

February 6, 2023
Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Anya Arnold

TITLE: Parent

EMAIL ADDRESS: anya.e.arnold@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

I am a parent of three elementary students in the Shawnee Mission School District. I value our public schools, the community, and the educators that work with our students each and every day. I value the public school system because it serves EVERY student. Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children. Instead of funding private and home schools, the legislature should focus on fully funding special education.

I am urging you to oppose or vote no on bill HB2218

Thank you for your consideration.

Anya Arnold

Parent

Shawnee Mission School District

February 6, 2023
Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Amy Bagnall
TITLE: Parent, citizen of Kansas, taxpayer
EMAIL ADDRESS: amybagnall1@gmail.com
BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts
PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent
WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

I am a parent in the Shawnee Mission school district. Public schools are valuable for a variety of reasons. I'm disappointed you want to use public tax dollars to support private education for anyone. The oversight of these institutions is vague to non-existent; their curriculum is suspect. In addition:

- Instead of funding private and home schools, the legislature should focus on fully funding special education
- Education Savings Accounts aren't available to rural students who have little to no options besides public schools. Rural communities will be subsidizing private schools for students in metro areas. Loss of funding could cause school consolidations and will have big impacts on community life.
- Private schools that can choose which children they want to serve should not receive our public dollars

My child attends a private school in Missouri, but I am more than happy to support the Kansas PUBLIC school system with my tax dollars. Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children.

Please vote NO on bill HB 2218.

Thank you for reading and considering my concerns.

Amy Bagnall
Prairie Village, KS

Mr. Belknap,

I would like to submit testimony for the hearing of HB 2218.

As a resident of Kansas and a public school teacher I am VEHEMENTLY against school vouchers and anything that takes money away from public education. I have been a teacher for 20 years, and have watched and experienced the dismantling of public education for the entirety of my career. When I began teaching in 2003, we were in the throes of "No Child Left Behind." The sad part was that it actually DID leave children behind by forcing teachers to teach to a test, disregarding the fact that learning is never linear, nor on a fixed time line.

Our students experienced constant testing, and teachers were working in fear of losing funding for our schools of students didn't "perform" on the one test. We all knew, and still know, that one test can NEVER give us the entire picture of someone's learning.

Now, I have watched my home state of Missouri fiercely dismantle their public school systems and I am watching it happen here. When I moved to Kansas, we were experiencing the horrors of Brownback's agenda and illegal school funding that sucked funds from public schools. We have not recovered from that.

Every day, I come to work and fight for my students. I want to teach my kids. I want to help them learn. But, the strain of worrying about whether I have a job next year, whether I have resources to use, whether my students are getting ALL of the support they need to be successful weighs on my heart every single day.

Currently, in my district, Lawrence Public Schools, we have nearly 50 para positions open at any given time. That is 50 people we literally NEED to provide required services for children. The pay for these jobs is disgustingly low. The job is physically and emotionally demanding and DESERVES appropriate pay. Our children have the RIGHT to a free and public education, and we cannot give it to them. M

HB 2218 takes public funds and gives them to private schools. Private schools are not required to accept ALL students, are not held accountable to the same educational standards, nor are they required to hire qualified teachers with certifications and training.

Additionally, defunding public education will hurt our students living in rural communities where there is no school other than the public schools for miles and miles. Accessibility to alternatives would be a necessary part to make vouchers a successful program. Instead, what vouchers will do is take more money from public schools, and put it in the hands of people that are already utilizing private schools and take away money for students that do not have access to them.

I strongly urge my representatives to vote against the use of vouchers in the state of Kansas and instead, fully fund our public schools--provide money for us to pay teachers, pay support staff, have resources, and training. That is what we need. And, if you take the time to talk to teachers, you will know this is true.

Sincerely,

Amanda Benavidez-Williams

resident and teacher in Lawrence, KS

Name: Alex Welch Blattner

Title: Constituent in Shawnee, KS

Email: alexwelchblattner@gmail.com

Bill Number: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

Proponent, Opponent, or Neutral: Opponent

Oral or Written Only Testimony: Written

Dear Chair & members of the committee, I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

I was born and raised in Johnson County and have received my entire education—from kindergarten through my MBA—from public schools. During my time in the Olathe School District, I received special education services that helped me expand my learning opportunities when my normal classes were not challenging enough. I deeply valued these services and looking back, I am glad I was in a public school that offered them.

Private schools lack the oversight of public schools and are not required to offer special education services. This means students with learning disabilities can be excluded from a private school just because of their disability. I do not want my tax money being taken away from public schools that serve everyone and sent to private schools that can exclude disabled students. I pay taxes to support all children, not just the ones that private schools deem worthy.

For this reason, I ask that you vote no on HB2218. Thank you for your consideration.

Alex Welch Blattner

Resident, Shawnee, KS

Name: Allison Briley
Parent - Olathe School District
email - briley.allie@gmail.com
Bill Number - HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts
Opponent
Written Only Testimony

Dear Chair and members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. I grew up on the Missouri side of Kansas City and went to private schools because of the poorly performing and unsafe public schools to which I would've been assigned. After having children, my husband and I moved to Lenexa so that we could raise our children in one of the best school districts in the state and send them to safe, high performing, diverse schools without adding the cost of private schools into our family budget.

Public funds need to be used for public schools, the parents who choose to send their children to private or parochial schools understand that there is a cost associated with that choice and are prepared to pay it.

If every school district in the State of Kansas was fortunate enough to to have ongoing budget windfalls instead of having to make cuts year after year then perhaps this wouldn't be an issue but I want to continue to be proud of my city and my schools even after my sons graduate and the only way to do that is to ensure that they're fully funded, not having money diverted to the schools who can raise tuition and have fundraisers as needed.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Allison Briley
Parent - Olathe School District
Lenexa KS

February 6, 2023
Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Dr. Amanda Bruce, PhD

TITLE: Parent, Clinical psychologist, and Kansas Citizen

EMAIL ADDRESS: amandasbruce@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written testimony

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to express my firm opposition to bill HB2218.

As a native Kansas, and a very proud product of public school system (USD 383; Manhattan High School), It is critical that we maintain and in fact increase funding for the public school system. This is imperative if we hope to maintain the high standards of the State of Kansas' educational system. I was more than prepared for college at the University of Kansas when I entered after graduating from the public schools. I was also ready for graduate school, earning my PhD in clinical psychology at the Pennsylvania State University. I returned to Kansas and am now raising my three daughters. They attend the Shawnee Mission School District and we have been quite impressed with the caliber of educational opportunities they are receiving. Please do not limit the public schools system in any way -- like with Sunflower Education Savings accounts. On the surface, they may sound appealing. But all it does is serve to decrease important, necessary, vital funding for the public school system. Thank you for considering this input.

Vote NO on HB 2218.

Thank you for your thoughtfulness,
Amanda S. Bruce

Parent, Psychologist, Kansas Citizen

HB 2218
OPPONENT testimony
Written Only

February 6, 2023
Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Alice J. Capson
TITLE: retired teacher Shawnee Mission School District (and others)
EMAIL ADDRESS: capsonks@aol.com
BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts
OPPONENT
WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY

Chair and members of the committee:

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218
As a retired public school teacher and a strong believer in the role of public education for a strong democracy, I oppose this bill for many reasons. Taxpayer funds should NOT be diverted from our public schools to private schools and home schools. Private schools do not have the same accountability standards as public schools. The public schools accept all students while private schools (which often have a religious component) can choose their students. Additionally, this is unfair to Kansas taxpayers and would create a two-tier education system that may benefit some students while hurting the majority of students.

This bill is a ploy to divert funds that are needed to support Kansas schools to home schools, private schools. We need a bill to fully fund special education students, and to keep the excellence in our PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The legislature should be supporting our public schools, not trying to undermine them!
OPPOSE HB2218!

Sincerely,
Alice J. Capson
Retired teacher, Shawnee Mission West HS
11412 W 105th St, Overland Park, KS
capsonks@aol.com

Sent to garret.belknap@house.ks.gov

Feb 2, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

Dear Chair and members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my **opposition to bill HB2218**. Do not divert public tax dollars to private schools. Quality public schools protect our home values. Private schools can pick and choose who they admit. Public tax dollars shouldn't go to schools that can deny Kansas students.

Allison Cargnel, MD

Mother, Physician, Citizen of the Great State of Kansas

Overland Park, KS 66207

Allison.lisle@hcamidwest.com

Opponent to HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Amy Carter

TITLE: Parent, Olathe School District

EMAIL ADDRESS: carteam17@yahoo.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

As a parent in the Olathe School District, I urge you to vote no on bill HB2218. Our public tax dollars should stay with our public schools that serve all children, regardless of need. Kansas has long been known for our award-winning public schools across the state and diverting public funds away from our schools will be detrimental to our students and schools. As I'm sure you're aware, families often move across the state line to Kansas just to have access to and attend our public schools. I do not think our public tax dollars should subsidize well-off families who choose to send their children to private or religious institutions with limited oversight. Our nation's greatness is built on free public schools that serve ALL students.

Instead of the Sunflower Education Savings Accounts, please stay focused on our public schools that educate 90% of Kansas kids. Our tax dollars should be used to fully fund special education.

Please vote NO on Bill HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration.

Amy Carter

Concerned Parent

Overland Park, KS

February 2, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

Anna Clark

Parent, and Parent Educator in Shawnee Mission School District

aclark320@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY:

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. Public schools make Kansas a great state to raise our children. We need to keep our public schools strong in order to gain and maintain trust from parents that they are in good hands.

Children with special needs can best be served with specialized, educated staff at our public schools. If we take away funding from our public schools, we are taking away funds from our families who are happy, and trusting to stay with the public schools. You would be abandoning the majority to benefit a few from charter schooling. Private schools can choose who receives services. Public schools have standards in which to stay accountable. Please consider how many students this bill truly affects. Please vote NO on HB2218, and vow to make a better bill for Special Education in the near future.

Thank you for your consideration.

Anna Clark, Leawood

February 2, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

Analisa Cox, esq.

acox@rousepc.com

HB2218 Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

Opponent

Written Only Testimony

Dear Chair & members of the Committee,

I am writing to encourage you to vote no on Bill HB2218.

I attended Blue Valley public schools from elementary through high school, receiving instruction from devoted teachers, participating in character developing extracurricular activities. I oppose HB2218 because it diverts desperately needed public tax dollars from our public schools. Choosing to enroll your children in private school is a luxury, not a right, and certainly not a luxury taxpayers should be funding. We are blessed in Kansas to have excellent public schools, but their funding is already precarious. We are still recovering from the ill-advised Brownback era. I strongly encourage you to consider whether the result of this Bill would be an appropriate use of taxpayer dollars, and vote NO on HB2218.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



Analisa Cox, esq.

Mission Hills, KS

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Amber Dent

TITLE: Proud Parent

EMAIL ADDRESS: babylemonadeblog@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY

Dear Chair & members of the committee:

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

I am a mother to wonderful and bright little girls that currently attend our public school system. Sending my children to a private school is out of the question. My oldest child relies on services put into place by her IEP that a private school cannot accommodate. **Public** tax dollars should be used for the **public** good and we should not be funneling **public** tax dollars away from **public** schools when we're facing much larger issues. There is a \$160 million shortfall in funding for special education. Every single child deserves the right to have a quality education. We should be fully funding special education, not private schools.

I implore you to vote NO on bill HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration.

Amber Dent

Proud Parent

Bonner Springs, KS

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Allie Free

TITLE: Kansas City, Kansas citizen, public school teacher

EMAIL ADDRESS: anfree13@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written only

Dear Chair & members of the committee, I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

Public schools are enormously popular public goods. The vast majority of all parents in Kansas entrust their students' education to our public schools. Our schools are full of certified, professional educators, hardworking and vital support staff, and the equipment and technology needed to support our kids. That takes money. Keep the money there and do not divert it to niche education settings. Defunding our public schools will worsen the quality of education for hundreds of thousands of students. Keeping the money in public schools will support an enormously popular pillar of our great state.

Please vote no on this bill.

Allie Free, Kansas City, KS

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Anisa Gluzberg

TITLE: Blue Valley School District Parent

EMAIL ADDRESS: anisa.gluzberg@icloud.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

OPPONENT:

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. I believe that we should not be diverting public tax dollars to private schools at this time. Public schools are economic drivers. Businesses and families look for quality public schools when relocating. I know we did when we recently moved to the Blue Valley area. Please vote no on bill HB2218.

I appreciate your time and consideration. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Anisa Gluzberg

Leawood, KS

February 6, 2023
Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

Amy Hartman
Parent, Blue Valley School District 229
amyhartmantwins@gmail.com
Opponent
Written Testimony

Dear Chair and members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to Bill HB2218.

I am a parent and former Spanish teacher. My twin boys attended Blue Valley schools from Kindergarten through high school, and graduated from Blue Valley Northwest. I witnessed some of the best teaching throughout my sons' schooling. Public school gave my sons the foundation to go on and excel in college.

I oppose HB2218 because tax dollars should remain in public schools that accept and educate all children. There is no stipulation in the bill that requires private schools to accept all children (as public schools do.) The legislature should focus on fully funding special education.

Please think of all children and vote NO on HB 2218.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Amy Hartman (parent and educator)
Overland Park

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Ammar Hawaslii

TITLE: Parent, Leawood Elementary School, Blue Valley School District

EMAIL ADDRESS: Ammar.hawasli@gmail.com.

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

As a parent of children in both public and private schools, I oppose this measure, and ask you to do the same because our public school system currently offers a free and quality education to all students, and our society needs an educated public for our democracy to function well. This is how our public tax dollars should be used — in the greatest interest of all. Our current system gives everyone a chance for a quality education and has produced a number of outstanding Americans, who took advantage of the free and quality education provided by public schools. Without this, American society could become further fractured and divided, and we risk losing some of the most valuable members of our society, because they won't be able to participate fully due to a lack of education. Individuals choosing to route their kids to private institutions for whatever reason may choose to do so in the current system by supplying their own funds. Private school has always been a luxury education in the United States, and should remain so.

Please oppose or vote no on HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration

Dr. Ammar Hawaslii, MD

Parent, Blue Valley School System, Leawood Elementary School

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Amy Hill

TITLE: Blue Valley Parent

EMAIL ADDRESS: amykfrost@yahoo.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written only testimony

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

At least 90% of students in Kansas attend public schools so public funds should be used to fund public schools who are accountable to the parents and community they serve. There is a lack of oversight for private school admissions processes and for their outcomes while public schools are held to standards.

If you divert public funds away from schools, rural communities will suffer as well as students who don't have the resources and knowledge to navigate the private school admission process.

The public school systems in Kansas are well respected and serve as a key attractor for businesses trying to attract candidates to relocate to our state. Our representatives should be focused on funding special education to better support all of our students, not creating programs to fund private schools.

Our teachers have shown up in huge ways over the last three years to support our students. Please support them by supporting our public schools.

Please vote no for HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration.

Amy Hill

Blue Valley Parent

Olathe, KS

February 2, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

Adrienne Joyner, J.D.

ajoyner@rousepc.com

HB2218 Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

Opponent

Written Only Testimony

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

I am a product of Kansas public schools, two parents who taught in Kansas public schools for 40+ years, and a parent of two young children in the Shawnee Mission School District. I oppose HB2218 because it diverts public tax dollars from our **public school** children. Public schools are required to educate *all children* – even “the least of these.” Private schools can choose to admit children at their discretion. Our state is strong because our citizens all had an equal chance at a quality education. I implore you to vote NO on this bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



Adrienne Joyner, J.D.

Overland Park, KS

Amanda Ketterling - Kansas Citizen
ketterlinga@usd204.net
BH 2218 Sunflower Education Equity Act
Opponent
Hearing Date 2/6/2023

My name is Amanda Ketterling and I am a parent and 23 year veteran teacher in USD204. Bonner Springs is a very low income Title One school with a lot of special needs students as well as ESOL students. We are a small suburb of the Kansas City area with 1 preschool, 3 elementary schools, 1 middle school, and 1 highschool. My school, Bonner Springs Elementary, is truly a treasure hidden in the KC area, not because of material things but because of our staff and students. I am writing to express my opposition to HB 2218. Being a public educator is one of the most difficult jobs that a person can choose to do! It is a calling and takes more perseverance than one can imagine. Having been part of the 2022 Kansas Teacher of the Year team, we were given the opportunity to travel around Kansas and visit a great deal of school districts in various economic states, including urban, suburban, and rural. Kansas schools are some of the best schools in the country and Kansas has always been a leader in education. Public schools by definition are open to **ALL** students... which is the way it should be! All students have a right to a quality education. In order to accomplish this expectation, funding needs to be provided to those schools in order to function, not only minimally, but in order to truly thrive. Funding has been at a deficit in education for years and is a constant discussion point in the government as well. We, as public educators, open our doors and hearts to **every** student who comes to us, from whatever situation they have been given. My past principal always stated that parents give us the best kids they have! As a result this means public education includes severe special needs, behavioral needs, social emotional needs, mental health needs, academic needs, language acquisition needs, poverty needs, and much, much more! Private schools do **NOT** accept **ALL** students. They have the "power" to decline or remove students they deem not the norm or problems in their educational environment. There is no equitable comparison between the amount of students and definitely the NEED of those students in the public education system. Therefore why is there a bill trying to make funding equitable for private and public education?

Teaching special education students with IEPs (and even more difficult, those who are not yet identified or have fallen in the cracks) requires more money for staffing, training, and resources to provide the opportunity of success in their education. Majority of these students are in the public education system and the SPED numbers keep increasing while we are experiencing major teacher shortages in these areas at the same time. Meanwhile, the private schools are declining these students' admission altogether or requiring the parents to hire and pay out of pocket for their own paraprofessional to assist the child during school hours. They are **NOT** fully accepting of **ALL** students and only chose the financially stable, academically successful, or athletically gifted students to attend their school systems. The government education funding needs to be going to public education! Private schools have their constituents pay a fee of enrollment and that is solely determined on what they choose to charge. It is like running a business, with clients and owners. That money is not required in public education. Not only do private schools not have to share their funds, legacy donations, or enrollment fees with the public education system, but also those families are getting a benefit as well in comparison to the public school families. They are able to "double dip" by collecting both savings account money and tax scholarship credit. Why are we taking money that is intended to help those less fortunate, and giving it to those who choose to go to the private sector? Unlike public schools who are required by law to report scores, data, and results to KSDE, no one is able to hold private schools or home schools accountable for reporting data, curriculum, etc... because they cannot be forced to share what they are teaching. Kansas needs to be working together to create a positive educational system to address the teacher shortage and exhaustive struggles that we are currently facing across the state. Please put your faith back into the public education system and vote to oppose this bill. Thank you for your consideration.

Amanda Ketterling, Proud Public Educator

February 2, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

Abigail M Kroll, DPT
abigailkroll@gmail.com
HB2218 Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

Opponent

Written Only Testimony

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

I am a parent of three young children in the Shawnee Mission School District. I oppose HB2218 because it diverts public tax dollars from our **public school** children. Public schools are required to educate *all children* – even “the least of these.” Private schools can choose to admit children at their discretion. Our state is strong because our citizens all had an equal chance at a quality education. I implore you to vote NO on this bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Abigail Kroll, DPT
Overland Park, KS

February 6, 2023
Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

Andrew Mall
Parent
andrew@linkrealtykc.com

HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts
OPPONENT
WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. Our public schools are critical to our children, our state and are the backbone of a thriving economy. Not to mention, they are imperative to home values and building strong communities. Our children deserve a fully funded public education. I ask you to vote no on HB2218. Thank you for your consideration.

Andrew Mall
Parent
Shawnee

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Anne Melia

TITLE: Kansas Resident, Parent of two Shawnee Mission School District Graduates, and Graduate of Wichita Public Schools

EMAIL ADDRESS: melia.anne.s@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Testimony Only

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. Public schools are the life blood of our communities. I am a life-long Kansan, a product of Kansas Public Education, as are my husband and our two children. My husband retired from the Blue Valley School District after the 2020-2021 school year after 33 years teaching middle school science. After college, we stayed in Kansas because of its strong commitment to public education. It has been demoralizing to see this commitment decline to the point that we have to fight every legislative session to maintain funding. There are a myriad of reasons why bill HB2218 is bad for our public schools and bad for Kansas:

- Public tax dollars should not be diverted to private schools at a time when legislators should be focused on the **\$160 million shortfall in special education funding**. The state should fully fund special education, not private schools.
- Public tax dollars are for the public good and should not be used to support private entities.
- Public schools are economic drivers. We stayed in Kansas after graduating college for the schools, and know many, many people who moved to Kansas because of the schools, despite having jobs across the state line in Missouri.
- Using public dollars for private schools drains the public schools of needed resources for successful student learning.
- This will hurt rural students and school districts very hard as funding will be funneled to private schools in the metro areas. Students in rural areas have little to no access to private schools.
- Private schools do not have to educate all students and can deny admission based on academic ability, physical ability, religion, sexual orientation, etc. Additionally, private schools are not held to the same accountability standards and are not required to participate in state testing. Public funding should go to our public schools which educate **all students**.
- There are no oversight provisions in Bill HB 2218, and it has no mechanism to evaluate the progress and achievement of students receiving public funds to attend private or home schools.
- Voucher programs do not provide enough money for low income students to attend private schools. Tuition at many private schools is greater than the amount covered by Education Savings Accounts, leaving out those students without the means to make up the difference or who don't have reliable transportation. Meanwhile, funding for their neighborhood school is drained.

- Research continues to show that **private school vouchers do not improve student achievement.**
- Transparency is a major concern! Public schools are accountable and transparent to the parents and community they serve. Private schools do not have the same state mandated requirements for accountability and transparency.

Our tax dollars should be used to educate all Kansas students, and therefore I am asking you to **please vote NO on Bill HB2218.**

Thank you for your consideration.

Anne Melia
7647 Windsor Street
Prairie Village, KS 66208

February 6, 2023
Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

Name: Amy Moore
Title: Parent of public school students
Email: amooredunn@gmail.com
Bill: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Account
Opponent to the HB2218
Written only testimony

Dear Chair and members of the committee,

I am writing to share my opposition to HB2218. I am the parent of three public school students, one of which is served under special education. I believe the Kansas legislature should be focusing on fully funding special education rather than diverting public tax dollars to private schools.

We chose to move to Kansas solely for the public education system. We looked for a house in Kansas because it not only meant a quality education for our children but because of the strong public schools, it meant a quality neighborhood in which to raise our children.

I am asking that you oppose HB2218. We must keep public money in public schools.

Thank you
Amy Moore
Prairie Village

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Adrienne Newlin

TITLE: parent of Blue Valley School District student

EMAIL ADDRESS: adrienne.newlin@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: written only testimony

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

- Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children
- Instead of funding private and home schools, the legislature should focus on fully funding special education
- Education Savings Accounts aren't available to rural students who have little to no options besides private schools. Rural communities will be subsidizing private schools for students in metro areas. Loss of funding could cause school consolidations and will have big impacts on community life.
- Private schools that can choose which children they want to serve should not receive our public dollars

PLEASE - **VOTE NO** on HB2218!

Thank you for keeping education for ALL students a priority.

Adrienne Newlin
Blue Valley parent
Overland Park

February 2, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Ann Norbury

TITLE: Kansas citizen

EMAIL ADDRESS: annknorbury@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY:

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

Public funds should support public schools. Public schools accept ALL students. Public funds should not support schools that exclude students.

Public schools are the centerpiece of a community, especially in rural areas. Many Kansas counties are rural and public schools are an essential part of the community.

Private schools lack accountability. Private schools should be funded by the families that choose that option, not by taxpayers.

I ask you to vote NO on HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration,

Ann Norbury

Shawnee

February 2, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Amanda Palan

TITLE: PTO Vice President, Overland Trail Middle School

EMAIL ADDRESS: 5813 W. 131st Street; Overland Park, KS 66209

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: WRITTEN

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to Bill HB2218.

My children have attended Blue Valley schools for over 10 years. I do, however, have two close friends who send their children to two different local private schools, and both rely on our local Blue Valley public school for special education resources and support.

We should not be diverting public tax dollars to private schools at a time when legislators should be focused on the **\$160 million shortfall in special education funding**. The state should fully fund special education, not private schools.

Private schools can choose which students they accept, whereas public schools educate ALL Kansas students regardless of academic ability, physical ability, religion, sexual orientation, and so on. Private schools are not held to the same accountability standards and are not required to participate in state testing.

Bill HB 2218 lacks oversight and provides no review process to evaluate if students utilizing our taxpayer dollars at private or home schools are achieving. Taxpayer dollars should require the same oversight and transparency as our public schools.

Please oppose Bill HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts, as it will hurt our public schools and our children across the state. It will ultimately hurt our economy, because excellence in public schools is an economic driver since businesses and families look for quality public schools when relocating.

Thank you for your consideration.

Amanda Palan

Overland Trail Middle School PTO VP

Overland Park, KS

February 1, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Anita Parsa

TITLE: Parent of 3 kids who went to private schools

EMAIL ADDRESS: akparsa@me.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only

Dear Chair & members of the committee,
I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

This may seem weird coming from someone who sent all 3 kids to private schools from kindergarten through high school, but please read on.

This is not a "school choice" bill. It doesn't add any more choices. This is a "shift the cost of my choice to send my kids to private schools onto everyone else" bill.

Public schools are not a "pay as you go" system, and Kansas will fail if they become one. We all pay for public schools - people without kids, people whose kids are still babies, people whose kids are grown - because they keep our neighborhoods strong, they bolster our property values, and they create strong potential employees for Kansas companies.

We will decimate Kansas schools if we allow those who opt out of public school to take their money with them. And why should they get to not pay if grandmas and young singles and empty nesters are all paying?

Please vote NO on HB2218. Thank you for your attention.

Anita Parsa

February 6th, 2023
Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

Ashley Rohr
Parent of 1st Grade Student in Kansas
ash.rohr@gmail.com
Bill Number: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Account
Opponent
Written Testimony Only

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

I am writing this testimony to state my opposition of HB2218. I am a parent of a 1st grade student in Kansas. At a time when public school funding is needed, especially in special education, we should not be diverting critical money away from public schools. Teachers in our public schools need more resources, not less, so they can best educate our students.

It is a choice if a parent wants their student to attend a private school. Without proper tracking and accountability, public funds should not be used to fund private schools. Additionally, public funds should not be given to schools who do not accept ALL students.

Please vote no on HB2218.

Thank you.

Ashley Rohr
Overland Park, Kansas

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Alisa Sicheloff

TITLE: Parent, Shawnee Mission School District, Kansas Resident

EMAIL ADDRESS: hbpsab@yahoo.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

This will take funds AWAY from Public Schools, and harm our kids. Most children in our state go to public school for K-12. We need to keep the funding with those kids instead of diverting it to private schools which don't provide an equal opportunity for everyone.

Please vote NO on Bill HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration.

Alisa Sicheloff

Lenexa, Kansas

I'm writing to ask you to oppose bill HB 2218.

I am a parent of a kindergartener and second grader in a Lenexa public elementary school. I value public schools because I believe education should be widely available to our citizens, at no cost. Public education allows our youngest citizens to interact with a larger portion of their local community, where private schools limit diversity to only those able to pay a higher cost for their children's education, limiting our little citizens experiences and ultimately compassion for those who are not as affluent as their parents.

My 2nd grader has an Individual Education Program for his ADHD and could not be accommodated in a private school.

I oppose voucher programs like education savings accounts, because public tax dollars should benefit the most citizens. I do not agree with using tax money to help those who are already wealthy and to not suffer from trouble paying the daily cost of living in our country.

I am asking that asking that our State representatives represent all citizens - not the fewer wealthy citizens, and Vote No on bill HB.

From Allison Warner

Alliehofstetter@gmail.com

Re: HB 2218 - Establishing the Sunflower education equity act to provide education savings accounts for qualified students in Kansas.

Position : Opposed

Hearing date : 2/6/23

Good morning!

I am writing in opposition to HB 2218.

As a parent who moved here from out of state and specifically chose BV for their public education system after watching what vouchers did to our previous schools; I am strongly against this bill.

I have 2 special needs students receiving services. Without these services my kids would not be able to get through school. I watch the absolutely amazing staff work with what they have now, and to take any extra funding away would be a crushing blow to an already overtaxed system.

There is no oversight on the private schools these would fund, and statistically there is no improvement in testing/scores. The only people to benefit from these programs would be families with students not requiring any special services, already attending private schools and receiving an extra tax incentive, and the backers who finance the schools.

Thank you for your time.

Allison Warner

February 1, 2023
Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Anna Wolf

TITLE: Kansas citizen, Parent of Olathe School District student and Kansas School for the Deaf student

EMAIL ADDRESS: anna.e.oconnor@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. Time and time again, we have seen that school vouchers do not work, and only serve to degrade the public school systems in the states where they have been tried. Kansas should not be diverting funds away from our public schools.

I live in the KC metro area. One of the reasons I live in Kansas instead of Missouri is because of the strong public schools. Passing this bill WILL negatively affect these public schools.

I am the mother of a child who receives special education. The Kansas legislature should work to fully fund special education rather than experiment with vouchers.

I ask you to please vote no on HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration.

Anna Wolf



Ron Hobert, President
rhobert@aftks.org
HB 2218
Written Opponent Testimony
House K-12 Budget Committee
2 February 2023

Chairman Williams and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony in opposition to House Bill 2218

My name is Ron Hobert, and I am the president of the American Federation of Teachers – Kansas. I have also worked for over 30 years as an educator, both in public schools at USD 259 in Wichita and in private schools at the Catholic Diocese of Wichita. I am testifying today as both a representative of the thousands of public employees, parents, and Kansans that AFT Kansas serves, and as a dedicated and passionate teacher committed to providing our students with the best education possible. That is why I am testifying in opposition to this bill, HB 2218

Educators, parents, students, lawmakers and Kansans taxpayers all want to give our kids a high-quality, accountable education so our students can thrive and excel to become productive citizens. I also would hope that all of us agree that we should not be wasting state funds—and children and educator’s time on flawed and failed educational program called vouchers. I believe expanding the state’s voucher program would waste tax-payer dollars on a costly program that has not proven to improve academic outcomes for students.

While some would have you believe that vouchers are a salve to the challenges facing our schools, there is ample evidence, from more than a dozen research-based studies, evaluations, and reports of existing voucher programs throughout the country conducted over the last 20 years that show, unequivocally, that vouchers **do not improve** student outcomes. Let me highlight just a few examples:

- Back in 2008, the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago said the best research to date finds relatively small achievement gains for voucher students, most of which are not statistically different from zero.
- A 2016 [study of the Ohio private school program](#), which is targeted to students from low-performing schools or who are economically disadvantaged, conducted by one of the foremost *conservative* think tanks—the Thomas Fordham Institute and funded by the *pro-voucher* Walton Foundation—found voucher

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students have “fared worse academically compared to their closely matched peers attending public schools ... and that such impacts also appear to persist over time.”

- A 2018 [longitudinal study of the Indiana Choice Scholarship Program](#) found that low-income students who switched from public to private school using a voucher starting in the 2011-12 school year experienced *worsening* math achievement throughout their time using the vouchers, compared to students who remained in public school.
- A 2019 [study published in the Russel Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences](#) found significant losses in academic achievement for Indiana students who used a voucher to move from public to private school.
- And a 2019 [study on the Louisiana voucher program](#) found that after four years, voucher students performed *noticeably worse* on state assessments than their public school counterparts.

These examples of research should be extremely sobering for anyone considering expanding voucher programs in Kansas. We can and must do better for our Kansas kids. Because, in the end, what matters most is the students.

While some want you to believe vouchers are a magic salve, they are not what parents and voters want. The American Federation of Teachers just released a nationwide survey of parents and voters to examine their education priorities. By an overwhelming 80 percent to 20 percent margin, parents and voters said they want policymakers—like you—to focus on improving education in the public schools rather than expanding school choice.

- Their top priorities for public schools include developing students’ fundamental skills in reading, math and science; ensuring all kids, regardless of background, have an opportunity to succeed; developing critical-thinking and reasoning skills; teaching practical life skills; and preparing students to succeed in college or careers.
- They also said policymakers and schools should address staff shortages, reducing class size and improving literacy skills.
- That is because these are the things that will really make a difference in students’ lives.

Let me also note, a lot has been made about the academic performance of students following the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on student outcomes. But a recent review of research on vouchers shows their impact on students is far worse than the pandemic itself. Michigan State University Professor of Education Josh Cowen has found that the impact of vouchers on student outcomes are as disastrous for students as natural disasters, similar to the impact of Hurricane Katrina on student achievement in Louisiana in 2005.

I believe in following the research and you should open your mind to these research facts:

- Private school vouchers do not save taxpayer money.
- Private school vouchers give choice to private schools, not parents.
- Private school vouchers do not offer supports or legal protections to vulnerable students.
- Private school vouchers do not work in rural areas.

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- Private school vouchers lack transparency and accountability. On the KS program’s website, it says: “Kansas’ tax-credit scholarship program generally avoids unnecessary and counterproductive regulations.”
- When vouchers are on the ballot, American voters reject them, and usually by overwhelming margins. Since 1970, voters have rejected the creation or expansion of private school vouchers every time they have been proposed on ballot referenda—a total of fourteen separate instances. These voucher initiatives rarely garner even 35% of votes in their favor.

The State Legislature would do right by our students by giving them what they really need and what parents and voters support. Our public schools need to be well-funded and well-resourced to address the teacher shortage impacting classrooms across the county. Legislators should invest in public school buildings and mental health supports for children recovering from the global pandemic. Legislators should hear parent voices who want public schools where kids want to go, parents want to send their kids and where kids can thrive and be prepared for college, careers, and life. Expanding the state voucher program would not accomplish any of these goals.

Again, AFT Kansas strongly opposes any type of voucher or tax-credit legislation.

Thank you for your time today.

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Toll Free 1-800-232-5273

NAME: Brandie Armstrong
TITLE: USD 500 and USD 233 Parent
EMAIL ADDRESS: bnshepherd1987@gmail.com
BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts
PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent
ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218 and am pleading that you join me in doing the same with your vote.

I am a mother to two Kansas students. One is a Kindergartener in USD 500 and one is a Sophomore in USD 233 as you know both are public school systems. Both of my children have IEP's and my youngest is autistic and receives special education through USD 500. If this bill goes through you will be directly hurting my children and their chances of receiving a decent education. It has already been extremely difficult getting my children the services they need and if this bill passes, and cuts the funding to public education like it is guaranteed to do, it will be next to, if not completely impossible to get those services.

As someone who works as a political consultant and campaign manager for local elections, including races for the State House, and has knocked on close to if not over 10,000 doors in my community during that time, I know a purely partisan political bill when I see one. HB2218 is definitely a partisan bill meant for your donors and die-hard constituents at the expense of the rest of Kansans, especially those that are already suffering. As a mother I am pleading that you please put the political games down and start doing what is right for ALL people in Kansas. If you allow this bill out of committee and to pass, you are hurting children and families who have done nothing to deserve their right to equal, equitable, public education being threatened to be taken away in such a crass and careless manner with this fast-tracked bill.

With all due respect, please know that the people of Kansas are watching you and the bills you pass. If you continue to defy the will of the people and harm Kansans for a political score, we will be seeing you at the polls, and I will be more than happy to help lead that charge. I've already knocked on 10,000 doors, what's 10,000 more?

In closing, if you do not want a politically knowledgeable, fired-up mother of two from Wyandotte County, with a little too much time on her hands in each of your districts knocking on doors informing people of the harm you are causing by voting for bills such as this one, then I am asking you to vote no on HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration.

Brandie Armstrong
Kansas City

Name: Brian Biggs

Title: Kansas Citizen and Parent, Shawnee Mission School District

Email address: BrianMitchellBiggs@gmail.com

Bill Number: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

OPPONENT

Written Only Testimony

I am writing to convey my vehement opposition to HB 2218. Kansas's public schools are economic engines for our state, both in the number of Kansans they employ and in helping prepare our children to be the workers that Kansas businesses need to ensure their future success. Any direction of funds away from public schools is a dereliction of duty to our children and our state. Strong public schools help draw employers to Kansas, contribute to property values, play a vital role in the fabric of our communities. Passage of HB 2218 or any other attempt to funnel public funds to private schools would be disastrous for our children and our state's economy.

Thank you for your consideration.

Brian Biggs

Overland Park, KS

Ben Blankley
3404 Country Club Place, Wichita, KS 67208 ben.blankley@gmail.com
Bill number: HB2218
Position on bill: opponent
Date of Hearing: February 6, 2023

My name is Ben Blankley, and I am a Wichitan, a career aerospace engineer, a former local school board member, and a parent of a public school elementary student in Kansas.

I urge the K-12 Budget committee to reject HB2218. This proposal would further redirect public education funds for private schools.

The proposed bill has little to no accountability or data reporting for the private schools. There are no minimum quality requirements for the private schools, and the private schools can choose to reject students on many federal and state protected categories including race, LGBTQ+ status, religion, and special education needs. This proposal will enable further segregation in and fracturing of our shared community.

This week, in Ohio, a Neo-Nazi homeschool network was uncovered. In Ohio, state law requires homeschool families provide annual written notice and assurances to the local educational authority.

Kansas state law requires no annual reporting nor assurances for non-accredited private schools or home schools. There are no guardrails in place with this or other proposed legislation to prevent publically-funded ideological hatred through this proposed school voucher system.

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

Name: Brooke Grant, Esq.

Title: Parent, Kansas public school alumni, Kansas State University Alumni, Licensed Kansas Attorney

Email address: blh0509@gmail.com

Bill No.: HB2218 Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

Position: Opponent

Testimony: Written

I am writing as a graduate of Kansas public schools and universities, a licensed Kansas attorney, and a mother of two children currently in the Kansas public education system. I respectfully ask that the bill that is currently drafted to divert appropriated dollars for public schools to private schools be rejected.

