, a bill that would expand the tax credit for scholarships to students living in low- and moderate-income households. Kansas Action for Children is a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy organization working to make Kansas a place where every child has the opportunity to grow up healthy and thrive.

We support the right of every child to access a free, high-quality public education. This means using public taxpayer dollars for public schools, where every student is accepted, regardless of ability or financial means. Private schools do not offer the same access to every student and are often selective in who they enroll. A publicly financed education system that offers equal opportunity is one that has stood the test of time.

Shifting taxpayer dollars to a private – and often exclusive – system weakens the public system from which so many children and families benefit. Also, public schools are very much accountable to taxpayers – and legislators, the state board of education, and KSDE. Private schools are not required to provide the same level of accountability about student success, school budgets, nor school policies. Vouchers that support private schools set up an inequitable system that unduly favors these private, unaccountable entities.

Public schools offer support to every child. Nearly one in six Kansas students receives special education services through their public school system<sup>1</sup>, allowing them to participate in learning opportunities with their peers and friends. The private schools in our state offer no such guarantee. Furthermore, Black and minority students have disproportionately higher

---

<sup>1</sup> Kansas Department of Education. (Retrieved January 24, 2023). *Special Education Prevalence Data: 2021-2022 School Year*. Kansas K-12 Special Education Reports – Data Central.





numbers in Special Education since 1968<sup>2</sup> and, as a result, they are more largely impacted by the expansion of this program than their white peers.

The scholarship program also has a disproportionate impact on students in rural areas. Of the 122 Participating Qualified Schools, 98 are east of the Interstate 135 corridor, including 60 in the Greater Kansas City and Wichita areas. This does not provide equal opportunity for the students in the western half of the state, communities that depend on their public schools not only for student education, but also for community vitality and workforce development.

Since the start of this program in the 2015-16 school year, more than \$30 million in contributions have been given to the Scholarship Granting Organizations (SGO), yet only \$17 million has been distributed as scholarships. An SGO must disburse at least 90 percent of the amount given within three years of receipt. This leaves the SGOs with \$10 million in funds from past years that still must be given as scholarships, 30 percent of the total contributions across the last eight years. There is simply no need to expand the limits on the program to \$20 million in credits annually.

Thank you for the opportunity to share information with you today. Feel free to reach me if you have any questions at [daniel@kac.org](mailto:daniel@kac.org).

---

<sup>2</sup> National Center for Learning Disabilities. (2020). *Significant Disproportionality in Special Education: Current ... - NCLD*. [www.nclld.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/2020-NCLD-Disproportionality\\_Trends-and-Actions-for-Impact\\_FINAL-1.pdf](http://www.nclld.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/2020-NCLD-Disproportionality_Trends-and-Actions-for-Impact_FINAL-1.pdf)

