

**January 25, 2023**  
**Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee**

**NAME:** Emily Meissen-Sebelius

**TITLE:** Parent of children in the Shawnee Mission School District

**EMAIL ADDRESS:** emsebelius@gmail.com

**BILL NUMBER:** HB2048, Tax Credit Scholarship Expansion

**PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL:** Opponent

**ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY:** Written only

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2048. I believe public schools benefit the entire community and state, they provide opportunities for ALL children, they have layers of public oversight, and are uniquely qualified to receive public support for these reasons.

As a parent, I strongly believe that public schools are the bedrock of our communities, in our rural, suburban and urban areas of the state. As a family, we chose to live in Kansas, and Johnson County, specifically because of the high quality public schools. Strong public schools attract quality businesses and employers, as well as create a robust future workforce for our state. Johnson County is evidence of this in practice, as well as other areas of the state where public schools serve as community and economic hubs.

Very importantly, public schools provide opportunity to ALL children, regardless of income, religion, academic needs or other abilities. I believe that public funds should be reserved for public schools only, specifically because of this very unique accountability and mission to serve ALL children. Public schools cannot deny admission and diverting public funds to private schools that can set limits on whom they serve, is unfair and a poor use of our public dollars. I am also concerned with using public funds for private schools that do not have the same accountability and oversight as our public schools.

As a family, we have had very positive experiences with our public schools, and I think it is incredibly important to keep public funding with these institutions to continue to improve and build upon them, making them even better for all in the community who would like to and/or need to access public education. Our teachers and staff are professional, caring and incredibly competent. They work so hard, especially over the last few years, to meet the diverse needs of children and our community. I am forever grateful for our teachers, who have helped our children navigate a global pandemic and continue to grow and learn through adversity. Over the last few years, retaining teachers and staff in public schools has been a challenge. The legislature should be doing EVERYTHING within its power to support our public schools, teachers and students, and in turn our economy and broader community. Bills like HB2048 do just the opposite. I'd urge you to keep public funds tied to public schools and vote in opposition of HB2048.

Thank you for your consideration, and sincere thank you for your service to our great state.

Emily Meissen-Sebelius

Parent of a 1st and 5th grader in Shawnee Mission School District

Prairie Village Ks.