We live in an area with no beaches and no mountains. There are two main reasons people choose to live in Kansas and make it their homes: (1) a strong public education system and (2) affordable housing. This bill could divert up to \$300 million from our public schools and would absolutely desecrate the strong public education system that attracts taxpayers, and their employers, to the state.

This bill does not require private schools to accept all children, as public schools do. This bill does not have appropriate oversight for the expenditure of funds. This bill does not have appropriate oversight to ensure minimum performance standards for children are being met. Rural students would suffer as public funding is funneled to private schools mostly located in metro areas.

Please oppose this hastily thrown together bill, which is bad for students, bad for educators and bad for Kansans.

Sincerely,

Brooke L. Grant, esq.
Leawood, Kansas

February 2, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

Charles Barrett Kroll

cbkroll@gmail.com

HB2218 Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

Opponent

Written Only Testimony

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

I oppose HB2218 because it diverts public tax dollars from our public-school *children*. Public tax dollars that our children rely upon for quality education. Public tax dollars that are necessary for ALL children to be afforded the opportunity to thrive. Public schools are necessary to offer education to every child. HB2218 will pull resources from those children who can't afford to opt into private schooling or whose parents can't stay home and educate them. Private schools can choose to admit children at their discretion, those whom they believe will only support their success rate. What about the kids that don't fit this mold? Our state is strong because our citizens all had an equal chance at a quality education. I implore you to vote NO on this bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Charles Barrett Kroll

Overland Park, KS

Betsy Loomer

Kansas Citizen, Parent of a Shawnee Mission School District student

betsyloomer@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. I am a citizen of Kansas and my daughter attends a public elementary school in Prairie Village, Kansas. We moved to Kansas and have stayed in Kansas so that we may raise our daughter within the public school districts of Kansas. It is important to our family that public tax dollars should remain with our public schools and that our public schools should accept and educate all Kansas children. If there is a concern with funding and special education, the legislature should focus on fully funding special education to meet the needs of all Kansas students, not just those wealthy enough to afford private schools. Private schools serve a purpose, but they are not open and available to all Kansas students, so they should not receive public dollars.

Please vote no on HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration,

Betsy Loomer

Kansas Citizen, Parent of a Shawnee Mission School District student

Prairie Village, KS

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Bob Myers

TITLE: Parent of 8th grader at Indian Hills and Senior at East High School in Shawnee Mission School District

EMAIL ADDRESS: BobMyers@ReeceNichols.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition and to ask you to vote no to bill HB2218.

My grandchildren have always gone to public schools in the Shawnee Mission School District. I am a broker at ReeceNichols for many years and one of the basic reasons where buyers buy houses is based on the strength of public schools. That is why the strongest market in Johnson County is based on public schools.

Both of my kids have IEP's based on behavior and academics. Their school career would be significantly different without that protection they receive. Without modification, additional para teaching and requests, their experience would be diminished. Seventeen-year-old Caitlin was abused as a young child so if she sits in the front of the class, her PTSD would not allow her to pay attention because her back has to be in the back of the room allowing her to know no one is coming at her from behind. The IEP allows for that modification. Private schools are not bound by IEP's. That is one of many examples. We have had an exemplary experience through Shawnee Mission Schools to work with teacher and our family to support these kids.

Most buyers want their kids in public education so tax dollars should support the better-rounded school experience that public education allows. The need is great for special education so the legislature 's constituents would be better served for additional funding for special education than through vouchers. Money controls the private school not always to the benefit of kids that need special assistance.

I again am writing to voice my opposition and to ask you to vote no to bill HB2218.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my opinion on this very important topic to my family.

Bob Myers

Broker ReeceNichols

Fairway, Kansas

February 2, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

Name: Barbara O'Toole

Title: Former parent of SMSD students

Bill Number: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

Proponent, Opponent, or Neutral: Opponent

Oral or Written Only Testimony: Written Only

Dear Chair and members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

As a parent, I have enrolled my children in both parochial and public schools. My three children attended parochial school for grades pre-K through 8th grade and public high school. Even having chosen private school for some part of my children's education, I am vehemently opposed to using public tax dollars for private schools.

Several years ago, the parochial school my children attended denied attendance to a Kindergartner based on the sexual orientation of the child's parents. While I did not agree with this decision, I do not oppose their right to make this decision. However, if they have the right to deny a child attendance, they should in no way be receiving public tax dollars.

Public tax dollars should be for the public good. Public tax dollars should not be used to fund schools that deny admission. Public tax dollars should not be diverted to private schools. Private schools do not have the same state requirements and accountability that public schools do. Public schools educate all Kansas students regardless of academic ability, physical ability, religion, and sexual orientation.

Barbara O'Toole

Prairie Village

Written Opponent-Testimony before the House K-12 Education Budget Committee
In opposition to
HB2218 - AN ACT concerning education; establishing the sunflower education equity act; providing education savings accounts for students; establishing the sunflower education equity scholarship fund.
by Becky Plate, Board Member of USD491 Board of Education
February 2nd, 2023

Madam Chair, Members of the Committee:

It is my great honor to serve on the Board of Education for the Eudora USD491 Schools. This testimony is my own. I do not speak for the school district or the board as a whole, and this testimony should not be construed as the will of that board. I submit my testimony in opposition to HB2218 out of concern for the wellbeing of the students in Kansas schools and the good stewardship of Kansas tax dollars.

A central role of local boards of education in Kansas is the responsibility to establish a system of free public education for *all* residents of that district. Public schools do not choose their students. Public school students are not excluded due to their educational needs or abilities, religion, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, or any of the other many criteria a private school can utilize in selectively admitting or excluding students. Public schools are for the benefit of *all*, and are subject to a high degree of government oversight and operational standards.

HB2218 specifically stipulates that, “Sec. 13. Nothing in this act shall be construed to permit any governmental agency to exercise control or supervision over any nonpublic school or home school.” If private schools are free of public control or supervision, why should they be entitled to public tax dollars? I have no doubt that there are good private schools in Kansas, but they simply are not held to the same high standards as Kansas public schools, do not fulfill the same public service as Kansas public schools, and are not entitled to the public funds that support the fulfillment of that obligation.

HB2218 affirms that, “all children shall receive what they need educationally regardless of their socioeconomic, racial or cultural status” but does not stipulate that private schools who accept tax dollars from the sunflower education equity scholarship fund are required to admit and retain all students regardless of their socioeconomic, racial or cultural status. While the language of HB2218 claims to ensure, “educational equity” and “educational freedom” it does not require that the private schools receiving the funds provide free or equitable access to their programs.

At this time, HB2218 does not have a fiscal note published, but similar programs in other states provide convincing evidence of the disastrous impact it is likely to have on our state's general fund. In Arizona, 2022 legislation authorized universal enrollment in the "Empowerment Scholarship Account" program, which is now expected to balloon to \$425 million in increased government spending by next year⁸, many times the original expected cost of \$64.5 million⁷, contributing to the state's "economic uncertainty".⁸

HB2218 also promotes a false generalization that students are better served in private schools than in accredited public schools. Research shows that private schools do not categorically outperform public schools academically.¹⁻⁵ In reality, Kansas schools have proven to be highly efficient⁶, high performing, and adhere to the "Rose Capacities" that have been endorsed by this legislature and the Kansas Supreme Court. Kansas schools currently rank 10th in the U.S. when utilizing measures from the State Board of Education's Kansans Can program.⁹ To the best of my knowledge, no evidence has been offered that shows students participating in the existing Tax Credit Scholarship Program show statistically better outcomes than students in Kansas public schools. The data just does not support the generalized implication that Kansas public schools are failing students, or that diverting funds from public schools to private schools leads to improved outcomes for either student set.

In conclusion, HB2218 is fiscally irresponsible. HB2218 is not equitable. HB2218 diverts public tax dollars away from high performing, highly regulated public schools to private programs without similar oversight or stringent standards, and with no evidence-based benefit to students. The diversion of these tax dollars undermines the duty I am bound to, as a school board member, to provide an adequate and equitable free public education for all residents of my district. I urge you to oppose HB2218.

1. Jonathan N. Mills & Patrick J. Wolf, Univ. of Ark., The Effects of the Louisiana Scholarship Program on Student Achievement After Four Years (Apr. 2019).
2. Megan Austin et. al., Russell Sage Foundation J. of the Social Sciences, Voucher Pathways and Student Achievement in Indiana's Choice Scholarship Program (2019).
3. David Figlio & Krzysztof Karbownik, Fordham Institute, Evaluation of Ohio's EdChoice Scholarship Program: Selection, Competition, and Performance Effects (July 2016).
4. *E.g.*, Jonathan Plucker et al., Ctr. for Evaluation & Educ. Policy, Univ. of Ind., Evaluation of the Cleveland Scholarship and Tutoring Program, Technical Report 1998-2004, 166 (Feb. 2006).

5. *E.g.*, U.S. Dep't of Educ., Evaluation of the DC Opportunity Scholarship Program: Impacts Three Years After Students Applied (May 2019); U.S. Dep't of Educ., Evaluation of the DC Opportunity Scholarship Program: Impacts Two Years After Students Applied (June 2018); U.S. Dep't of Educ., Evaluation of the DC Opportunity Scholarship Program: Impacts After One Year (June 2017).
6. Taylor, L.L., Willis, J., Berg-Jacobson, A., Jaquet, K., Caparas, R. (2018). *Estimating the Costs Associated with Reaching Student Achievement Expectations for Kansas Public Education Students: A Cost Function Approach*. San Francisco, CA: WestEd.
7. The Staff of the Joint Legislative Budget Committee, Phoenix, Arizona. *Fiscal Note BILL # HB 2853 TITLE: Arizona empowerment scholarship accounts; appropriations* (June 2022)
8. The Staff of the Joint Legislative Budget Committee, Phoenix, Arizona. *FY 2024 STATE GENERAL FUND BASELINE SUMMARY* (January 2023)
9. Kansas Association of School Boards, Topeka, KS. *Comparing Kansas 2022* (July 2022)

House K-12 Education Budget Committee

HB 2218

February 2, 2023

**Opponent Testimony by
Bryce Wachs, Superintendent**

Madam Chair and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. I stand as an opponent to House Bill 2218. Fort Larned is a rural school district with an enrollment of 862 PK-12 as of February 2, 2023. We are located in south central Kansas and are comprised mainly of Pawnee County and the western section of Barton County. Due to USD 495's rural setting, our public school can be called the centerpiece of our community.

The additional funding to private sectors would be detrimental to public education and rural districts will suffer tremendously from the effects of HB 2218. Ultimately, we fear that our student's well-being could be compromised due to equal funding and unequal scrutiny of standards, policies, and accountability. Non-accredited education cannot be considered equal to accredited education for many reasons, but especially the inability to correlate success between the two.

In addition to the inequity of students, there are also inequities in the accountability standards when it comes to educators. In our district's strategic plan, we focus on recruiting, supporting, and retaining high-quality staff members and this is a significant priority to USD 495. Non-accredited students cannot be promised the same level of education because the accountability standards for educators do not match those of accredited students.

Above all, public schools serve all students, regardless of socio-economic factors, academic and physical disabilities, and geographical placements. USD 495 provides many avenues of support for our students; such as, additional educational opportunities, interventions, and evidence-based instruction to assist them in working towards proficient State Board of Education outcomes.

I respectfully ask that while you consider publicly funding outside of public education, that we keep our student's well-being in mind, as well as the long-term effects it would cause for rural school districts like ours. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition of **House Bill 2218** and for your service to the State of Kansas.

Respectfully,



Bryce Wachs
Superintendent of Schools
Fort Larned USD 495
bryce.wachs@gmail.com

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Cindy Connellan

TITLE: Retired school nurse, parent of child who went through SMSD and ended up with a doctorate from Johns Hopkins, parent of a special needs child who went through SMSD.

EMAIL ADDRESS: connellanc@aol.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: written

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

I am a retired school nurse. My children went through SMSD. Public school is for teaching ALL students based on their needs. People who choose to home school, or send their children to private schools, do so because of their religious beliefs. Private schools do not have to admit everyone. Private schools send their children to public schools for speech therapy, gifted education and other things that the private school doesn't supply. If you give money to anything but public schools, you will dramatically decrease the quality of education for all students in Kansas. If you spread the money out to everyone, public schools will no longer have the funds to provide a quality education.

Please vote no on HB2218

Thank you for your consideration,

Cindy Connellan RN

Prairie Village , Ks

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Chuck Cordray

TITLE: Parent, Leawood Elementary School, Blue Valley School District

EMAIL ADDRESS: chuck_cordray@hotmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

As a parent of children in both public and private schools, I oppose this measure, and ask you to do the same because our public school system currently offers a free and quality education to all students, and our society needs an educated public for our democracy to function well. This is how our public tax dollars should be used — in the greatest interest of all. Our current system gives everyone a chance for a quality education and has produced a number of outstanding Americans, who took advantage of the free and quality education provided by public schools. Without this, American society could become further fractured and divided, and we risk losing some of the most valuable members of our society, because they won't be able to participate fully due to a lack of education. Individuals choosing to route their kids to private institutions for whatever reason may choose to do so in the current system by supplying their own funds. Private school has always been a luxury education in the United States, and should remain so.

Please oppose or vote no on HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration

Chuck Cordray

Parent, Blue Valley School System, Leawood Elementary School

Cindy Couchman

ccouchman44@gmail.com

Written Opposition Testimony to HB 2218

Hearing Date/Time: 2-6-2023 at 3:30 pm

Members of the House K-12 Education Budget Committee,

My name is Cindy Couchman and I am the 2009 Kansas Teacher of the Year. I am writing to express my opposition to HB 2218. I have been a public school educator for 32 years.

This bill lacks forethought of many issues and creates even more bureaucracy. Just a few of the main items I am deeply opposed to are:

The lack of immediate accountability for the Educational Savings Account. What prevents a family in poverty from pocketing this money and say they are homeschooling them without ever providing any educational services to their children?

The lack of long term accountability creates an inequitable expectation of results. Public schools are held to a high standard on state assessments. If ANY private school, homeschool, microschool, or public school receives taxpayer monies, shouldn't they all be held to the same standard for measuring those results?

Education is for all. Allowing private schools to select those students they want to attend while forcing public schools to have open enrollment sets the educational system up for segregated silos that would include public education as the provider for all high needs students. Is a segregated educational system what you would want for a special needs grandchild or child of yours?

The ability for families to "double-dip" using the ESA and the private school tuition credit creates inequity and an extra incentive to go to a private school.

Long term planning is void in this bill. There is no estimate of cost projection for the next 4 years. The lack of planning, vision, and implementation process is appallingly lacking.

Please drop this bill from the committee and protect the education of ALL students in Kansas.

Sincerely,

Cindy Couchman, National Board Certified Teacher AYA Mathematics

2009 Kansas Teacher of the Year

2009 National Finalist Presidential Award for Excellence in Science and Math Teaching

2010 Kansas State University Alumni Fellow

2012 Lowell Milken Fellow

2014 National Teachers Hall of Fame

2021 Kansas Confidence in Education Award

Superintendent, Buhler USD #313

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Colleen Cunningham

TITLE: Parent of 3 Blue Valley students, former Special Education teacher in Shawnee Mission district, former home school student

EMAIL ADDRESS: colleen@demod.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only

Dear Chair Williams & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

I oppose this bill for a number of reasons:

- As a parent of elementary and middle school children, and as a homeowner, I believe we should be doing all we can to strengthen Kansas' neighborhood public schools. Going back to the 1830s, American leaders like Horace Mann recognized that investing in public education would benefit entire communities by creating literate, moral and productive citizens.
- As a tax payer, I don't believe it is appropriate for tax dollars to be diverted to alternatives to public schools, particularly those with religious mandates. Doing so blurs the line that separates church and state.
- In my PhD program in Educational Policy and Leadership Studies, we learned that our public schools are often the hub of communities, particularly in rural areas, and I have seen this in my own experiences. When schools don't have sufficient funding to stay open, that closure has an adverse impact on the economic health and vibrancy of communities. This bill would exacerbate that effect by leaving all communities with public schools which are further underfunded, therefore able to support fewer employees, leading to more crowded classes, and lowering property values in the process.
- As a former special education teacher, I often had to choose between spending my own salary on purchasing items my students needed for their learning, or watching them go without. Instead of taking taxpayer dollars and diverting them to alternatives to public schools, which are not required to provide special education students with the same legal protections as public schools, I believe your committee should be laser-focused on providing full funding for special education, particularly while we have a budget surplus.
- As a former home school student, I have empathy for families who choose that route because their public school isn't working for them, and they have additional expenses as a result. That mirrors my own experience, and it was a challenge for my low-income family to make it work. But let's be clear: that is a choice that family is making. I should not be expected to subsidize their choice, particularly when we can see that [similar legislation in other states](#) has led to [reported](#)

[widespread misuse of funds](#), and there is no required oversight to ensure that our tax dollars are used to successfully achieve measurable educational outcomes, as public schools are required to do.

I continue to be flummoxed as to why your committee is working so diligently to remove funding from our public schools, in favor of alternatives that lack educational oversight, don't provide legal protections for students with disabilities, and which will serve to exacerbate existing shortcomings in our public education system. For these reasons, I oppose HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration.

Colleen Cunningham
Overland Park

Cheri Koochel

Kansas Citizen, retired school social worker, President of the Kansas School Social Workers Association, parent of 2 sons that graduated from public school in Manhattan USD 383.

16cheri831@gmail.com

HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

Opponent

Written Only Testimony

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to HB2218.

I strongly believe public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children. The mental health needs of our students, staff and families have increased over the last few years. Instead of taking money from public education and giving it to private school's legislators need to fully fund special education and ensure every school has the trained mental health team (school social worker, nurse, psychologist, counselor) that is vital for all students to learn.

School safety, unmet mental health needs such as the onset of major mental illness, suicide ideation, poverty and meeting the basic needs of our students (clothing, food, school supplies, etc.) are where your focus should be. According to the Center for Evaluation & Education Policy, "Recent studies have shown large, negative impacts of vouchers on student achievement". I challenge you to seek current research and to visit public education classrooms to include classrooms for our SPED students to assist you in making your decision.

I am asking committee members to Vote No on bill HB 2218.

Thank you for supporting all Kansas children and youth.

Cheri Koochel, LMSW

785-556-0007

Feb 2, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

Dear Chair and members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my **opposition to bill HB2218**. Do not divert public tax dollars to private schools. Quality public schools protect our home values. Private schools can pick and choose who they admit. Public tax dollars shouldn't go to schools that can deny Kansas students.

Catherine Lewis, MD

Mother, Physician, Citizen of the Great State of Kansas

Shawnee, Kansas, 66226

Catherine.Lewis2@hcamidwest.com

Opponent to HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Catherine Linde

TITLE: Parent

EMAIL ADDRESS: cathysteffen@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts OPPONENT

Opponent WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY:

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. It is unfathomable to me that you would vote to take away funding from institutions that have a mandate to serve all. This bill is a transparently ableist move designed to appease a minority of voters: right-wing Christians. Your mandate is to uphold the separation of church and state while ensuring a free and appropriate education for all children of this state. Period.

As a mental health clinician serving area adults, I hear the struggles of parents of neurodivergent kiddos at both public and private schools. I hear of teachers and administrators at private schools blatantly ignoring parents' pleas for more help for their children, including using their religious beliefs to oppose medical and clinical guidance the parents are receiving. When these children fail at these "Christian" schools, they need a public school with appropriate services to fall back on. Why would you vote to jeopardize this funding?

Obviously, vote NO on HB2218.

Thank you in advance for the only appropriate vote in this matter: NO.

Catherine Linde, LCSW, LSCSW

Overland Park, KS

February 2, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

Name: Cara Luptak-Peterson

Title: Parent, Shawnee Mission School District

Email Address: caraelizabeth1@yahoo.com

Bill Number: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

Proponent, Opponent, or Neutral: Opponent

Oral or Written Only Testimony: Written Only Testimony

Dear Chair and members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

My name is Cara Luptak-Peterson. I am a parent in the Shawnee Mission School District and have three children in the public school system.

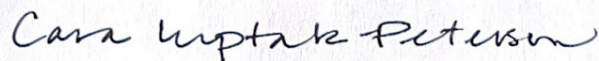
I strongly oppose voucher programs, such as Education Savings Accounts, because tax dollars should remain with our public schools. Public schools accept and educate ALL children. Voucher programs drain public education budgets while providing public funds to private schools who can discriminate in their admissions. In addition, private and home schools are not held to the same oversight and accountability expected of public schools and are not required to report on the academic progress of students receiving public dollars.

Instead of funding private and home schools, the legislature should focus on fully funding special education, which would positively impact all students in the Kansas public school system.

Please support Kansas children by voting NO on bill HB2218.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,



Cara Luptak-Peterson
Parent, Shawnee Mission School District
Overland Park, Kansas

Carla J. Maneth

Kansas Citizen for 64 years

3731 Robin Road

Great Bend, KS 67530

cjm3731@hotmail.com

HB2218 Sunflower Education Equity Act

To whom it may concern:

My name is Carla J. Maneth. I am a retired public school teacher of 36 years and a substitute teacher in both public and private schools. My position on the above bill (HB 2218) is in opposition at this time.

Public dollars belong in public schools. The low funding that is given to public schools would make it even more scarce if given to private schools. Students in the public schools would have less access to the already low amount given for extra programs. The public schools accept ALL students no matter the need of the student, vouchers do not support students who have these disadvantages. Working together for public schools to improve all aspects of education is important especially at a time when we have a teacher shortage.

Thank you for representing the state of Kansas. I appreciate your time and energy in looking for the best solutions.

Sincerely,

Carla J. Maneth

Retired school teacher and life long Kansas citizen

My name is Caroline New. I live in Goddard, Ks and I can be reached at carrinew@gmail.com.

This is my written testimony regarding HB 2218.

I am writing in opposition to this bill.

The hearing date is Feb 6, 2023.

My name is Caroline New and I am a community member in USD 260. Goddard public schools have an excellent reputation and are doing a phenomenal job of educating it's students.

I am writing to express my opposition to HB 2218. I am the parent of a special needs child who was on an IEP for his entire school career. Under this bill, my tax dollars would be removed from my child's public school and sent to a private school that has no obligation to teach special needs children. My child's school, and his education, would be harmed by this bill. I fully support the rights of parents to choose how and where to educate their own children PROVIDED they use their own money. My tax dollars are meant to educate all children in public schools. Public dollars belong in public schools.

My parents sent me to Catholic schools when I was in elementary school. They paid my tuition and did not expect the government to subsidize. That is how it should be.

Cat Poland

catherine.poland@gmail.com

RE: HB 2218 Sunflower Education Equity Act

Position on Bill: Opponent

Hearing Date: 2/6/2023

My name is Cat Poland and I am a parent with three children who attend school in USD 313 (Buhler).

I am writing to express my opposition to HB 2218. I am in opposition because I have two children with disabilities, and with the limited funding schools are already dealing with, it's a struggle.

While I understand that not every parent will feel that public schools are a great fit for their child, every parent has the option to send their child to a public school. The word every is key here. If funding is diverted from public schools, more money will be funneled into private, home or micro schools, where not every student has the option to attend.

Non-public schools are not regulated when it comes to accepting and accommodating students with special needs or disabilities, and also students who identify as LGBTQ. Marginalized and disadvantaged students need more resources and funding, not less.

In addition, public schools provide a safety net for students facing challenges or abuse at home. Another set of eyes and ears on children can often identify needs and connect students and their families with the resources they need.

Public schools are not perfect, but they're a valuable, necessary, irreplaceable part of our society's fabric. Devaluing them and diverting resources would have devastating consequences. In fact, many states that have passed similar bills are looking at budget shortfalls. We can't afford that in Kansas.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Cat Poland

February 6, 2023
Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Claire M. Reagan
TITLE: Parent, Olathe School District
EMAIL ADDRESS: clairereagankc@gmail.com
BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts
PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent
ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only Testimony

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

Thank you for giving citizens the opportunity to provide written testimony on HB2218. This testimony is on behalf of my three young children and other Kansas kids who currently or will one day attend our much sought after public schools. I am writing to respectfully request that you *not* pass HB2218 out of committee based on my experience as both a parent as well as a former public and private high school teacher.

There are many pieces of the bill that trouble me; however, here are my main concerns: it diverts public tax dollars to private schools at a time when legislators should be focused on the \$160 million shortfall in special education funding; private schools can choose which students they accept, whereas public schools educate *ALL* Kansas students regardless of academic ability, physical ability, religion, sexual orientation, and so on; and private schools are not held to the same accountability standards and are not required to participate in state testing.

As far as the aforementioned issues I have with HB2218, the one most troubling to me is the diversion of public tax dollars, tax dollars that should be spent making up for the \$160 million special education funding gap. When special education isn't funded to the state's full obligation, the re-allocation of resources within each individual district to meet that obligation impacts *ALL* of our kids. Our family understands this balance acutely as our 8-year-old son lives with autism spectrum disorder; his ASD diagnosis has impacted our lives in many ways, but the resources available to us through our public school district have made a life-changing difference for him and our family as a whole. Our 6-year-old daughter and 2-year-old son are typical in their development and are equally deserving of having all of their educational needs met.

All Kansas kids should have the opportunities that well-funded public education can afford them and access to resources they may not otherwise receive.

HB2218 jeopardizes that opportunity and access.

It is with the utmost respect and appreciation for what our great state has provided our family thus far that I appeal to you now. Doing right by our children is humanity's most sacred covenant; I trust you will proceed with their very best interest in mind and *oppose* HB2218.

Thank you for your careful consideration.

Claire M. Reagan
Olathe, KS

February 6, 2023
Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee
Caroline Saferstein
Parent of son with autism
caroline@headwear.com
3312 W 71st St
Prairie Village, KS 66208

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts
OPPONENT
WRITTEN OR ORAL TESTIMONY

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

How can we even be considering this bill while there is a \$160 million shortfall in special education funding? Public school is designed to educate a diverse population. If some parents do not want to send their child to an inclusive school that acknowledges diversity (including gender) that is their choice. Our tax dollars, however, should not go to fund private schools. Kansas has the responsibility to educate all children in an inclusive environment. Don't take funds away and give our tax dollars to private schools that can pick and choose their students!

I have a son with autism who went through the Kansas public school system. Our son was unsuccessful at two private preschools because of his behavior. We searched and finally found a third preschool that had a special ed teacher on staff and was willing to accept our son. We didn't even consider a private school for kindergarten since we knew that public school was the only place equipped to help him succeed. It was hard to keep him in his seat, much less do schoolwork for years but his IEP provided him the critical resources needed to learn. He is now a senior in the engineering school at K-State and even has an engineering job waiting for him upon graduation. I thank the Kansas Public schools for his success. I am worried about the future of other children like my son who will not be given the intervention needed due to lack of funding.

Please vote NO on HB2218 and save the quality of special education in our schools.

Thank you,

Caroline Saferstein

February 6, 2023
Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

Carisa Stejskal
Parent of student in USD 497 Lawrence, KS
carisalynns@gmail.com
BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts
OPPONENT
Written only testimony

Dear Chair & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. Voucher programs take scarce funding from public schools, which serve 90 percent of students, and give it to private schools that are not accountable to taxpayers. There are no stipulations that require private schools to accept all children. Public schools accept every child and provide an education with accommodations based on their needs and directed by their IEP.

Are there other areas in our state government that allow public funds to be redirected to private entities based on the public's choice? Can a KanCare recipient receive a voucher to purchase health insurance from a private health insurance company? Can a Kansan that is unsatisfied with the service from the KBI or Kansas Highway Patrol receive a voucher to hire their own private investigator? I have a child who is currently attending the University of Kansas. If she feels she could receive a better education at a smaller private university, could she receive a voucher to offset the higher cost? Public funds improve our community making it a better place to live and should stay with the public.

Voucher students have been found to underperform public-school students in many states, including Ohio, Louisiana, Indiana, & Washington, D.C. Researchers have found that private schools offer less instructional time causing their students to test lower than students attending public schools. Boser, Benner, & Roth. (2018, March 20). *The Highly Negative Impact on Vouchers*. American Progress. <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/highly-negative-impacts-vouchers/>

Our publicly funded schools follow state guidelines and curriculum standards. Private schools do not have the same state-mandated requirements for accountability and transparency. This bill isn't good for students, taxpayers, or our democratic community.

I ask that you vote NO on bill HB2218.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Carisa Stejskal
Lawrence, KS

February 2, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Courtney Wilson

TITLE: Shawnee Mission School District parent and PTA president of Brookwood Elementary

EMAIL ADDRESS: cwilsonbsn@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: **Opponent**

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to Bill HB2218. I strongly oppose this bill. If this bill is passes it will take away funding from public schools, and that will decrease the school resources for all students to have a free quality education. As the daughter of a teacher and the mother of three children currently in public school, I have witnessed the educational system from multiple viewpoints; the Kansas public school system will not as a whole benefit from this.

My child has an IEP and would not be accepted into private schools, and there are many others in a similar situation. We should not be enacting legislation that will be detrimental to those who require the most support.

Please do not take away resources and funding that is necessary for my child to receive a quality education.

Please vote no on Bill HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration,

Courtney Wilson
Overland Park

February 2, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Donna Ackley

TITLE: Parent in USD497

EMAIL ADDRESS: dtackley@hotmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. I am the parent of 2 children who attended public schools in USD497. Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children. Focus should be on fully funding special education in our school district. What happens in rural communities where there is no option other than the public school? These families would be helping pay for private schools in the large metropolitan areas. Loss of funding to these schools could cause schools to consolidate and impact the community.

Please Vote No on bill HB 2218

Thank you ,

Donna Ackley
Lawrence, KS

February 2, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Diana Beckman

TITLE: Parent, SMSD School, Kansas Citizen

EMAIL ADDRESS: DianaLBeckman@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL OR WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written only

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee

I am writing in opposition to HB2218.

I was educated in public Kansas schools and am now the parent of a public-school student that receives special education services. When we decided to raise our children in the Kansas area, it was in large part due to the strength of our public schools. We depend on our public school to support our son with special learning, speech, language, and social needs as well as our children that do not need additional services.

A private school would not be required to accept all of our children. We saw this first-hand during our son's preschool years when his needs could not always be met in a private setting.

As taxpayers, we should not be paying for schools that are not able to educate ALL students. Our public funds should remain with public schools that can support each member of our student community.

Instead of considering bills like HB2218, we should be focusing on fully funding public education, including special education. Please do the right thing, and vote no on HB2218. Families like mine depend on public schools, and it is part of what makes our community so valuable.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this critical issue.



Diana Beckman
SMSD Parent
Prairie Village, KS

February 2, 2023
Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Dawn Brumbley
TITLE: Parent in Olathe Schools
EMAIL ADDRESS: dawnraeann@gmail.com
BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts
PROPOSER, OPPOSER, or NEUTRAL: Opponent
ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: written only testimony

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

Public funds should be used for public education only. Both of my children attend Olathe public schools, and we live in Olathe because of the quality of public education. To be frank, we have been looking to move out of Kansas because the Kansas Legislature has shown in recent years that they want to destroy public education, and my children deserve better than this game being played with tax dollars. The cost of this bill could strip \$300 million dollars from public education to private or homeschooled education with no oversight. The state won't even fully fund and invest in Special Education for \$160 million but will divert that tax money to private education? This is wrong in so many ways. My children's education is already suffering due to the lack of funding for Special Education. 95% of kids in Kansas go to public schools, stripping \$300 million for 5% of kids is sickening. I wholeheartedly oppose this bill.

Vote NO and oppose HB2218 and keep public funds in public education where schools accept and educate ALL children.

Thank you for your consideration.

Dawn Brumbley
Olathe district parent
Olathe, KS

February 2, 2023
Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Deana Curtin
TITLE: Parent, SMSD School, KS Citizen
EMAIL ADDRESS: deanacurtin@gmail.com
BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts
PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent
ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: written only

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

I oppose voucher programs like Education Savings Accounts:

- Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate ALL students
- Instead of funding private and home schools, the legislature should focus on fully funding special education.
- Private schools can choose which children they want to serve, and they should NOT receive our public dollars.

As a parent of a child with an IEP and in the SPED program at SMSD, I am appalled that this bill being put forth exists. We have one of the best public education systems in the country. We should be proud of that and continue to enhance it by FULLY FUNDING SPECIAL EDUCATION, not diverting money to private schools that would never accept one of my children.

The SPED program is crucial to children like my son. He receives services (OT/Speech) within SMSD that he would never receive at a private school. We need to uplift, respect and educate ALL children regardless of ability.

This is not a "school choice" bill. This is a "shift the cost of someone's choice to send their kids to private schools onto everyone else" bill. Kansas will fail if we move to a "pay as you go" system. We all pay for public schools- people without kids and people with kids that aren't school age- because they keep our neighborhoods strong and they bolster our property values.

Do the right thing and vote NO on bill HB2218!

Thank you for your consideration,

Deana Curtin
SMSD Parent
Prairie Village, KS

February 6, 2023
Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Delaney Jones
TITLE: Kansas Citizen, Higher Education
EMAIL ADDRESS: dcjones2@shockers.wichita.edu
BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts
PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent
ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: WRITTEN ONLY

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing today to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

I have always attended public school. The education I was granted is something I will be forever grateful for, though I will always recognize the shortcomings that a lack of financial support has done to damage, lessen, or make impossible many aspects of my education. I was educated in a low-income community, often having to share food at lunch with my peers whose families were unable to pay lunch fees. As a child in the gifted program, I spent many days in an empty room or storage space with my peers, as a classroom could not be afforded to us. My teachers, all trying their best and doing what they could to prepare us for the world, could not hide the poverty in which our classrooms dwelled. Plumbing always on the fritz, cold lunches that went wasted and unpaid for, and students who had to choose between work and school the minute they were old enough to join the workforce.

That being said, instead of focusing on funding well-off private schools, our children deserve better public-school funding. Rural students, poor communities, and children with IEPs or special needs will be affected most by HB2218. These are the children who need this funding most of all. All Kansas children deserve the opportunity to get a good public education: one that allows them to have a legitimate classroom, ensures they get a warm meal during the day, has access to running water and fully functioning electricity, and has the resources to help each and every student according to their needs. To take from the poor, those schools receiving already the bare minimum funding, and to give to the rich, hurts everyone.

For these reasons, I kindly implore you to oppose HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration.

Delaney Jones
El Dorado, KS.

February 6, 2023
Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Dan Kass
TITLE: Kansas Citizen
EMAIL ADDRESS: lacyjazz@sprintmail.com
BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts
PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent
ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only Testimony

Dear committee chair and members,

Please note that I am against passage of this bill. If passed, it will be the end of our public school system. I am a graduate of Shawnee Mission East along with all three sons, my girlfriend, and even my ex-wife. This will be a travesty to see our great public school system destroyed.

Dan Kass
Mission, Kansas
913-208-2632

February 6, 2023
Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

Name: Drew Ladd
Title: Parent, Blue Valley Schools
Email Address: dladd3@gmail.com
Bill Number: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts
Proponent, Opponent, or Neutral: Opponent
Oral or Written only testimony: written only

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

I have three children, one of whom is in kindergarten at Sunrise Point Elementary School. We plan to send all three of our children through public school. We feel fortunate to live in a community that strongly backs our public-school district – we know this is not the case in all areas of our state – which makes this bill even more concerning for the state of education in Kansas.

Voucher programs like Education Savings Accounts pull critical resources from public schools, which educate over 90% of Kansas students. I believe that public tax dollars are for the public good and that using public dollars for private schools drains the public schools of needed resources for successful student learning. Low income students are hurt by voucher programs too. Tuition at many private schools, especially in the Kansas City area, is greater than the amount covered by ESA, leaving out those students without the means to make up the difference or who don't have reliable transportation. Meanwhile, funding for their neighborhood school is drained. Rural schools will also suffer as public-school funding is funneled to private schools mainly located in metro areas.

Please vote no on HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration.

Drew Ladd
Overland Park, KS

February 1, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

Debra Mitchell
Short1954@gmail.com
Lenexa, Kansas

BILL NUMBER: HB 2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts
PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent
ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to House Bill 2218. I was born and raised in southeast Kansas and my three children graduated from public schools in Olathe, Kansas. They received a quality education and were able to take advantage of the wonderful teachers including special education resources.

House Bill 2218 will hurt public education. It will divert public tax dollars to private schools at a time when legislators should be focused on the \$160 million shortfall in special education funding. The state should fully fund special education, not private schools. Using public dollars for private schools drains the public schools of needed resources for successful student learning.

Public tax dollars are for the public good, and public schools are economic drivers—businesses and families look for quality public schools when relocating. That’s why so many young couples leave Kansas City, Missouri to move to the Kansas side when they have children—to take advantage of the great public schools.

Even for Kansas residents that do not have school-age children, quality public schools protect our property values.

We also need to think of the future workers of Kansas. If we are not funding our public schools appropriately, we will have a generation of less-educated citizens, which will affect our state.

In addition, rural students (like I was growing up) will suffer as public-school funding is funneled to private schools mainly located in metro areas.

Finally, House Bill 2218 lacks oversight and provides no review process to evaluate if students utilizing our taxpayer dollars at private or home schools are achieving. Taxpayer dollars should require the same oversight and transparency as our public schools. Continued research demonstrates that private school vouchers do not improve student achievement.

Voucher programs like Education Savings Accounts do not offer parents a real choice. Private schools pick and choose who they accept. Public schools accept all students.

I respectfully ask you to vote no on House Bill 2218. It will be devastating for not just the school-age children in Kansas, but for all Kansans.

