

**Written Testimony in Support of HB 2468, the Low-Income Family Assistance Scholarship Act**

House Education Committee

Proponent Testimony HB 2468

NAME: Geoff Andrews

TITLE: Superintendent of Catholic Schools, Diocese of Salina

DATE: January 21, 2026

Chairwoman and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of the Low Income Family Assistance Scholarship Act. I previously testified in support of similar legislation, and while that effort did not advance last year, the need it sought to address has only grown more urgent for Kansas families.

My name is Geoff Andrews, and I serve as the Superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Diocese of Salina. Our diocese spans approximately 26,000 square miles across north-central and northwest Kansas and serves communities that are predominantly rural. Our Catholic schools welcome families of all faiths and backgrounds and exist to serve students where they are—academically, socially, and personally. For many families in our region, educational choice is not about preference or ideology, but about finding the right fit for their child.

For more than a decade, Kansas has had a low-income tax credit scholarship program that provides meaningful assistance to families whose income falls at or below 250% of the federal poverty level, the same benchmark used for Affordable Care Act eligibility. Despite its proven success and careful oversight, the program's cap has remained unchanged, limiting its reach even as demand has steadily increased.

During the 2024–2025 school year alone, the Scholarship Granting Organization serving the Diocese of Salina awarded approximately \$138,000 in scholarships to 102 students—an average of \$1,351 per student. Since the 2021–2022 school year, our diocesan SGO has awarded more than \$500,000 in scholarships to low-income families seeking an educational environment where their children can succeed. For many of these families, the scholarship is not supplemental, it is essential.

The Low-Income Family Assistance Scholarship Act responsibly builds on this foundation by expanding eligibility and increasing the availability of tax credits tied to private donations. It is important to be clear: this program does not redirect public education dollars to private schools. Rather, it allows individuals and businesses to voluntarily contribute to state-approved scholarship organizations that operate under strict guidelines for eligibility, reporting, and accountability. As an educational leader, I strongly support fully funded public schools, while also recognizing that no single educational model works for every child.

A significant and timely component of this legislation is the opt-in alignment with the federal Educational Choice for Children Act (ECCA). This provision positions Kansas to leverage a potential federal scholarship tax credit in a way that respects state authority and local decision-making. If families and donors choose to participate, the ECCA component

could meaningfully expand scholarship capacity without imposing new mandates or financial burdens on the state. For low-income families with limited options, this alignment represents a practical and forward-thinking approach to educational access.

At its core, this legislation affirms a simple principle: parents are the primary educators of their children, and income should not be a barrier to choosing the educational setting that best meets a child's needs. This is especially true in rural Kansas, where educational options may already be limited and where strong schools, public and private alike, serve as anchors for their communities.

I respectfully urge the committee to support the Low-Income Family Assistance Scholarship Act. This bill strengthens educational opportunity, encourages private investment, and helps ensure that Kansas students are not defined or limited by their family's financial circumstances.

I would also like to share a brief first-hand experience that illustrates the real impact of this program. Before serving in Catholic education, I spent many years as a public school teacher and administrator. In my final year as a public school administrator, a significant portion of my time was devoted to supporting one particular student. He struggled socially and behaviorally, was frequently teased by peers who knew how to push his buttons, and often found himself in conflict—fighting, acting out, and using inappropriate language toward students, teachers, and administrators. Despite the best efforts of caring educators, the environment was not the right fit for him.

The following year, this student and his siblings transferred to one of our Catholic schools. That transition was only possible because of support provided through the low-income tax credit scholarship program. Today, that same student is preparing to graduate this spring. He participates in athletics, sings at Mass, performs in school musicals, and is a member of the scholar's bowl team. He is not perfect—as none of us are—but he is growing into a confident, engaged, and respectful young man. I am incredibly proud of him and deeply grateful for the commitment and sacrifices his family has made to place their children in a school environment where they could thrive.

This is the kind of transformation that does not show up fully in spreadsheets or policy summaries, but it represents the heart of why this legislation matters. For some students, access to the right educational setting can be truly life-changing.

I would like to briefly address the federal opt-in provision related to the Educational Choice for Children Act (ECCA). This portion of the legislation can be simple, practical, and focused squarely on Kansas students and families.

Opting in to ECCA would provide additional educational opportunities for Kansas students regardless of where they are enrolled, public, private, or religious schools alike. The ECCA scholarship framework is designed to help working families access educational options that meet their children's unique academic, social, and developmental needs. For families in rural Kansas, where choices may already be limited, this added flexibility matters.

