

Proponent Testimony for SB87

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Chair Erikson and members of the committee I thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on Senate bill 87 on behalf of Maranatha Christian Academy.

Hello, my name is Scott Feild and I am an 8th grade student at Maranatha Christian Academy. Last year, me and my family noticed that public school was quickly growing away from our vision of how my education could expand. We started making connections that my problems academically, sprouted from carelessness and our views not matching with the schools. Then, I found that public school was not my only option. God blessed my parents with the necessary funds needed to afford going to Maranatha, but some and most families are not that fortunate. Once I began attending Maranatha, I noticed that this school fitted my needs like a glove. Though it can never be perfect, my education path drastically changed once I found a school that provided what I needed. I'm here today to say that I'm worried for the future generations of children that possibly can't find a school because their family isn't fortunate. However, I'm also here today to say that I have hope that one day, all Kansans can go to any school that they deem fit for them.

For example, why would someone with less-than-adequate grades aim for a school like Harvard? Or why would an engineer, someone whose skills are deeply rooted in logic and practicality, go to an art school? On the surface, it might seem like a mismatch, even contradictory. But that's the beauty of the idea that education isn't a one-size-fits-all solution. Schools, in their traditional sense, are often constructed around rigid standards and a set of expectations that don't always cater to the unique abilities and learning styles of every student.

The truth is schools are a crucial part of shaping every child's life. They provide structure, community, and opportunities, but if the school doesn't fit the child, if it doesn't align with their learning style, their passions, or their potential, then it becomes a struggle—not just for the child, but for the entire family. The misalignment between a child's needs and the school's offerings can lead to frustration, underachievement, and even a lack of self-belief. And yet, this mismatch happens every day.

So, why would anyone try to fit into a mold that doesn't work for them? That's where the dream of an ideal educational system comes in—a system where any Kansan, no matter their background or financial situation, has the freedom to attend the school that best suits their child's needs. A system where parents can look at their options and make decisions based on what will truly benefit their child, not based on the financial barriers that stand in the way.

I hope one day, we'll live in a world where education is not about squeezing every child into the same mold but about embracing their differences, nurturing their diverse talents, and opening doors to opportunities based on what they need, not what they can afford. Every child should have the chance to reach their fullest potential, and they should have the ability to pursue an education that's tailor-made for who they are.

Parents, not the government or the number on your bank statements are the ones who should decide where their child goes to school and invests so much time in. With the much-needed scholarship money for these families, every Kansas child can attend where they see as the best fit for them.