Sincerely,

Debra Mitchell
Short1954@gmail.com
Lenexa, Kansas

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Donna Oberstein

TITLE: Kansas Citizen

EMAIL ADDRESS: d.oberstein@icloud.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to express my opposition to bill HB2218.

Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children.

Our children attended private school as well as public school. At no time during their years in private school did we want or expect the state to cover the choice we had made.

We were fortunate to have Education Savings Accounts. Education Savings Accounts aren't available to rural students who have little to no options besides **public** schools. Rural communities will be subsidizing private school for students in metro areas. Loss of funding threatens school consolidations in rural communities and threatens the quality of rural community life.

HB2218 is a bill which must be opposed in order to assure quality education for ALL Kansas children.

Thank you for your consideration.

Donna Oberstein

Overland Park

February 2, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Debby Patel

TITLE: Parent, Kansas Citizen, Doctor

EMAIL ADDRESS: Drdebbypatel@yahoo.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, OR NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

I am currently a parent of two children in our public school system. Not long ago were my children in private school. Private schools that cost 50x the cost of my childrens' public school. The reason we chose to quit private school and enroll them into public school is because it is comparable in everything except the price.

Please vote NO on HB2218

Dr Debby Patel

Overland Park, KS

David Plous

Kansas Citizen, Parent of a Shawnee Mission School District student

dplous@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. I am a citizen of Kansas and my daughter attends a public elementary school in Prairie Village, Kansas. We moved to Kansas and have stayed in Kansas so that we may raise our daughter within the public school districts of Kansas. It is important to our family that public tax dollars should remain with our public schools and that our public schools should accept and educate all Kansas children. If there is a concern with funding and special education, the legislature should focus on fully funding special education to meet the needs of all Kansas students, not just those wealthy enough to afford private schools. Private schools serve a purpose, but they are not open and available to all Kansas students, so they should not receive public dollars.

Please vote no on HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration,

David Plous

Kansas Citizen, Parent of a Shawnee Mission School District student

Prairie Village, KS

February 2, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Debra Rettenmaier - parent of 2 SMSD students (Shawnee Mission East High School and Indian Hills Middle School)

EMAIL ADDRESS: rettendew@aol.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: OPPONENT

WRITTEN TESTIMONY:

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to Bill HB2218.

I ask that you please oppose and vote no on this bill. This bill is NOT about school choice. I doesn't actually add more choices for students. These same choices already exist. It simply shifts the cost of a student's choice to attend private school onto the entire population including those that choose to send their children to public school and those people without any children or any school aged children at all. Public schools are not a pay as you go system and they will fail if they are forced into this type of system. Public schools are a foundational pillar of our society and are not optional. Public schools are paid for by ALL - people without kids, people whose kids are still babies, people whose kids are grown and gone - because they keep our neighborhoods and communities strong, they bolster property values and they create capable potential employees for Kansas companies and the world beyond.

Make no mistake, we will decimate Kansas schools if we allow those who opt out of public school to take their tax payments with them. Why should they have this option when grandmothers and empty nesters and singles, and people without children are paying?

Thank you for your consideration and your vote in opposition to Bill HB2218.

Debra Rettenmaier, parent of 2 SMSD students

Leawood, KS

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Dena Sneed, OTR/L

TITLE: Kansas Citizen, Parent, Pediatric Occupational Therapist

EMAIL ADDRESS: denasneed@icloud.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only Testimony

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my strong opposition to bill HB2218.

I am a third generation Kansan, born and raised in Newton. I currently reside in Prairie Village and am a proud parent of a public-school graduate. My husband (also a native Kansan) and I made a very conscious decision to raise our daughter in the Kansas public school system. This decision was based on the strong public education we received growing up in Newton. I am also a Pediatric Occupational Therapist (OT) and provided therapy services for over 27 years to children identified with special needs. I served children in public schools and clinical settings. I remember Newton Public School District (USD 373) having a very comprehensive special education program and students from all over the county attended. I remember sitting side-by-side with these amazing students. Those experiences influenced my decision to become a Pediatric OT and I am a better person for it.

I am grateful for the first Federal Law that guaranteed a free and appropriate public education for ALL students in 1972 (Education for All Handicapped Children Act). This law became the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in 1990. Without these laws and funding for these laws, we literally leave many, many children behind. Private schools, parochial schools, and home schools are exempt from the federal laws that protect and educate our most vulnerable children. When public tax dollars are taken away from these programs, children and their families suffer. Plain and simple. I know. I have witnessed it. I worked with many children that were struggling in their private and parochial schools because they were not receiving the accommodations or appropriate therapy services that would allow them to succeed in the classroom. Parents struggled to pay for private services. And those who could not afford it, had no choice but to let their child suffer in the classroom or be kicked out of the private or parochial school. Private, parochial, and home schools that are exempt from Federal Laws and choose which children they want to serve *should not* receive our public dollars.

Instead of funding private, parochial, and home schools, the legislature should focus on fully funding special education. Additionally, Education Savings Accounts are not available to rural students. Rural communities, already struggling to adequately provide special education services due to lack of funding and staff, will be subsidizing private school for students in metropolitan areas. Loss of funding could cause school consolidations and will have big impacts on rural community life.

I am a strong proponent of doing what is best, right, and just for our children. They are our future leaders. What we do and leave for them affects all our communities and all our futures. I ask that you please oppose HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration,

Dena Sneed, OTR/L
Prairie Village, Kansas

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Emily bartlett

TITLE: parent, therapist

EMAIL ADDRESS: emrbartlett@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: [choose one]

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

This is a terrible bill and will only support schools that are allowed to choose their kids and leave public schools to crumble without adequate funding. It will further the gap between the rich and the poor in our state which is already wide. It will also allow those schools to teach wild things that would be unthinkable at public schools. ALSO:

Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children

Instead of funding private and home schools, the legislature should focus on fully funding special education

Education Savings Accounts aren't available to rural students who have little to no options besides public schools. Rural communities will be subsidizing private school for students in metro areas. Loss of funding could cause school consolidations and will have big impacts on community life.

Private schools that can choose which children they want to serve should not receive our public dollars

Please oppose oppose bill hb2218

Thank you for your consideration

Emily Bartlett

PRDT, TTT

MERRIAM, kansas

Written Testimony before the House Committee on K-12 Education Budget

in **opposition to House Bill 2218** - An act concerning education; establishing the sunflower education equity act; providing education savings accounts for students; establishing the sunflower education equity scholarship fund.

by Erica Benson, public school parent, PTA Board Member and teacher

February 1, 2023

Distinguished Chair, Members of the Committee:

I am writing to voice my opposition to **House Bill 2218**. The creation of education savings accounts for students, while well-intentioned, will have a devastating effect on the funding and quality of public schools in Kansas. In this testimony I will outline evidence of widespread fraud and mismanagement in states with similar programs, poor performance outcomes for students, and the malicious historical motivations for education savings/vouchers and modern libertarian goals to end public education in America.

Firstly, there will be **widespread fraud and mismanagement** with education savings accounts. It is impossible for one treasurer to effectively monitor and manage the distribution of funds to multiple accounts. Furthermore, there is no way to guarantee that the funds will be used for educational expenses as intended. There are several examples of how education savings accounts have been misspent or where fraud has been rampant in states where they have been implemented. Here are a few:

1. Arizona: A 2020 investigation by the Arizona Republic found widespread misuse of funds in the state's education savings account program, including purchases of luxury goods, vacations, and other items that had nothing to do with education.
2. Florida: A 2018 investigation by the Miami Herald found that millions of dollars in education savings account funds had been spent on private schools that were not accredited, lacked state certification, or had other problems.
3. Mississippi: A 2016 investigation by the Clarion Ledger found that millions of dollars in education savings account funds were being spent on homeschooling materials, private schools, and other expenses that had nothing to do with education.

This is a clear indication that these programs are not sustainable or effective in the long term.

Academic studies have consistently shown that voucher programs and **education savings accounts do not improve student performance or outcomes**. In fact, they often have the opposite effect, draining resources and talent from public schools. Research has demonstrated that public schools are more efficient and effective in utilizing taxpayer dollars to provide high-quality education to all students, regardless of their background or circumstances. There is a wealth of evidence that shows that vouchers and education savings accounts are ineffective in improving student outcomes. Here are a few examples of studies that support this:

1. A 2020 study published in the peer-reviewed Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis journal found that students who used vouchers to attend private schools in

Louisiana had lower test scores in math and reading compared to their peers in public schools.

2. A 2018 study conducted by the National Bureau of Economic Research found that students in the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, which is the nation's oldest voucher program, had lower test scores in both reading and math compared to their peers in public schools.
3. A 2017 study published in the Journal of School Choice found that students who used vouchers in Ohio did not perform better on standardized tests than their peers in public schools.
4. A 2016 study by the Brookings Institution found that students who used vouchers in Washington, D.C. did not perform better on standardized tests than their peers in public schools.

These studies and others like them provide strong evidence that vouchers and education savings accounts are not an effective solution for improving student outcomes.

Many historians note the unpleasant and racist history of voucher programs in America. Nancy MacLean is William H. Chafe distinguished professor of history and public policy at Duke University and author of "Democracy in Chains: The Deep History of the Radical Right's Stealth Plan for America." She writes, "School choice had its roots in a crucial detail of the *Brown* decision: The ruling only applied to public schools. White Southerners viewed this as a loophole for evading desegregated schools.

In 1955 and 1956, conservative White leaders in Virginia devised a regionwide strategy of "massive resistance" to the high court's desegregation mandate that hinged on state-funded school vouchers. The State Board of Education provided vouchers, then called tuition grants, of \$250 (\$2,514 in 2021 dollars) to parents who wanted to keep their children from attending integrated schools. The resistance leaders understood that most Southern White families could not afford private school tuition — and many who could afford it lacked the ideological commitment to segregation to justify the cost. The vouchers, combined with private donations to the new schools in counties facing desegregation mandates, would enable all but a handful of the poorest Whites to evade compliance.

Other Southern states soon adopted voucher programs like the one in Virginia to facilitate the creation of private schools called "**segregation academies**," despite opposition from Black families and civil rights leaders. Oliver Hill, an NAACP attorney key to the Virginia case against "separate but equal" education that was folded into *Brown*, explained their position this way: "No one in a democratic society has a right to have his private prejudices financed at public expense." ...

Despite such objections, key conservative and libertarian thinkers and foundations, including economists Milton Friedman and Friedrich Hayek, Human Events editor Felix Morley and publisher Henry Regnery, backed the White Southern cause. They recognized that White Southerners' push for "freedom of choice" presented an opportunity to advance their goal of

privatizing government services and resources, starting with primary and secondary education. They barely, if ever, addressed racism and segregation; instead, they spoke of freedom (implicitly, White freedom).

These conservative and libertarian thinkers offered up ostensibly race-neutral arguments in favor of the tax subsidies for private schooling sought by white supremacists. In doing so, they taught defenders of segregation a crucial new tactic — abandon overtly racist rationales and instead tout liberty, competition and market choice while embracing an anti-government stance. These race-neutral rationales for private school subsidies gave segregationists a justification that could survive court review — and did, for more than a decade before the Supreme Court ruled them unconstitutional.

[Milton] Friedman, too, was interested in far more than school choice. He and his libertarian allies saw vouchers as a temporary first step on the path to school privatization. He didn't intend for governments to subsidize private education forever. Rather, once the public schools were gone, Friedman envisioned parents eventually shouldering the full cost of private schooling without support from taxpayers. Only in some "charity" cases might governments still provide funding for tuition.

Friedman first articulated this outlook in his 1955 manifesto, but he clung to it for half a century, explaining in 2004, "In my ideal world, government would not be responsible for providing education any more than it is for providing food and clothing." Four months before his death in 2006, when he spoke to a meeting of the conservative American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), he was especially frank. Addressing how to give parents control of their children's education, Friedman said, "The ideal way would be to abolish the public school system and eliminate all the taxes that pay for it."

Today, the ultrawealthy backers of school choice are cagey about this long-term goal, knowing that care is required to win the support of parents who want the best for their children. Indeed, in a sad irony, decades after helping to impede *Brown's* implementation, school choice advocates on the right targeted families of color for what one libertarian legal strategist called "forging nontraditional alliances." They won over some parents of color, who came to see vouchers and charter schools as a way to escape the racial and class inequalities that stemmed from White flight out of urban centers and the Supreme Court's willingness to allow White Americans to avoid integrating schools.

But the history behind vouchers reveals that the rhetoric of "choice" and "freedom" stands in stark contrast to the real goals sought by conservative and libertarian advocates. The system they dream of would produce staggering inequalities, far more severe than the disparities that already exist today. Wealthy and upper-middle-class families would have their pick of schools, while those with far fewer resources — disproportionately families of color — might struggle to pay to educate their children, leaving them with far fewer options or dependent on private charity. Instead of offering an improvement over underfunded schools, school choice might lead to something far worse."

Private schools are typically expensive even with a savings account or voucher, making them less accessible to families with limited financial resources. This can lead to **increased socio-economic segregation**, as students from different income levels attend different types of schools. Additionally, private schools are often not required to accept all students, and **can choose to admit only those students who meet certain academic, behavioral, or religious criteria**. This can limit the diversity of student populations and create a less inclusive learning environment. For-profit schools will increase their tuition if this education savings account goes into effect and in the end, families who already send their kids to private school will be the people who benefit. When state tax dollars are used to support private schools, charter schools, and online schools, resources are being taken away from the public education system. This can lead to reduced funding for public schools, making it more difficult for them to provide a quality education to all students. Tax dollars should not go to private/for-profit institutions, it is our state's duty to serve and educate every child. Research has demonstrated that public schools are more efficient and effective in utilizing taxpayer dollars to provide high-quality education to all students, regardless of their background or circumstances.

Investing in high-quality early childhood education programs is one of the most effective ways to improve public schools. Research has shown that students who receive high-quality early childhood education are more likely to succeed in school and in life. Let's improve public schools with more funding to reduce class sizes, to create a universal pre-K system, to create programs to recruit, retain and pay high quality teachers, to serve all students with IEPs, 504s and disabilities, and allow students of all socioeconomic backgrounds to go to school together. Public schools are designed to provide equal access to education for all students, regardless of their socio-economic background or family circumstances. This is a cornerstone of democratic societies, where all citizens should have equal opportunities to succeed.

In conclusion, I urge you to reconsider this education savings/voucher bill and the potential harm it may bring to public schools in Kansas. Let us focus on supporting and strengthening our public schools.

Please oppose **House Bill 2218**, thank you for your consideration.

Erica Benson, Overland Park, KS

February 6, 2023 Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Emily Bush, MD

TITLE: Parent, Pediatrician, Kansas CitizenEMAIL

ADDRESS: ebarkofske@yahoo.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

Dear Chair & members of the committee, I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. As a parent and a pediatrician that cares for children, I have a lot of concern and investment in the education of kids. This bill will be extremely harmful to so many children in Kansas, who need good funding of public schools for countless services and benefits, including special education services, counseling, and access in general to education, which are not guaranteed by private schools.

I can tell you that I know of private schools turning away children for numerous reasons, including an example of a private school turning away a kindergartener because the parents are in a same sex marriage. This is just one example of the way private schools cannot guarantee equal access for all children.

Another concern is that the pandemic has brought about so many issues, including a lot of mental health problems and learning lags/discrepancies in children. Private schools are not a solution to keep up with the magnitude of this problem. We need public school funding NOW to support the communities that are suffering the most. Education is where the solutions start for so many things. If we educate our kids and provide a good environment for them to learn and grow, they can go on to thrive and contribute to their community as adults.

This bill is simply discriminatory and selfish, and I implore you to vote no on bill HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration [

Emily Bush MD Prairie Village, KS

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Ethel A. Edwards

TITLE: Retired K-12 Educator

EMAIL ADDRESS: etheledwards766@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPOSER, OPPOSER, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to HB2218. Even though my husband and I have no children, we pay plenty of taxes AND we support public education. As I was growing up, my mother told me on a regular basis, "You need to get a good education," and I did in a public school setting.

Then, as a teacher in a public K-12 setting with less than 150 students to a public high school with over 1500 students, I saw what happened to students and programs when funding cuts were made. Instead of diverting taxpayer dollars to private and home schools, the Legislature should FULLY FUND special education.

I oppose voucher programs like this Education Savings Account because public tax dollars should remain with our PUBLIC schools that accept and educate ALL children. Private schools that can choose which students they want to serve should not receive public dollars.

I ask you to vote NO on HB 2218.

Thank you for reading this testimony.

Ethel A. Edwards

Topeka

February 6, 2023
Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Elizabeth Foster

TITLE: Kansas Citizen

EMAIL ADDRESS: majida6712@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only

Dear Committee Chair and members,

I am writing this to oppose HB 2118. I have lived in Prairie Village since 1985. My children went to public schools, and now my grandchild attends Indian Hills. These public schools are excellent, and this keeps property values high and makes our community cohesive. We don't want to move into a private school voucher situation, which weakens our community and how our children learn.

I am very strongly opposed to this bill. Please vote no on HB 2118.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Foster

6712 Granada Road
PRAIRIE VILLAGE, KS 66208
913.522.2790

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. [something like this]

[YOUR TESTIMONY]

[CLOSING ask them to oppose or vote no on include bill number]

Thank you for your consideration [or something similar].

[NAME]

[TITLE] – if you want to list again

[CITY]

HOW TO SUBMIT TESTIMONY

1. All testimony must be received in writing, 48 hours before the committee meeting. Written testimony is also required if you want to provide oral testimony. Hearing for HB 2218 is Monday, February 6 at 3:30 in Room 546-S
2. **Deadline for submitting testimony for is 3:30 on Thursday, February 2.** Must be in PDF form emailed to garret.belknap@house.ks.gov. For questions, Garret can be reached at 785-296-3971.
3. **Subject of email** should include HB 2218 and whether testimony will be oral or written only. [ex. HB 2218 Opposition Written Only Testimony]
4. **Oral Testimony** In your email state that you want to provide oral testimony and specify whether it will be in person or via WebEx. If WebEx, you will receive WebEx link about an hour prior to the meeting.
5. It's always good to copy your state representative on your email with testimony. You can find your representative by typing in your **full** address at openstates.org. Your house representative is indicated by "lower chamber." Click on their name to find their contact info and record it in your phone for future reference.

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Education Budget Committee

Erin Gould, Parent

erinlgould@gmail.com

OPPOSE - House Bill 2218 - Education Savings Accounts

Written Testimony Only

Madam Chair, Members of the Committee;

I am a parent of three public school students (two former, one current). I am writing to day to express my opposition to HB 2218.

I have broken down my concerns into categories of Obligation, Access, Accountability, and Cost.

What Do We Owe Each Other?

I support this bill's proposition that parents have "the freedom to direct the education of their children." I support a parent's decision to find alternative education paths for their children. However, if a parent decides a public education is not what they want for their children am I obligated to pay for whatever other education they decide is appropriate? Even if it is not as academically rigorous as the public schools? Even if there is no public oversight or meaningful accountability? As a taxpayer, my answer is "no". As Kansans, we pay state taxes for accountable, state-provided services available to all eligible Kansans. We don't get to pick and choose which public services we pay for. If I opt out of using a service, I don't get to ask for cash back. If that were true for education, couldn't it be true for other things? For example, my local taxes pay for buses. I never ride the bus. It's too infrequent and uncomfortable. I don't like it. I prefer my car or an Uber. Just because I don't like the bus should I expect to get tax dollars back to pay for my Uber? Of course not. That's silly but not really different than what this bill is proposing. Public schools are the tax-funded option. Like buses, their cost is maintained by the community. Their use is optional but if a family doesn't want to use them, they can't expect the community to pay for a private choice.

There might be some who try to say this bill simply allows a family to use "their" education tax dollars as they see fit; that they are not *taking away* from they state, they are just taking "what's theirs." This is true in only a very few cases. Few family's 20 mil payment to the General Fund is equal to the full amount of their children's BASE aid to public education¹. If the parent is not a homeowner, they contribute less; if a family has purchased less, they generate less in sales tax. Should we all begin keeping receipts to figure out what we spent in Kansas and what the state "owes" us if we want to opt out of a state service? The dollars being used for these ESA accounts are not, in fact, the parent's money which the state owes them if they don't use the public schools. Each child's BASE aid comes from families and businesses all across the state who agree, as Kansans, to contribute to the public schools which are fully accountable to their communities and committees like this one. As a Kansan, I expect my General Fund education dollars to be used for the benefit of schools that serve all Kansas children in a clear, equal, and accountable way.

As a taxpayer, I much prefer that my education dollars stay in programs that maximize access so all students benefit.

¹ For example, in 2022, my family's 20 mil levy for a house appraised at \$343,600 to the state general fund was \$698.28. See attached. According to the KSDE website, the 2021-22 BASE aid was \$4,706 and this school year it is \$4,846. That means this year, the BASE aid for my one child in public school is 6.94 times more than I paid in taxes in 2022. If families have more than one child in public school, the disparity grows since mills are tied to homes, not children. Last year, when I had two children in public school, the disparity would have been 13.48 times more given to my children in BASE aid than I contributed to the General Fund. ((2 x \$4706)/\$698.28).

Who Has Access?

Every student is unique and deserves an “individualized education [which] provides an essential pathway to success” as this bill’s preamble states. The question before us is, whether creating a system that leaves parents to haphazardly obtain educational services based on their ability to find local, reputable, affordable providers is really the best, most effective way to ensure that pathway? If a majority of parents find a gap in public education, wouldn’t it be better to make sure the shortcoming is corrected so all Kansas children benefit?

I’ll give you an example of why I believe the public way is better.

My 16 year old son is dyslexic. By the fourth grade, he read at the first-grade level, and the reading intervention program at the public school was not designed to remediate his learning delay. I asked the district for help. They agreed they didn’t have the expertise or resources to helping dyslexic students so I sought private tutoring. Eventually, my son was able to read at grade level. Hooray. Now, some of you will say, “See! that is why we need this bill! Everyone should be able to pay for a private tutor, if that’s what their child needs!” My reply to you is, “No, private tutoring is not the answer.” What we were able to provide for our son was a privilege that many families cannot acquire, even with a voucher/ESA money. It took four years to remediate the reading delay through twice-weekly tutoring. I am a stay-at-home parent and had the time to drive across town regularly to get my son to and from tutoring. Also, finding a qualified tutor with time slots available was not easy – even in Kansas City. At the time, I wondered, “what do working families or families without local dyslexia tutors do?” Is it fair that only students whose families are able to locate and access private tutors get the help they need? Of course not. It was a terrible system. Full of inequity, inconvenience, unnecessary expense and frustration. The better solution was Kansas’ Dyslexia Taskforce which brought Kansas educators and families together to improve reading education across the state. It made sure quality educational resources are available in the public schools so that ALL the dyslexic children can receive the reading instruction they need. Students today get a reading program that is based on reading science, and works much better for dyslexic students like my son. I know because I volunteer in a first grade classroom and see the difference in materials and teaching instruction. The Taskforce model is a much better, fairer model for addressing learning challenges schools still face.

How Do We Know It’s Not Wasteful?

Let’s say a family is unhappy with their public school and they take their BASE aid and spend it on a private program. Once the money is spent, there is little in the way of oversight to demonstrate the program or service succeeded. This bill only requires that “a portion” of the money be used to provide an education “in at least the subjects of reading, grammar, mathematics, social studies and science.” That’s pretty vague. There are no standards or measurements attached. This bill allows homeschool parents direct access to public fund without having to demonstrate to the state the educational soundness of their selected curriculum, that it is delivered with fidelity, or that their child achieved grade-appropriate skills in exchange for direct access to public funds. So we literally could be throwing away money when we allow families to spend ESA dollars without any oversight or accountability on programs that don’t work as well as the ones used by public schools or at all. That’s wasteful.

Ultimately, I wonder do we, as a state with a fiscally conservative bent, truly believe that this is the most fiscally responsible option? – to create a second, parallel, education system that has its own management costs, is less accountable and, has no meaningful way for taxpayers to know the educational outcomes of all students receiving these taxpayer funds?

Even with this voucher, geography, time, and cost could still put the services parents seek out of reach.

Recipients of education funds should be required to demonstrate the selected school, program or service results in appropriate educational outcomes.

Who are the Winners and Losers?

My final concern with this bill is that if, as a state, we chose to begin privatizing education, there certainly will be winners and losers.

The state loses. This bill could cost Kansas at least 128 million more in education dollars because private accredited schools will encourage all families to take advantage of this new, unfettered access to public funds, increasing the cost to the state through distributions of BASE aid for students who have not, in the past, received it.²

Small towns lose. According to data on the KSDE website, there are 125 accredited private schools. Most of them are centered in and around the three largest cities: Wichita, Topeka and Kansas City.³ Cities and counties with larger markets and more affluence will be winners and end up with a greater variety of options and price-points. As is currently the issue, smaller communities will find themselves with the least number of good options. A small student population will make small towns less attractive to new private schools which will face the same shortage of qualified staff that challenge our rural public schools.

Wealthy parents win. The more expensive private schools will likely continue to charge tuition greater than BASE aid and affluent families will be able to make up the difference. Poorer families have access to only what their voucher will buy.

The public loses. While accredited private schools do have to comply with some academic guidelines there is no requirement that they be transparent about how they spend the tuition money they receive. Further, these schools may engage in arbitrary and prejudicial discrimination which runs contrary to the intent of services funded with public money.

If this committee believes there are improvements that can be made to ensure more students receive an education that “considers [their] unique learning needs”, then I hope you will find a better solution that works for all students and all Kansas communities. I urge you to vote no on this bill.

Do we believe tax funds should be used to create winners and losers?

² Based on all non-public school data I could find on the [KSDE website](#), there are 26,446 students enrolled in accredited non-public schools. If each private school required all attending students to enroll in this program, the cost to the state (students x BASE aid of \$4846) would cost the state \$128,157,316. This would be new additional educational expenses to the state since private school students currently do not receive BASE aid. Of that, \$6,407,865.80 would be set aside for administrative costs. I could not find any information on the KSDE website about the number of students currently homeschooled who would be eligible for this new program. But, there would be additional expenses to the state for homeschool students.

³ See attachment for visualization of accredited private schools across the state. A link to an interactive version of the map can be found [HERE](#).

To pay bills, view statements and print receipts search here:

Property Search [Advanced Search](#)

JOHNSON COUNTY TAX OFFICE

Quick Ref ID **R146075** Owner **GOULD, MATTHEW D. CO-TRUSTEE GOULD, ERIN L. CO-TRUSTEE** Property Address **005200 NEOSHO LN, ROELAND PARK, KS** 2022 Assessed Value **\$39,514**

2022 GENERAL INFORMATION

Property Status **Active**
 Property Type **Residential Single Family**
 Legal Description **MISSION RIDGE NLY TRACT LOT 20, 125 FT ON E & 60 FT ON W RPC-6887A**
 Taxing Unit Group **0655UW**
 Neighborhood **007**
 RE Tax ID **PP45000000 0020B**
 Map Number **F04**

2022 OWNER INFORMATION

Owner Name **GOULD, MATTHEW D. CO-TRUSTEE GOULD, ERIN L. CO-TRUSTEE**
 Owner ID **O0078949**
 Exemptions
 Mailing Address **5200 NEOSHO LN ROELAND PARK, KS 66205**

[Print property information](#)

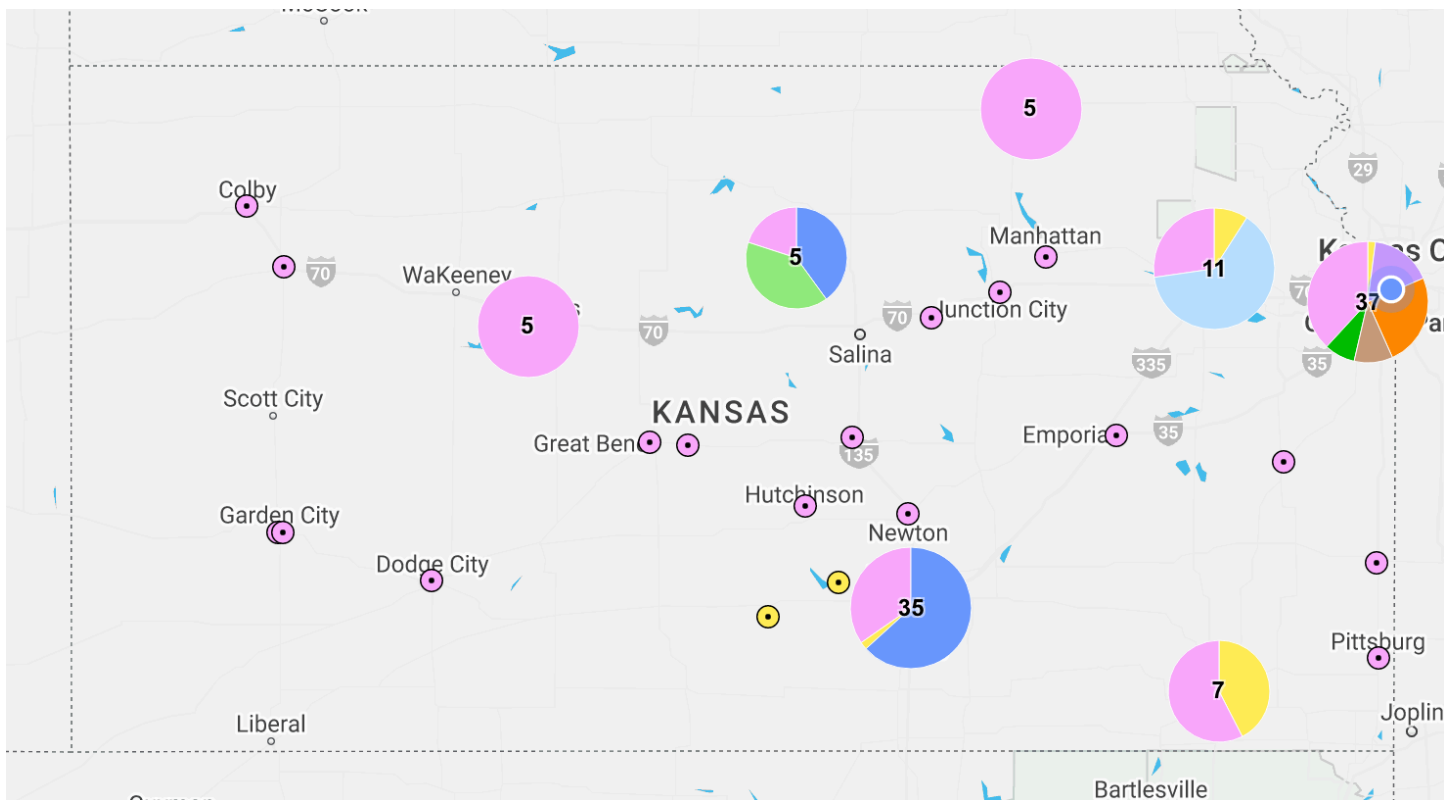
2022

[Payment History](#) [Tax Statement](#) [Details](#)

TAXING ENTITY	RATE	TOTAL TAXES DUE	AMOUNT PAID	BALANCE
Installment 1 Last Paid Date: 11-18-2022				
512 BOND	0.007453	\$147.25	\$147.25	\$0.00
512 SCH GEN	0.020000	\$349.14	\$349.14	\$0.00
512 UNIFIED	0.021933	\$433.33	\$433.33	\$0.00
COMM COLLEGE	0.008617	\$170.25	\$170.25	\$0.00
JC CON FR #2	0.010477	\$206.99	\$206.99	\$0.00
JO CO LIBRARY	0.003815	\$75.37	\$75.37	\$0.00
JO CO PARK	0.003021	\$59.69	\$59.69	\$0.00
JOHNSON CO	0.017772	\$351.12	\$351.12	\$0.00
ROELAND PARK	0.027663	\$546.54	\$546.54	\$0.00
STATE OF KS	0.001500	\$29.64	\$29.64	\$0.00
RPC TRASH	-	\$107.25	\$107.25	\$0.00
Installment 2				
512 BOND	0.007453	\$147.25	\$0.00	\$147.25
512 SCH GEN	0.020000	\$349.14	\$0.00	\$349.14
512 UNIFIED	0.021933	\$433.32	\$0.00	\$433.32
COMM COLLEGE	0.008617	\$170.25	\$0.00	\$170.25
JC CON FR #2	0.010477	\$207.00	\$0.00	\$207.00
JO CO LIBRARY	0.003815	\$75.38	\$0.00	\$75.38
JO CO PARK	0.003021	\$59.68	\$0.00	\$59.68
JOHNSON CO	0.017772	\$351.12	\$0.00	\$351.12
ROELAND PARK	0.027663	\$546.54	\$0.00	\$546.54
STATE OF KS	0.001500	\$29.63	\$0.00	\$29.63
RPC TRASH	-	\$107.25	\$0.00	\$107.25
TOTALS	0.122251	\$4,953.13	\$2,476.57	\$2,476.56

TOTAL TAXES DUE	Effective Date:
Current Amount Due	\$2,476.56
Past Years Due	\$0.00
Total Due	\$2,476.56

Private Accredited Schools By Location



February 1, 2023

Written testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

My Name: Eva Gryszowka: Shawnee Mission (USD 512) elementary teacher and parent

My email: epotruck@gmail.com (professional: evagryszowka@smsd.org)

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. As a parent and a teacher in the Shawnee Mission School District, I am strongly concerned with the implications this would have on our schools. Our public tax dollars should stay with our public schools that serve all children, regardless of need. Instead of expanding the Tax Credit Scholarship program when there is no evidence to ensure participating students are succeeding, please stay focused on our public schools that educate 90% of Kansas kids. Our tax dollars should be used to fully fund special education.

I teach in a Title I school, and to lose public funding or have it diverted away from our schools, would be detrimental. Here are some things we need: more hands on manipulatives for math lessons, a bigger and more updated library, more supplies for our science program, new grass for our playgrounds that are currently a mud pit, and more food and snacks for our kids who show up to school hungry and who leave to go home to apartments without stocked fridges. What we don't need is to lose out on millions of dollars that could go to those getting those resources for our schools.

You must vote no to bill HB2218, it would be devastating to Kansas schools. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Eva Gryszowka: Shawnee Mission (USD 512) elementary teacher and parent
Overland Park, KS

February 6, 2023
Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Elizabeth Harkman
TITLE: Parent in USD 265
EMAIL ADDRESS: bethbenson21@hotmail.com
BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts
PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent
ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written testimony

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB 2218.

I have 3 children in the Goddard public school system. Public schooling is extremely important to ensure that every child has access to the best education possible. All 3 of my children have IEPs so I know first-hand the important role public schools play in a child's life. With an IEP private schools could turn my children away and deny them an education. Private schools should not get public funding or vouchers. Our tax dollars need to stay with public schools that educate and benefit all students. Instead of funding private schools and home schools the legislature should focus on fully funding special education.

I urge you to vote no on HB 2218.

Thank you for your consideration.
Elizabeth Harkman
Parent in USD 265
Wichita

February 6, 2023
Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Emily James

TITLE: Kansas Citizen

EMAIL ADDRESS: ejames514@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB 2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: written

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB 2218.

I have long known the quality of Kansas public schools. I moved to Kansas a year and a half ago and was glad to have my tax dollars contribute to the continuity of quality education for Kansas children. This bill is not something I support. I wholeheartedly support public schools and believe they are invaluable community resources. Public schools also drive the economy and increase property value. It is unacceptable to allow private schools to use taxpayer funds when they are free to exclude students based on academic ability, physical ability, religion, sexual orientation, etc. without oversight.

Please vote no on HB 2218.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Emily James
Kansas Citizen
Mission, KS

February 6, 2023
Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Erin Laughlin, DPT
TITLE: Parent, Shawnee Mission School District, Kansas Citizen, Owner of Laughlin Performance & Physical Therapy
EMAIL ADDRESS: laughlinek@gmail.com
BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts
PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: OPPONENT
ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

I am a graduate of the Blue Valley Public School System. The education I received was outstanding and enabled me to pursue academic scholarships to Kansas State University in order to ultimately achieve my Doctorate of Physical Therapy from Rockhurst University. I am proud of my public school background – so proud that I have continued to work with my public high school pro bono, offering off-season conditioning sessions on site to the girls athletics since graduating from my DPT program. I also accepted the position of Girls' Assistant Varsity and Junior Varsity Soccer Coach in the Spring of 2015 while on maternity leave simply because I admired my former soccer coaches and wanted to give back to a school that had given me so much. Saying this, passing this current bill would be a mistake. Now, as parents of a 2nd grader in the Shawnee Mission School District, my husband – a private catholic school alum – and I have been beyond impressed with the quality of schooling, the diversity, the quality of teachers and administrators, and the real-world lessons that our son is receiving. Kansas has been known for the quality of its public schools – especially in Johnson County. This bill would take away from that quality.

In closing, please oppose or vote no on HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Erin Laughlin, DPT

Parent, Shawnee Mission School District, Kansas Citizen, Owner of Laughlin Performance & Physical Therapy

Overland Park, KS

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Elizabeth McDole

TITLE: Parent

EMAIL ADDRESS: elizabethmcdole@hotmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: **Opponent**

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Testimony

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. This bill will have negative impacts for BOTH private school and public-school students, and completely undermines the spirit of public education.

I say this as a parent who sends her children to private schools in Kansas, which might be surprising to you. Most of the private schools in Kansas are religious in nature and there is a significant disparity in what we pay in tuition and the actual cost to educate. What this means is that many of our schools lack special education services. Speech Therapy, assistance for dyslexic students, enrichment for high-achieving students, services for autistic students and paraprofessionals are virtually non-existent.