Kansas would not be acting alone. Several of our neighboring states, including Missouri, Colorado, Nebraska, and Oklahoma, have already opted in or publicly expressed their intent to do so. If Kansas chooses not to participate, Kansas taxpayers will still contribute federal

dollars, but those resources are likely to flow to surrounding states instead of being reinvested in Kansas children. Simply put, opting in allows us to support our own students rather than exporting opportunity across state lines.

As Colorado Governor Jared Polis succinctly stated when discussing his state's decision to opt in, "I would be crazy not to opt in. If Colorado doesn't participate, our federal tax dollars will simply flow to other states." That same logic applies to Kansas. Opting in is a fiscally responsible decision that keeps resources focused on Kansas families while preserving local and state control.

For the Diocese of Salina, this alignment would complement the existing low-income scholarship framework already serving rural families. It strengthens our ability to support students like the one I described earlier, students whose success depends not on a single system, but on access to the right educational environment at the right time. The ECCA opt-in does not mandate participation; it simply ensures Kansas families and donors have the option to benefit.

Thank you for your time, your consideration, and your continued service to the children and families of Kansas.

Respectfully submitted,

Geoff Andrews  
Superintendent of Catholic Schools  
Diocese of Salina



ALIGNED  
22052 W. 66th Street • Suite 200  
Shawnee, KS • 66226

(913) 484-4202  
WeAreAligned.org

**Claudia Fury-Aguirre**

Manager of Kansas Policy and Outreach, Aligned

[claudia@wearealigned.org](mailto:claudia@wearealigned.org)

**Proponent Testimony on Senate Bill HB 2468 (Written-Only Testimony)**

Scholarship Tax Credits

House Education Committee

January 21, 2026

**Chairwoman Estes and members of committee,**

Thank you for allowing us to submit testimony **in support of House Bill 2468**

Aligned is a nonpartisan, nonprofit coalition of business, education, and community leaders working across Kansas to ensure every child has access to a high-quality education that meets their individual needs. We evaluate legislation through a child-centered lens and support policies that expand opportunity, empower families, and strengthen outcomes for students.

Aligned supports House Bill 2468 because it expands educational choice and provides families, particularly low-income families, with more options to select the learning environment that best fits their child.

HB 2468 allows Kansas to participate in a new federal tax credit for donations to scholarship granting organizations while also strengthening the state’s existing Low Income Students Scholarship Program. Together, these changes increase the pool of private dollars available for student scholarships without diverting funds from public schools. The bill leverages private investment to expand opportunities and gives families greater flexibility to make decisions in the best interest of their children.

For many families, especially those with limited financial means, educational options can feel constrained by zip code, school capacity, or a lack of specialized support. Scholarship programs supported by HB 2468 help address these barriers by giving parents additional tools to choose schools that align with their child’s academic, social, or developmental needs. This bill recognizes that families are best positioned to understand what environment will help their children succeed.

Aligned believes that expanding high quality options for students is not an either or proposition. Supporting parental choice and strengthening public education can and should happen together. HB 2468 reflects that balance by empowering families, encouraging private investment in education, and prioritizing student opportunities.

For these reasons, **Aligned respectfully urges the Committee to support House Bill 2468.**

Thank you,

Claudia Fury-Aguirre

**2026 Aligned Board of Directors**

Tyler Nottberg *U.S. Engineering*  
Kate Ferrell Banks *Ferrell Capital*  
Mike Stradinger *Holland 1916*  
Michael Knecht *Advent Health*

Andrea Sellers *GKCCF*  
Kelly Dreyer *MultiStudio*  
Brian Brush *Focus Partners Wealth*

Shelly Buhler  
Hayden Catholic High School  
401 SW Gage Blvd  
Topeka, KS 66606

### **Written Proponent Testimony in Support of HB 2468**

Dear Charwoman Estes and Members of the Kansas House Education Committee,

Chairwoman Estes and members of the Kansas House Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of HB 2468, legislation that raises the cap on the Low-Income Tax Credit Scholarship Program and allows Kansas to participate in the federal tax credit program.

The Low-Income Tax Credit Scholarship Program is an effective tool we have to ensure access, stability, and educational success for low-income families.

