

My name is Jude Schwalbach, and I'm an education policy analyst with Reason Foundation, a national 501c(3) nonprofit policy research organization. I'm testifying on Kansas [House Bill 2514](#).

Kansas H.B. 2514 would prioritize students who are residents of Kansas and siblings of current transfer students in the open enrollment selection process. It also improves transparency by requiring school districts to submit important open enrollment data to the state department of education annually. The proposal also improves upon the existing open enrollment law by requiring school districts to post their latest open enrollment policies and procedures in a clearly marked location on districts' websites. These transparency provisions, in particular, ensure that school districts make the open enrollment process family-friendly.

However, H.B. 2514 can be improved. Policymakers should clarify how school districts determine if a transfer student is in good standing. Specifically, a student's good standing should not be determined by their academic record or performance.

Policymakers should also clarify that the annual open enrollment data collected by the state department of education should be published on its website each year. The current language states that the data must be published, but does not specify how often.

Additionally, Kansas policymakers should adopt a statewide within-district open enrollment policy which requires all school districts to participate. Students could use within-district open enrollment to transfer to any school with open seats inside their district of residence. These changes would ensure Kansas' students have access to every open seat in public schools and help them find the best public schools for them.

A 2023 report by the [Becker-Friedman Institute for Economics at the University of Chicago](#) found that students participating in Los Angeles Unified School District's within-district open enrollment program saw positive results in achievement and college enrollment, especially when transfer students were compared with nonparticipants. In addition, school quality in LAUSD's lowest-performing schools improved the most. The authors concluded that these positive effects were due to the competitive pressures put on public schools by open enrollment.

A Dec. 2023 [Morning Consult-EdChoice](#) poll of 1,320 adults found that 73% of parents with children in school supported open enrollment, and only 17% opposed it. It also enjoys bipartisan support: 76% of Democrats, 75% of Republicans, and 69% of Independents with kids in schools say they favor allowing families to attend schools across school district lines. Moreover, robust open enrollment laws signed into law in Idaho, Montana, and West Virginia during the 2023 legislative sessions enjoyed [significant bipartisan support](#), receiving the votes of over 80% of Democrats and 90% of Republicans in those legislatures.

Strengthening Kansas' open enrollment policy would help ensure that public schools are available to all students and further empower families to find public schools that are the right fit for their kids.