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Oral Testimony before the
K-12 House Education Committee
02/06/2023
In Opposition of HB 2218

Representative Williams and Committee Members:

My name is Jess Herbig and I have the privilege to serve as the Executive Director of Student Support Services for Goddard Public Schools for the past five years. Our current district enrollment is approximately 6300 students, and we also serve 3000 students in the Clearwater, Cheney, and Conway Springs school districts as the host of our Special Education Cooperative. Our Cooperative boundaries include six private and parochial schools. These schools include Wichita Friends School, St. Joseph Catholic School in Conway Springs, St. Paul Lutheran School in Cheney, St. Peter Catholic School in Schulte, Holy Spirit Catholic School in Goddard, and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic School in Wichita. Our district has special education staff assigned full time to St. Peter and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton. We also partner with Bishop Carroll to provide a blended learning model for one of our students. We have a strong partnership with these schools but feel that HB 2218 will have a negative impact on our current delivery model. **I am testifying today in opposition of HB 2218 for the following reasons:**

- This bill will increase the number of students with disabilities that could attend one of the private/parochial schools within our boundaries. Without fully funding special education this will cause us to change how we provide special education services to our students who are attending a private/parochial school. If numbers increase, we will have to provide services for these students in Goddard. This increase will put a strain on our current staffing. This will disrupt each of the private/parochial schools' schedules and would not be in the best interest for students.
- This bill discriminates against parents of students with disabilities as it states that a qualified school does not have to take a student with a disability, or a student identified as having a disability under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
- Public schools are provided the opportunity to serve ALL students. Because of this type of bill, it creates opportunities for a private school to have a parent sign their child out of receiving IEP services and then drop the student from their school.
- There is no oversight or accountability with teachers who are teaching these students outside of the public school. Anyone can apply and receive this scholarship according to how the bill is written. Where will the committee draw the line on accepting or denying students access to this scholarship?

We appreciate the opportunity to partner with our private and parochial schools. Any type of bill that doesn't provide accountability and support for ALL students, including those with IEPS, is not in the best interest of ALL Kansas kids. In closing, I urge this committee to vote against HB 2218.

Sincerely,

Jess Herbig