At Hayden we focus on the education of the whole person, this program allows families to choose an educational environment that best supports their child's academic and social development. For many families we serve, the scholarship is not a matter of preference—it is the determining factor.

HB 2468 will responsibly expand access by raising the tax credit cap and positioning Kansas to participate in the federal tax credit program. These changes strengthen educational opportunity across public, private, and religious schools and reflect a thoughtful approach to meeting diverse student needs statewide. Opting in would provide more opportunities for Kansas students- regardless of their enrollment location- public, private, religious.

This legislation supports families, respects local leadership, and prioritizes student success. For these reasons, I support HB 2468 and respectfully ask for your support.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,  
Shelly Buhler  
President, Hayden Catholic High School

Nikki Chubb  
Representing Self  
[nikkirchubb@gmail.com](mailto:nikkirchubb@gmail.com)  
785-672-5054

HB 2468 - Expanding student eligibility under the tax credit for low-income students scholarship program, increasing the amount of the tax credit for contributions made pursuant to such program and providing for aggregate tax credit limit increases under certain conditions.

Proponent

January 21, 2026

Dear Chairperson Estes and Members of the Committee,

My name is Nikki, and I am a homeschool mom of five children from Sharon Springs, Kansas. Our community is extremely rural, and families here face very limited educational opportunities. For years, many of us have struggled to find options that truly meet our children's needs.

Because our local district has not been able to provide the level of education our children deserve, my husband and I made the decision to launch a hybrid school using our own personal funds. We did this because we believe deeply in high-quality education and wanted to give families in our area real choices. What began as a small effort has grown rapidly: our homeschool group is overflowing, and our hybrid school has doubled enrollment in just one year. The demand is undeniable.

Families in western Kansas are searching for better educational opportunities, but many simply cannot access them without financial support. That is why I am strongly in favor of expanding tax credits for low-income student scholarships. This bill would make a meaningful, practical difference for rural families who are doing everything they can to provide a better future for their children.

Expanding these scholarships would not only empower parents, but it would also open doors for students who currently have no viable alternatives. In communities like mine, where resources are scarce and families are working hard to create better options, this support would be transformative.

I respectfully urge you to support this bill and help ensure that every Kansas child, regardless of zip code or income, has access to the education they deserve.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Nikki Chubb

Debbie Herrman

8715 Dunraven St.

Lenexa, KS 66227

dherrman@ymail.com

## HB 2468 Low Income Family Assistance Scholarship Act

Proponent – Written Testimony

January 21, 2026

Written PROPONENT testimony in favor of HB 2468. Chairwoman Estes and members of the committee, I am writing in favor of HB 2468, the bill raising the limit on the low income students scholarship program and electing to participate in the federal tax credit program.

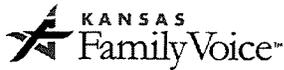
I am writing as a concerned constituent from Lenexa, Kansas that would like to see more educational opportunities for students who have historically faced barriers to choice, particularly working families and students with special needs. The federal tax credit is one of those opportunities and if Kansas chooses not to opt in we will be sending our federal tax dollars to neighboring states that have already indicated they intend to or will opt in. Kansans will possibly fund scholarships for students in Missouri, Colorado, Oklahoma and Nebraska instead of helping kids right here in our own state and that would be unfortunate. This program provides the opportunity for Kansas students- regardless of their enrollment location- public, private, religious - to receive scholarships for a wide range of education expenses including tuition, tutoring, dual-enrollment courses and educational therapies such as occupational, physical, behavioral or speech-language therapy.

In addition, you have the opportunity to expand an existing tax credit program that helps many Kansas students and families choose the educational setting that best meets their needs— whether that is a private or religious school. Families make these choices for many reasons: increased safety, a close-knit community, smaller class sizes, the ability to escape bullying, or other individualized needs. However, families should not be limited in making these decisions simply because of their financial means.

Research indicates that humans make nearly 35,000 decisions each day, yet our current system restricts tax-paying citizens from deciding where their children attend school unless they can afford to do so. I strongly believe in the importance of strong public schools, but I also believe we need a range of educational options that reflect the diverse needs of students and families. When families can choose an environment that aligns with their values and supports their children's learning, students are better positioned to reach their academic potential and communities are better positioned to thrive.

The changes proposed in HB 2468 would allow more students and families to make educational choices that are right for them. Ultimately, this flexibility helps students reach their full potential and strengthens our communities as a whole.

In closing, I ask that you please support HB 2468.