This means if your child needs help, we must either look to expensive private therapies/assistance or utilize the services provided by the PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

I have personal experience with both ends of the spectrum – with a son who is high-achieving and needs additional enrichment, and a son with dyslexia. Our private school is NOT able to provide them what they need, and we must look to private services (which are extremely expensive) and our local public school district, which thankfully provides exceptional services for my sons.

This bill will have a negative impact on ALL Kansas students. The fact that you are considering this bill is alarming. Undermining public education is alarming. I urge you to do the right thing and kill this bill. As public servants you have an obligation to ensure ALL your constituents, including children, benefit from the legislation you bring forward. **HB2218 This is not one of them.**

Please vote NO on HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration,

Elizabeth McDole

Prairie Village

February 6, 2023
Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME:Emily Meissen-Sebelius

TITLE: Parent of children in Shawnee Mission School District

EMAIL ADDRESS: emsebelius@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. I believe public schools benefit the entire community and state, they provide opportunities for ALL children, they have layers of public oversight, and are uniquely qualified to receive public support for these reasons.

As a parent, I strongly believe that public schools are the bedrock of our communities, in our rural, suburban and urban areas of the state. As a family, we chose to live in Kansas, and Johnson County, specifically because of the high quality public schools. Strong public schools attract quality businesses and employers, as well as create a robust future workforce for our state. Johnson County is evidence of this in practice, as well as other areas of the state where public schools serve as community and economic hubs.

Very importantly, public schools provide opportunity to ALL children, regardless of income, religion, academic needs or abilities. Parents who would like to, can choose to send their children to private schools, but I believe that **public funds** should be reserved for **public schools** only, specifically because of their very unique accountability and mission to serve ALL children. Public schools cannot deny admission and diverting public funds to private schools that can set limits on whom they serve, is unfair and a poor use of our public dollars, particularly in a bill like HB2218 which is not reserved for low-income families. I am also concerned with using public funds for private schools that do not have the same accountability and oversight as our public schools, creating a system vulnerable to fraud and abuse of our tax payer dollars.

As a family, we have had very positive experiences with our public schools, and I think it is incredibly important to keep public funding with these institutions to continue to improve and build upon them, making them even better for all in the community who would like to and/or need to access public education. Our teachers and staff are professional, caring and incredibly competent. They work so hard, especially over the last few years, to meet the diverse needs of children and our community. I am forever grateful for our teachers, who have helped our

children navigate a global pandemic and continue to grow and learn through adversity. Over the last few years, retaining teachers and staff in public schools has been a challenge. We should be fully funding special education and creating innovative opportunities to attract and retain teachers. The legislature should be doing EVERYTHING within its power to support our public schools, teachers and students, and in turn our state economy. Bills like HB2218 do just the opposite. I'd urge you to keep public funds tied to public schools and vote in opposition of HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration, and sincere thank you for your service to our great state.

Emily Meissen-Sebelius
Parent of a 1st and 5th grader in Shawnee Mission School District
Prairie Village Ks.

February 2, 2023
Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Eric Persson
TITLE: Parent of two SMSD students
EMAIL ADDRESS: ericjpersson@hotmail.com
BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts
PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent
ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

90% of Kansas kids attend public schools. This Education Savings Account voucher program hurts Kansas kids.

⚠️ Voucher programs drain public education budgets while providing public funds to private schools who can discriminate in their admissions.

⚠️ Private and home schools are not held to the same oversight and accountability expected of public schools and are not required to report on the academic progress of students receiving public dollars.

⚠️ has no eligibility limits and

⚠️ allows public school funds to be diverted for home schools, as well

As such, this bill will result in an even bigger reduction to public school budgets.

As a parent of two children who are attending public school in the SMSD and as a PTA member and husband of a PTA President, I strongly encourage you to oppose bill number HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration.

Eric Persson
Shawnee, KS

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Erin Potter

TITLE: Parent, Olathe Public Schools

EMAIL ADDRESS: erinelizabeth1608@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB 2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only

Dear Chair & members of the committee, I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. As a parent of a child with a disability, I believe that public schools should retain public funds and Kansas should fully fund special education. Private schools do not have to provide special education services, do not have to accept all students and lack the same oversight as public schools. I am asking that you oppose bill HB2218. Thank you for your consideration.

Erin Potter

Parent

Olathe

February 2, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee
Erin Shoemake, Concerned Parent of 2 SMSD Elementary Students
erin.shoemake@gmail.com

Bill Number: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

Opponent

Written Only Testimony

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

As a mother of 2 special needs children who currently attend public school in the Shawnee Mission School district and a personal alumnus of public schools growing up, I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

- 90% of Kansas kids attend public schools. This Education Savings Account voucher program hurts Kansas kids.
- Voucher programs drain public education budgets while providing public funds to private schools who can discriminate in their admissions.
- Private and home schools are not held to the same oversight and accountability expected of public schools and are not required to report on the academic progress of students receiving public dollars.
- It has no eligibility limits and allows public school funds to be diverted for home schools.
- Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children.
- Instead of funding private and home schools, the legislature should focus on fully funding special education.
- Private schools that can choose which children they want to serve should not receive our public dollars.

This bill will result in an even bigger reduction to public school budgets.

I am asking you to oppose or vote no on bill HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Erin Shoemake
Concerned Parent of 2 SMSD Elementary Students
Overland Park

Erica Shook–Kansas Citizen
eshook6@gmail.com
OPPONENT Testimony on HB 2218:
Sunflower Education Equity Act
For the House Committee on K-12 Education Budget
February 2, 2023

Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide **opponent** testimony related to House Bill 2218. .

In addition to being a concerned citizen of Kansas, I am a 13-year educator, a parent of students in USD 313, a grandparent of future students in multiple school districts across the state, a community member in McPherson, and I am a proud–vocal–supporter of public education in Kansas. .

I don't know of anyone who would dispute that “every child in Kansas is unique with diverse learning needs” (lines 8-9, HB 2218). As both an educator and a parent of 6 children, I certainly would not. As a grandmother of children who are each very, very different, I know this will be true of them when they become students as well.

HB 2218 states, “The sunflower education equity act affirms that equity in education means that all children shall receive what they need educationally regardless of their socioeconomic, racial or cultural status. The act affirms and promotes that all children, without preference or bias, are uniquely capable and worthy of meeting and exceeding the highest caliber of expectations in an environment that best promotes their unique qualities, abilities, needs and goals” (lines 14-20, HB 2218). While this statement is true of the requirements of public schools in Kansas, it is inherently false when one starts talking about non-public schools. There is no oversight from the Department of Education or the state of Kansas to ensure the same requirements are met for students or educators in these settings as they must be in public schools, which are funded by tax dollars. There is no requirement for non-public schools to accept **ALL** students “regardless of their socioeconomic, racial or cultural status...without preference or bias.” In fact, they regularly do not. There is no requirement for non-public schools to accept students who are not the best and brightest in their age group. Not the most popular among their peers. Not the best athlete, musician, artist. Not from a family with a good deal of disposable income. Not completely able-bodied. In fact, the number of students who are all of these things is an incredibly **TINY** fraction of all Kansas students. Non-public schools are not required to accept students with special needs or students of color or LGBTQ+ students.

Non-public schools are legally able to do the exact opposite of everything this bill proclaims it will provide for Kansas families because there is no oversight for non-public schools–**AND** it will divert public funds away from the public schools that, in fact, do.

As a registered Kansas voter, a Kansas educator, and a Kansas parent, I respectfully request that you **not** vote for a bill that will hurt Kansas children and the public schools that educate all of them “regardless of their socioeconomic, racial or cultural status.”

Thank you,



Erica Shook



Unified School District 232



De Soto – Shawnee – Lenexa – Olathe
www.usd232.org

Frank Harwood Ed. D
Superintendent of Schools

February 2, 2023

Frank Harwood
Superintendent, USD 232 – De Soto
35200 W. 91st Street, De Soto, KS 66018
fharwood@usd232.org

House Committee on K-12 Education Budget
Opposition for HB 2218 – Sunflower Education Equity Act
Opponent
Hearing: February 6, 2023

Chair Williams and members of the committee:

Thank you for taking time to read my testimony in opposition of HB 2218. Careful consideration of all testimony is an important part of the legislative process. Unfortunately, I am not able to testify in person due to the short notice and scheduling conflicts.

I will start by stating that I am opposed to the use of public funds for private schools or for home schooling. Although we are fortunate to have some very good private schools in our area, there are not academic reasons that a student would need leave public school. I fully support a family's ability to choose private or homeschool options but public funds should not be used as a supplement. Public funds are intended to be used to provide programs of public good. For education, the Kansas Constitution defines this as providing public schools.

When considering HB 2218, other tax credits, vouchers, or education savings account legislation, the regulations and requirements that are placed on public schools should be included. HB 2567 set out the requirements for public schools allowing school choice for out of district students. These same policies should apply to any individual or organization that is granted public funds for private education. This would mean that any private school that accepts public funds, would accept all students in the order in which they apply without regard for the student's "ethnicity, national origin, gender, income level, disabling condition, proficiency in the English language, measure of achievement, aptitude or athletic ability." Additionally, no tuition should be charged. Furthermore, any agency that receives public funds should be accredited by KSDE and be held to the same level of regulation and accountability as a public school. Allowing the use of public funds for private use without comparable accountability would undermine the importance of education in our society.

We are fortunate in Kansas to have very good public schools. Although I understand the desire to support school choice, public funds should be reserved for public programs.

Again, thank you for considering my testimony in opposition of HB 2218.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Frank Harwood". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Frank" being more prominent than the last name "Harwood".

Frank Harwood
Superintendent
USD 232 – De Soto

Name: Gregory M. Bentz
Contact Information: gregbentz20@gmail.com
Bill Number: HB2218
Position on Bill: Opponent
Date of Hearing: 6 February 2023

I am an opponent of House Bill 2218 and provide this written testimony in opposition. I feel strongly that it is critically important that public funding of education remain intact. This bill, seeking to divert public education funding to private schools, undermines one of the core strengths of Kansas—Public Education. Kansas has a long history of supporting public education and these efforts have provided the state with a strong workforce and a good standard of living. Now is exactly the wrong time to be undermining our children's futures. If anything, efforts should be made to fully fund education, not reduce it. As the parent of a high school teacher, I am well aware of the difficult and challenging environment they face and the effort they put forth to teach our children the skills that these students need to succeed at life. Please do not further hamper their valiant efforts by diverting the funds these students and teachers so desperately need to be successful. This bill will also harm rural students by diverting money from the smaller rural school districts and sending it to private schools that are largely in metro areas. Finally, public tax money should be used to fund public efforts, such as our schools. Thank you for your consideration. Please oppose HB2218.

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Gregory Hack

TITLE: Kansas citizen, resident of the Olathe School District

EMAIL ADDRESS: gregorylhack@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: written

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. Our children received excellent public educations in our local schools, and we think all children in Kansas deserve similarly excellent educational opportunities. This requires that the state spend our tax dollars on public schools, in sufficient amounts that every Kansas public school provides a great education. Education Savings Accounts will benefit the already well-off in urban areas; we need to support rural schools, not undermine them by sending their money elsewhere.

Please vote NO on HB2218 and keep Kansas public education fully funded.

Thank you.

Gregory Hack
Lenexa 66220

Grace Whisler – Kansas Citizen

Contact Information – gracewhis27@gmail.com

HB 2218 sunflower education equity act

Position on bill: Opponent

Hearing Date: 2/6/23

My name is Grace Whisler and I am a former student and now community member of USD 313.

I am writing to express my opposition to this bill because public schools are a critical system in communities across the state and nation. Tax-payer dollars belong to public systems, including our public schools. My background as a student of public education has paved my future thanks to the accountability of public school standards and equal opportunity provided by public education. By accepting all students, public schools promote equity in their community. The objective of public schools is not to function for monetary profit, but as an investment for future citizens.

I support our public school teachers and hope for a bill in the future that will address the teacher shortages, offer current public educators greater support, and invest in our public schools.

Best,

Grace Whisler

February 6, 2023
Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

Heidi Atlas
Parent, Shawnee Mission School District and Kansas Citizen
hatlas@gmail.com
HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts
Opponent

WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY:

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my strong opposition to bill HB2218.

I am a parent of two children in our public school system, one of whom is served by an IEP and for whom private school would not serve their needs as well.

I strongly oppose voucher programs like Education Savings Accounts. Public tax dollars should remain with schools that accept and educate all children. The Legislature should fulfill its responsibility to the citizens of Kansas by focusing on fully funding special education, not funding home-based and private programs.

Moreover, Education Savings Accounts aren't available to rural students who have little to no options besides private schools. Rural communities will be subsidizing private schools for students in metro areas. Loss of funding could cause school consolidations and will have big impacts on community life.

Private schools that can choose which children they want to serve should not receive our public dollars! I ask that you oppose HB 2218.

Thank you for your consideration.

Heidi Atlas
Parent, Shawnee Mission School District
Leawood, KS

February 6, 2023
Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Heather Grimsley

TITLE: Parent in Blue Valley School district, former teacher in Shawnee Mission and Johnson County Private Catholic School

EMAIL ADDRESS: hgrimsley@gmail.com]

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROponent, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only Testimony

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

I am a parent in the Blue Valley School district and I urge you to vote no on bill HB 2048. Our public tax dollars should stay with our public schools that serve all children, regardless of need.

I have taught in the Shawnee Mission School District. I have taught for a Catholic school in Johnson County. Public tax dollars should not be going to schools that do not accept and educate all children. Private schools are very careful about this. It isn't that they refuse students (although they often do), but they make it so difficult for students needing services to be successful in their schools. Private schools (speaking specifically from my experience in Johnson County Catholic schools vs teaching in SMSD or watching my own children in BVSD) do not have the resources for students with special needs. They do not offer PT, OT, speech therapy, gifted services, or other special education services. Should parents still choose to have their child with special needs attend, they are responsible for transportation to the public schools where those services are provided. This disrupts that student's day and takes time away from learning. Because of this many parents forgo the private school. I taught 3 years in a Catholic school. I never had a student with a IEP or 504 plan. In the same time at a school in SMSD, I never had fewer than 2 a year and some years many more. Public money needs to stay with our public schools.

Instead of expanding the Tax Credit Scholarship program when there is no evidence to ensure participating students are succeeding, please stay focused on our public schools that educate 90% of Kansas kids. Our tax dollars should be used to fully fund special education.

I'm asking you to oppose and vote no on HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration.

Heather Grimsley
Overland Park, KS

Hannah Howard
Kansas Citizen
hpatterson916@gmail.com
HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts
Opponent
Feb. 2, 2023
Written Only Testimony

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. Education Savings Accounts aren't available to rural students who have little to no options besides public schools. Many of my family members reside in rural Kansas, and benefit from the public school systems. Rural communities will be subsidizing private school for students in metro areas. Loss of funding could cause school consolidations and will have big impacts on community life, particularly my family's community life. Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children in Kansas.

Please vote NO on Bill HB 2218

Thank you for your consideration,

Hannah
Merriam, KS 66204

February 2, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

Hilary Junk
hilary.junk@gmail.com

HOUSE BILL 2218: Sunflower Education Savings Accounts
OPPONENT
WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY

Dear Chair & Members of the Committee:

I am writing to voice my opposition to House Bill 2218. I am a proud graduate of the Kansas public schools, and my professional success is a testament to the high-quality education I received. I have returned to the state after 15 years with the intent to support the community that invested so much in my education and future.

I request that you please vote no on House Bill 2218 as it will lower the overall education level of children across the state. I'm gravely concerned that this bill is focused on intent without any consideration of impact of application, especially in the long-term. Will Kansas still be an attractive place for employers and their employees when our public schools are highlighted in the press for falling output as a result of losing funding from this bill?

House Bill 2218 will divert public tax dollars to private schools at a time when legislators should be focused on the \$160 million shortfall in special education funding. Public tax dollars are for the public good. The state should fully fund special education, not private schools. Using public tax payer dollars for private schools drains the public schools of needed resources for successful student learning.

Furthermore, House Bill 2218 lacks a way to assess if taxpayer dollars diverted to private or home schools are being used properly or measured. Taxpayer dollars should require the same oversight and transparency as our public schools. Continued research demonstrates that private school vouchers do not improve student achievement.

I respectfully request that you vote no on House Bill 2218. This bill will negatively impact not only students, but all Kansans.

Sincerely,

Hilary Junk
Hilary.junk@gmail.com

Cc: Mike Thompson mike.thompson@senate.ks.gov
Laura Williams laura.williams@house.ks.gov

Hugh Miner

Parent

hughminer@gmail.com

HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Account

Opponent

Written Only Testimony

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

I feel this HB2218 Bill is nothing more than a money grab. I do not want my hard-earned tax dollars going to fund private businesses. We do enough for Pro Sport teams funding their stadiums and much more. They make millions of dollars off our backs. These private schools do not have the same oversight as public schools, yet they want voucher funds to pad their profits. It's honestly outrageous. Kids will surely be left behind. I'm from a small Northeast KS town. The loss of Public School funds will decimate the budget of a school that is already underfunded. Let's strengthen our Public Schools. Kansas schools used to be a great source of pride for our State. But the constant underfunding of our schools has changed that. I feel so badly for the youth of our State who suffer so the wealthy can make a few extra bucks.

I strongly oppose the HB2218 bill.

Thank you for your consideration.

Hugh Miner

Parent

Overland Park

To: The House K-12 Budget Committee
Date: February 6, 2023
Re: HB 2218 written testimony in opposition

From: Hannah Schumacher, Parent of students in Topeka Public Schools
herschumacher@gmail.com

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. As a Kansas taxpayer, parent of three children in Topeka Public Schools and a former special education teacher I am very concerned with what this bill wants to do with tax money.

HB 2218 will have a negative impact on public schools and the low income students it intends to serve by diverting public money to private schools. Our communities need strong public schools with a myriad of services fully funded by public money. Taxpayer money should not be going to private schools or homeschools that don't have to serve all students, or abide by the same state regulations.

Many in support of this bill argue that private school/homeschooling is better than public schools. That's simply not true. Private schools are designed to be able to choose their scholars. They set academic standards and deny those "at-risk" or with special needs, all while not being held to the same reporting standards as public schools. The lone private high school in Topeka had a smaller percentage of their low income students score 3 or 4 on the Kansas State Assessment in math and reading over the last three years compared to three of the four local public school districts. This bill is trying to devote taxpayer money to schools that can't prove they're educating the low income students to the level of college and career readiness.

Public schools funded by taxpayer money are the backbone of communities and harness our greatest assets. Diverting public taxpayer funds to private schools or homeschools will harm all Kansas students. As a parent and taxpayer I urge you to oppose HB 2218.

Thank you for allowing me to submit written testimony,

Hannah Schumacher
2208 SW Knollwood Dr
Topeka KS 66611

- a) Ian Graves - Kansas Citizen
- b) 7646 Aberdeen St.
Prairie Village KS 66208
ian.graves@protonmail.com
- c) HB 2218 Sunflower Education Equity Act
- d) Position on bill: Opponent
- e) Hearing Date: 2/6/2023

Members of the House Committee on K-12 Education Budget:

I am a parent with students in Kansas schools and I deeply oppose the trojan horse that is "educational savings accounts" in Kansas.

HB 2218 is impressive in the length that it goes to behave like it's implementing a public good when it's doing the exact opposite. To put it frankly, **this bill is hot garbage.**

"Education Savings Accounts" are kind of like HSAs or "Health Savings Accounts," but they manage to be even worse. At least with a health savings account, we know that our government is denying us a basic public good in the form of universal healthcare and opts to, instead, provide us with a savings vehicle that doesn't work to meet the cost of healthcare.

"Education Savings Accounts" are worse. Instead of starting from a public good that we don't have, the ESA idea starts from a public good we do have, strips it down for spare parts, and then gives us scraps that we can use to "pay for an alternative." An alternative, I should add, that more than likely won't be fully defrayed by inflows to an ESA. All the while, the Universal Benefit of public education is kneecapped yet again.

If the goal is to shred what little public goods we have left in this state that families rely on, then the ESA is an obvious yes. But I think most folks like those public goods and would like to keep them, nay, would like to strengthen them in real ways that matter. Not siphon off taxpayer dollars to unregulated schools with no oversight as to what kinds of things are being taught. Our schools are not a strip mine for special interest groups, especially those built on the fever dream of privatizing everything.

If you would like to improve educational opportunities in Kansas, then invest the time and resources into improving our public schools. Don't engage in nonsensical fantasies about "free market

competition" pulling a rabbit out of a hat and producing better results. HB 2218 will leave education budgets broken and our kids with worse outcomes.

Vote down HB 2218. Send it to the trashcan where it belongs.

Ian Graves, Prairie Village, KS

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Jill Black

TITLE: Parent, Shawnee Mission School District

EMAIL ADDRESS: jillblack@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

I am a parent of three elementary students in the Shawnee Mission School District. I value public schools because I believe a strong education is a right for all citizens. With 90 percent of Kansas children attending public schools, weakening the funding to these schools weakens the education for that 90 percent. I oppose voucher programs like education savings accounts because public funding cannot and should not be diverted to schools that are not held to the same oversight, accountability, and reporting as current public schools are. Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children.

I am asking that asking that our State representatives Vote No on bill HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jill Black

Lenexa, KS

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Janice Brunks

TITLE: Kansas Citizen, Mother of Kansas Public School Graduates and Grandmother of Current Public-School Students

EMAIL ADDRESS: jmbrunks@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY

Dear Chair & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

For the sake of our country, it is imperative that our children receive the best public education available.

Below are just a few reasons why keeping public dollars for public schools is so important.

- Using public dollars for private schools drains the public schools of needed resources for successful student learning.
- Rural students will suffer as public school funding is funneled to private schools mainly located in metro areas.
- Public tax dollars belong with our public schools who accept and educate all kids.
- Public schools are accountable and transparent to the parents and community they serve.
- Private schools do not have the same state mandated requirements for accountability and transparency.

Again, I highly oppose HB2218.

Thank you for your attention.

Janice Brunks
Olathe, Kansas

February 2, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

Name: Jamie Cluff

Title: Parent, substitute teacher, and future Kansas secondary English educator

Email: Jamie.Cluff.3@gmail.com

Bill number: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

Position: Opponent

Testimony: Written Testimony

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing you today to voice my deepest opposition to HB2218. My children have been Kansas public school students for the last two years, and I have been a sub in our local school district for one. During this time, they have had access to wonderful teachers, and I have seen incredibly talented, wonderful young people through these institutions of learning. That said, I have also been a firsthand witness of the crisis facing our public-school systems. Teachers are quitting in droves, substitutes are hard to come by, access to resources is continuously limited, teacher's have not seen raises in three years, and more. Diverting public tax dollars away from public schools for private institutions or homeschooling will do nothing but further this crisis. Make no mistake—there is no group of teachers waiting in the wings to save us from this crisis.

If we pass this bill, we continue to tell teachers and prospective teachers that we do not care about them, about their students, or about the resources they have to ensure *every* child gets the education they rightfully deserve. Private schools can pick and choose who they admit to their schools, homeschooling can limit significantly what students learn about; but public schools are the place for *every* student, of *every* background, for *every* future. It seems absolutely ludicrous to risk further defunding of public schools when they already are not funded well-enough as it is. And what's worse? Students on IEP's who need special services are the highest on the chopping block with this proposal to divert funds in other directions. Every student deserves *quality* education, be they on an IEP, 504, or other type of plan, and diverting funds away from them tells parents and schools alike that the state of Kansas does not believe that these students are worth the investment—in fact they are worth defunding.

Public schools must have access to resources for their students to thrive, and private entities should not be entitled to those funds; they are meant for all students, not those who are deemed “worthy” of the private school system. The students of Kansas are depending on us, on *you*, to make the right choice today. There is no group of teachers waiting in the wings, please vote

against this bill to ensure that students and teachers across the state are given access to the resources they need.

Thank you for your consideration, and please do what is right for the students and teachers of Kansas.

Jamie Cluff

Parent, substitute teacher, and future Kansas secondary English educator

Maize, Kansas (USD266)

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: John D. Cowden

TITLE: Pediatrician, Parent of children in Shawnee Mission School District

EMAIL ADDRESS: jdceel@yahoo.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

When fully supported, public schools serve as the foundation for strong communities. When neglected, they show how our sense of community has eroded, encouraging parents to send children away to private schools outside their own communities. While I understand the frustration many feel about the state of public schools in some areas, I am worried about our tax money, which is meant for the public good, being earmarked to support only part of our community, namely those children who live in families that can afford to pay the difference between a voucher's value and private school tuition and those who do not have special education needs.

In my pediatric practice, I care for many children with special health needs and developmental delays. It is painfully clear to me that the current \$160 million shortfall in special education funding directly impacts the ability of these children to get the support and education they need. To divert money away from public education when there are so many children in need who cannot access private schools (that are not required to provide them an appropriate set of services) is frustrating to see. It brings to mind the questions we ask ourselves when looking at changes we are considering in the hospital and the clinic: Who benefits? Who is burdened?

I believe in this case that the burdens of this bill on individual children, their families, and the community at large are greater than benefits that might be enjoyed by private schools and the select children who can access them.

Please don't divest from our communities and please vote no on bill HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration.

John D. Cowden, MD
Prairie Village, KS

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

Name: Jennifer Day

Title: Kansas citizen

Email: jendaykc@gmail.com

Bill #: HB 2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

Proponent, Opponent, Neutral: Opponent

Oral or Written Only Testimony: Written only

Dear Chair and members of the committee,

I am writing today to express my opposition to HB 2218. As a person who is childless by choice, many of you may believe I have no reason to have an opinion on this matter. However, as a taxpaying Kansan, I believe we *all* should have a strong opinion on the type of legislation that this bill represents.

Even as a childless citizen, I have long been aware of how important our public school system is to Kansans. People move here to take advantage of what we have to offer...or at least they used to. As legislators continue to push for public funds being funneled to support private schools, I can't help but wonder what might happen to our property values if bills like HB 2218 are implemented?

What will happen to our public schools when they continue to experience depleted funds needed for successful student learning? What will happen to those students who are rejected by private institutions which are unable to provide for their specific educational needs? What will happen to our rural schools as their funds are directed to private schools located in metropolitan areas of the state?

It's hard to fully state my position on this bill since there isn't a fiscal note associated with it as of the deadline to provide testimony. However, I will always strongly advocate for public tax dollars being used to support our public schools to the fullest extent possible, and for private schools to use other means, such as philanthropic sources, to fund their scholarship desires.

I hope that you will act judiciously on this legislation and vote no on HB 2218.

I thank the committee for your consideration of my position.

Jennifer Day

Overland Park, KS 66204

February 2, 2023 Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Justin Dean

TITLE: Parent

EMAIL ADDRESS: justindeankc@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. I oppose the bill because, as the recipient of a public school education myself, I value our public schools and believe they are a critical part of our society. I also believe that our public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children. Instead of funding private and home schools, I would encourage the legislature to focus on fully funding special education programs in our public schools.

Thank you for your consideration.

Justin Dean

Prairie Village, KS

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Jennifer Ensz _____

TITLE: parent, SMSD elementary age kids x 2 _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: jenensz@gmail.com _____

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: written

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my strong opposition to bill HB2218. I have 2 boys, one of which was a preemie and has had an IEP since he was age 3. He will likely always need extra support as he continues to progress through elementary school and beyond to middle and high school. I am not alone in my position.

Funds need to stay in our district. Private schools raise funds through private donors within their community, and thus public schools should not be sharing the same pool of funds. We are lacking space in our school, we are lacking equipment/resources that private schools are able to fund without needing to ask the state/local governments to step in.

Please vote no. Keep public funds in our public schools.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jennifer Ensz

Parent of SMSD children (Corinth Elementary School, Prairie Village, KS)

From: Jennifer Fellers jfellers610@gmail.com
Subject: HB 2218 opposition written only testimony
Date: February 2, 2023 at 2:17 PM
To: cindy.neighbor@house.ks.gov, garret.belknap@house.ks.gov, pat.petthey@senate.ks.gov



February 6, 2023 Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Jennifer Fellers

TITLE: RN, School Nurse Merriam Park Elementary, Parent of children in the public school system

EMAIL ADDRESS: jfellers610@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. I have been working in the public school setting for 6+ years and believe that public tax dollars should remain with our public schools who accept ALL children vs private schools who can choose which children they want to serve. Furthermore, my own child has an IEP that the public school setting accommodates. I ask you to vote no on include bill HB2218 and thank you for your consideration.

Jennifer Fellers RN

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Jennifer Hawaslii

TITLE: Parent, Leawood Elementary School, Blue Valley School District

EMAIL ADDRESS: Jennifer.pick@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

As a parent of children in both public and private schools, I oppose this measure, and ask you to do the same because our public school system currently offers a free and quality education to all students, and our society needs an educated public for our democracy to function well. This is how our public tax dollars should be used — in the greatest interest of all. Our current system gives everyone a chance for a quality education and has produced a number of outstanding Americans, who took advantage of the free and quality education provided by public schools. Without this, American society could become further fractured and divided, and we risk losing some of the most valuable members of our society, because they won't be able to participate fully due to a lack of education. Individuals choosing to route their kids to private institutions for whatever reason may choose to do so in the current system by supplying their own funds. Private school has always been a luxury education in the United States, and should remain so.

Please oppose or vote no on HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration

Dr. Jennifer Hawaslii, MD

Parent, Blue Valley School System, Leawood Elementary School

February 2, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

Jennifer James
Jennifer.mcfadden@yahoo.com
HB2218 Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

Opponent

Written Only Testimony

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

I am a parent of two young children in the Shawnee Mission School District where school is FREE. Private schools get funding from people paying them! We cannot afford to send our kids to private schools and now you're wanting to give them taxpayers dollars. Don't they already get taxpayer dollars for their churches which are usually associated with schools. I oppose HB2218 because it diverts public tax dollars from our **public school** children. Public schools are required to educate *all children* – even “the least of these.” Private schools can choose to admit children at their discretion which means my daughter probably wouldn't even be allowed due to her soon having an IEP with the school. Our state is strong because our citizens all had an equal chance at a quality education. I implore you to vote NO on this bill. Also no more incentive for home school parents. Kids need socialization and access to FREE school. If millions are pulled then all education will go down the drain. Its hard enough finding teachers, if you pull the funding public schools will have to start charging for school and then there will be millions of families without the ability to send their kids to school. Please think of the big picture here.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Jennifer James
Overland Park

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

Jennifer Jarrell

Parent of students in Kansas public schools for over 20 years, longtime PTO volunteer, and former Republican Precinct Committeewoman

Contact: jarrellville@gmail.com

RE: HB2218 Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

Opponent

Written Testimony

Chair & members of the committee:

Like countless other Kansans, I oppose HB2218. Public dollars belong in public institutions with public oversight and accountability to taxpayers. Whether we're discussing ESAs or other types of voucher-schemes, it's all the same. Public dollars should not be funding private schools, religious schools, home schools, nor materials and services to support those entities.

If supporters of this onerous bill truly valued Kansans children, you'd be directing your efforts toward bolstering public schools in our state – schools that educate every child, regardless of race, creed, ability, income, and countless other factors. Instead, certain members of this committee are attempting to make the dismantling of Kansas public education into an art form. We see you at work.

Unlike most of you, I actually have children in public school today. In fact, I've had children in public school for so many years that I've witnessed first-hand the devastation of the Brownback Tax Disaster on our schools – the fallout of which continues today. Perhaps if more of you were public school parents, or volunteered in public schools during legislative breaks, you'd understand that undercutting public education causes real harm to kids, especially the most vulnerable in our Kansas communities. That's not a pro-life position.

Citizens who pay attention to the legislature every year already know how this committee will vote, but be advised that the number of folks watching continues to grow. Some of you saw evidence of this in the past election cycle. Sooner or later, votes against the schools in our communities will come home to roost at the ballot box.

Jennifer Jarrell

14404 Falmouth St.

Leawood, KS 66224

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Jill Jolicoeur

TITLE: Parent, Shawnee Mission School District

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, OR NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written only

Dear Chair and members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

As a parent of two children in the Shawnee Mission School District, and graduate of the Blue Valley School District, now serving my community full time as a public servant in area local government management, the value I place on the public education system is immeasurable. I see our school administrators, teachers, staff, from paraprofessionals to bus drivers, show up each day to provide our students with a quality education using the tools and resources they have available to them. Any loss of state funding threatens to undermine this work, and I am deeply opposed to those funds being redirected to private institutions that are not required to serve all children in Kansas in a just and equitable way. I'm proud to be a member of the Shawnee Mission School District community and will do all I can to support the administrators, teachers, staff and students it serves, including advocating for the vital funding that is needed to support this system. I honor the parents and communities across Kansas that share these same sentiments for their local schools and the role they play in the lives and well-being of Kansans.

I appreciate the time and consideration for this communication.

Jill deVries Jolicoeur

2013 West 92nd Street

Leawood, Kansas 66206

February 2, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: John D. Jones

TITLE: Parent

EMAIL ADDRESS: jdj5588@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

I attended public schools in Kansas growing up and now my 2 boys do as well. I would like to think that the education my sons are receiving is as good or better than the education I received. My son Porter has an IEP. The additional assistance he receives as part of his IEP will benefit him throughout the remainder of his education and throughout his life.

Our Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children. Instead of funding private and home schools, the legislature should focus on fully funding special education. Private schools that can choose which children they want to serve should not receive our public dollars.

I respectfully ask you to vote NO on bill HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration.

John D. Jones

Leawood, KS

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Jennifer Klenke

TITLE: Citizen of Leawood, KS, former private school educator, and parent of children at Brookwood Elementary School

EMAIL ADDRESS: jenfrank.jf@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: written

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

Our public schools are the backbone of our community and they already need more state assistance than they are currently getting. The voucher program will gut our schools, giving a share of what those in need are receiving to those with more than enough. This is a ploy to get our government to fund religious education, which is boldly against our Bill of Rights. This bill can not pass. I beg you to vote NO on HB2218.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this matter.

Jennifer Klenke

Parent and Educator

Leawood, KS

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Janet Majure

TITLE: Fifth-generation Kansan, product of public schools and parent of a public school graduate

EMAIL ADDRESS: jmajure@sbcglobal.net

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written testimony only

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my strong opposition to bill HB2218. I do so as a Kansan who has benefited from Kansas' former commitment to great public schools both as a parent and as a student.

This bill is wrong because it:

--benefits a few at the expense of the many.

--involves public money (beyond tax exemption) in religion.

--does not impose the same demands on private schools that public schools must meet.

I understand that some people do not like public schools for various reasons, but it is not the roll of Kansas taxpayers to subsidize such personal preferences. Also, this bill seems like an obvious target for a legal challenge, and it's time to quit paying lawyers to defend (and ultimately lose, as a rule) unconstitutional laws.

Do the right thing and vote NO on this bad legislation. The backward thinking it represents will not help Kansas keep and attract families and businesses.

Thank you for your consideration.

Janet Majure

Lawrence, Kansas

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Julie Matlage

TITLE: parent of children who attended Olathe School District, retired officer of Black & Veatch

EMAIL ADDRESS: jematlage@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: written only

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

I believe public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children. Private schools that can pick and choose which children they want to serve should not receive our public dollars. Public schools cannot afford to lose any public tax dollars as they are already strapped financially to give students what they need for success. After the pandemic and school closings, the less fortunate students are even farther behind the students from families with money. They need our support now more than ever.

Please vote NO on bill HB 2218.

Thank you for your consideration.

Julie Matlage

Olathe

February 2, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

Julie McInerney

jachonko@bluevalleyk12.org

HB2218 Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

Opponent

Written Only Testimony

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

I am a parent of two young children in the Shawnee Mission School District where school is FREE. I am also a teacher in the Blue Valley School District, where school is FREE! Private schools get funding from people paying them! We cannot afford to send our kids to private schools and now you're wanting to give them taxpayers dollars. Don't they already get taxpayer dollars for their churches which are usually associated with schools. I oppose HB2218 because it diverts public tax dollars from our **public school** children. Public schools are required to educate *all children* – even “the least of these.” Private schools can choose to admit children at their discretion which means my daughter probably wouldn't even be allowed due to her soon having an IEP with the school. Our state is strong because our citizens all had an equal chance at a quality education. I implore you to vote NO on this bill. Also no more incentive for home school parents. Kids need socialization and access to FREE school. If millions are pulled then all education will go down the drain. Its hard enough finding teachers, if you pull the funding public schools will have to start charging for school and then there will be millions of families without the ability to send their kids to school. Please think of the big picture here.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Julie McInerney

Leawood KS

717 W. 4th St.

Haysville, KS 67060

February 1, 2023

To: The House Committee on K-12 Budget

Topic: Letter in Opposition to HB 2218

I am opposed to HB 2218 for the following reason:

- This bill creates a dual education system in Kansas. The governing board for private schools would be appointed by politicians, whereas public schools are governed by an elected state school board and local school boards.
- This bill creates more bureaucracy in the Kansas school system.
- The bill is much too generous to those who donate for voucher scholarships. Why should donors get a bigger tax break than normal charity donations?
- Many private schools and homeschools use curricula materials that are weak in science or even deny the findings of science. (I have taught many college students who went to private schools - and my daughter who has both homeschooled and taught in a private school, verified that this is true in her experience.)
- Students need to be exposed to broader ideas and experiences. By extending the program to high school students, a student may graduate without being exposed to those broader ideas or different cultures.
- The money could be much better spent. It could be used for currently underfunded special ed programs or early childhood programs. An NCLS speaker provided data that early childhood education returns four times as much money as is spent. The savings come in decreased remedial education, reduced incarceration, and higher incomes which results in better productivity and higher salaries - which leads to more tax income for the state. It also probably leads to better citizenship.
- This would disadvantage many rural students who only have public schools available. This could cost Kansas up to \$20 million in tax income and take money that could be spent on rural public schools.
- There is no evidence that disadvantaged students get a better education at private schools. The claims that public schools are failing are based upon flawed methodology and are meaningless.
- If parents want to send their children to private schools or to homeschool them, they should pay the expenses. Currently, most of the children attending private schools are those of wealthy

parents. The scholarships would essentially help pay for educating children whose parents are wealthy and can afford it.

