

**Oral opponent testimony before
The House K12 Education Budget Committee**

On

SB 83, providing additional student eligibility under the tax credit for low-income students scholarship program

By

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Madam Chair and Members of the Committee,

KASB appears today in opposition to SB 83. KASB's legislative policies, affirmed by our Delegate Assembly in November 2022 state, "To ensure all students have the opportunity to succeed, all schools supported by public funds must serve all children on the same basis as public schools. We oppose programs including but not limited to vouchers, education savings accounts and tuition tax credits because such programs divert public funding from public education to schools which are not required to serve all students, including those who are disadvantaged, disabled, or those with the greatest needs."

Kansas public schools are the pride — and often the lifeblood — of their communities. [Graduation rates are at an all-time high, including for low-income students](#). Our public schools attract businesses to the urban centers represented by many legislators and are the primary employers in the less populated areas of the state represented by others. No doubt each member of this committee can share examples of great things happening in their constituent school districts.

We are not convinced the tuition tax credit scholarship will improve student achievement in Kansas. [Public school students and private school students generally perform about the same when comparing similar type students](#).

Rural lawmakers know that in many of our smallest communities, parents and other local taxpayers fight hard to keep their public schools because if the school building closes, the community will wither and die. Urban and rural legislators can likely agree that one of Kansas' best strategies to stem outmigration is to preserve and strengthen the state's public schools.

Although state law currently says tuition tax credit scholarships may be used only by qualified accredited schools, and the qualified schools operate in a somewhat traditional school structure, we're concerned this bill may open the door to for-profit schools which are not necessarily regulated in the same way as Kansas public schools. This concern is amplified by the recent introduction of HB 2218, which establishes a system of unregulated nonpublic Kansas schools.

We also note there does not seem to be significant demand to expand the existing tuition tax credit program, based on the state department of education's 2023 report to the legislature.

For these reasons, we respectfully ask the committee to support all Kansas students by voting no on SB 83.

KASB is a non-profit service organization built on an abiding belief in Kansas public schools. We have put the needs of students and K-12 leaders first since 1917.