Brittany Jones

Written Only Testimony in Support of H.B. 2468

House Education

January 21, 2026

Chairwoman Estes and members of the committee, my name is Brittany Jones. I am an attorney and the President of Kansas Family Voice. Kansas Family Voice believes Kansas should be a place where life is cherished, religious freedom flourishes, and families thrive. A core part of helping families thrive is ensuring they have the freedom to choose how and where their children are educated. It is for these reasons that we urge your support of H.B. 2468.

H.B. 2468 expands educational flexibility for Kansas families at a time when parents need every available tool to place their children in learning environments that meet their unique needs. The bill strengthens two key programs that do exactly that: the low-income tax credit scholarship program and opting the state into the Educational Choice for Children Act (ECCA).

The low-income tax credit scholarship program has operated in Kansas for more than a decade, providing students with access to quality educational opportunities they otherwise would not have. More than 17 states have similar programs in statute. This year, Kansas reached the program's \$10 million cap—demonstrating both the demand for and the success of this initiative. Countless children across our state have benefited from these scholarships, and expanding this program ensures more families can access the options they need.

The ECCA is a federal initiative that allows individuals to claim a dollar-for-dollar federal tax credit for donating to approved Scholarship Granting Organizations. Individuals can claim a tax credit up to \$1700 per year. These contributions directly fund scholarships for students who meet the program's requirements, increasing the number of families who can choose the educational setting that best supports their child.

What makes the ECCA especially valuable is that it leverages private dollars to meet needs. Rather than creating a new government program or expanding bureaucracy, it mobilizes community generosity to help students access schools that align with their learning needs, values, and aspirations. It also creates a stable, predictable funding stream for scholarship organizations, allowing them to plan ahead, serve more families, and respond quickly to changing educational demands. For Kansas families—the ECCA represents a practical, cost-effective way to open doors that would otherwise remain closed.

Educational freedom rests on a simple principle: parents should be able to send their children to the school where they will thrive. This is a child-centered, family-centered model. It is not about elevating one type of schooling over another; it is about empowering families to make the best decision for their children.

Parents are best positioned to know and raise their children, and educational institutions should serve as partners in that responsibility. Protecting the fundamental

relationship between parent and child is essential to the stability and flourishing of our communities. Both programs strengthened by H.B. 2468 offer straightforward, effective ways to support families in that role. For these reasons, I ask that you vote H.B. 2468 out favorably.

Thank you!

AJ Khule  
ACE Scholarships  
635 SW Clay St. Topeka, KS 66606  
[akhule@acescholarships.org](mailto:akhule@acescholarships.org)

HB 2468 - Electing to participate in the federal tax credit for individual contributions to scholarship granting organizations and increasing the aggregate tax credit limit on the tax credit for low income students scholarship program.

Proponent – Written Only  
January 21, 2026

My name is AJ Kuhle, and I am the President of ACE Scholarships Kansas & Missouri. Since 2016, ACE has provided K–12 private school scholarships to low-income Kansas students, helping families access educational opportunities that best meet their children’s needs. At ACE, we believe that *changing education changes everything*.

ACE is dedicated to ensuring that every child—regardless of financial circumstances—has access to a quality education. We believe families deserve the freedom to choose the learning environment that works best for their children, whether public, private, charter, or homeschool.

In 2025, ACE awarded more than 14,000 scholarships nationwide to students attending approximately 1,100 partner schools across 12 states. In Kansas alone, ACE awarded 385 scholarships through the low-income students scholarship program, partnering with 92 schools across the state.

ACE supports HB 2468, which addresses the rapidly growing demand for the scholarship program by increasing the tax credit cap and establishing an automatic escalator. Demand has risen sharply, our applications have nearly tripled in just three years, and the current cap has already been reached. Without an increase, many eligible Kansas students will continue to be turned away despite strong donor interest and demonstrated need.

The proposed escalator is critical to the program’s long-term success. It allows the program to grow responsibly alongside demand, provides greater certainty for families and schools, and ensures that scholarships can reach more Kansas students statewide in future years without the need for repeated legislative action.

ACE is also encouraged by ongoing conversations at the federal level to strengthen tax incentives for charitable giving to scholarship organizations. Federal alignment would further support state programs by leveraging private contributions to expand educational opportunity for low-income families while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

Beyond the data, this program changes lives. For many Kansas families, access to a scholarship determines whether a child can attend a school where they are safe, supported, and able to thrive. We respectfully urge the committee to support HB 2468 and continue advancing educational opportunity for Kansas students.