- This bill would encourage private schools to try to recruit the best students and athletes - and they may avoid taking problem students or those with learning disabilities, which would greatly hurt public schools in the area. And, they would receive scholarship money to do this.
- Private schools are not held to the same standards for teacher preparation or curricula as public schools, so students attending them may be shortchanged.
- Originally created to help low income students receive a better education, this concept has now been expanded until it is now mostly a tax break for wealthy Kansans and corporations. Please vote “no” and show your support for Kansas’ public schools.

Respectfully submitted,

Jesse C. Moore

316-558-7848

From: Jane W Plous

Title: Johnson County SMSD parent and grandparent

Email: jwplous@gmail.com

Bill #: HB2218 Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

Opponent

Written Only Testimony

Dear Chair and Members of the committee:

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

I believe universal public education is the cornerstone of our country and our communities. Private education dilutes this shared experience.

Furthermore, I strongly oppose my tax dollars being used for any religious instruction – Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, Baptist, or any other.

Please vote NO on HB 2218

Thank you,

Jane W. Plous

Overland Park, KS

Jeri Powers

jerijopowers@gmail.com

Written Opposition Testimony to HB 2218

Hearing Date/Time: 2-6-2023 at 3:30 pm

Members of the House K-12 Education Budget Committee,

My name is Jeri Powers and I am the 2008 Kansas Teacher of the Year. I have been a public school educator for 25 years, and am a life-long Kansan, raising three sons in Kansas public schools. I am writing to express my opposition to HB 2218.

I realize with every complex issue there are emotionally opposing views, and many times it is extremely difficult to objectively wade through the details. When I hear terms such as *parent choice*, *money follows the child*, and *school choice*, it sounds enticing. However, I also know that every decision comes with unintended consequences. My concern is that we are not thinking through what these issues will most certainly be and how to best deal with them. This bill is flawed in many ways.

Specifically, my concerns center around these issues:

1. **Equity for All Students:** How will students with special needs receive the specialized services they need and deserve? These are our most vulnerable, and when students are spread around multiple physical sites, there are not enough teachers to provide support. Additionally, special education teachers “wrap around” each of their student’s day, meaning they need to be in the same building, with the same children, throughout every day.
2. **Specialized Instruction:** I’ve spent the majority of my career working with students who have dyslexia. How will these students receive the specialized instruction they need and deserve? Many children with dyslexia do not require an IEP, rather their needs can be met in general education, with highly trained teachers and interventionists. Traveling from school-to-school wastes time and does not allow a teacher to build trusting relationships with her students.
3. **Accountability:** How will we monitor schools for quality? Who will oversee quality and from where will the funding come? How will we ensure that ALL schools follow the same rules? For example, public schools now must follow a rigorous process for accreditation. How will we make certain that all schools follow the same process? We all should have to play by the same rules if our goal is to monitor and evaluate academic outcomes.
4. **Fairness of Systems:** How will we handle schools that deny students admittance due to low academic performance, perceived cognitive ability or behavioral concerns? We can’t legally discriminate; however, it happens frequently. Public schools must take all children. This is not the case with private.
5. **Funding:** We have a limited amount of money. The more we spread that over growing options, the less we have centralized for all learners. How will we ensure that all students have the services they need, when they need it, to reach their full potential?
6. **Protection of our Most Vulnerable Children:** How will this new system support our most vulnerable children, the ones who do not have active parents, looking out for their best interest? I believe a system must be judged on how well it cares for “the least of these.”
7. **Bureaucracy:** As I read through this bill, I am shocked at the layers of bureaucracy that will be required to make this a system that advocates and protects all Kansas children. If we think there are too many layers of government involvement currently, this plan expands government control in order to ensure quality of services over a very broad range of options.

I urge you to please drop this bill and make certain it does not pass out of committee. We need to work together to improve our public schools, provide adequate funding for special education, and learn to work together in a more civil and understanding way. Please think through unintended consequences before voting.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeri Powers

22505 W 53rd Terrace

Shawnee, KS 66226

913.708.0957

February 2, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Julie Rios

TITLE: Parent of children in Kansas Public Schools

EMAIL ADDRESS: j4rios@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

HEARING DATE: February 6, 2023

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written-Only

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218 as a parent of 2 students in Kansas public schools. Tax dollars belong to public education because public schools educate ALL children, including those on IEPs or 504s (like one of my children), those whose backgrounds differ from those who run/fund the school, those who live in rural areas, those of all economic levels. Public schools have accountability, oversight and transparency. Public schools are the foundation of a community.

No organization, school or individual should receive public tax dollars for education because they are not held to the same standards, oversight and accountability as our public schools. I urge you to vote for Kansas children by voting NO on HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration,

Julie Rios
Shawnee, KS



Scott County School District

704 South College
Scott City, Kansas 67871
620-872-7600

Jamie Rumford, Superintendent

jrumford@usd466.org



To: K-12 Education Committee

Re: HB 2218 – Sunflower Education Equity Act

Date: February 2, 2023

Thank you for your attention and consideration for this written testimony regarding HB 2218. This testimony is in opposition of HB 2218. There are many concerns with this bill's attempt to support private educational institutions who can discriminate against students with high needs and have no accountability measures in place. Along with those concerns is the **negative effect it will have on rural, western Kansas school districts.**

This bill is clearly an attempt to divert taxpayer dollars that were intended for public schools to private schools, and it targets families in suburban and urban districts. The majority of school districts in Kansas are rural, and most rural, western Kansas communities have no access to private schools. They rely fully on their public school districts to provide an educated workforce with the skills and traits to influence our local economy. This bill will not equitably influence the students of Kansas, and the cost to implement it will likely result in cuts to funding for all public schools, even from those districts who cannot make use of the proposed plan.

U.S.D. 466, located in Scott City, Kansas, has experienced the fortune of a supportive community for our public school system. Our taxpayers support facility improvements, connect with students to provide work-study options, and make career changes to fill the teacher shortage and take care of our kids. We have seen positive results from increased funding. Our graduation rate has grown to 94%, post-secondary effectiveness rates outpace our expected levels, and local assessment scores have improved each year. Increased funding has allowed us to be competitive with the wages of other careers, and we have added key staff members to address our students' needs.

It has been estimated this diversion of the funds our taxpayers intended provide for the public school systems HB 2218 could approach \$250 million. Kansas public school systems are strong and progressive, and we have proven our ability to meet the needs of all students. Sufficient funding is necessary to support all students, including At-Risk, special education, and English language learners.

We encourage you to use taxpayer funds for their intended purpose and fund school districts fully. We also encourage your support of the proven public school system.

In Education

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "L. Jamie Rumford".

Jamie Rumford – Superintendent of Schools

INTENTIONALLY EDUCATING TODAY, SUCCEEDING TOMORROW... WE ARE SC!

February 2, 2023
Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee
Julie Sparrow
Parent and Kansas Citizen
juliesigns@gmail.com
HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts
OPPONENT
Written Testimony Only

Dear Chair & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

I am a proud parent of 2 children in the Shawnee Mission Public School District. When planning my family, I purposely moved into this school district so my children could get a quality education. Top quality schools help drive our local communities. Property value is increased when the school district is desirable.

Using public money for private schools drains the public schools of needed resources for successful student learning. Public schools are accountable and transparent to the parents and community they serve. Private schools do not have the same state mandated requirements for accountability and transparency. Public schools are designed to serve ALL students, regardless of income. This bill would be especially devastating and inequitable to lower income students. Public schools are already struggling to fund special education. This would create an even larger deficit for those kids who need the extra support.

In summary, PLEASE vote no on Bill HB2218 and save our public schools!

Thank you for your consideration.

Julie Sparrow
Concerned Parent and Citizen
Mission, Kansas

February 6, 2023
Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Jennifer Thomas
TITLE: Parent
EMAIL ADDRESS: pastorjennifer72@gmail.com
BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts
PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent
ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: written

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

I'm writing to ask you to oppose bill HB 2218.

I'm an involved parent, and my kids have attended public school in Shawnee, KS for over a total of 20 years. My youngest has an IEP. She wouldn't have received this kind of help in a private setting. We value funding public schools and oppose funding vouchers for private schools.

I oppose voucher programs like Education Savings Accounts. Because,

- Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children.
- Instead of funding private and home schools, the legislature should focus on fully funding special education.
- Education Savings Accounts aren't available to rural students who have little to no options besides private schools. Rural communities will be subsidizing private schools for students in metro areas. Loss of funding could cause school consolidations and will have big impacts on community life.
- Private schools that can choose which children they want to serve should not receive our public dollars.

I ask the committee members to Vote No on bill HB 2218.

Thank you for your consideration of my opposition to this bill.

Jennifer Thomas
Parent
Shawnee, KS 66216

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Jeremiah Wardle

TITLE: Concerned public school parent

EMAIL ADDRESS: jwardle1326@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY:

Dear Chair & members of the committee, I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. As a parent of children in public education I strongly oppose any action taken that can harm public education in favor of private.

I am asking that you vote no on HB2218

Thank you for your consideration.

Jeremiah Wardle

Concerned public school parent

Shawnee, KS

Jonathan Zimmerman - Kansas Citizen
121 W Cleveland Ave
PO Box 265
Sterling, KS 67579
jon.zimm@gmail.com

Re: HB 2218 Sunflower Education Equity Act

My name is Jonathan Zimmerman and am a parent in USD 376. We have an outstanding public school system here in Sterling and across the state as a whole. I graduated valedictorian from Sterling H.S. in 1998 and graduated with honors from Kansas State University in 2002.

I am writing to express my opposition to HB 2218.

I am writing in opposition to this bill because passage of this bill will send our state's education system down a slippery slope leaving rural and middle and lower class families in the dark when it comes to educational opportunities.

With declining population in most areas of our state every single dollar available to the local school district is key to ensure that all students are provided with the best education we can give them. Funneling monies into the hands of those that have the means to choose to send their children to private schools does absolutely nothing to maintain or improve our education system.

The real cost of this proposal will be paid by the families that choose to stay in the public education system through the decline in their children's education experience. Our award-winning USD 376 will suffer financially and be forced to chip away at our offerings for our students. We're already dealing with a huge disadvantage when compared to larger districts and

this bill will exasperate the funding issues.

Another key point in consideration of this bill must be focused on the accountability of the private schools that might be funded by our public monies. Private schools are not bounded by the state to accept all students. They are allowed to discriminate on basis of criteria that they determine.

How will this end well? I will tell you, it won't! You will be a part of eroding the bedrock of this nation's success that has been built for decades upon decades through a robust system of public education that is envied worldwide.

If you believe the system is broken, please be a part of making improvements without burning down our house.

I ask you to not be caught up in the nationwide assault on public education and wave of misinformation buoyed by wealthy misguided individuals.

Please do not allow this bill out of committee.
Please work together in a more proactive direction to maintain and improve our public education system.

With warm regards,
Jonathan Zimmerman



Unified School District No. 357
719 N. Main • PO Box 760 • Belle Plaine, KS 67013
Phone # 620.488.2288 • Fax # 620.488.3517
<http://www.usd357.org>

ADMINISTRATION

KELLY ARNBERGER, Ed.D.
Superintendent

RICHARD GILSON
High School Principal

DAVID MARTIN
Assistant Principal/A.D.

JOSH GODWIN
Middle School Principal

MIDGE SIMMONS
Elementary Principal

TOM SIMMONS
Director of Experiential
Learning

SCHOOL BOARD

STEPHANIE SCOTT
President

DOUG ZIMMERMAN
Vice-President

BILL BERRY
Member

SALLY COX
Member

CURTIS GOENTZEL
Member

IEREMY HENRY
Member

ANGELA JEFFERIES
Member

BECKE SHIVERS
Board Clerk/HR

MARILYN ZIMMERMAN
Treasurer

To: House K-12 Budget Committee
From: Kelly Arnberger, Superintendent USD 357
Re: Testimony in opposition to HB 2218

Committee Members,

Thank you for taking the time to read this brief testimony in opposition to HB 2218. I would like to share a real-time example I believe would immediately demonstrate how problematic this bill would be if made law.

Belle Plaine is a high poverty district. We receive state aid in both the Capital Outlay and the Supplemental General Fund. Our students demonstrate significant academic and behavioral needs. We are thankful for the resources the State has provided the last several years to ensure we are able to meet the needs of our students.

Two weeks ago we enrolled four students who had not attended public school for over two years. They were "home schooled". They moved from another county in Kansas. We assessed their academic progress and agreed with the grandparent to place each child one grade lower than where one would assume they would be placed based on their ages. Truthfully, we could have placed each child in a lower grade. Our task is to acclimate the children to school and then provide intervention so they can access learning. This is not the first example, just the latest. While this is not common, it is an issue rural schools can relate to and is not unique to Belle Plaine.

We will always provide the best education to every student who walks through our doors. HB 2218 will divert resources making it harder for schools to serve students and it will encourage future scenarios in which we will repair the damage of the unregulated non-public setting.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelly Arnberger
Superintendent
Belle Plaine USD 357



February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Kelly Dean Brende

TITLE: Parent and Taxpayer

EMAIL ADDRESS: kbrende23@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only

Dear Chair & Members of the Committee:

I am writing to voice my OPPOSITION to bill HB2218.

I truly believe using public dollars for private schools drains the public schools of needed resources for successful student learning. We should not be diverting public tax dollars to private schools especially at a time when legislators should be focused on the \$160 million shortfall in special education funding. The state should fully fund special education, not private schools.

Also, low income students are hurt by voucher programs. Tuition at many private schools is greater than the amount covered by Education Savings Accounts, leaving out those students without the means to make up the difference or who don't have reliable transportation. Meanwhile, funding for their neighborhood school is drained.

Furthermore, public schools are economic drivers. Businesses and families look for quality public schools when relocating. Quality public schools also protect our property values which again drive businesses and families to relocate to Kansas.

I request that you oppose HB2218 and vote NO so this bill does not make it out of this Committee.

I appreciate your time and consideration.

Kindly,

Kelly Dean Brende
Leawood, Kansas

February 2, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

Kathryn S. Brogden
Former Speech/Language Pathologist in the public schools
Parent
Voting Citizen of Kansas and Taxpayer
brogden.kathy@gmail.com
HB 2218
OPPONENT testimony
Written Only

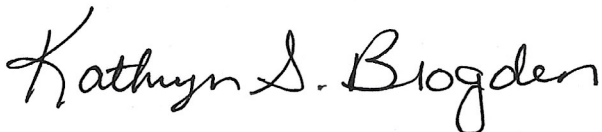
Dear Chair and members of the committee:

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

I oppose this bill for many reasons, mainly because it diverts taxpayer funds from our public schools to private schools. Private schools do not have the same accountability standards as public schools. Additionally, this is unfair to Kansas taxpayers and would create a two-tier education system that may benefit some students while hurting the majority of students.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathryn S. Brogden". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'K' and a long, sweeping underline.

Kathryn S. Brogden
Former Speech/Language Pathologist in the public schools
Parent
Voting Citizen of Kansas and Taxpayer
Olathe, KS
brogden.kathy@gmail.com

February 2, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Kristen Brown

TITLE: Parent

EMAIL ADDRESS: kristenmariebrown@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. As a parent of three children in Kansas public schools, I strongly believe that public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children. Private schools can be selective and choose which students they will serve. Public schools are doing the important work of educating all eligible children and need to be funded accordingly. A yes vote for HB2218 will divert important funds away from the students and teachers of this state who need it most.

I strongly encourage you to oppose bill number HB2218 when it comes up for a vote.

Thank you for your consideration.

Warmly,

Kristen Brown
Leawood, Kansas

February 2, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

Kellie Bubeck

Kellie.bubeck@gmail.com

HOUSE BILL 2218: Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY

Dear Chair & Members of the Committee:

I am writing to voice my opposition to House Bill 2218. I was born and raised in Olathe, Kansas, and am fortunate to have attended Olathe public schools for my entire education. The quality education I received in Kansas public schools provided the foundation for my life, including my pursuit of higher education.

I am now an attorney and mother of three children, all of whom will attend Kansas public schools. I request that you please vote no on House Bill 2218 because it will hurt public education and reduce the opportunities for other children in the state to receive a quality public education.

House Bill 2218 will divert public tax dollars to private schools at a time when legislators should be focused on the \$160 million shortfall in special education funding. The state should fully fund special education, not private schools. Using public taxpayer dollars for private schools drains the public schools of needed resources for successful student learning.

Public tax dollars are for the public good. It is no coincidence that many young couples who live in Kansas City, Missouri move to Kansas once they start having children because of the high-quality public schools.

We also need to consider the long-term implications of this bill. If we are not funding our public schools appropriately, we will have a generation of less-educated citizens, which affects us all.

In addition, this bill will disproportionately affect rural students as there are few options for private schools outside of the Kansas City metropolitan area. Voucher programs like Education Savings Accounts do not offer parents a real choice. Private schools pick and choose who they accept. Public schools accept all students.

Quality public schools benefit more than just families with children. They increase our property values. Without quality public schools, fewer individuals will be inclined to move to Kansas, which will ultimately result in a smaller tax base for the state.

Furthermore, House Bill 2218 lacks oversight and provides no review process to evaluate how students are utilizing our taxpayer dollars at private or home schools. Taxpayer dollars should

require the same oversight and transparency as our public schools. Continued research demonstrates that private school vouchers do not improve student achievement.

I respectfully request that you vote no on House Bill 2218. This bill will negatively impact not only students, but all Kansans.

Sincerely,

Kellie Bubeck

Kellie.bubeck@gmail.com

Cc: Ethan Corson ethan.corson@senate.ks.gov

Rui Xu rui.xu@house.ks.gov

February 6, 2023
Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Keith Davenport
TITLE: Parent in the Gardner Edgerton School District, USD 231
EMAIL ADDRESS: keithmdavenport@gmail.com
BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts
PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent
ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. I have three children who attend Gardner Edgerton School District and a fourth who will be old enough to do so soon. Last fall my family attended a high school football game on our team's journey to the state championship. My six-year-old was very excited to see that his first grade teacher, a parent of one of the players, was just sitting a few rows behind us in the crowded bleachers. He immediately climbed the stairs to go talk to her. Then, while the rest of us were watching the high school game, he would turn around every couple of downs to yell again to his teacher and wave. He loves his teacher and, as his teacher told me afterwards, she cares a lot about him too. It's these types of experiences that really make me and my family feel like we belong here, and it's these types of interactions that are only made possible by strong public schools.

Public schools are the basis of community. Local school districts are the primary way that families build relationships and feel a sense of belonging. These relationships are what tie people to our town and make this place feel like home. This was evident even this morning as I attended Rotary Club: an alumni of our high school founded the club, nearly all of the attendees are either alumni or parents of children currently attending public schools, and a new staff member of our fire department, who is also an alumni, visited for the first time this morning. The public schools are what tie us all together. Instead of building on this community foundation, HB 2218 encourages the opposite. I do not understand why the state would have any interest in using tax incentives to encourage people to leave this central cornerstone of our community.

The philosophy of using public funds and tax credits to be dispersed on a per-individual basis to private entities is an ineffective approach for any public service. If we were to apply the philosophies of HB 2218 to healthcare, we would see hospitals close and health outcomes plummet. If we were to apply those principles to public safety, we would have underfunded law enforcement agencies and an increase in violent and non-violent crimes. If we applied these principles to our infrastructure, we would experience disruptions to our economy due to an inefficient system of roads and bridges. Our communities need good hospitals, police departments, and roads. We also need strong public schools. Please vote no on HB 2218 and build on our communities.

Thank you for consideration,

Keith Davenport
Gardner, Kansas

- a) Katherine Dillon
- b) katherinedillon09@gmail.com
- c) HB2218 – ESA Vouchers
- d) Opponent
- e) Monday February 6, 2023

I am adamantly against HB2218 because this bill...

- Contains little to no public oversight for the expenditure of ESAs.
- Contains little to no public oversight for student achievement.
- Will lead to the creation of unregulated schools.
- Would allow any Kansas student, including those already attending private school, to use the ESA voucher.
- Prohibits students with an ESA voucher from enrolling full-time at a public school, but appears to allow part-time enrollment.
- Would establish ESA voucher accounts which would receive 95% of the BASE state aid annually, to be spent on non-public school tuition and fees.
- Would allow ESA voucher accounts to remain active for at least four years after high school graduation.
- Excludes students with disabilities who attend a non-public qualified school from instruction on required subjects.
- Would allow parents to “double dip” to receive funds for ESAs and the state’s private school tuition tax credit program.

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Kristy Ecton

TITLE: Parent of public school children and Kansas Citizen

EMAIL ADDRESS: fraser678@hotmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. Our public schools in Kansas are already hurting for funding. We can't pay teachers what they're worth, we can't fund important programs like music and art in some schools. We can't provide social workers and special needs programs. Some districts are closing down 1 day/week due to funding issues. By passing this bill, we will lose more funding that will be routed to non-public schools and home school families. Private school and home school are CHOICES of education, but for students who don't have that CHOICE, it is public school that gives them the right to education no matter what and is what our taxes pay for. I urge you to vote NO on Bill HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kristy Ecton

Parent and Kansas Citizen

Leawood, KS

Kami Fisher

Parent

fisherkami@outlook.com

HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Account Opponent

Written Only Testimony

Dear Chair and members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

HB2218

- Contains little to no public oversight for student achievement. Where are the numbers to show that our Kansas scholarship students actually do better academically in private schools? Where is the oversight?"
- Will lead to the creation of unregulated schools.
- Would allow any Kansas student, including those already attending private school, to use the ESA voucher.
- Prohibits students with an ESA voucher from enrolling full-time at a public school, but appears to allow part-time enrollment.
- Would establish ESA voucher accounts which would receive 95% of the BASE state aid annually, to be spent on non-public school tuition and fees.
- Would allow ESA voucher accounts to remain active for at least four years after high school graduation.
- Excludes students with disabilities who attend a non-public qualified school from instruction on required subjects.
- Would allow parents to "double dip" to receive funds for ESAs and the state's private school tuition tax credit program.
- Will hurt our Kansas public schools and the children who rely on them.

Please do not allow HB2218 to pass. Please oppose HB2218.

Thank you,

Kami Fisher

Parent

Overland Park

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

Kelli Fitzpatrick

Parent, Shawnee Mission School District

kellicochran@hotmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

OPPONENT

Written Only Testimony

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. It is critical that public schools in Kansas maintain, at a minimum, the current level of funding that they receive. Anything less will be a direct impact on not only the quality of education that our children receive, but the quality of our communities as a whole. I have lived in Kansas for most of my life and I'm the product of the public Shawnee Mission School District of which I'm very proud.

I have always felt that I received the same high level of education that many others have to pay thousands of dollars to receive at private schools. It's the reason my husband and I choose to live in Prairie Village, KS and I know the same is true for so many of our neighbors. We love the fact that our kids go to school with other kids that live close by – it gives us a great sense of community and strengthens our neighborhoods.

Public schools also provide critical resources to those in need in our communities, as well as funding for programs for learners who need extra support. It is critical that public schools continue to be provided with the funding to be able to provide these important programs.

I'm asking you to please protect the quality of public schools in Kansas and vote NO on HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration.



Kelli Fitzpatrick

Parent, Shawnee Mission School District

Prairie Village, Kansas

NAME: Laura Hayden

TITLE: concerned parent

EMAIL ADDRESS: laurakate45@yahoo.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: written only

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. As a parent and former teacher, I am very concerned about HB2218. Our public schools are already financially struggling to provide for our students, and have done so for several years. We are unable to fully fund special education, and many other necessary services. Our teachers need support and better compensation, as does our school support staff. We ask more and more of teachers every year, asking them to fulfill roles far beyond educating. This is the time to wrap around and support our schools and teachers, not further denigrate and defund them.

In addition, I believe that providing funding for unregulated schools such as home schools, micro-schools, and educational co-ops can put children at a disadvantage. Children should be educated by prepared, licensed teachers. They should be given the advantage of the same curriculum as all other students in the state, with the full knowledge of science and history, as well as math, literature and the arts. Also, unregulated schools lack the watchful eye of teachers who are one of the greatest resources when it comes to identifying and reporting abused and neglected children. As a foster parent educator, I know this is a critical step in keeping children safe.

Please oppose HB2218. Keep education in Kansas equal, safe, funded, and for all students.

Thank you for your time,

Laura Hayden

Parent

Olathe

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Katie Kimbrell

TITLE: Parent

EMAIL ADDRESS: laird.katie@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218 that diverts public education funds. Thank you for your consideration. Education is also the field that I work in and I know what these decisions do to oppress the marginalized and minimize opportunity, which in turn makes our whole community suffer and the short and long term.

[Katie Kimbrell]

[SMSD parent and Chief Education Officer, Startland]

[Overland Park]

February 6, 2023
Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

Name: Katrene Ladd
Title: Parent, Blue Valley Schools
Email Address: katealadd@gmail.com
Bill Number: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts
Proponent, Opponent, or Neutral: Opponent
Oral or Written only testimony: written only

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

I have three children, one of whom is in kindergarten at Sunrise Point Elementary School. We plan to send all three of our children through public school. We feel fortunate to live in a community that strongly backs our public-school district – we know this is not the case in all areas of our state – which makes this bill even more concerning for the state of education in Kansas.

Voucher programs like Education Savings Accounts pull critical resources from public schools, which educate over 90% of Kansas students. I believe that public tax dollars are for the public good and that using public dollars for private schools drains the public schools of needed resources for successful student learning. Low income students are hurt by voucher programs too. Tuition at many private schools, especially in the Kansas City area, is greater than the amount covered by ESA, leaving out those students without the means to make up the difference or who don't have reliable transportation. Meanwhile, funding for their neighborhood school is drained. Rural schools will also suffer as public-school funding is funneled to private schools mainly located in metro areas.

Please vote no on HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration.

Katrene Ladd
Overland Park, KS

February 2, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

Kimberly Pieper
kkbpieper@gmail.com
HB2218 Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

Opponent

Written Only Testimony

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

I am a parent of two young children in the Shawnee Mission School District. I oppose HB2218 because it diverts public tax dollars from our **public school** children. Public schools are required to educate *all children* – even “the least of these.” Private schools can choose to admit children at their discretion. Our state is strong because our citizens all had an equal chance at a quality education. I implore you to vote NO on this bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kimberly Pieper
Overland Park, KS

February 2, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Kelsey Sabates

TITLE:Parent

EMAIL ADDRESS: kelseysabates@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY:written only

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. My daughter is going through the IEP process within the Shawnee Mission School District and her needs would not be met at a private school.

- Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children
- Instead of funding private and home schools, the legislature should focus on fully funding special education
- Private schools that can choose which children they want to serve should not receive our public dollars

I ask that committee members vote NO on bill HB 2218

Thank you for your consideration

Kelsey Sabates

Leawood, KS

February 6, 2023
Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Kimberly Shaw
TITLE: Kansas Citizen, MA Educational Studies
EMAIL ADDRESS: kimshaw04@hotmail.com
BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts
PROPOSER, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent
ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only Testimony

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to express my opposition to bill HB2218.

As a Kansas taxpayer, former elementary public and private school teacher and product of SMSD schools I know the harm diverting millions of dollars from public schools to private and home schools can cause. As a teacher I used thousands of my own dollars to provide classroom materials and furniture for my classroom. I provided supplemental materials to support learning centers for reading, spelling and math. I've seen the value of free breakfast and lunch for children in my classroom. I've witnessed how state dollars impact the ability of reading specialists striving to improve not only children's reading fluency but my skills in teaching and diagnosing reading levels of my students. Public funds made this possible. Imagine a child who received free lunch not having that lunch and then trying to concentrate on learning when hungry. Imagine the teacher whose students don't have the needed supplies and can't afford to purchase them. Imagine the engaged children in schools that are well funded in communities that benefit economically because of these public school systems.

Let me stress the value of these dollars to providing public education to rural, suburban and urban Kansas students. It is time we work together to support our public school districts, not funnel money away under the guise of improving educational opportunity. The administrators, teachers, students, parents and tax payers in this state deserve quality schools.

Please oppose HB 2218.

Thank you for reading my testimony and considering my perspective in opposing this bill.

Kimberly A. Shaw
M.A. Educational Studies
Overland Park

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Kim Shelton

TITLE: Parent in the Shawnee Mission School District and lifelong Kansas Citizen

EMAIL ADDRESS: Kim.shelton@outlook.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written only

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

My children both attend a public school in the Shawnee Mission School District. During a time when we are losing teachers due to stress, burnout, and lack of funding, it is absolutely the wrong decision to divert public tax dollars from public schools. Over 90% of children in Kansas attend public schools, and as many teachers will tell you, there's no way to do more with less. Teachers are already paying for supplies out of their own pockets (even while they remain underpaid). To further decrease public school funding (while there is already a budget shortfall of \$160 million in special education funding) would be disastrous.

We live in a metro area, but I am also concerned about children in rural areas. The tax dollars those rural families pay would subsidize private schools in metro areas, while leaving rural children with few options.

Additionally, public schools teach ALL children, and our public tax dollars should not be used for private schools that can choose which students they accept. Use of taxpayer dollars should require the same amount of oversight and transparency as public school, which this bill does not require.

Please vote NO on HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kimberly Shelton

Kim Shelton
Prairie Village, KS

HOW TO SUBMIT TESTIMONY

1. All testimony must be received in writing, 48 hours before the committee meeting. Written testimony is also required if you want to provide oral testimony. Hearing for HB 2218 is Monday, February 6 at 3:30 in Room 546-S
2. **Deadline for submitting testimony for is 3:30 on Thursday, February 2.** Must be in PDF form emailed to garret.belknap@house.ks.gov. For questions, Garret can be reached at 785-296-3971.
3. **Subject of email** should include HB 2218 and whether testimony will be oral or written only. [ex. HB 2218 Opposition Written Only Testimony]
4. **Oral Testimony** In your email state that you want to provide oral testimony and specify whether it will be in person or via WebEx. If WebEx, you will receive WebEx link about an hour prior to the meeting.
5. It's always good to copy your state representative on your email with testimony. You can find your representative by typing in your **full** address at openstates.org. Your house representative is indicated by "lower chamber." Click on their name to find their contact info and record it in your phone for future reference.

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Kristen Sittig

TITLE: Kansas citizen, public school teacher

EMAIL ADDRESS: Kristen.sittig@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

As an educator in Kansas, every day I see the positive impact that public education has on Kansas students. Public schools teach *every* child, regardless of their level of need or their challenges. Private and charter school are not required to educate all students. Our public schools are already underfunded – teachers buy supplies out of their own pockets, parents donate money for supplies and events, and teachers are in short supply for many reasons but often because pay is not competitive with the private sector. Despite this, teachers show up every day to educate our students, and sending public money to private institutions will do nothing but further underfund public schools. Private schools can turn away the neediest students, and if vouchers undercut the funding that public schools have there will be no programs left to meet that need. Public dollars belong in public schools – an educated populace is the best investment in the future of our country and our state that we can make.

Please vote no on bill HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kristen Sittig
Middle school teacher
Kansas City

Kelsea Stueve - Kansas Citizen

kelseastueve@gmail.com

HB 2218 sunflower education equity act

Position on bill: Opponent

Hearing Date: 2/6/2023

Hi, My name is Kelsea Stueve and I am both a parent and a teacher in USD 230. I am writing to express my opposition to HB 2218 because I strongly believe that this bill will be detrimental to our youth for many reasons. The whole idea, honestly, just doesn't make much sense to me. Yes, it costs more to educate students with special needs, and yes there is a teacher shortage. However, instead of providing more funds to these schools to amend these issues and help provide these services by qualified professionals, we are trying to remove funding from our schools instead, which will allow untrained personnel to work with these kids. What happens to these kids when their basic needs aren't being met and no one notices? What happens when they're being abused and no one can tell because they never leave home? What happens when these kids decide to go elsewhere or be homeschooled, micro schooled etc, and there is no accountability nor oversight to their education. How can these unregulated schools, with untrained professionals, who can't be asked to share what they are teaching be the best option for our youth? We should be working together to improve our public schools and address the teacher shortage instead of pushing or encouraging students to go to other options. I am asking you please vote against this bill. Thank you for your time.

Karen Tritt

kmtritt@gmail.com

Written testimony opposing HB 2218

Hearing date/time: Feb 6, 2023; 3:30pm

My name is Karen Tritt and I am your 2010 Kansas Teacher of the Year. I've taught for 26 years in Kansas. I'm grateful for the opportunity to provide opposing testimony to HB 2218.

I express my deep opposition to this bill because it simply **does not put students first**.

- The bill **does not provide equity** for all citizens. As required by law, our public education system provides strategic support for EVERY student through interventions, accommodations, enrichment, and modifications. Private schools are not held to this same level of service. By virtue of their private status, these schools can accept or reject applicants based on what their school system can or wants to provide. Though HB 2218 is intended to provide choice, there is nothing here to ensure equity for families. If a child has an IEP or a 504 that requires substantial interventions, those families will most definitely not have the same choices as other families.
- The bill is **fiscally irresponsible**.
 - HB 2218 moves funds from public schools into the private/religious sector. Even though funds would go into an Educational Savings Account (ESA), a good percentage of those same funds will then go to religious institutions. This will be a new precedent that connects church and state by a single adjoining link.
 - HB 2218 removes funds from public education even though public schools will still be required to meet the needs of all students. One might argue that fewer students translates to less expense for the districts. However, if the enrollment balance shifts (per bullet #1), that argument loses water.
 - Additionally, this bill will require another level of supervision at KSDE to oversee and protect the integrity of these ESAs. The opportunity for the abuse of funds is obvious and will need to be closely supervised. The shifting of funds away from public education will impact classrooms and services.

Please do not move this bill past the committee so that our great state of Kansas can continue to provide an excellent educational environment for all of our students. Public schools build equity. This bill does not.

Karen Tritt, NBCT

2010 Kansas Teacher of the Year

Kyle Unruh – lifelong Kansan
kunruh1@gmail.com
OPPONENT Testimony on HB 2218:
Sunflower Education Equity Act
For the House Committee on K-12 Education Budget
February 2, 2023

Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for your consideration of this submitted **opponent testimony** related to House Bill 2218.

I am a lifelong and concerned citizen of Kansas, an educator of nine years, a parent of young children in USD 418, a community member in McPherson, and am a loyal proponent of public education in Kansas.

I don't know of anyone who would dispute that "every child in Kansas is unique with diverse learning needs" (lines 8-9, HB 2218). As both an educator and a parent, I certainly would not. HB 2218 states, "The sunflower education equity act affirms that equity in education means that all children shall receive what they need educationally regardless of their socioeconomic, racial or cultural status. The act affirms and promotes that all children, without preference or bias, are uniquely capable and worthy of meeting and exceeding the highest caliber of expectations in an environment that best promotes their unique qualities, abilities, needs and goals" (lines 14-20, HB 2218).

While this statement is true of the requirements of public schools in Kansas, it is inherently false when one starts talking about non-public schools. There is no oversight from the Department of Education or the state of Kansas to ensure the same requirements are met for students or educators in these settings as they must be in public schools, which are funded by tax dollars. There is no requirement for non-public schools to accept ALL students "regardless of their socioeconomic, racial or cultural status... without preference or bias." In fact, they regularly do not. There is no requirement for non-public schools to accept students who are not the best and brightest in their age group. Not the most popular among their peers. Not the best athlete, musician, artist. Not from a family with a good deal of disposable income. Not completely able-bodied. In fact, the number of students who are all of these things is an incredibly small fraction of all Kansas students. Non-public schools are not required to accept students with special needs or students of color or LGBTQ+ students.

Non-public schools are legally able to do the exact opposite of everything this bill proclaims it will provide for Kansas families because there is no oversight for non-public schools—AND it will divert public funds away from the public schools that, in fact, do.

As a registered Kansas voter, a Kansas educator, and a Kansas parent, I respectfully request that you not vote for a bill that will hurt Kansas children and the public schools that educate all of them "regardless of their socioeconomic, racial or cultural status."

Thank you,

Kyle Unruh

Katherine Warren

Katielaske@gmail.com 316-258-8399

HB 2218 sunflower education equity act

Opponent on HB 2218

Hearing Date: 2/6/2023

My name is Katie Warren and am a parent of a student in USD 259. My son is a Sophomore in Wichita Public Schools at Northwest High School. He has wonderful teachers and wonderful opportunities in Wichita Public Schools.

I am writing to express my opposition to HB 2218. I am writing in opposition to this bill because public dollars belong in public schools. I don't think it is ok for me to pay for someone's private school education when they don't have the same standards and don't have to accept all students.

*Public schools accept all students. It costs more to educated students with special needs. We should be fully funding special education, not taking funding out of schools.It bothers me because there is no oversight in these schools.

It is estimated that between 70-90% of students who use vouchers already attend private schools, so the vouchers do not reach who they are intended for. This will allow parents to "double dip" and collected both savings account money and tax scholarship credit. It will take money from my child's education. Also many states that have passed similar bills are looking at budget shortfalls.

I truly feel that we should be working together to improve our public schools and address the teacher shortage.

I just had surgery so I'm home for a few days, please feel free to reach out with any questions.