Thank you for your consideration.



January 21, 2026

House Committee on Education

Chairwoman Estes and Members of the Committee,

yes. every kid. believes families should be empowered to customize an education that best matches their child's unique talents, interests, and priorities—regardless of income or ZIP code. As a Kansas parent myself, I see firsthand how important it is for families to have the flexibility to choose what works best for their children. That is why we support HB 2468.

HB 2468 allows Kansas families to benefit from the Educational Choice for Children Act (ECCA), which was recently enacted into federal law. ECCA establishes a new dollar-for-dollar federal tax credit of up to \$1,700 for individuals who donate to scholarship-granting organizations (SGOs). These SGOs then distribute scholarships to students in participating states, which can be used for school tuition, educational technology, tutoring and special needs services, dual enrollment, transportation, and more.

Opting into ECCA allows scholarship dollars to remain in Kansas, ensuring they benefit Kansas students and families rather than flowing to other states that choose to participate.

This legislation also includes a necessary increase in the cap on the state's tax credit scholarship program. In 2025, Kansas reached its \$10 million cap, preventing additional private donations from being used to fund student scholarships. Raising the cap does not increase state spending; it simply allows more private dollars to flow to eligible students who need access to educational options. Without an increase, students are left on waiting lists, and willing donors are turned away, limiting the program's ability to serve Kansas families most in need.

HB 2468 helps more Kansas students access an education that works for them and empowers families to make decisions about their children's education. For these reasons, we respectfully ask for your support of HB 2468.

Shannon Pahls  
public affairs director  
yes. every kid.



## Catholic Education Partners

The National Catholic Voice for Education Choice

January 19, 2026

Shawn M. Peterson  
President

Catholic Education Partners

[speterson@catholicpartners.org](mailto:speterson@catholicpartners.org)

HB 2468/Opt-in to the federal FSTC program and increase the tax credit cap for the  
Kansas education choice program

Proponent

Written Only

Hearing Date: January 21, 2026

Chairwoman Estes and Members of the House Education Committee:

I am writing today to ask for your support of House Bill 2468. Before I begin, I wish to thank you all for your public service and your commitment to ensuring that each student in your state has access to a good quality education.

This session you will have the opportunity to enact legislation that would greatly expand educational options for the children of Kansas by advancing HB 2468. This legislation will create greater access to charitable funds, both through the new federal tax credit program and the expansion of your own state program, for those children that need it most and provide them with the opportunity to thrive in the setting that best fits their individual educational needs.

In addition to financial benefits, these programs affirm the vital role parents play in their children's lives by giving them meaningful choices in where and how their children are educated. The Catholic Church, along with many other Christian and non-Christian faith traditions, teaches that parents are the first educators of their children and have a sacred responsibility and right to ensure the proper upbringing and education of those children.

In Pope Saint Paul VI's "Declaration on Christian Education," he states:

"Parents who have the primary and inalienable right and duty to educate their children must enjoy true liberty in their choice of schools. Consequently, the public power, which has the obligation to protect and defend the rights of citizens, must see to it, in its concern for distributive justice, that public subsidies are paid out in such a way that parents are truly free to choose according to their conscience the schools they want for their children."

Parental choice in education is so important because no one knows a child better than his or her parents. No one else should be able to judge better on a daily basis if their child is learning. No one should know better what their child is going through at school or if their education needs — no matter what they are — are being met.

A parent must have the ability to say, "This school isn't the best fit for my child, and I need to make a different choice." But if no other options exist, largely due to a family's economic situation, it doesn't matter what the parent knows or thinks; they are rendered powerless. And no parent should feel that way when it comes to their child's future.

For too many in our country — especially those who live in minority communities, disadvantaged neighborhoods or many rural communities, and for families who are struggling economically — there is only one option.

By opting in to the federal program, and at the same time increasing the cap on your own state program, you will be making it possible for citizens of your state to receive a tax benefit when they donate their private funds to scholarship organizations to help tens of thousands of children in Kansas have more educational options. Additionally, supporting these two programs in no way harms or redirects funding from other educational institutions, it simply allows more families options. In fact, under the federal program, a scholarship organization could be created to raise additional funds for the local school district. A rising tide that could lift all boats.

By not opting in to the federal FSTC, you risk sending many millions of charitable dollars out of your state to be used to educate children in other states (that do opt in) and that seems like an odd position to take.

By doubling your state credit cap to \$20 million, you will make more giving possible and therefore more funds potentially available. Through this increase you will show your support for a funding mechanism that empowers families and shifts the focus of the debate to the benefit of each individual child, rather than favoring one model or system. What's best for each child should always be the foremost concern for all of us, including parents, educators, advocates and lawmakers.

I pray that by advancing HB 2468 you will give more Kansans opportunities to access an education that is best for them and a better chance to achieve their full potential as sons and daughters of God.

Thank you again for your public service and for all you do to serve the Common Good. I am also grateful for the opportunity to submit this written testimony as well.

Respectfully,

Shawn M. Peterson  
President  
Catholic Education Partners

James Sandstrom  
Hayden Catholic High School  
401 SW Gage Blvd.  
Topeka, KS 66606  
[sandstromj@haydencatholic.net](mailto:sandstromj@haydencatholic.net)  
785-272-5210 ext. 106

Written Proponent Testimony in Support of HB 2468

Chairwoman Estes and members of the Kansas House Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of **HB 2468**, the bill that raises the cap on the Low-Income Tax Credit Scholarship Program and opts Kansas into the federal tax credit program.

I am blessed to serve as the principal of Hayden Catholic High School. Each day, I have the privilege of working with students and families whose lives have been directly impacted by the Low-Income Tax Credit Scholarship Program.

For many of our families, this scholarship is not about preference—it is about access. It allows students to attend a school where they feel safe, supported, and known. I have seen firsthand the academic growth, improved confidence, and renewed sense of hope that occur when a student is placed in an environment that aligns with their needs and their family's values.

Beyond academics, these students benefit from strong community, positive mental health support, and a school culture that fosters responsibility, character, and purpose. Families regularly share that without this scholarship, their child would not have access to the stability and opportunity they experience today.

The changes proposed in **HB 2468** will allow more students like those I serve to benefit from educational options that help them thrive. Expanding the tax credit cap will increase access for low-income families, while opting Kansas into the federal tax credit program will support students across public, private, and religious schools throughout our state.

This legislation strengthens education by meeting students where they are and helping them reach their full potential. It is a thoughtful, student-centered approach that benefits families, schools, and communities across Kansas.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to Kansas students.

Respectfully,

James Sandstrom  
Principal, Hayden Catholic High School  
Topeka, KS



**HB 2468 Proponent Testimony**  
**House Committee on Education**  
**Educational access regarding Federal Tax Credit**  
**Tanner Tempel- Deputy State Director, Americans for Prosperity**  
**January 19, 2026**

Madame Chair and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 2468. A bill that strengthens educational opportunities for Kansas students by expanding access to scholarship-granting organizations and aligning our policies with new federal tax credit opportunities.

**Expanding Educational Opportunity Through Private Giving**

HB 2468 allows Kansas to opt into the new federal tax credit for individual contributions to scholarship granting organizations. Encourages more private giving to the nonprofit entities already helping low-income students access better-fit schools. This legislation:

- Leverages a newly created federal tax credit, already enacted by Congress, without increasing state taxes or creating a new state program.
- Strengthens organizations that have a proven record of connecting students from struggling families with learning environments where they can thrive.

By choosing to participate, Kansas can maximize charitable support for the students who need it most without requiring any additional state spending.

**Increasing the Tax Credit Cap Helps More Families**

HB 2468 increases the statewide cap on the Low-Income Students Scholarship credit from \$10 million to \$20 million, with the possibility of increasing to \$30 million if at least 75% of the cap is used. This is a smart, data-driven structure; it avoids unnecessary growth by raising the cap only when demand demonstrates real need.

- It ensures Kansas families are not turned away from scholarship opportunities simply because the program reached an arbitrary ceiling.
- It allows scholarship-granting organizations to plan and expand services responsibly.

The Low-Income Students Scholarship Program has now reached its \$10 million statewide cap, signaling strong demand from Kansas families. As a result, estimates from one AGO indicated that around 1,100 eligible students were turned away solely because the cap was met, and no more credits were available. HB 2468 is needed to ensure families are not denied opportunities due to an artificial funding limit.



### **Leveraging Private Resources to Support Public Good**

The scholarship program does not defund public schools because it relies on voluntary private contributions rather than appropriations, and scholarships are awarded independently of public-school funding formulas. Rather, it:

- Brings new private dollars into Kansas education.
- Helps families access school options they could not otherwise afford.
- Reduces pressure on public systems by giving every child a path to the environment that works best for them.