Thank you,

Katie Warren

1122 N Lark Ln, Wichita, KS 67212

Katielaske@gmail.com

316-258-8399

NAME: Kim Wilburn

TITLE: Parent of children attending SMSD schools

EMAIL: kflenker@hotmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

Dear Chair and members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

As a parent of 2 children who have attended SMSD school district, one of which has had a 504 plan since he was 8 years old, I oppose the use of our public education dollars being used in the form of vouchers for private schooling, especially as special education continues to be underfunded. Public schooling dollars belong to all, not the few who can afford private school.

Please vote NO on bill HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kim Wilburn

Merriam, KS



February 2, 2022

Written Testimony: In Opposition to House Bill 2218: establishing the sunflower education equity act; providing education savings accounts for students; establishing the sunflower education equity scholarship fund

Submitted by: Kansas Association of Special Education Administrators (KASEA)

Honorable Chair Williams and Committee Members,

The Kansas Association of Special Education Administrators (KASEA) is concerned about the effects of enacting legislation that would strip students who currently have protections under IDEA within public schools accredited by the State of Kansas. Therefore, KASEA opposes HB 2218.

Noted below are several specific concerns associated with this legislation.

1. **HB 2218 is a duplication of other statutes currently in place.** Kansas already established the Tax Credit for Low Income Students Scholarship Program under K.S.A 72-4351 through 72-4357 nearly 10 years ago. Adding another voucher program to the Kansas education system may actually conflict with the current program and confuse the general public. In addition, it also creates a burden on taxpayers and state resources to implement dual programs.

2. **Private schools are not required to be accredited through the Kansas Education Systems of Accreditation (KESA), which the Kansas State Board of Education has oversight.** Private schools that are not accredited through KESA are not held to the same accountability standards as public schools. Non-accredited schools are not required to take state assessments or submit reports to KSDE such as student discipline and Emergency Safety Interventions. Non-accredited schools are also not required to screen for reading disorders as defined by the recent Kansas Board of Education's Dyslexia training and screening regulations.

2. **Private schools are not required to accept all students,** which really gives the "choice" to the private schools, versus the student. Private schools are not bound to the requirement of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) under IDEA and may or may not allow admission of a student with a disability based on the student's disability.



3. Private schools are not obligated to implement the requirements of IDEA and are not obligated to collaborate with the local school district to provide special education services.

Private schools frequently do not choose to collaborate with their local school districts to ensure children with special needs receive services. Private schools are also not obligated to ensure implementation of IDEA's Child Find requirements which are outlined in both state and federal laws and regulations.

HB 2218 by its very name gives promise that it will create equity. If private schools can exclude students with disabilities, students with mental health issues, students who identify as LGBTQ+ or students who have parents who just happen to be of the same sex, then HB2218 is not a means to establishing equity. KASEA supports public education which ensures all students are provided opportunities to meet their unique learning and social-emotional needs. We urge our legislators to consider the complexity and inequities which would be created by opening yet another door to voucher programs in Kansas and vote no to HB 2218.

KASEA appreciates your consideration of these concerns as you act on HB 2218 during this session. Please reach out to us if you have any questions.

Patty Carter, KASEA Legislative Committee Chair

Director of Special Education Greenbush

P: 785-862-7840 ex 412 / M: 785-248-1184 / patty.carter@greenbush.org

Forbes Field

6822 SE Ross Street

Topeka, KS 66619

Doug Anderson Ph.D. KASEA President

Executive Director Keystone Learning Services

P: 785-876-2214 / M: 316-253-5415 / danderson@keystonelearning.org

500 Sunflower Blvd.

Ozawkie, KS 66070



PO Box 654
Lawrence, KS 66044
KansasInterfaithAction.org

<https://kansasinterfaithaction.org>
mrieber@kansasinterfaithaction.org
(913) 232-2336

Rabbi Moti Rieber, Executive Director
Rev. Rachael Pryor, Board Chair

Written Testimony in Opposition to HB 2218, Sunflower Education Equity Act

House K-12 Education Budget Committee, Rep. Kristey Williams, chair

February 6, 2023

Mme. Chair, Ranking Member Winn, Members of the Committee:

Kansas Interfaith Action is a statewide, multi-faith issue-advocacy organization that “puts faith into action” by educating, engaging and advocating on behalf of people of faith and the public regarding critical racial, economic and climate justice issues. We are the advocacy partner of several of the mainline denominations in Kansas, including the ELCA Lutheran Church; the Kansas-Oklahoma Conference of the UCC; the Episcopal Diocese of Kansas; and the Mercy & Justice Team of the Great Plains Conference of the UMC, as well as of Jewish and Muslim individuals and faith communities. I submit testimony in opposition to HB2218.

Public education is a foundational element of our democratic system, helping to develop an educated and enlightened citizenry. The idea that every child, whatever their background or economic status, can get equal access to a world-class education, is one of the things that we can be proudest of as Americans. Public education is a project we all share, one of the few remaining areas of life where the entire society supports a project, whether they directly benefit from it or not.

Our public schools are the pride of Kansas; from the huge and world-class schools in Johnson County to the small school districts throughout our state, every child in Kansas has the right to a good education – and they get it. We should do nothing to undermine, or to underfund our system. We’ve been down that road before.

Vouchers undermine this commitment. Privatizing public education does not improve academic achievement. Private schools, religious schools, and homeschools, are not subject to the same accountability standards as public schools, and get to choose their students, unlike our public schools, which serve all students.

As I was preparing this testimony I went, as I always do, to the statements of our denominational partners. The position of by the United Methodist Church, both in its Statement Concerning Church-Government Relations and Education (1968) and the Statement on Church-Government Relations (2016 Book of Resolutions, #5012)¹ is so strong that they deserve extensive citation here:

The fundamental purpose of universal public education at the elementary and secondary levels is to provide equal and adequate educational opportunities for all children and young people, and thereby ensure the nation an enlightened citizenry.

We believe in the principle of universal public education, and we reaffirm our support of public educational institutions. At the same time, we recognize and pledge our continued allegiance to the US

¹ Church & Society, The United Methodist Church. Social Principles and Resolutions/Church-Government Relations, #5012 (2016) <https://www.umcjustice.org/who-we-are/social-principles-and-resolutions/church-government-relations-5012>

constitutional principle that citizens have a right to establish and maintain private schools from private resources so long as such schools meet public standards of quality. Such schools have made a genuine contribution to society. We do not support the expansion or the strengthening of private schools with public funds. Furthermore, we oppose the establishment or strengthening of private schools that jeopardize the public school system or thwart valid public policy.

This bill is broader than the tuition tax credit expansion bill that we previously opposed. The schools that would benefit from this program could be unaccredited, could discriminate on the basis of race or religion, and are not subject to oversight by any government agency.

Bills like this are often called by their proponents “universal vouchers.” This is ironic, because public education is already truly universal – open to all, without regard to race, religion, income or ability. Voucher programs are an attempt to get public money into private hands, without regard to how it impacts our students or our educational system.

Public education is a bulwark of our democratic system, bringing together young people from the broadest swath of life to learn both academic skills and how to live and work together. We have seen in the past in Kansas how systems that took years to build can be destroyed in a year or two of unwise legislation. Let’s not let this happen to Kansas’ public schools – truly the pride of our state.

I urge you to vote NO on HB2218.

Thank you for your attention.

February 2, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Elizabeth Bagby

TITLE: Parent of Shawnee Mission School District

EMAIL ADDRESS: lbagby0@icloud.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only Testimony

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. I am a parent of three children enrolled in Shawnee Mission School District. One of my children is enrolled in a centralized program for Special Education and has an IEP. He is nonverbal and diagnosed with ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder) and Global Development Delay. A private school would not be able to provide the resources that my son needs to receive a quality education. My other two children are not disabled and have both excelled at school as a testament to a quality public education received through the Shawnee Mission School District. I support a public education that educates all children!

VOTE "NO" for HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration.

Elizabeth Bagby

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee, February 6, 2023 Hearing

NAME: Linda M. Collier

TITLE: Retired Teacher/Debate Coach

EMAIL ADDRESS: lindamcollier33@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

ATTENTION: Garret Belknap, garret.belknap@house.ks.gov

Feb. 2, 2023

Dear Representative Kelsey Williams, Chair, & House K-12 Budget Committee Members:

I strongly urge you to reject HB2218.

As a lifelong Kansan, I know and value the importance of public education. It is the foundation of all we achieve here.

The public schools I attended in Iola were an important influence in my life. Reducing funding to it - and the high-quality schools in Johnson County where I live now - would hurt these schools and their ability to ensure all Kansas students learn the skills and knowledge we depend upon to maintain the high quality of life every Kansan should have access to.

Voucher programs inevitably create major funding cuts to education budgets to benefit a select few at the expense of the majority. Please reject HB2218.

Sincerely,

Linda M. Collier

cc: The Honorable Stephanie Clayton, stephanie.clayton@house.ks.gov

February 2, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Lucy Rumsey DeWitt

TITLE: Parent, Funeral Director, and Kansas Citizen.

EMAIL ADDRESS: lucyrumseydewitt@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: [written]

Dear Chair & members of the committee, I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

Public schools are the only option for most Kansas citizens. Schools in Johnson County are nationally ranked. With that designation, we can bring families that may start businesses here, or specifically move here because of the schools. Please oppose or vote no on HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration,

Lucy Rumsey DeWitt

Parent, Funeral Director, and Kansas Citizen

**HB2218 Sunflower Education Equity Act Opponent Testimony from Laura Meyer Dick - Kansas Citizen
Hearing Date 02/06/2023**

Dear Committee Members:

I have served on the Buhler Board of Education for nearly 14 years. Kansas Public Schools provide a fantastic opportunity for our children to be the future of tomorrow. Unfortunately, HB2218 threatens to destroy that. Please think realistically about the unlevel playing field this creates for many children in our State. Support of this bill only widens the divide between the haves and the have-nots. We are Kansas, not California or Florida.

Please don't destroy something positive in a large percentage of Kansas student's world to satisfy the ideology of the minority. Here is a list of reasons to oppose.

- 1) Children in the more rural parts of the states don't have an opportunity to attend a private school.
- 2) The backers of this group believe Kansas schools are teaching inappropriate topics. I can assure you that USD 313 is not. Ask them for concrete evidence!
- 3) The constitution of Kansas provides for an educational opportunity for all. This bill takes away from the have-nots and gives to the have. What private school in Kansas has tuition that is as low as our base state aid? Parents will have to make up the difference.
- 4) Private schools only must take the students they choose. Kansas Public schools must accept all students. All students aren't equal regarding their educational needs and behavior issues.
- 5) Ask the supporters of this bill how much time they have spent in a public-school classroom lately. Most have yet to darken public school doors in the last few years. The needs of the students aren't the same as when these legislators were young. Unfortunately, parents don't parent like they did when I was growing up. Schools must provide that support.
- 6) Private schools do not have to comply with all the education requirements of the State, so they can teach whatever they choose.
- 7) The quality of education for the majority of students will go down to benefit the minority. Is that what we want for our future?

Please vote no against HB2218 – protect all students in Kansas and don't favor a few. Parents are free to choose to send their kids to private schools now. Public dollars don't belong in non-public organizations. Thank you for listening.

Laura Meyer Dick

USD 313 Board Member

President

First National Travel Agency & Nation Inc

1 N. Main Ste 717

Hutchinson, KS 67501

o) 620-662-0587 m)620-474-6770

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: LeAnn Drumm

TITLE: Kansas Citizen

EMAIL ADDRESS: leanndrumm@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: written

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

Public schools accept and educate all kids across the state of Kansas. Public tax dollars belong with public schools. Rural communities shouldn't be subsidizing private schools in KC, Topeka, and Wichita metro areas. Vouchers don't help all kids.

Please vote no on HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration.

LeAnn Drumm

Shawnee, KS

February 2, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

Elizabeth Dvorak
elizdvorak@gmail.com
HB2218 Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

Opponent

Written Only Testimony

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

I am the daughter of a parent who taught in Kansas public schools for 25+ years, and a parent of two young children in the Shawnee Mission School District. I oppose HB2218 because it **diverts public tax dollars from our public school children**. Public schools are required to educate *all children* – even “the least of these.” Private schools can choose to admit children at their discretion. Our state is strong because our citizens all had an equal chance at a quality education. I implore you to vote NO on this bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Elizabeth Dvorak
Overland Park, KS

February 2, 2023
Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Leena Fry
TITLE: Parent, Shawnee Mission School District
EMAIL ADDRESS: leena.fry@gmail.com
BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Account
PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent
ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to HB2218. I have a fourth grader who is homeschooled and also attends public school for gifted services. Even though this bill might provide me some financial benefit, I am very much opposed to it. As a taxpayer, I want public funds to go to public education. I value the services of our public schools and strongly believe that taxpayers should not pay for other parents' choices to send their kids to private schools or to homeschool them.

Please vote no on HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration,

Leena Fry
Lenexa, Kansas

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: LeAnna Herrmann

TITLE: Registered Nurse, Kansas Citizen, parent

EMAIL ADDRESS: weasel.tamer@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY:

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to share my opposition to bill HB2218.

Our education system is a bedrock, the foundation upon which every child can grow into a productive member of society. Every child deserves that educational opportunity, and passing HB2218 will deny that to the future children of Kansas. Our public schools will accept any student, regardless of disability, ethnicity, culture, or religious affiliation. Public education provides accommodations to children like my son Kelvin, aged 12, who has a reading delay and ADHD, while a private school wouldn't have any obligation to meet his special needs. This bill also provides no oversight, to ensure the funds would even be spent on education for the designated students; so the approximately 300 million dollars that may be taken from the children of Kansas doesn't even have to be spent on educating any students.

This is designed to deplete our schools of funds and put lower - and middle class children at an even bigger economic disadvantage as they become adults.

Please listen to the constituents of Kansas and vote no on HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration.

LeAnna Herrmann, RN
Kansas Citizen and parent
Topeka

February 6, 2023 Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

Laura Beachy Langdon

Parent of public school children; former public school teacher; Kansas citizen

reelbeachy@hotmail.com

HB 2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

OPPONENT

Written only testimony:

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to voice my opposition to HB2218. Our public schools in Kansas are simply too important, and we CANNOT afford to take money away from them. Public schools are critical to our state and our future; they need MORE support, not less!

Please oppose HB2218 and protect Kansas school children and our future. We MUST give everything we can to the educators, facilities, and resources that serve so many precious students!

Thank you for your service to our state and your thoughtful consideration,
Laura Beachy Langdon
Overland Park, KS

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

Date of hearing: Feb 6, 2023

Lisa Lowe

Parent-3 graduates from SMSD; Kansas Citizen

lowe3236@gmail.com

Bill Number: HB2218; Sunflower Education Savings Account

Opponent

Written Testimony Only

Dear Chair and members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to HB2218.

Strong public schools are fundamental to our strength and our future as Kansans. Now more than ever, following the Covid pandemic and academic disruption, our public schools need all of the the funding support that we can provide. I urge you to oppose any funding supporting private schools. The impact would be harmful for our students and communities.

Please vote no on bill HB2218. Our public schools depend on Kansas, and I thank you for your consideration of my request.

Lisa Lowe

Overland Park, KS

February 2, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Education Budget Committee

NAME: **Leslie D. Mark**

TITLE: **Kansas Citizen / Voter**

EMAIL ADDRESS: **ldmark61@gmail.com**

BILL NUMBER: **HB2218, *Establishing education savings accounts for qualified students in Kansas.***

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: **Opponent**

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: **Written Only**

Dear Chair Williams & Members of the Committee,

I write to voice opposition to HB 2218, creating a “Sunflower Education Equity Act” for expanding the Tax Credit Scholarship Program in Kansas.

School vouchers take public funds and are used to send some students to private schools. The effort to chip away at public schools, to erode the confidence communities have in our schools, to punish teachers and their collective support structures is more than 30 years old. This year we see all across the country and right here in Topeka, boilerplate language that has been shared around the anti-public education cohort, pushing vouchers into a whole new frontier.

Up ‘til now, vouchers and like-programs were designated for specific student populations. Today we are hearing about these education savings accounts or ESA’s. The idea is to grant money to each public school student < 18 and for their parents to spend as they see fit. That could be for traditional private schools, but also includes religious schools, online schools and approved costs for homeschooled children. Before now, ESA’s have been open to limited populations (economically disadvantaged or special needs K-12) but HB2218 would make ESA’s open to everyone, regardless of a family’s ability to pay. The average cost to educate a child for a year is \$12,000.

It should be clear to everyone on this committee that school funding is more complicated than a per-pupil allocation. Public schools rely on tax dollars contributed to state general funds by all taxpayers and from the federal government. We distribute them in turn, theoretically at least, based on a district’s enrollment and needs. But first and foremost, they are **obligated to educate all** students. When our middle son was in 5th grade, at a private day school in Kansas City, he was diagnosed with two different learning issues — each masking the effect of the other — resulting in struggles for him and confusion for his teachers as to why. They had no means to assist him, they told me. It was my public school district that helped me walk through the diagnosis and suggest an IEP for our son — one that could, in fact, be implemented at his expensive, prestigious school by his more than capable teachers. We wouldn’t have made it through that year in that education setting, notwithstanding the high-priced private school we fronted on our own, had we not had the resources of our public school district to support our son. I was grateful our tax dollars had been well spent undergirding public education even if we weren’t walking the hallways at that time.

HB2218 is an attack on the foundational idea of **public** education itself. The proponents want to use a public good for a private benefit. The drivers are private industry and their lobbyists eager to slurp from the money

sluice flushed from public coffers; the culture-wars are the battle tactic and tools deployed to win the war. This is not now nor has it ever been about the educational needs of students.

It is important to not lose sight of the contemporary context for legislation like HB2218. It goes hand in hand with Republican-led culture war arson: (1) Legislation banning critical race theory, (2) gender expression (3) demanding “curriculum transparency,” and (4) “Parents’ Bill of Rights” (legally giving parents power to review classroom instruction and/or to remove their child from lessons they object to). The aim is to keep public education embroiled in America’s broader political wars.

Want proof? Look at Iowa lawmakers who last Tuesday held a hearing on identical legislation. A veteran teacher echoed many at the 2-hour hearing with his criticism that ESA’s drain desperately needed resources away from public schools. Republican politicians argued the bill was the only way to ensure parents have power in their children’s education — citing “political agendas being taught” but never providing any evidence.

Please think carefully about what mission you are actually on and the ensuing destruction of a vaunted education system that you are risking. It is not, it has never been, just about HB2218. This is a dangerous and completely unnecessary bill. Vote No on HB2218.

Leslie D. Mark
Mission Hills, HD 25 / Sen 7

February 2, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Lauren Proffer

TITLE: Kansas Citizen

EMAIL ADDRESS: lol9955@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: written only

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to state my opposition to bill HB2218.

To divert funding from public schools to potentially benefit private schools, and possibly those already in private school, does not make any sense. Private schools already have systems in place to support them. It's kind of you to want to worry about them. Those who are home schooling are already privileged enough to do so. it's kind of you to want to worry about them.

Please now focus your attention on those in public schools. Please continue to serve them, serve them as you would if you understood the future of the world depends on effective public school systems. If you are in a position meant to serve Kansas, please align yourself accordingly. Serve Kansas and the future of Kansas. Support children in public schools. They are the future, to support them is to support the future of Kansas for decades to come.

Please oppose bill HB2218.

Thank you for your attention.

Lauren Proffer

Manhattan

February 2, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Laura Rathbun

TITLE: Parent, PTA President, & Elementary Kitchen Manager

EMAIL ADDRESS: LauraRathbun@smsd.org

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPOSER, OPPOSER, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. I am a parent of an elementary student, the current PTA president for the elementary school, and have been an Elementary Kitchen Manager in another elementary school for over 3 years. What I see daily in these roles shows me how truly valuable Public Education is in our current economy and community.

The school where I work is over 80% free and reduced lunch students, and a very high percentage are English Language Learners. We have new students monthly that are new to not only our community but our country, immigrating from Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, and more. Public tax dollars are not only crucial for the education and support of these students, but sometimes our schools are the ONLY place they can receive this care and attention. Our public tax dollars MUST remain in our PUBLIC schools to ensure these precious kids do not fall through the cracks.

Please, I urge you to vote NO on Bill Number HB2218 and protect our amazing students who need the wonderful public education we can provide.

Thank you for your consideration.

Laura Rathbun
Elementary Kitchen Manager, Comanche Elementary
PTA Co-President, Rising Star Elementary
Lenexa, KS

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

I attended both, parochial and public school, but it is my time in the Kansas Public that made me who I am today. I believe that fully funded public schools would give students more choices in life paths. And a better opportunity to explore the real world without the idealistic religious indoctrination of our child to only experience one forced perspective. Simply, let's keep public school's public with a fully funded educational system that will give every child in the state of Kansas equal opportunity to thrive and become tax-paying voters.

Thank you for your consideration and a moment of your precious time.

Larissa Shively-Vitt

Precinct Leader

Shawnee

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

Lisa Veglahn

Prairie Village, KS

Graduate and Parent of Graduates from Shawnee Mission School District

lveglahn@hotmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

Opponent WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY

Dear Chair & members of the committee, I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. I am a proud graduate of the Shawnee Mission School District and my children also attended Shawnee Mission Schools from Kindergarten through graduation. I chose to raise my children in Kansas in large part because of our strong public schools.

I oppose HB2218. Public tax dollars belong with our public schools who accept and educate all kids. Public schools educate ALL Kansas students regardless of academic ability, physical ability, religion, or sexual orientation. It is wrong to allow our public tax dollars to fund schools that deny admission to Kansans, schools that are not subject to accountability or testing.

PLEASE oppose/vote no on HB2218. Listen to your constituents and voters. Thank you.

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Lindsay Vise

TITLE: Parent of Shawnee Mission SD Students

EMAIL ADDRESS: lmfvise@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL OR WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. Public tax dollars should stay with our public schools that accept and educate all children. Instead of funding private and home schools, the legislature should focus on fully funding the needs of our public schools. Our public schools provide for those students who most need our support.

I have worked with our school as a volunteer for six years and am a product of public education. I know the impact that our teachers and staff have on our students. They are providing them with the resources and support to succeed but cannot continue to do so if funding is once again taken away from our public schools.

Please oppose bill number HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts.

Thank you for your consideration [or something similar].

Lindsay Vise

Leawood, KS

February 2, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Linda Yarlagadda

TITLE: Parent of 3 children in public school in Johnson County

EMAIL ADDRESS: Lgcy@me.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY:

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

Perhaps because I am not a young parent, it was later in my life that I first understood the harm done to our communities by the requests for school vouchers.

The great thing about our public schools in the United States is that it elevates our communities, from the weakest and least privileged, to our most capable and fortunate. Whether or not we have children ourselves. as communities we all benefit from having educated citizens and additionally from the mixing and bonding of people who would not otherwise have common ground to share.

Private schools serve a purpose, and we cannot speak highly enough of the private Montessori preschool our three children had the privilege of attending. But private schools do NOT need to hamper the good of the public school system by siphoning off funds collected from the tax payers for the benefit of the entire community.

Please, I urgently ask that you, in your important position of leading the great state of Kansas and serving the people you represent, vote no on bill HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration.

Linda Yarlagadda

Leawood, KS



Date of Testimony: Monday, February 6, 2023; Written Only Testimony

Bill Number: HB 2218 - Establishing the Sunflower education equity act to provide education savings accounts for qualified students in Kansas.

Disposition: Opponent

From: Cille King, 785-766-6992, cilleking@gmail.com; Advocacy Chair; League of Women Voters Kansas

To: Chair Rep. Kristey Williams and members of the House Committee on K-12 Education Budget.

The League of Women Voters of Kansas opposes HB 2218 because it would allow public funds to go to private entities without the oversight and requirements of public schools.

Our objections to HB 2218 include the following issues that the bill:

- Contains little to no public oversight for the expenditure of ESAs.
- Contains little to no public oversight for student achievement.
- Will lead to the creation of unregulated schools.
- Would allow any Kansas student, including those already attending private school, to use the ESA voucher.
- Prohibits students with an ESA voucher from enrolling full-time at a public school, but appears to allow part-time enrollment.
- Would establish ESA voucher accounts which would receive 95% of the BASE state aid annually, to be spent on non-public school tuition and fees.
- Would allow ESA voucher accounts to remain active for at least four years after high school graduation.
- Excludes students with disabilities who attend a non-public qualified school from instruction on required subjects.
- Would allow parents to “double dip” to receive funds for ESAs and the state’s private school tuition tax credit program.

Please vote NO on HB 2218.

February 6, 2023
Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

Mary Kathryn Boomer
Parent, Shawnee Mission School District
PTA President, Briarwood Elementary
Maryseltzerboomer@gmail.com

HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts
Opponent
Written Only Testimony

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. I currently have two children at Shawnee Mission schools, one at Briarwood Elementary, and the other at Indian Hills Middle School. As a graduate of Kansas public schools (K-12) myself, I deeply value the Kansas public school system. Of note, in fall 2023, my son will attend a private high school in Kansas City, MO to best meet his academic and personal goals. I am fortunate to have access to public and private schools, and the personal financial means to fully support my son's learning needs and preferences.

I oppose bill HB2218 because public tax dollars are for the public good. We should not be diverting public tax dollars to private schools at a time when legislators should be focused on the \$160 million shortfall in special education funding. Using public dollars for private schools drains the public schools of needed resources for successful student learning. The state should fully fund special education, not private schools.

Please vote NO on HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration.

Mary Kathryn Boomer
Parent & PTA President, SMSD
Prairie Village, KS
maryseltzerboomer@gmail.com
(415) 637-5776 c

February 6, 2023
Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

Monica Melroy
Public school teacher and parent
monicamelroy21@gmail.com
BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts
PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent
ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written only testimony

Dear Chair & members of the committee,
I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.
As a public school teacher I am 100% this bill. Public schools do so much for the education of our public and are imperative to the future of our society. If someone chooses to attend a private school, that is on them. Please do not take away any of our funding to make it harder for us to educate the public. We need all the money and support we can have. Private schools do not offer the same quality of education and should not be supported with tax dollars.

Please vote no and oppose bill number HB2218
Thank you for your consideration

Monica Melroy
Parent and public school teacher

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

Meghan Cizek

Parent of two Kansas students, Kansas citizen

meghancizek@gmail.com

RE: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. I am a parent to two elementary students in Shawnee Mission School District. Our schools are already struggling to meet the needs of our students, especially those in need of special education services. Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate ALL children. Private schools can choose who they educate and should not receive our tax dollars. Instead of funding private and home schools, the legislature should first focus on fully funding special education.

Please oppose and vote no on include bill HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Meghan Cizek, parent and Kansas citizen

Overland Park, Kansas

February 6, 2023 Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Melissa Clark

TITLE: Parent of children who attend Shawnee Mission School District Schools – Citizen – Voter

EMAIL ADDRESS: melissafisherclark@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

Dear Chair & members of the committee, I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. As a parent, tax paying citizen in Kansas, (and product of our KS public school systems), I am asking you to vote NO for bill 2218. This bill will take our needed tax funding from our public schools and re-allocate to areas that are already funded as needed, and are not a part of our public school systems. Private schools and home schooling should not be funded by our tax dollars. These are independent associations, leave them that way. Please vote NO on Monday to HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration,

Melissa Clark

SMSD Parent and Mainstream Coalition Board of Directors, VP

DATE: February 2, 2023

SUBJECT: Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Martha Weber Conradt

TITLE: Kansas Citizen since 1992

EMAIL ADDRESS: mwconradt@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

OPPONENT, WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY

Dear Chair and members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my **opposition to bill HB2218**. I am a parent of two sons I chose to send to Catholic schools, and you may be surprised to be hearing from someone like me. So why am I writing in opposition?

1. My oldest son tested gifted in second grade. His Catholic school was not able to offer a gifted program at that time, so **if we wanted him to receive special programming for gifted students, the alternative was to send him to public school one half day a week**. I had a friend with a daughter the same age who had a learning disability. She was not able to enroll her daughter at the school because they were not in a position to serve her. The school has since bolstered its program; however, not all private schools are in a position to accommodate the needs of students like my son or my friend's daughter. Reducing public school funding is *not* the right answer.
2. Because my involvement in Catholic schools dates back to 2005, I am aware **there are many resources available for families who can't afford school tuition** but want their children to receive a private education. Specifically for Catholic schools:
 - a. Individual schools have scholarship programs
 - b. The Diocese offers tuition assistance
 - c. Nonprofits such as the Catholic Education Foundation offer help
3. Another option, as of January 2018, is that **families can now use 529 plans** – which offer many tax advantages – to pay for up to \$10,000 in tuition expenses at elementary or secondary public, private or parochial schools.
4. **Private school is a choice that shouldn't be funded by tax dollars.**
5. Strong public schools:
 - a. Keep our neighborhoods strong
 - b. Help develop the future workforce for Kansas companies
 - c. Bolster property values

Please join me in opposing HB2218. Thank you for your consideration and your service in the legislature.

Sincerely,

Martha Weber Conradt
Leawood, Kansas

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

Melissa Hurrelbrink
Concerned parent in the Piper School District
mrk1589@hotmail.com
HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts
Opponent

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to Bill HB2218. I have children in the Piper public school district. Over the last 10-ish years, our district has become extremely desirable for western Wyandotte county. Usually, one would think that is a good thing, the problem is that we are growing too quickly for funding to keep up. We have had to pass two special bonds for tax increases over the last five years. Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools. Private schools should not receive public dollars when they can pick and choose which children they accept. We should not be diverting public tax dollars to private schools when legislators should focus on the \$160 million dollar shortfall in special education funding, funding that public schools need since they educate all students regardless of ability level.

Please vote no on HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration,

Melissa Hurrelbrink
Kansas City, KS

February 2, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Molly Keppler

TITLE: Parent, Blue Valley School District

EMAIL ADDRESS: mollyewalsh@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Account

PROPONENT, OPPONENT OR NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only

Dear Chair and Members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

We should not be diverting public tax dollars to private schools at a time when legislators should be focused on the \$160 million shortfall in special education funding. The state should fully fund special education, not private schools. Using public dollars for private schools drains the public schools of needed resources for successful student learning, and it is not an appropriate use of public tax funds. It's important to note that private schools can choose who they accept whereas public schools are responsible for educating all Kansas students regardless of academic ability, physical ability, religion, etc. Public dollars should not be used to fund schools that deny admission to students.

Furthermore, public schools are great economic drivers. Businesses and families look for quality public schools when relocating, and quality public schools protect our property values.

Please vote NO on HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration,

Molly Keppler
Leawood

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee
Megan Kohlman, Parent, Hesston Middle School Teacher
Opponent Written Testimony for HB 2218

Dear Chair Williams & members of the committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on HB 2218. I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

Public taxpayer dollars should be used for public education. Kansas K-12 public schools provide a vital opportunity to every single Kansas student, regardless of their abilities, needs, or zip code. Additionally, public schools have numerous accountability measures in place to ensure that they are meeting the needs of all students including the accreditation process and state assessments.

Private schools are not held to the same standard of education or accountability. They are selective about which students they accept and are not held to the same expectation of high quality education that public schools are.

In addition to these concerns, numerous studies have shown that students who participate in voucher programs such as this education savings account perform worse academically than students who attend public schools. We simply cannot afford to send Kansans' tax dollars to schools that will not provide the same quality of education that our public schools do.

Please oppose HB 2218. Every child in the state of Kansas has equitable access to public schools. The same simply cannot be said for private schools, and that alone should disqualify private schools from having public education funding of any kind.

Thank you for your consideration and understanding of the importance of public education in Kansas.

Megan Kohlman
Hesston, KS

February 1, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Margaret M. Lund

TITLE: Parent, Shawnee Mission School District

EMAIL ADDRESS: mollylund@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Account

PROPONENT, OPPONENT OR NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only

Dear Chair and Members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

I am the mother of two daughters in the Shawnee Mission School District. My husband and I graduated from Shawnee Mission Schools. I was involved with the PTA at our elementary school for many years, including 2 years as President. We bought our home in Prairie Village, mere steps away from our elementary school, as it is a thriving community – full of families – and our property value keeps rising. Public schools are important for ALL community members. Our public tax dollars should stay right where they belong – in schools, supporting every student and family and teacher. Our special education students are already being denied vital services due to underfunding; that needs to be addressed and the rest of our students will benefit at the same time. Diverting public money to private schools is harmful for Kansans.

Please vote NO on HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration,

Margaret Lund
Prairie Village, KS

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Michelle E. Owens

TITLE: Librarian

EMAIL ADDRESS: MichelleEileenOwens@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY:

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

As a master's-level information services professional, I strongly believe that public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children. The Kansas State Legislature should focus on fully funding special education. Private schools should not receive public funding. Please protect public education in Kansas.

In conclusion, I ask you to please vote no on HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration.

Michelle E. Owens, MLIS
Overland Park, Kansas

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Melinda Parks

TITLE: Kansas Citizen

EMAIL ADDRESS: melindaparks85@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written testimony

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. I am a strong believer in our Kansas public school systems. I was raised in Kansas and have raised my daughter in Kansas. My daughter is preparing to become an educator in Kansas.

I do not support any legislation, particularly this school voucher program, that will divert funds from public education. More specifically, I do not support public funds going to institutions that have no obligation to provide services for all students. This effort would serve to leave our public schools devastated with lack of funding while leaving those institutions with the full cost and burden of providing education for any student in Kansas. Public education funds should only be spent for schools that require acceptance of any student.

Not only will we do a disservice to those students who will remain in the public school system without adequate funding, we will suffer harm to our communities and property values. High-quality public school systems are the bedrocks of our communities and our property values. In addition to lost property values, we will lose population in Kansas who choose not to educate their children here, and finally we will lose quality educators who don't want to teacher where they cannot be properly compensated.

I ask you to vehemently oppose HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts.

Regards,

Melinda Parks

Citizen / Parent of future educator

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Mel Pinick

TITLE: Kansas Citizen, or add applicable credentials

EMAIL ADDRESS: melforkansas@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

This bill is not good for the average Kansas parent. The proposed program will only help to ease costs for high income families, while taking away taxpayer funds that could be used for schools that are accessible to all children regardless of their families' income.

With this program a private school parent will receive 4,603¹ in support from taxpayers for the 2023 school year. This only covers about half of the average private school tuition cost in Kansas². While parents making over 150k, with only one child still struggle to pay for private school³, the average household income for parents of school-aged children is between \$67,091 and \$74,733⁴. These families will not be able to afford the remaining cost of sending their kids to private schools.

There are already 41,406⁵ students in private school. These parents are already able to send their children to private school but will be given a total of over \$200 million dollars from taxpayer funds.

This bill is bad for the 90% of Kansas students that are enrolled in Kansas Public Schools.

Thank you for your consideration and caring to improve schooling outcomes for ALL Kansas kids!

Mel Pinick

Olathe

¹ KSA 72-5132: rate for 2023 is \$4,846 – 5%=\$4,603

² <https://www.privateschoolreview.com/tuition-stats/kansas>

³ <https://www.nais.org/learn/independent-ideas/january-2015/to-afford-private-school,-high-income-families-mak/>

⁴ Median income for residents aged 25-44, and 45-65, <https://www.point2homes.com/US/Neighborhood/KS-Demographics.html>

⁵ <https://www.privateschoolreview.com/kansas>

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Michael Proffer

TITLE: Parent of public school children

EMAIL ADDRESS: mproffer@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. Public schools in our state are the pillars on which our communities are built. Too long have our politicians worked to undermine and divert funding that even the Kansas Supreme Court deemed was to go to public schools. I should not have to continually write my opposition to bills such as this. The voters have spoken, and we OPPOSE vouchers for private schools!!!! Again and again and again! This is TIRESOME! Lastly, this steals money from our rural schools where many of the conservative voter base lives. Stop taking money from our communities!

So, once again for like the 15th time, we still oppose diverting funding from public schools, such as in HB 2218.

Regards,

Michael Proffer

Concerned and annoyed parent of public school children

Overland Park, KS

February 6, 2023
Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Maggie Scaletty
TITLE: Private School Parent
EMAIL ADDRESS: mscaletty23@gmail.com
BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts
PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent
ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

I have two children who both attend private school. While one might assume having my children in private school would lead me to support the concept of a “Sunflower Education Savings Account”, I actually fundamentally oppose this approach to school funding. My son was diagnosed with a learning disorder several years ago. The school was completely unprepared to support any alternate therapies or approaches. It was suggested I look at sending him for part of the day to public schools to get the assistance he needed. In fact, at his end of year parent teacher conference, the teacher seemed surprised at his diagnosis and argued with the extensive testing we had completed from trained professional. She was unwilling to support him in managing his diagnosis. This would never be allowed in a public-school setting as the state of Kansas oversees and requires support for their students. I am disappointed in the number of parents who hold the sentiment that they oppose vouchers because they want to keep kids with disabilities, special needs, or learning difficulties out of their schools.

For a number of reasons, we decided it was in his best interest to keep our son at the school he was in and seek resources outside the school and pay for it directly. His father is an ER physician and I serve as the CEO of a small business so we were able to afford this extra cost. It occurred to me as we navigated the system that we are fortunate to be able to provide resources to our son – but that the school completely failed him.

I am certain opening up vouchers in our state would be harmful to the public school system. For those families who cannot afford to seek services outside of school, those children will suffer as the schools are not looking for or responding to needs. The primary benefit to this approach is to further reduce the cost for the families who can already afford the choice to send their children to private schools.

Please consider these concerns as you evaluate HB2218 and OPPOSE the legislation.

Respectfully Submitted,
Maggie Scaletty (Leawood)
Parent, Private School

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Mary Verett

TITLE: Parent of Olathe, KS students

EMAIL: Maryverett@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

Opponent

WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. I have one child currently attending public school with two more excitedly counting the days until they can join their older sibling. Having grown up attending small rural schools, I have seen first hand the deficits that exist when schools are underfunded and lack resources for children who desperately need them. With my experience in mind, our family firmly believes in the value of quality public schools for the public good. I implore you to consider all students when evaluating this bill. The kids whose parents can't choose private or homeschool due to work schedules or special needs or the kids who are left behind when students and voucher money leaves their schools. There are many many reasons to oppose this bill and I appreciate your consideration of my request for you to vote no.