Every Kansas child deserves an education that unlocks their potential, not one determined solely by their ZIP code or family income. Scholarship programs are one of the strongest tools we have to make that a reality.

### **Providing Predictability and Transparency**

HB 2468 also requires state reporting to the U.S. Treasury and allows scholarship-granting organizations to work with the state to allocate credits.

- Improves transparency.
- Ensures compliance with federal law, and
- Supports better administration of the program.

This is responsible for policymaking that strengthens public trust.

### **Conclusion**

Kansas has long valued local control, parental responsibility, and community-based solutions. HB 2468 reflects those values by empowering families and local organizations rather than expanding bureaucracy.

For these reasons, Americans for Prosperity–Kansas strongly supports HB 2468, and we urge the committee to advance this bill.

Thank you,

Deputy State Director

Americans for Prosperity Kansas

Matthew Vettel  
Support for Catholic Schools, Inc  
424 N Broadway  
Wichita, KS 67202  
[vettelm@catholicdioceseofwichita.org](mailto:vettelm@catholicdioceseofwichita.org)  
(316)269-3900

HB 2468 Low Income Family Assistance Scholarship Act  
Proponent – Written  
January 21, 2026

Thank you, chairwoman and committee. My name is Matthew Vettel, and I represent Support for Catholic Schools, Inc, a Scholarship Granting Organization based in Wichita, Kansas.

Support for Catholic Schools offers scholarships to 1,212 students who attend Catholic schools in the Diocese of Wichita. The majority of students receiving our scholarships reside in urban or rural communities throughout southeastern Kansas.

These children's families normally cannot afford the cost of private school and we are extremely grateful for the state of Kansas offering the current 75% tax credit for donations to Support for Catholic Schools and other Scholarship Granting Organizations!

The Catholic schools in the Diocese of Wichita have a long history of welcoming students whose families cannot afford private school tuition. For the 2024-2025 school year, more than 26% of students in diocesan schools qualified for the Free and Reduced Lunch Program.

Throughout the country, private schools are closing. Our urban and rural communities are hit the hardest because these communities have unique financial challenges.

That said, there are private donors who are willing to support these students and their families so these students have access to educational choice.

The Kansas tax credit amplifies generosity of private donor dollars to support students whose family desires this option for their child's education, but have a difficult time covering the cost of education!

The bill you are considering today has two important features that I encourage you to enact.

First, thank you for considering an increase of the credit limit on Kansas tax credits for this program from \$10.0M to \$20.0M with an escalation clause.

The state of Kansas exhausted the \$10.0M in tax credits associated with this program on Friday, December 19 around 12:30pm. Following credits being fully exhausted, Support for Catholic Schools

was contacted by donors willing to contribute over \$600,000 to scholarships but chose not to due to the lack of Kansas tax credit.

I know Support for Catholic Schools was not alone and that other Scholarship Granting Organizations also had donors who would have generously supported their scholarship program if they would have had access to additional tax credits.

Please consider the impact of \$450,000 (75% of \$600,000) on the Kansas state budget compared to the impact of \$600,000 on the educational future of the 1,212 students who rely on scholarships from Support for Catholic Schools. The increased credit limit with an escalator clause minimizes the chances of this scenario in the future.

Second, thank you also for considering legislation that would allow Kansas children to be eligible for scholarship associated with the Federal Tax Credit Scholarship program.

The Federal Tax Credit Scholarship program has an opportunity to give working families access to educational options that meet their children's needs and gives donors an incentive, that costs the state of Kansas nothing, to directly support the public and private education of Kansas children.

Whether the state of Kansas opts-in to this program or not, every federal taxpayer who resides in the state of Kansas will have access to \$1,700 in federal tax credits. If Kansas does not opt-in to this funding and not allow Kansan donors to support Kansan children, dollars will leave the state of Kansas and support children in other states.

It would be disappointing if keeping this funding local was not an option in Kansas.

Thank you again for considering the Low Income Family Assistance Scholarship Act. These two features of the bill have the opportunity to greatly support families who care deeply about their child's education, but, due to their financial circumstance, do not have the resources to access valuable options for their child.

Thank you for your consideration in supporting HB 2468.

Matthew Vettel  
Support for Catholic Schools, Inc

SEEKING  
JUSTICE IN  
PUBLIC POLICY

# KANSAS CATHOLIC CONFERENCE



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Most Reverend  
Shawn McKnight, S.T.D.  
Archdiocese of Kansas  
City in Kansas  
Board Chairman

Most Reverend  
John B. Brungardt, D.D.  
Diocese of Dodge City

Most Reverend  
Carl A. Kemme, D.D.  
Diocese of Wichita

Most Reverend  
Gerald L. Vincke, S.T.L.  
Diocese of Salina

Mr. Chuck Weber  
Executive Director

Chuck@KansasCatholic.org  
www.KansasCatholic.org  
Phone: 785-227-9247  
Cell: 316-708-5350

KANSAS STATEHOUSE OFFICE  
Kansas Catholic Conference  
204 SW 8<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Topeka, KS 66603

**WRITTEN ONLY PROPONENT testimony in favor of HB 2468 Electing to participate in the federal tax credit for individual contributions to scholarship granting organizations and increasing the aggregate tax credit limit on the tax credit for low-income students' scholarship program.**

**TO:** Madam Chair Rep. Estes and members of the House Education Committee

**FROM:** Chuck Weber, Executive Director, Kansas Catholic Conference

**DATE:** January 19, 2026

Dear Chair Estes and committee members,

My name is Chuck Weber, and I serve as the executive director of the Kansas Catholic Conference, where I represent the Catholic Bishops of Kansas in the public policy arena.

Thank you for allowing me to share our support for HB 2468. This legislation has two main elements. 1) The "opt in" for the federal Educational Choice for Children Act (ECCA), and 2) strengthening the current Kansas low-income tax credit scholarship program that has helped parents and their children for more than ten years.

If HB 2468 becomes law, it will be a significant step forward in the educational opportunities that can be made available for students from both PUBLIC and non-public schools. This is especially exciting for the Catholic community as an estimated 75%-80% of Catholic children attend public schools.

**No matter what happens to this legislation, Kansas taxpayers will be able to take advantage of it. Will Kansas students benefit as well?**

Regarding the first element of HB 2468, the "opt in" on the ECCA, here's how it will work, assuming this bill becomes law. The taxpayer first donates up to \$1700 to a recognized Scholarship Granting Organization (SGO), including a PUBLIC SCHOOL SGO. The taxpayer is then given a 100% tax credit—dollar-for-dollar—off their federal income tax liability.

The SGO can then award scholarships to qualified families (households at or below 300% of their area's gross median income), including students in public and non-public schools to cover services like tutoring, dual-enrollment courses, and educational therapies to support students with disabilities like occupational, physical behavioral or speech language therapy. Scholarships

can also be used for assistive technology like specialized equipment and software to support learning or even specialized instruction.

**Please let me be clear—the Catholic Church in Kansas has long supported strong public schools, including fully-funded public schools.** We do not bring an “us vs. them” mentality to this discussion. It is our desire and hope that the best educational environment and resources be made available to every child, no matter where a parent decides that happen.

The second element of HB 2468 would focus on a provision to raise the current aggregate cap on donations to the current low-income tax credit scholarship program in Kansas from \$10 million annually to \$20 million. The \$10 million level has not changed since the inception of the program in 2015. **This is the same program that was strengthened in 2023, thanks to legislation signed into law by Governor Laura Kelly.**

Unlike the ECCA (federal) scholarship program, donations to SGO’s only receive a 75% tax credit. The bar for qualifying for a scholarship under this program is more restrictive, 250% of the federal poverty level. That is the same level of eligibility for someone seeking assistance from the federal government through the Affordable Care Act. Please refer to the bill language for more details on that part of the bill.

The Catholic Church has long held that parents are the first and best educators of their children. This does not mean parents must personally educate their child, but it does mean they should be afforded as many options and pathways as possible toward that end. HB 2468 does that for virtually all Kansas children, those in public schools or non-public schools.

Today’s children are coming of age in a diverse and dynamic era. They deserve an equally diverse and dynamic educational setting now to give them the best chance of success. This legislation is a vibrant step forward in providing additional educational resources for students from all families in Kansas, those attending public or non-public schools.

Please support HB 2468 and help make that happen.



Chuck Weber  
Executive Director  
Kansas Catholic Conference  
[Chuck@KansasCatholicConference.org](mailto:Chuck@KansasCatholicConference.org)