Thank you for your time,

Mary Verett

Public school parent, Olathe, KS

February 2, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Michelle Wiens

TITLE: Parent, Shawnee Mission School District

EMAIL ADDRESS: mwiens678@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Account

PROPONENT, OPPONENT OR NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only

Dear Chair and Members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

I am writing with a testimony of the value public schools bring to families and the community. Not only do public schools bring a community together; but they also are a place that can accommodate and manage many families needs as they deal with IEP services. When our family started the education journey we choose a private school. We quickly realized that the private school was not able to accommodate the needs of my child. Thankfully, the public school was able to quickly enroll him, evaluate him, and accommodate his needs that were eventually detailed in an IEP. Public schools have the experience and resources to help students and families that find themselves in this situation. This brought relief to may family in so many ways. I went from receiving daily phone calls from the private school to come get my son to a public school system that was able to care for him and help him grow. Now he is reaching his academic goals and IEP goals. This is just one of many benefits we have seen in the public school system.

Please vote NO on HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration,

Michelle Wiens
Overland Park

February 6, 2023
Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Michele Woods

TITLE: Parent, Shawnee Mission School District, Kansas Citizen

EMAIL ADDRESS: michelemwoods@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Educa on Savings Accounts

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

My child is in public school for several reasons, one of which is financial considerations, but also because the school district that we live in is a great one that has historically provided great education and services. We selected the neighborhood we live in with the school district top of mind. My child is completing elementary school this year and will be moving on to middle school in the fall, and high school after that in the same school district.

Already as it is we see that there are funds needed by these schools to keep up the facilities, the supplies, curriculum, equipment, the buildings, and adequate and competitive pay for the teachers and staff. Already we are fighting for every dollar to keep our public schools at a competitive level, and we are fundraising ourselves to provide even the smallest of extras to include basic classroom supplies, items for science projects, books for the library, giving back to the teachers as well as donations for the community. Already as it is we see bathrooms that are run down, basketball nets with holes in them, and facilities falling apart. We cannot afford to lose more funds to privately funded systems.

We should not be diverting public tax dollars to private schools at a time when legislators should be focused on the \$160 million shortfall in special education funding. The state should fully fund special education, not private schools. Public tax dollars are for the public good. Using public dollars for private schools drains the public schools of needed resources for successful student learning.

Private schools can choose which students they accept, whereas public schools educate ALL Kansas students regardless of academic ability, physical ability, religion, sexual orientation, and so on. Private schools are not held to the same accountability standards and are not required to participate in state testing.

Bill HB 2218 lacks oversight and provides no review process to evaluate if students utilizing our taxpayer dollars at private or home schools are achieving. Taxpayer dollars should require the same oversight and transparency as our public schools.

In closing, I urge you to oppose or vote no on Bill HB 2218.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michele Woods". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Michele Woods
Parent, Shawnee Mission School District, Kansas Citizen
Overland Park

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Madeleine Lai

TITLE: Kansas citizen and former student in both public and private schools

EMAIL ADDRESS: madeleineglai@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only Testimony

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. I am a former Kansas student who attended public elementary school and private middle and high school. And although I attended and graduated from private school, I feel very strongly that public tax dollars should be reserved for public schools.

Good public schools are the heart of our community and economy. Not only do they protect property values, but the quality of local public schools is often a make-or-break factor when families decide whether or not to relocate. If we want to continue to attract companies and high-earning professionals who bring wealth and economic growth to our state, we have to provide good public schools for their kids.

Furthermore, in a democracy, it is vital that we provide every child with the opportunity to receive an excellent education. If we divert funds from public schools to private schools, what happens to the kids who aren't admitted to private school, don't live near a private school, or don't have the means to pay for it? Public schools are held accountable to taxpayers and the families they serve, and most importantly, they have to accept ALL students. Private schools, on the other hand, can pick and choose which students to accept. Additionally, most private schools are located in metro areas, which means many rural students would not even have a choice between a private school or a public school. And, private school tuition is often higher than the amount covered by Education Savings Accounts, which means they would still be inaccessible to low income students who don't have the means to make up the difference.

Instead of funneling money away from the public schools, we should be focusing on fully funding them - including fixing the current \$160 million shortfall in special education funding. Public tax dollars should be put towards opportunities available to ALL Kansas kids, not just the few whose academic ability, financial situation, and location allows them to choose between public and private school.

In conclusion, please stand up for our public schools and vote no on HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration.

Madeleine Lai

Overland Park, KS

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Mary Poggie

TITLE: Parent of an SMSD student, ECE Educator, Girl Scout Leader, and Product of Kansas Public Schools.

EMAIL ADDRESS: marypoggie@hotmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. Kansas Public Schools are already struggling and to take public money away to send toward private entities is shockingly damaging to the majority of children in our state. Public schools exist to ensure that all children have access to a quality education. Private schools and home schools are boutique choices that not everyone has access to. It honestly feels like a no brainer.

As products of Kansas public schools, my husband and I have immense respect for state funded education. We were living in Arizona when our daughter was born and very quickly made the choice to come back to Kansas so that she could have the same educational opportunities that we did. Opportunities that, for me, included programs that kept me fed, that helped me with a speech impediment, and that had programs that made it possible for me to go to college. The school my daughter attends in the Shawnee Mission School District is already one of the most poorly funded. But even still, it is a safe haven and a chance to learn. For many of her fellow students, this public school is their chance to compete in a world that often forgets them. It's their chance to get help with homework while their parents work multiple jobs. It's a chance to have access to gifted programs that would otherwise be impossible. It's a chance to be able to connect with a social worker. All of these things cost money.

My daughter attended a private school for preschool and kindergarten, and I have done auction fundraising for both. At the private schools, a painting I created with preschoolers went for \$1,500, without hesitation. In elementary, that same project was considered a huge success when it went for \$80. Private school families don't need public funds. Democracy exists to protect the many from the actions and decisions of the few. This is never more important than when it refers to children.

Please: vote No on HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration.

Mary Poggie

Mission, KS



February 6, 2023; 3:30 pm

House Committee on K-12 Education Budget

Rep. Kristey Williams, Chair

Michael Poppa

Executive Director, Mainstream Coalition

michael@mainstreamcoalition.org

HB 2218 – Establishing the sunflower education equity act; providing education savings accounts for students; establishing the sunflower education equity scholarship fund.

Opponent Testimony, Oral (WebEx)

Chair Williams and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide Opponent Testimony on HB 2218.

Mainstream is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to creating a more representative and responsive government by empowering informed participation and meaningful action in the political process. We envision a Kansas political system that represents all of its constituents.

Mainstream opposes HB 2218, as we have stood in opposition to similar programs since 2014. We uphold the separation of religion and government as one of our founding principles, and so our objections remain: that this bill intends, in part, to divert taxpayer dollars to fund private and parochial schools without regard for student outcomes.

It is our collective duty to protect and uphold the rights of our children to affordable, equitable, and excellent public education. These sentiments as well as the additional concerns I bring forward today are shared by Kansans from a range of political, ideological, and religious identities from across the state. Among them are:

HB 2218 creates further inequity in education. It diverts public dollars to fund private parochial schools. These schools are not held to the same standards, requirements, and accountability as Kansas public schools.

SB 2218 perpetuates discrimination. There are no requirements in place that would prevent a private school that receives public funding from subsequently rejecting students and families on the basis of religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability.



MAINSTREAM

SB 2218 does not seem to be based on empirical evidence. Since 2014, we are not aware of any data available, or required, to assess efficacy or warrant the use of public dollars to fund private and parochial institutions. There is no guarantee that participating students and families are, in fact, doing better than they were in their public school setting.

The future of our children is in your hands. If you seek to increase opportunities for education excellence, we urge you to reject HB 2218. Instead, champion data-driven efforts that are proven to increase positive socioeconomic outcomes— like fully funded public education and early childhood programs; and, increased access to healthcare, mental health, and disability services.

I urge you to please OPPOSE HB 2218.

February 6, 2023
Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Meredith Lai
TITLE: Parent, Blue Valley and private schools
EMAIL ADDRESS: meredithlai@gmail.com
BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts
PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent
ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written only

Dear Chair & members of the committee:

I am writing to voice my opposition to HB2218.

I am the parent of a child who is finishing his education in Blue Valley schools and one who attended both Blue Valley and private schools. Though I have paid private school tuition, I strongly believe public tax dollars are for the public good and should not be diverted to private schools.

Voucher programs like Education Savings Accounts (ESAs) pull critical resources from public schools, which educate over 90% of Kansas students, and put money into private schools instead. Private schools can choose which students they accept, whereas public schools educate ALL Kansas students regardless of academic ability, physical ability, religion, and sexual orientation. Additionally, public schools are accountable and transparent to the parents and community they serve. Private schools do not have the same state mandated requirements for accountability and transparency.

Many students will be hurt by voucher programs. Rural students will suffer as public school funding is funneled to private schools mainly located in metro areas. Low income students who don't have the means to make up the difference between ESAs and private tuition, or who don't have reliable transportation, will be left out. Students with IEPs will suffer when special education services aren't fully funded. We should not be diverting public tax dollars to private schools at a time when legislators should be focused on the \$160 million shortfall in special education funding.

Quality public schools benefit our communities by serving all students, acting as economic drivers, and protecting our property values. Please protect our public schools by voting no on HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration,

Meredith Lai
Overland Park

February 6, 2023
Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Mike Poggie

TITLE: Parent of student in Shawnee Mission School District

EMAIL ADDRESS: ekfeb31980@hotmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written only Testimony

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

I grew up in a more privileged area and since then my perspective on shared services (e.g. public school) funding has evolved. Based on my early background I can understand the argument that if someone (e.g. your children) are not using a resource (e.g. public schooling) then why should "I" have to pay into it instead of having the money go to where it will more directly benefit me or my family. The problem with this argument is that the public school system is the resource made for all children by our government and for it to be successful, all need to contribute to it. If we start siphoning off funds to other programs (even if they are meant to be alternatives) it weakens the primary education system that our country provides to its citizens. If others want to set up and run their own alternative systems, that is up to them, but it should not be funded by the government.

In closing, I urge you to vote no on bill HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration.

Mike Poggie
Mission, KS

February 2, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Neeti Alapati

TITLE: Physician, Parent

EMAIL ADDRESS: neetialapati@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL OR WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: WRITTEN ONLY

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. I am a mother of 3 children who are currently or will be utilizing the blue valley public schools. My husband and I, both physicians, truly value the importance of education and want the best for our children. We chose to live in an area with high quality public schools, and want to make sure they at least maintain their current standards and over time hopefully improve. My husband and I are in the highest tax bracket, and would like our tax payer dollars to be directed at PUBLIC school education in a transparent fashion! Please support our wishes and vote NO on bill#HB2218

Thank you for your consideration.

Neeti Alapati, MD

Overland Park, KS

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Nancy Hackney

TITLE: Kansas Citizen and Public School Graduate

EMAIL ADDRESS: nlhackney@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only Testimony

Dear Chair & members of the Committee,

As a concerned citizen and a graduate of Kansas public schools, I am writing to voice my strong opposition to bill HB2218.

I encourage you to consider voucher programs such as Education Savings Accounts pull critical resources from public schools, which educate over 90% of Kansas students. For the continued strength of the state's economy, we must invest in education for ALL Kansas students, not drain our public schools of economic resources. Public tax dollars belong with our PUBLIC schools.

Please vote NO on HB2218.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Nancy Hackney

Maize, KS

February 2, 2023
Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

Nicole Marshall
Parent, Shawnee Mission School District
nicole.elizabeth.marshall@gmail.com
Bill Number: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts
Opponent
Written Only Testimony

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

My daughter is currently enrolled in 3rd grade at John Diemer Elementary in the Shawnee Mission School District. She attended the pre-kindergarten program offered at the SMSD Early Childhood Education Center to address a speech delay and social emotional learning. Because of these programs and dedicated public school teachers, my daughter has reached all of her benchmarks and her IEP was closed this year. She is thriving both academically (well above the national average) and socially. Please DO NOT divert public tax dollars to private schools at a time when legislators should be focused on the \$160 million shortfall in special education funding. The state should fully fund special education, not private schools.

Moreover, when my husband and I were purchasing our home, we chose to live in Kansas within the SMSD *because* of the quality of the **public** schools within the district. Public schools are economic drivers. Businesses and families look for quality public schools when relocating.

In closing, please **vote no on HB2218**.

Thank you for your consideration,

Nicole Marshall
Parent, Shawnee Mission School District
Overland Park, KS

Written Testimony in OPPOSITION to HB 2218

I am submitting written testimony (only) today to express my opposition to HB 2218, which is essentially a bill that diverts taxpayer dollars to private schools and homeschools resulting in decreased funding for public schools. I gather that the KS GOP gets annoyed when we call this a voucher bill, but that is exactly what this bill is. Calling it a scholarship does not take away from the fact that it uses taxpayer dollars to fund private schools.

There are many reasons for my objections: Homeschools and private schools are not subjected to the same level of accountability. Only public schools are required to accept and educate ALL students. Private schools are allowed to discriminate by not accepting students who have special needs, as well as students who are LGBTQ, students who are of a different religion (or who hold no religious views) and students who have some more extreme medical needs. Additionally, many private schools and homeschools do not participate in any sort of accountability, such as standardized tests, reporting attendance, or even following Kansas State Educational Standards. Our state does not even require yearly check-ins for homeschoolers & has no official count of the number of children being homeschooled at any given time. It's like the wild west when it comes to educating our children in these environments. As a former public school teacher, I find this lack of oversight to be extremely concerning.

My own children are both neurodivergent. My sophomore has autism and ADD as well as skeletal issues. All of these challenges are addressed in his IEP. My freshman has ADHD as well as OCD and anxiety. Both children are gifted and our public school has gone above and beyond to meet their needs in the most appropriate ways, regardless of the extra resources that are required. Public schools have worked very hard to find efficiencies since the legislature has created an environment of scarcity when it comes to funding over the past couple decades.

This bill would take public dollars & funnel it into vouchers for religious learning, which seems very un-American to me. I am not in favor of public money being spent to prop up religious institutions. The lack of accountability bothers me greatly.

The bill would also drain the pool of taxpayer dollars that are collected to be spent on PUBLIC education, which is an unacceptable outcome. The legislature has already spent decades in court trying to weasel out of their CONSTITUTIONAL DUTY to fund our schools. Unacceptable. From a fiscal standpoint, there is no fiscal note attached to this bill, which is fiscally irresponsible and reckless. Please oppose this bill and any other attempts to funnel more taxpayer dollars to private schools and homeschools.

Sincerely,
Nikki McDonald
14506 S. Darnell St.
Olathe, KS 66062

nkiblueeyes@gmail.com

February 6, 2023
Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Nicholas Orlando
TITLE: Shawnee Mission School District Parent, Special Education Father

EMAIL ADDRESS: Nicholas.orlando172@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent
ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218 and my frustration with the lack of representational government in the introduction and hearing of this bill. The abbreviated timeline for testimony is clearly designed to thwart the discussion about the utility, ethics, and lack of evidence for benefit of this type of program.

My three children attend public schools in the Shawnee Missions School District as well as 9 of my nieces and nephews. My son – who is a first grader – has Down Syndrome. As a regular volunteer at the school, I have seen first-hand both the benefits and struggle of the district in trying to appropriately resource their students and support their teachers and staff. In fact, my serving as a regular volunteer came about because of the gross understaffing of the classrooms – especially for the most challenging students.

The lack of special education as well as lack of requirements to provide services in private schools is particularly concerning. Public tax dollars belong in public schools that are both willing and required to educate all children. Shifting funds to private schools furthers the gap between children with and without disabilities. Taxpayer dollars should only be used for education that has oversight and transparency.

As you make decisions about this bill, please consider the risk it places the vast majority of students at if it is passed. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nicholas Orlando
Parent, SMSSD
Prairie Village

February 2, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Natalie Roberts-Wilner

TITLE: Grandparent, Kansas Citizen, Registered Nurse

EMAIL ADDRESS: nrwilner@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: written only

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I'm writing to ask you to oppose bill HB 2218.

I am a Registered Nurse and a grandmother, most people cannot afford private school. Diverting money from public schools to private schools is not a solution.

I oppose voucher programs like Education Savings Accounts. Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children, instead of funding private and home schools, the legislature should focus on fully funding special education. Private schools that can choose which children they want to serve should not receive our public tax dollars

I'm writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

Please vote no to bill number HB2218

Thank you for your consideration,

Natalie Roberts-Wilner,

RN, Grandmother, Taxpayer

Merriam, KS

HB 2218: Establishing the Sunflower education equity act to provide education savings accounts for qualified students in Kansas.

OPPONENT testimony (written only)
February 2, 2023

Chair Williams and members of the committee:

I oppose this bill for many reasons and this testimony was easy to write. The objections to the failed school choice bill in 2022 still apply to this 2023 version. I find it extremely disappointing that a new education savings account bill now suddenly appears after the flawed 2022 bill was so roundly criticized and defeated.

HB 2218 is disturbingly short on details. There is only a mention of an audit process with zero details of the scope. The proposed oversight board is skewed to be heavily partisan and would also include members of the private school community as their own overseers. Without robust auditing, the program would be ripe for fraud.

There is no fiscal note for HB 2218. Without specific details concerning cost implementation and oversight, I will refer to last year's testimony provided by the Kansas treasurer. That testimony outlined estimated costs and additional labor needed to establish and maintain education savings accounts. It detailed how education savings account costs would be wasteful and excessive and the implementation timeline to be unrealistic. Exposing these facts in 2022 is perhaps why there is no detail in this year's version about how education savings accounts would function.

http://www.kslegislature.org/li_2022/b2021_22/committees/ctte_h_k12_education_budget_1/documents/testimony/20220201_07.pdf

Simply HB 2218 would divert taxpayer funds from our public schools to private schools. Private schools do not have the same accountability as public schools. They are not bound to the same curriculum as public schools and in many cases include religious instruction that should not be subsidized by public funds.

Additionally, this is unfair to Kansas taxpayers and would create a two-tier education system that may benefit some students while hurting the majority of students. Private schools do not follow the same admission policies as public schools and have a choice to pick a small number of preferred students and deny most others. Students deemed unworthy by any measure (low test scores, physical or learning disabilities, etc.) would not be allowed a real choice. They would simply remain in a current system that would have less funding as a result of the funds diverted by this bill. Additionally, attending a private school simply isn't an option in many rural areas of the state. They do not exist.

I am a proud product of a private religious based education. My family sacrificed to make that possible. We would have never thought to ask for public tax payer funded assistance for it. We would have never wanted a state mandate that requires other taxpayers to pay for our tuition. This bill would actually undermine the mission of religious schools. Parochial schools have one function, which is to deliver instruction in a specific religious moral context and environment. This bill will ensure more students and families that do not share the same religious beliefs will be applying to and attending these private schools. Students that do not share the same religious beliefs become a disruption to the faith based instruction of those students that attend because of their deeply held family beliefs. This hurts the religious communities and families that have chosen to create a faith based environment through sacrifice and without state assistance.

I strongly reject the premise made by some on this committee that the Kansas public education system is failing kids. However, for committee members that assert the education system is a sinking ship I ask: Why is the proposed solution to only provide golden lifeboats to a chosen few instead of repairing and maintaining the ship for all the passengers? Private schools can only absorb a fraction of all students. They aren't available in many rural areas. Your job is to provide adequate budgeting for all kids and to not leave the vast majority behind to sink.

This bill is not about educational choice. This is about profits and personal gain. It moves public money into private hands without accountability. It essentially would provide a new tax break / subsidy to those already using private educational institutions. There is no widespread support for voucher-like programs and these programs were not what legislative candidates ran on in the 2022 campaign.

No matter the name - whether it's choice, vouchers, education savings accounts, or scholarships - it functions the same way. If it walks like a tax scheme, talks like a tax scheme, and it quacks like a tax scheme; then it's a tax scheme.

HB 2218 would damage public schools and the students and communities that currently rely on them. I strongly oppose this bill.

Sincerely,
Pat Gouger
Private Citizen, Shawnee Mission School District
Overland Park, KS

February 2, 2023
Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

Offered by:
Paul Minto
2511 W 47th Terrace
Westwood Kansas 66205
816-304-7416
pminto@urbanprairiekc.com

HB2218 Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

Opponent - Written Only Testimony

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my **opposition** to **HB2218 Sunflower Education Savings Accounts**.

I agree that “equity in education means that all children shall receive what they need educationally regardless of their socioeconomic, racial or cultural status.”

I disagree with the proposition that the sunflower education equity act affirms or facilitates this needed equity.

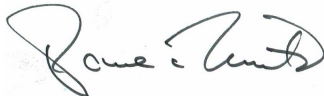
“Equity” focuses on taking those opportunities presented to students and infusing them with support and resources to turn the education system into a level playing field. This means that disadvantaged students will get the support they need to become equal to students who are not disadvantaged. It takes equality a step further by lifting students who may not have the same opportunities and ensuring they not only are presented with the same options, but that the differences are made up for these students.

The language of the bill states, **“The sunflower education equity program is hereby established to recognize the right of parents to choose the educational environment that best serves their children.”**

In my opinion, this bill has nothing to do with fostering equity in education. This seems yet another veiled attempt to siphon limited resources away from our state’s public schools. I am opposed to this piece of legislation and look to follow your deliberation and conclusions on this matter.

I appreciate the opportunity I have been given to write this letter and I greatly appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,



Paul C. Minto
(Educated in a public school.)

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Prachi Patel

TITLE: Parent, Blue Valley School District

EMAIL ADDRESS: Prachi.g.p@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written only

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

I have one child in the Blue Valley public school district and one child that will be starting public school next year. I've seen the value of having great public schools in our district. It's one of the reasons we chose to live where we do. I've grown up in Kansas and gone through the public school system. I've seen what a difference a good public school can have on the student, family, and community.

Public schools are economic drivers. Businesses and families look for quality public schools when relocating. Quality public schools protect our property values.

Using public dollars for private schools drains the public schools of needed resources for successful student learning. Taking funding away from public school will hurt our children and community. We should be focusing on improvements that can be made to the public schools rather than moving public tax dollars to private schools, which do not support all public students.

Bill HB 2218 lacks oversight and provides no review process to evaluate if students utilizing our taxpayer dollars at private or home schools are achieving. Taxpayer dollars should require the same oversight and transparency as our public schools.

Please vote NO on include bill HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration.

Prachi Patel

Parent, Blue Valley School District

Overland Park

My name is Pat Schneweis.

My contact information is patschneweis@gmail.com and 620-793-2274.

Re: HB 2218 Sunflower Education Equity Act

I oppose this bill.

Hearing date is 2/6/2023.

My name is Pat Schneweis. I am a parent of a Kansas teacher and a grandparent of their children in USD 313. I am a community member in USD 112. Both of these Kansas public school districts are performing amazingly well and have been for many years. I am very proud of our public education system.

That said, I am writing to you today to express my opposition to HB 2218. Please block this bill! I strongly believe that if this bill is approved it will be the beginning of the end of Kansas public schools which thousands of Kansas families depend on to educate their children and grandchildren. Many of our Kansas families, especially those in rural communities which make up the majority of our state, can't afford non-public schools or micro-schools for their children. Among the majority of Kansas families, they are unable to homeschool their children because both parents must work to pay their monthly bills. The thought that our public school dollars will be drastically short changed by HB 2218 is very frightening. Our public dollars belong in our public schools.

HB 2218 will provide no accountability or oversight to non-public schools, home schools or micro-schools whereas public schools do. Accountability and oversight are an extremely important part to providing the best education we can give to our students. There will be a creation of unregulated schools that cannot be asked or forced to share what they are teaching! What is happening to the basics ... math, writing, science? These areas are what students need to learn, not a chance to acquire bounce houses, home gyms and espresso machines which is what vouchers are being used for in the Arizona-style ESA. This is shocking and this 'taxpayer ATM', per se, can happen in Kansas if HB 2218 is not blocked!

HB 2218 will potentially place our children and grandchildren in harm's way if they are enrolled in unregulated schools because there is no way to identify abuse or other needs, especially those with special needs. It costs more to educate students with special needs...another vital reason why money should not be taken out of public schools.

There are many other reasons HB 2218 should be blocked, too many to list here. Let's work together to improve our public schools which includes addressing the teacher shortage. Our children, grandchildren, teachers and staff and communities deserve this, not experimenting with other avenues such as vouchers that haven't been proven to work. Our public school system works! It just needs more TLC.

Please keep our public dollars in our public schools and help make our public education system better! Please block HB 2218! Thank you!

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Rebecca Best

TITLE: Parent of elementary school student enrolled in the Shawnee Mission School District

EMAIL ADDRESS: rhbest@me.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPOSER, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: written only

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

Tax payer dollars should not be diverted away from public schools that are open to all Kansas children to support private schools or home schools that can pick and choose which students they want to accept and which they will reject. I fully support the right of parents to choose a private school for their children if they want to go that route, but I have no interest in paying for that choice at the expense of the public schools that offer education to all of our children. Proponents of this bill may claim that it expands choice. In the aggregate, it does not. Instead it limits choice by reducing the resources and funding available to public schools and by diverting more and more advantaged kids out of the public school system. While private schools can set minimum academic standards, public schools cannot. Therefore, we can expect that as more kids move to private schools, the average academic performance in public schools will fall both as a result of these selection effects and as a result of declining funding. That reduction in achievement may further jeopardize Kansas public school funding if funding is tied to metrics like standardized test performance.

As citizens in a democracy, we have a responsibility to ensure that the public – the electorate – has access to quality education, regardless of family income. Let's uphold that responsibility (and along with it, our property values and the potential of our populace for future innovation).

Fund our public schools. Let parents who don't want to use the public schools fund that decision themselves.

I ask that you vote no on HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration.

Rebecca Best

Leawood, KS

February 2, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Robert Deck

TITLE: Parent

EMAIL ADDRESS: deckjr@netzero.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written-Only

Dear Chair & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

Education is not a business. Children are not a product to make a profit from. They are our future. Now that we have established that, how hard can it be to see that using taxpayer dollars to fund private companies is a bad idea. Will taxpayers be allowed to choose how their money is being diverted to either Private or Public schools? What if I don't like a certain private school? What if a private school makes my local public school unnecessary? Do I have to drive my child around the metro? Do I have to fight to get into the one that is better run than the other? What will stop these institutions from favoring the rich? There is a reason that education is public. It's because of the value we put on it. We cannot allow taxpayer dollars to go to a private school that may or may not be successful, and possibly squander our money. What could possibly be the need for this? What could possibly be worth gambling our children? Anyone promoting this should be ashamed of themselves and should it pass, they should spend their days trying to get children into the most competitive private school and driving child back and forth to all these locations all around the metro. Additionally, anyone for this should also make themselves available to teach these children when the private school fails abruptly or decides a child is not worthy to be there.

Vote No on this. Look inside yourself and be honest with yourself what is driving this? It can't be the best interest of the children. If something is broken in the public education system – FIX IT! Do your job.

Thank you for your consideration.

Robert Deck

2312 W. 104th Ter

Leawood, KS 66206

February 6, 2023
Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

Rachel Dennis
Kansas Parent
Rachel_snow123@hotmail.com
HB 2218
OPPONENT
Written Only Testimony

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. I have three children in our neighborhood public school. Two of them receive services within special education. As a state we are still not fully funding special education and I believe this bill would only make things worse. Please vote NO on HB2218.

Rachel Dennis
Registered Voter
Overland Park, KS

February 2, 2023

Dear Chair and Members of Education Committee:

I am writing with strong opposition to bill HB2218. I am a retired, public school educator who taught 40 years in the State of Kansas. My three children attended Kansas public schools, two of whom are currently teaching in the State, and I also have six grandchildren attending public schools in our State.

Kansas schools are currently ranked 33rd in national ranking according to Wallet Hub. (It should be noted that Wallet Hub takes a comprehensive approach to the rankings including, but not limited to, student performance, funding, safety, class size, and instructor credentials). As a lifelong educator, I have watched our State losing ground over the past 20 years. This trend needs to stop. HB2218 will transfer more tax dollars from public schools and this will be devastating. Kansas also ranks 32nd in terms of teacher salaries. Research shows that the best way to ensure academic achievement is to have highly qualified teachers in classrooms. Our State has been falling in these two rankings for several years. Funding, or the lack thereof, is directly related.

As a legislator, you realize that high quality schools serve as a major economic force within the State. We cannot afford to continue these trends. Every school child in our State should have the right to attend a high-quality public school. Of course, parents have the right to send their children to private schools. But, that is a choice. Private schools are not required to admit all children and do not have the same transparency and testing requirements. Homeschooled children have even less. But, again, that is a parent's choice.

Please do the right thing for ALL children of our State and vote NO. DO not advance this HB2218 forward. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Ruth Ann Falls

247 S. Canyon Dr.

Olathe, KS 66061

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Rena Ferrell

TITLE: Parent

EMAIL ADDRESS: ferrellrlt@aol.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

Please vote no on HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration.

Rena Ferrell
Overland Park

My name is Robert Goeller and am a community member in USD 428. I am writing to express my opposition to HB 2218.

I am writing in opposition to this bill because:

1. It costs more to educated students with special needs. We should be fully funding special education, not taking funding out of schools.
2. No accountability or oversight will be provided to non-public schools, home schools, or micro schools.
3. There will be creation of unregulated schools that cannot be asked/forced to share what they are teaching.
4. We should be working together to improve our public schools and address the teacher shortage.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

February 6, 2023
Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

Name: Ruth Goff
Title: Retired Educator
Email Address: ruthe.goff.forkansas@gmail.com
Bill Number: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts
Position: Opponent
Written Testimony

Dear Chair & Members of the Committee,

It never ends. I have been retired from teaching in the Shawnee Mission School District for 6 years. Once again, some members of the Kansas Legislature are attacking our Kansas Public Schools.

The Kansas House K-12 Budget Committee is having a hearing on House Bill 2218, Sunflower Education Savings Account, or in other words public tax dollars funneling to private or homeschool entities. I oppose this bill.

I ask you, are you a product of public schools? Do your children or grandchildren attend Public Schools? Do you want opportunities for all students in Kansas no matter where they live? Are you thinking about the rural, suburban and urban areas across Kansas? Do you consider all levels, abilities and opportunities of students in Kansas?

I can say yes to all of these questions, can you? I urge you to oppose HB2218.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my concerns. Please vote no HB 2218.

Ruth Goff
Retired Educator
Lawrence, Kansas

February 6, 2023
Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

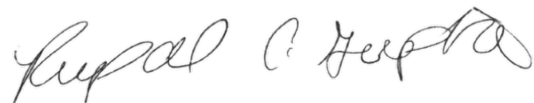
NAME: Rupal Gupta, MD, FAAP
TITLE: Parent in Blue Valley School District and Pediatrician
EMAIL ADDRESS: rupalpinto@gmail.com
BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts
PROPOSER, OPPOSER, or NEUTRAL: Opponent
ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only Testimony

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. My children attend public school in the Blue Valley School District and both have IEPs best served through gifted programming; they also have close friends in their classrooms with special needs, including autism and Down Syndrome, who benefit significantly from the school district being appropriately resourced to serve special needs children. Public tax dollars should serve public good. We should not be diverting these dollars to private schools when our elected officials should be focusing on instead addressing the \$160 million shortfall in special education funding. The state should focus on funding Special Education fully, not on funding private schools.

We moved to Blue Valley due to the quality of its public schools, which benefit the community not only through raised housing values, but by creating a strong and stable workforce as well as vibrant community - through services and highly educated children. Rural students would suffer from HB2218 as well if public school funding gets diverted to private schools, which are located mainly in the metropolitan areas.

Please oppose HB2218. Thank you for your consideration.



Rupal Gupta, MD, FAAP
Pediatrician and Parent in Blue Valley School District
Leawood, KS

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

Mrs. Rachel Jorgensen

Shawnee Mission School District Parent, PTA volunteer, Former 1st Grade Teacher

Rachel.e.jorgensen@gmail.com

HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

Opponent

Written Testimony

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

As a parent in a Title 1 school and a teacher who spend many years serving in a Title 1 school, I am strongly opposed to this bill. I completely understand and support parents who choose to educate their children in different ways. However, our schools are struggling. Our teachers are struggling. Diverting the funds from our public schools will harm vulnerable children. We need to stand up for kiddos who have no other option than public school; for the kiddos that find their neighborhood public school to be the safest place in their lives. As a community, we need to stand and labor for the least of these.

And, frankly, as a momma, I want support for my kiddos too. We have a 2nd grader with an IEP for speech; we have a 5th grader who is benefitting from enrichment efforts in his building. I want the incredible teachers and professionals in my children's neighborhood school to choose to stay because they are supported well.

Let's labor together for schools that serve our most vulnerable, not take our dollars back to help only our own children.

Please oppose bill HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration.

Rachel Jorgensen

Robert Peckham

14908 S Arapaho Dr
Olathe, KS 66062
(913) 302-8016
Robert.peckham@outlook.com

2/2/2023

Dear Committee Chair,

I am writing today to voice my opposition to HB 2218. We need to ensure that public schools are fully funded (including special ed) before transferring funds to subsidize wealthy individuals sending their children to private schools.

Further, before any private institution receives state funds, they should be required to meet all standards of the public schools: secular education, accept all special ed students, etc.

Thanks and regards,

Robert Peckham

Robert Simmons
11590 S Longview St
Olathe, KS 66061
918-381-4177
Robertsimmons05@yahoo.com

Subject: House Bill No. 2218, *Sunflower Education Equity Act*

Position: Opponent

Date of Hearing: Monday, February 6, 2023

Dear Committee Members and Staff,

As a parent of four children participating in a nonaccredited private school, I have the following concerns about HB 2218:

- Parents running nonaccredited private schools have intentionally not accepted or wanted any government funds. With the receipt of government funds, it inherently gives the government a foothold into (a) determining how the education of a child participating in such a school should be performed and (b) determining how the funds should be spent with mandatory reporting and noncompliance penalties, including those that might oppose parents' sincerely held religious beliefs. Thus, this inherently inhibits the freedom of the parents to educate their children in a way they deem best, not as the state deems best.
- I would rather keep the funds I would have otherwise paid into the state for my children's education to begin with. Under HB 2218, I might have received funds back from the state, but only after those funds have passed through the minefield of government inefficiency. Thus, the funds I am to receive through HB 2218 will not only consist of a small portion of my original tax dollars but also the tax dollars of several others, making this a fairly expensive program. In essence, I would rather put the money in my own savings account up front and spend it on my children's education instead of the state dictating a handout on the back end, which is not really savings at all.

- Simply put, I neither need nor want public money to pay for private education, a dangerous concept that is already bankrupting colleges and universities. Those institutions have had significant, over-the-top tuition increases year over year as such government assistance has poured in, making degree-seeking institutions increasingly unaffordable. An unintended consequence could likely cause private school tuition within the state of Kansas to begin increasing similarly to the same effect government funding has had in the colleges and universities.

As an opponent of this bill in its current form, I ask that:

1. EITHER unaccredited private schools be specifically excluded from HB 2218
2. OR amending HB 2218 as follows, similar to that in West Virginia and Arizona:
 - a. Add "*qualified schools as defined by the Sunflower Education Equity Act*" as a fourth school option for parents under the compulsory school attendance law. That way, a parent can choose to send their child to public school, traditional private/religious/parochial, a combination of both, OR a qualified school—which might be a private/religious/parochial school that complies with all the regulations—under the ESA.
 - b. Add a definition of private school to the compulsory school attendance law that clarifies: "*private school*" includes competent, private instruction of a child directed by a parent or person acting as a parent. That way, parents' right to direct the education of their children is protected by statute.
 - c. Amend the definition of a qualified student in the Sunflower Education Equity Act to require attendance at a qualified school. The final definition of a qualified student would then say: "*Qualified student*" means a resident of Kansas who is eligible to enroll in a public elementary or secondary school in this state or in a preschool program for children with disabilities and who is enrolled in a qualified school."

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

Ruth Simonton

Kansas Citizen, Former Kansas Public School Teacher K-9

bookwoman@thesimontons.com

HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

Opponent

Written Only Testimony

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. As a former Kansas public school student, teacher, homeschool mom, and current mother of a Kansas public school teacher, I am appalled that HB2218 is even being considered. Public funds should only go to public schools, full stop! Diverting funds to private schools and homeschools takes important resources away from our public schools. As a Kansas tax payer, I believe this to be unacceptable. My public tax dollars should be used to support our public schools.

Please vote no on HB2218

Thank you for your time,

Ruth Simonton

NAME: Rickye Twitchell

TITLE: Parent

EMAIL ADDRESS: [rickye23@gmail.com](mailto:ricky23@gmail.com)

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: oral

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

Both my husband and I chose to homeschool our son for a myriad of reasons, so we clearly value school choice. We also believe in separation of church and state and believe it is inappropriate to use public funds to pay for private schooling at religious institutions. Further, I do not believe taxpayers should fund any school that can be used to arbitrarily reject students from receiving an education as private schools and charter schools do. Additionally, it is not the Kansas taxpayers' responsibility to fund my child's education because I made the choice to homeschool him. If parent's choose an alternative form of education than public school, they have every right to make that decision, but they have no such right to expect the hardworking taxpayers of Kansas to pick up the tab for that choice.

I would appreciate your opposition to HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration.

Ricky Twitchell

From: Rachel Whitaker, Parent of two students currently attending the Shawnee Mission School District

Email: raawhitaker@gmail.com

Position: Opponent

HB2218: Establishing the Sunflower education equity act to provide education savings accounts for qualified students in Kansas.

Written testimony only.

Dear Chair and members of the Committee,

I am writing to state my opposition to the proposed bill listed above. As a parent of two students currently attending school within the Shawnee Mission School District, I believe strongly that the public school system needs to remain a high priority within the state of Kansas. We chose to work and raise our family in Kansas, knowing that it provided a strong public school experience. Our students attend school with children from a variety of racial and economic backgrounds. They learn to work together. This is preparing them for "real life" experiences they will have after graduation. My children have flourished in the public school system. They are taught by caring, passionate, and highly knowledgeable teachers. I worry that tax dollars being diverted from the public schools will decrease the quality of educational opportunities available in our area. I have a student who utilizes the gifted program. She has peers in the program from both public and private schools. I am concerned that programs such as those for gifted students will not be maintained if funding is diverted. Public schools provide equal opportunity for learning for all students, no matter their background or knowledge level. We need to maintain a strong public system for the betterment of our society.

Please continue to support our public schools systems. It benefits us all.

Thank you,
Rachel Whitaker

February 2, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Sri Krishna Alapati

TITLE: Physician, Parent

EMAIL ADDRESS: srikalapati@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL OR WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: WRITTEN ONLY

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. I am a father of 3 children who are currently or will be utilizing the blue valley public schools. My wife and I, both physicians, truly value the importance of education and want the best for our children. We chose to live in an area with high quality public schools, and want to make sure they at least maintain their current standards and over time hopefully improve. My wife and I are in the highest tax bracket, and would like our tax payer dollars to be directed at PUBLIC school education in a transparent fashion! Please support our wishes and vote NO on bill#HB2218

Thank you for your consideration.

Sri Krishna Alapati, MD

Overland Park, KS

February 1, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Sara Askew

TITLE: Parent

EMAIL ADDRESS: sarabrooke@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. I have three sons. Two of them have attended both private and public school. My youngest has only attended public school. The private school my children attended prior to switching to Maize USD 266 could not meet their academic or mental health needs, nor were they required to by law. Public education has absolutely been the answer for my kids. If funds were to be diverted from these public schools, kids will suffer. At a time when special education is not fully funded, the legislature's focus should be on fully funding public education, not diverting funds to private schools. Kids attending rural schools will also suffer. There are not private school options for them, and their only option for school will not receive the funds it needs to educate our many kids living in rural Kansas.

In closing I ask you to vote no on bill HB2218.

Thank you for your time,

Sara Askew

Wichita

SHAUN BATTLES, private citizen, WRITTEN ONLY
shaun.battles@gmail.com phone 913.980.6017

REGARDING HB2218

Position OPPONENT

Hearing Mon, Feb 6, 2023

I am writing against HB2218.

Kansas public schools are some of the best in the nation and serve the entire public, as intended.

For years, anyone who has had concerns with curriculum, preferred a religious education, or other, could go elsewhere, and the system worked just fine.

Those schools are not suffering and rarely turn people away for financial reasons. They don't need the help.

Having children of my own who attended both parochial and public schools, I can say that there is no need to change the system now.

I truly believe that most of the noise around public schools is being propagated by an overwrought mass that really has no idea what's going on in the public schools.

The loudest is not always correct.

Leave the schools alone, say not to the lobbyists, and skip HB2218.

Shaun Battles

Lenexa, KS

Feb 2, 2023

3.20pm

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

Name: Shannon Forsythe, Ed.S.,

Title: School Psychologist in Olathe Public Schools #233

Email Address: shannonkaforsythe@gmail.com

Bill Number: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

Proponent, Opponent, or Neutral: OPPONENT

Oral or Written Only Testimony: WRITTEN ONLY

Dear Chair and members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. As a school psychologist, I am a leader for our student intervention teams in two elementary schools, oversee evaluations that identify students with exceptionalities for special services, provide consultation for academic and behavioral interventions, and explain and communicate data to educators in order to make good decisions regarding the instruction of our most valuable Kansas resource – our children. Make no mistake, the data is clear, school vouchers like the one proposed in HB2218, hurt children by diverting precious resources to private schools that do not have to accept students and do not adhere to the same oversight as our public schools.

Not even a year ago, this same body refused to properly fund special education services in our state. Make no mistake, Our most vulnerable students and the overworked, passionate educators that serve them have suffered. There is not enough resources to properly support our ever-diversifying student population. In order to make up the difference, funds from general education must be taken. Students cannot get transportation to their athletic functions and so many other services that help give them the quality education and school experience they deserve. The introduction of this bill diverting funds away after refusing to properly fund our public schools is an insult to every Kansas student and educator.

However, I am a professional that deals in objective data and facts. I invite you to read a research brief on school vouchers which was collected and summarized by the National Association of School Psychologists which I have included below:

Research on School Voucher Programs

Preliminary research on school voucher programs has demonstrated equivocal outcomes; some studies have tied student participation in voucher programs to improved academic achievement, whereas other reviews of existing research have suggested voucher programs have negligible impact or even negative impact on student academic achievement compared to public schools. Listed below are highlights from recent research and ongoing systematic reviews. However, additional research is needed to draw meaningful and definitive conclusions:

- Academic achievement growth for voucher students is similar to their public school counterparts, demonstrating no clear positive impact or gains for students using vouchers (Center on Educational Policy [CEP], 2011; National Bureau of Economic Research, 2015).
- Specific states have demonstrated conflicting student outcomes for those attending voucher schools:
 - Students participating in Louisiana’s school voucher program had substantially lower academic achievement (National Bureau of Economic Research, 2015)
 - Washington D.C. students participating in their voucher program demonstrated small increases in reading achievement and high school graduation rates, but no evidence for improvements in math achievement (Wolf et al., 2013)
- While some studies may show graduation rates were higher for voucher students, many studies do not control for factors such as demographic differences (e.g., SES, race/ethnicity, parent educational attainment, employment status) between families who use vouchers, which when controlled for, often result in negligible differences between students in public schools and those using vouchers in private schools (CEP, 2011)
- Student rates of satisfaction with their own schooling and other indicators of success including school climate were not significantly different between students using vouchers in private schools and their public school counterparts (Wolf et al., 2010)

How School Vouchers Could Impact Students With Disabilities

The Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) grants critical rights and protections to students with disabilities to ensure that they have an equal opportunity to pursue a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. However, most states require students receiving vouchers to waive their rights to a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) provided by IDEA when they elect to attend a private school (Hensel, 2010; Cunningham, 2013; COPAA, 2016). Further, private school voucher programs raise the potential for lack of inclusion or lack of acceptance for students with disabilities. Private schools have the ability to select the students they want to serve and can refuse to educate a child if they deem their instructional program is not a fit for the student (NCSL, 2015); schools do not have to “accept” students who do not meet certain requirements. It is important to ensure parents are provided with sufficiently detailed information about the extent of special ed services available in order to provide FAPE in schools they are considering, so they can make a reasoned and informed choice. Listed below are a few state examples of how vouchers have been applied to students within special education:

- The Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, one of the oldest voucher programs in the country, does not require schools that receive voucher students to provide special education services. They can deny entry to students who are considered too severe to serve, and can choose to stop serving students at any time (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2017).
- A recent survey on voucher and education savings account (ESA) programs conducted by the U.S. Government and Accountability Office (GAO) found that student eligibility for private schools is often based on student disability status or family income (GAO, 2016). Findings suggest that “the

Department's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services will consider guidance about the responsibilities of SEAs and LEAs to ensure that IDEA's equitable services provisions are applied to students with disabilities enrolled by their parents in private schools under State voucher and ESA programs" (GAO, 2016).

- Some states offer special education vouchers, such as Florida's McKay Scholarship for Students with Disabilities. This allows IDEA-eligible students to receive a voucher for a sum of money that may or may not be equal to the state funded portion of the cost of their education in a public school. Families are then responsible for covering the remaining cost via supplement vouchers or other means (Almazan & Marshall, 2016; Winters & Greene, 2011), suggesting that only certain families may have the means, or elect to cover the difference for their child to attend a private school.

How Are Schools Held to Rigorous Accountability and Standards

It is important for schools to be accountable to families and the public regarding the quality of instruction and services provided to students. This safeguard applies to all public schools. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) gives states the flexibility to effectively manage federal educational policies to meet the needs of their school communities. Under ESSA, public schools are held accountable for four indicators. For elementary schools those indicators include academic performance in English language arts (ELA) and math, English language learner (ELL) proficiency, another statewide academic indicator of choice, and one statewide nonacademic indicator of choice. For high schools, accountability indicators include ELA and math performance, ELL proficiency, graduation rates, and one statewide academic indicator of choice. These indicators allow state education stakeholders to customize their accountability systems in ways they have not been able to before. An accountability system can be based on a variety of indicators of student growth toward postsecondary college and/or career readiness. Chosen academic and non-academic accountability indicators need to contribute to identifying schools for ESSA supports and recognition, the timely reporting of information to education stakeholders, and establishing meaningful education goals and interim targets for the state and its school communities. ESSA accountability provisions apply to public schools; however not all private schools (including those that could receive voucher funds) are required to follow those same standards. It is important for voucher programs to be full participants within these accountability mandates. Any use of public monies to a non-public school entity (including vouchers) should also require participation in the state accountability system, allowing for meaningful comparison of student educational outcomes and to help ensure all students are making progress toward high standards.

References will be included below. It's clear that the research on beneficial outcomes of these voucher programs is murky at best, however, it is clear that vouchers are harmful and discriminatory toward our students with exceptionalities and take away resources from all of the estimated 90% of Kansas children who attend public schools. I am not willing to gamble with the well-being and education of Kansas students. All Kansas students. I urge the members of this committee to vote against this proposed bill and continue to invest in our most valuable resource, which has always been, and always will be our students. ALL students.

Thank you for your public service and your time,

Shannon Forsythe, Ed. S.,

School Psychologist USD#233

Overland Park, Kansas

References

Almazan, S., & Marshall, D. (2016). School vouchers and students with disabilities: Examining impact in the name of choice. Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates. Retrieved from https://c.ymcdn.com/sites/copaa.site_ym.com/resource/resmgr/2016_Conference/COPAA_Voucher_paper_final_R6.pdf

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Cunningham, J. (2013). School vouchers: Legal and constitutional issues [webinar]. Retrieved from <http://www.ncsl.org/documents/educ/voucher-webinar.pdf>

Government Accountability Office (2016). Private school choice programs are growing and can complicate providing certain federally funded services to eligible students. Retrieved from: <http://www.gao.gov/assets/680/678994.pdf>

Hensel, W. F. (2010). Vouchers for students with disabilities: The future of special education? *Journal of Law & Education*, 39(3), 291–349.

National Conference of State Legislatures. (2014). School voucher laws: State-by-state comparison. Retrieved from <http://www.ncsl.org/documents/educ/StateByStateVoucherComparison.pdf>

Winters, M. A., & Greene, J. P. (2011). Public school response to special education vouchers: The impact of Florida's McKay Scholarship Program on disability diagnosis and student achievement in public schools. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 33, 138-158.

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Milwaukee Parental Choice Program. Retrieved from: <http://dpi.state.wi.us/sms/choice.html>

Wolf, P. J., Kisida, B., Gutmann, B., Puma, M., Eissa, N., & Rizzo, L. (2013). School vouchers and student outcomes: Experimental evidence from Washington, DC. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 32, 246-280.

Wolf, P., Gutmann, B., Puma, M., Kisida, B., Rizzo, L., Eissa, N., & Carr, M. (2010). Evaluation of the DC Opportunity Scholarship Program: Final Report (NCEE 2010-4018). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

Dear Mr. Belknap,

I'm writing to share strong opposition to HB 2218: I am not in favor of using public tax dollars to support non-public schools. I don't endorse a process that would strip our already under-funded public education system—a system that is foundational to our democracy in that it serves ALL students.

Thank you for your time and attention to my concern.

Sarah Hochstetler, PhD
Lawrence, KS

February 6, 2023
Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Dr. Sara A. Jahnke
TITLE: Shawnee Mission School District Parent

EMAIL ADDRESS: sarajahnke71@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent
ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. I have serious reservations about the proposed bill and its moving public funds to non-public schools.

As the parent to a child with special needs, I am disappointed that the priority of the committee is to support non-public schools rather than focusing efforts on fully funding special education to the statutory requirements. I was recently at my son's IEP meeting that was staffed by a dozen professionals. Through hundreds of hours of intervention and therapies, he is now able to attend general education full time. These opportunities would not be available to him in private schools. Funneling funds from public schools to private drains an already stressed public school system.

Further, I have explored the empirical evidence behind voucher programs that shift money from public to private schools. Consistently the data indicates these programs further disenfranchise at risk families and those from a low socioeconomic status. The majority of those taking advantage of the program are families already attending the private schools in higher tax brackets.

As you deliberate on this topic, I urge you to consider the deleterious impact such a move will have on the most vulnerable in our community. Please oppose HB2218 for those of us who rely on the public school system the most.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dr. Sara A. Jahnke
Parent, SMSD
Prairie Village

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Sandra B. Katz-Sherry

TITLE: parent

EMAIL ADDRESS: bethsherry@kc.rr.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY:

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to Bill HB 2218. As the parent of two children in the Shawnee Mission School District, I believe public tax dollars belong with our public schools who accept and educate all children. Using public dollars for private schools drains the public schools of needed resources for successful student learning. Furthermore, Bill HB 2218 lacks oversight and provides no review process to evaluate if students utilizing our taxpayer dollars at private or home schools are achieving.

Please vote no on HB 2218.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sandra B. Katz-Sherry

Prairie Village, KS

February 6, 2023

Written Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Shannon Kimball

TITLE: Parent of 3 public school students; 12-year school board member

EMAIL ADDRESS: sunflowerjd257@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: OPPONENT

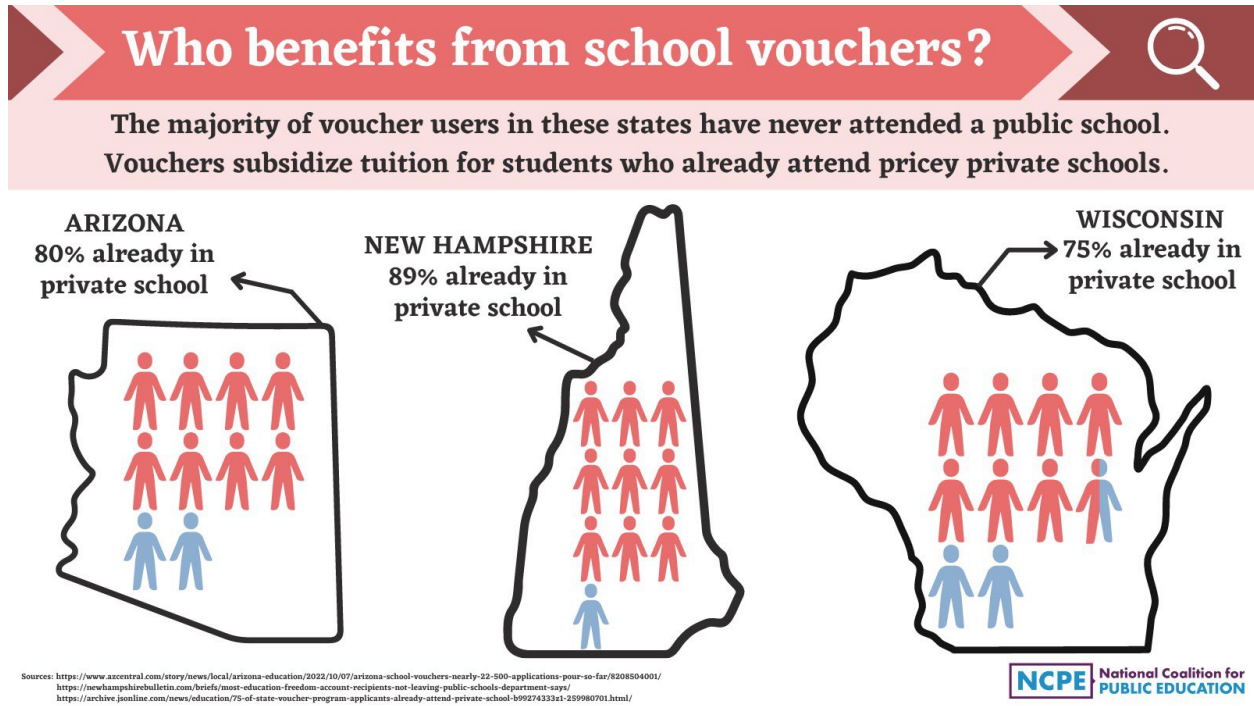
Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my strong opposition to HB2218. Based on my experience as a parent of three students in Kansas public schools since 2010, as well as my 12 years of experience as a school board member, HB2218 will harm education in our state. I ask you to reject this proposal.

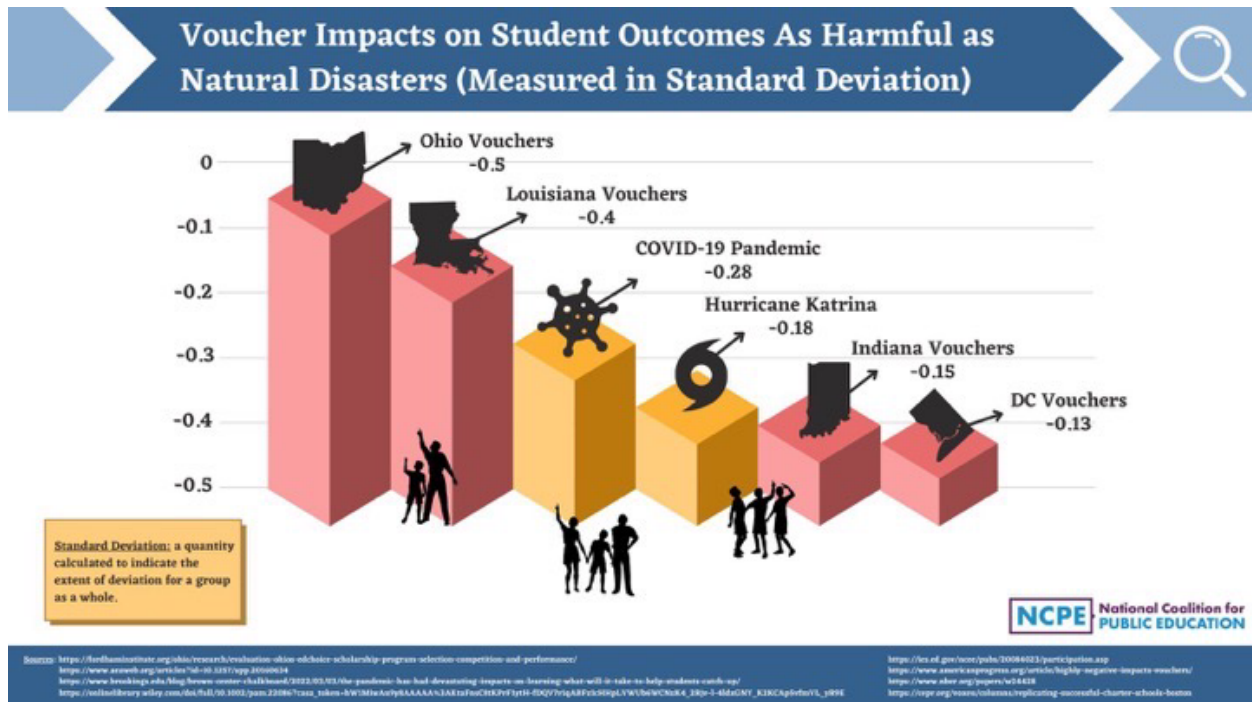
Our state constitution charges the legislature with creating a system of public schools and with providing adequate and equitable resources to those schools. HB2218 transfers public tax dollars away from the public school system to private schools that are not supervised by local boards of education; not subject to the oversight of the State Board of Education; not held to the same high levels of transparency and accountability for spending of taxpayer money; not held to the same high levels of accountability for student achievement; not required to serve all students who wish to attend; not required to provide due process to parents, students, or staff in resolving problems or concerns; and not accountable to any democratically elected governance body, parents, or voters. These shortcomings of HB2218 are especially egregious given that our public schools have been underfunded—both legally and as a matter of what it actually takes to provide the high-quality education Kansas parents expect and Kansas students deserve—since before my oldest son, now a senior in high school, started kindergarten. He has been shortchanged by the legislature, as have all the students and families in our public schools the last decade plus. Until the public schools these students attend are provided all the resources they need to thrive and excel, tax dollars should not be diverted to create a second, inequitable and inadequate system of education in our state.

Moreover, the body of research around education savings accounts and similar voucher programs is conclusive—they overwhelmingly result in transfers of tax dollars to wealthy families who are already sending their children to private school and, most alarmingly, they harm student achievement for those public-school students who attempt to use them.

The graphics below show that most voucher users never attended public school:



Shockingly, and alarmingly, for those students who moved from public to private school using a voucher, the negative academic impact on those students



approximates and even exceeds that seen as a result of the pandemic and Hurricane Katrina.

Moreover, studies of students who leave their voucher private school to return to public school have revealed that those returning students fare far better academically in their public school; data collected about students in Wisconsin showed “transferring students realize[d] substantial achievement gains after moving to the public sector.”¹

Researchers in this field have further pointed out that the negative academic impacts of ESA/voucher programs substantially exceed the positive impacts of even highly successful academic programs such as high-quality pre-K.² This is compelling research-based evidence showing that ESA/voucher programs have harmful impacts to students. Kansas students and families cannot afford such a self-imposed academic disaster.

In closing, I ask you to vote NO on HB2218. The future of education in Kansas needs you to fully resource our public school system, not create separate and unequal systems that research shows ultimately harm student achievement.

Thank you for your consideration.

¹ Carlson, D., Cowen, J. M., & Fleming, D. J. (2013). Life After Vouchers: What Happens to Students Who Leave Private Schools for the Traditional Public Sector? *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 35(2), 179–199. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0162373712461852>.

²<https://twitter.com/joshcowenMSU/status/1619773743785734144?s=20&t=1N0BTNeit7pl4ZuARvx7zA>, citing Duncan, Greg J., and Katherine Magnuson. 2013. "Investing in Preschool Programs." *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 27 (2): 109-32.

February 2, 2023

RE: Opposition to HB2218: Sunflower Education Equity Act

Dear Representative Landwehr,

I am Dr. Shane Kirchner from McPherson, KS and I am writing in opposition to HB2218, the Sunflower Education Equity Act. I am an educator in Kansas with nearly thirty years' experience. For the past 19 years I have been a professor of education at McPherson College and I am keenly aware of the teacher shortage. While this bill, on the surface, may help some families, I feel in the long term it will cause more damage to the profession and exasperate the teacher shortage.

I am concerned that the bill, as presented, contains little to no oversight of the private schools. While they are required to teach core subjects, they do not appear to have to teach the state standards. In short, other than a letter submitted to the board treasurer, there is not accountability of the private schools. Additionally, I'm concerned that private schools do not have to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

Ultimately, this bill will reduce the resources available to public schools by redirecting public money to private schools. Since private school don't have to accept students with disabilities, there will be a higher percentage of those students it public schools and, consequently an increased expenses by percentage of students in public schools. In short, the total amount available to public schools will be reduced. This is particularly concerning for our rural districts where private schools do not exist. In much of western Kansas, the public school is the only option. Several districts already operate on a 4-day school week as one way to reduce expenses. In short, this bill would remove money from the overall state coffers and ultimately reduce money to all public schools.

Teaching is a tough profession. We have a teacher shortage. We need to be doing everything we can to bolster our teachers and schools. I feel this bill, setting two different sets of standards for public and private schools and directing funding away from public schools, will ultimately increase the teacher shortage, not help it. For these reasons, I encourage you to oppose House Bill 2218: the Sunflower Education Equity Act.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shane Kirchner". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and address.

Dr. Shane Kirchner
748 E. Marlin St.
McPherson, KS 67460

Samantha Neill
sjneill13@gmail.com
Written Opposition Testimony to HB 2218
Hearing Date/Time: Feb. 6, 2023 at 3:30 pm

Members of the House K-12 Education Budget Committee,

My name is Samantha Neill and I am the 2018 Kansas Teacher of the Year and a 20-year teaching veteran; most importantly I am the mom of two school-aged boys who attend Buhler USD 313 and one college son who is considering a career as a public school teacher.

I am writing in opposition of HB2218 for several reasons.

There are currently 26 states who are introducing and debating these savings account/voucher style bills. This is not a bill that is brought forth by the majority of Kansans who expect us to fully-fund education. It is a nearly identical bill to many of the others across this country. The majority of Kansas counties depend on their public schools and have no other school options. Losing 8-10 kids in my district alone would result in the loss of 1 teaching position, increasing class sizes, and causing remaining state base aid to be split even further between children in our public schools. We've seen it too many times; when the public schools go, so goes the community.

Public schools are required to accept all children, regardless of their race, gender, identity, sexuality, religion, ethnicity, or ability. Private schools are not held to the same expectations as public schools and may turn students away for any of the reasons mentioned above. Many of our students in special education require more personnel and resources to be successful.

This bill exempts any of these non-public schools from having to share their curriculum, take measurement exams like state-assessments and ACTs, or have licensed teachers - all requirements that have been used to determine the effectiveness of public schools. I cannot fathom how leaders and adults who are pushing for more transparency from public schools can turn around in the same way and exempt non-public schools from these measures. Make it make sense because it seems like a double-standard.

This bill will serve those children who are lucky to have the resources and parents to choose their school opportunities. It does not put the needs of all students first; in fact, it will set up loopholes to divert funds from public school students' learning with little oversight or accountability. This bill allows for anyone who is approved to open a

homeschool or micro school and collect the base state aid. There is nothing stopping the “stripmall” schools from opening up as we have seen in other states.

Under this program, my oldest son, who was adopted out of foster care, would fall through the cracks. He wouldn't have had an advocate who fought for him like a parent can fight for him. Other children will fall through the cracks. They will be unaccounted for, in harm's way, with no other means to the outside world. This seems like a high price to pay for \$5,500. Without the support of his teachers, my son may have never made it out of his abusive homelife. Public schools provide so much to students in need - warmth, food, safety, and hope.

I have many other concerns, but these are the most important to my family. Instead of investing energy in this voucher-style program, we should be working together to create the strongest public schools that we can. In Kansas 65 counties have no other option but virtual school. The same proponents of us coming back to full, in-person learning during Covid-19 because of the “failure” of online and hybrid school surely cannot support this.

I would ask you to please drop this bill from consideration. It should not pass out of committee.

Samantha Neill
2018 Kansas Teacher of the Year
2021 Lowell Milken Fellow

From: Stephen Plous

Title: Johnson County SMSD parent and grandparent

Email : splous@kc.rr.com

Bill #: HB2218 Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

Opponent

Written Only Testimony

Dear Chair and Members of the committee:

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

I believe universal public education is the cornerstone of our country and our communities. Private education dilutes this shared experience.

Furthermore, I strongly oppose my tax dollars being used for any religious instruction – Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, Baptist, or any other.

Please vote NO on HB 2218

Thank you,

Stephen Plous

Overland Park, KS

Dr. Shannon Ralph
sralph81@gmail.com
Written Opposition Testimony to HB 2218
Hearing Date/Time: 2/6/2023 at 3:30 pm

Members of the House K-12 Education Budget Committee,

My name is Shannon Ralph and I am the 2015 Kansas Teacher of the Year. I am writing to express my opposition to HB 2218.

There are many components within this bill that raise a level of concern for those of us who have been in public education for decades, but I will highlight the top three.

- 1) This bill impacts entire communities in a negative way by pulling monies from local school districts that are meant to serve ALL students within a district. When money is unavailable, schools are forced to cut programs, in many instances the programs that serve the most vulnerable in a community. In addition, communities that have a desire to grow MUST have a strong school system to attract businesses and new families.
- 2) The lack of oversight of both the distribution and use of money that is pulled from public education creates an opportunity for the misuse of the funds. It is possible, and I would contend probable, that some people who might receive a check meant to educate children, will use it for other means. The lack of oversight will harm the children who are not given a proper education because they are in an environment that does not provide such education- through no choice of their own.
- 3) This bill has not explored the actual cost to the state. I have looked at similar plans in other states, and have found a common thread that the cost to implement this bill would actually be significantly more than the state's current funding of education.

Please consider dropping this bill from the House K-12 Education Budget Committee. I feel sure that concerns you may have regarding public education in Kansas can be addressed in a more beneficial way. I would love to be a part of this conversation, and I can bring my years of experience and expertise to the table.

Sincerely,
Shannon Ralph, Ph.D.
2014 Wolfe Teaching Excellence Award, University of Kansas
2015 Kansas Teacher of the Year
2016 Lowell Milken Fellow
2020 Friends of Education ABC Award

February 6, 2023
Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Sandra Reed

TITLE: Retired Kansas educator

EMAIL ADDRESS: reedsandra9@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPOSER, OPPOSER, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY:

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. I was educated in Kansas public schools, I taught for my whole career in Kansas Public Schools, and I have retired from Kansas Public Schools. So did my husband. My two children are Kansas Public Schools educators. I have five grandchildren attending Kansas Public Schools. I have long been an advocate for fully supporting and fully funding Kansas Public Schools with appropriate Kansas or federal tax money. When private or religious schools are required to accept ALL students and provide an adequate education for ALL students, then perhaps there can be a discussion for HB2218. Until then, please oppose or vote No on HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sandra Reed
Andover, Kansas

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Sally Root

TITLE: Homeowner and Taxpayer, Leawood Elementary School, Blue Valley School District

EMAIL ADDRESS: sjrleawood@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

As a homeowner and taxpayer in Kansas, I oppose this measure, and ask you to do the same because our public school system currently offers a free and quality education to all students, and our society needs an educated public for our democracy to function well. This is how our public tax dollars should be used — in the greatest interest of all. Our current system gives everyone a chance for a quality education and has produced a number of outstanding Americans, who took advantage of the free and quality education provided by public schools. Without this, American society could become further fractured and divided, and we risk losing some of the most valuable members of our society, because they won't be able to participate fully due to a lack of education. Individuals choosing to route their kids to private institutions for whatever reason may choose to do so in the current system by supplying their own funds. Private school has always been a luxury education in the United States, and should remain so.

Please oppose or vote no on HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration

Sally Root

Homeowner / Taxpayer, Blue Valley School System, Leawood Elementary School

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Sarah Selby

TITLE: Parent, Leawood Elementary School, Blue Valley School District

EMAIL ADDRESS: sarahtselby@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

As a parent of children in public schools, I oppose this measure, and ask you to do the same because our public school system currently offers a free and quality education to all students, and our society needs an educated public for our democracy to function well. This is how our public tax dollars should be used — in the greatest interest of all. Our current system gives everyone a chance for a quality education and has produced a number of outstanding Americans, who took advantage of the free and quality education provided by public schools. Without this, American society could become further fractured and divided, and we risk losing some of the most valuable members of our society, because they won't be able to participate fully due to a lack of education. Individuals choosing to route their kids to private institutions for whatever reason may choose to do so in the current system by supplying their own funds. Private school has always been a luxury education in the United States, and should remain so.

Please oppose or vote no on HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration

Sarah Selby

Parent, Blue Valley School System, Leawood Elementary School

February 2, 2023
Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

Name: Sheila and Ken Sonnenschein

Title: Kansas Residents and Parents of graduates from the Blue Valley School District and Parents of a graduate of a private school

Email: ksonshine6@gmail.com

Bill Number: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

OPPONENT

Written Only Testimony

Dear Chair & members of the House K-12 Budget committee,

We are writing to voice our STRONG opposition to bill HB2218.

Taxes for schools are to go to public schools. That is the law.

We have had children graduate from both public and private schools. We never would expect the state to pay for my child's private school education.

It is not fair to the public school kids who have a right to a good education with our hard earned tax dollars, for the money to be diverted to private schools.

Everyone has the right to choose whether or not to go to a public or private school. If we allow vouchers, the kids who go to public school will be hurt by this. Our public schools will deteriorate educationally along with the physical school structures. We will lose good teachers because without enough tax dollars, the pay would be too low. It's too low as it is.

If this bill passes, it will hurt our state. People will not want to move to Kansas because the schools would be subpar. That will lead to not bringing in enough taxes to pay for our public schools and other needs for Kansas families, households.

Therefore, we strongly oppose Bill HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sheila and Ken Sonnenschein
Overland Park, KS 66209



Be informed.
Get involved.
Vote.

Written Testimony to House Committee on K-12 Education Budget

Stand Up Blue Valley: Families for Our Schools Opposes HB 2218

Establishing the Sunflower education equity act to provide education savings accounts for qualified students in Kansas.

Hearing: Monday, Feb. 6, 2023, 3:30 PM Room 546-S

Stand Up Blue Valley: Families for Our Schools is a parent and patron advocacy group in the Blue Valley School District. We advocate for legislation that supports Blue Valley Schools and work to help our community understand the importance of their votes to our schools.

Madam Chair and Committee members:

Stand Up Blue Valley: Families for Our Schools has reviewed HB 2218: Establishing the Sunflower education equity act to provide education savings accounts for qualified students in Kansas. We are submitting testimony **in opposition** to this bill.

As always: we support families' rights to send their children to private schools or to homeschool them. We DO NOT support giving tax money to non-public entities that don't serve all students and are not required to have state accreditation, public oversight, or any measure of accountability for the tax dollars received. Our general objection to tax money being used to fund private schools applies to any voucher, scholarship, or similar plan to divert public tax money away from public schools.

We will share specific concerns about HB 2218 that we noted when reviewing this bill:

Lack of public oversight of the program and the schools benefiting

HB 2218 provides for a Board that is state-wide (not answerable to local taxpayers), meets only twice a year, and is not elected by The People. Except for 2 of the 10 members, the Board is appointed. There is little oversight by direct taxpayer representatives. In contrast, Kansas public schools are overseen by a fully-elected Board of Education for each district. Blue Valley taxpayers elect a School Board that represents their interests in the direction of how public tax money is spent and how the community's children are educated.

HB 2218 provides for NO public oversight as to how the tax money is spent. What are the administration costs of the private schools benefiting from these tax dollars? Anti-public education entities complain about public school administrative costs (and we disagree with their contentions) but why would we support tax dollars handed to private schools with absolutely no oversight as to how those funds are spent once the school has the money? What are the students being taught by the private schools, home schools, or online vendors who are collecting our tax money? There is not oversight or accountability built in to ensure students are benefiting.

HB 2218 provides no requirements for state assessment tests or other standardized exams. There is no way to track whether the students participating in the program, individually or as a group, are keeping pace with grade level, if they are proficient, if they will be ready to graduate. This black hole in oversight of the wide variety of participating schools is completely unacceptable, considering tax dollars would be used to fund them.

HB 2218 does not require that homeschooled or non-traditionally-schooled students get the education they need. There is no oversight to ensure that students have the opportunity to master all core subjects. What if well-intentioned parents use ESA money to purchase courses in reading and social studies but run out of money for math?

Cost to taxpayers excessive and undefined

Implementation of this program would be costly, and the fiscal note for that cost is as of yet unknown. HB 2218 provides for a large bureaucracy including audits of contracts, fraud reporting service, development and maintenance of a website and mobile app, management of accounts and payments, development and updating of a handbook - in part.

The Kansas Treasurers' office will have numerous added responsibilities, and would certainly need to hire additional employees. Administration of applications and enrollment, oversight and suspension of accounts - Would the 5% per student withheld for these costs actually cover this work? There is no way to know.

ESA history of fraud in other states

There have been numerous recent examples of fraudulent use of ESA money across the country. "Arizona parents have made fraudulent purchases and misspent more than \$700,000 in public money allocated by the state's school-voucher style program, and state officials have recouped almost none of that money, a new Auditor General report has found."

<https://www.azcentral.com/story/news/politics/arizona/2018/10/29/misspent-school-voucher-funds-excused-700-k-little-recovered/1780495002/>

"Some purchased books or other materials using their state-issued debit cards and then immediately returned them. The refunded money was put on gift cards, allowing parents to spend it with no scrutiny."

<https://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/arizona-education/2017/06/22/oversight-arizona-esa-school-voucher-program-almost-sham/407961001/>

State abdicating its responsibility to students

HB 2218 would pay non-qualified teachers and tutors in home and private schools. We object to the use of tax money to pay for an inferior education for Kansas students. It would pay for vendors of services that have not been evaluated for cost-effectiveness or even effectiveness in general. Taxpayer money will be the target of for-profit services; parents and unqualified private school administrators will not have the knowledge or tools to discern the good from the unhelpful, even harmful. HB 2218 contains no provisions to help prevent students from being used for the money assigned to them by unscrupulous services and private schools. The State has the responsibility to ensure that State dollars being spent to educate Kansas children are being spent in a fiscally responsible and effective manner.

Religious teachings may be covered

HB 2218 specifies: “The content or religious nature of a product or service may not be considered when determining whether payment for such product or service is an allowable expenditure from an account.” Tax money then will be used to pay for religious materials and education.

Unequal/unfair financial treatment of benefitting private schools

HB 2218 states: “Unless an account has been closed pursuant to subsection (h), moneys remaining in an account at the end of a school year shall roll over in such account to the next succeeding school year.” Kansas public schools are not permitted to roll over base state aid to the next school year. We object to home and private schools being given more latitude in management of finances in this way than public schools are.

Student support nonexistent

HB 2218 does not provide for any infrastructure to support students and families that is present in public schools. Our Blue Valley Schools have a school counselor in each building who guides students in course selection, college applications, to name just a few services. Students are assessed for learning disabilities and can get the support they need. Parents who only know their own kids may miss important delays that, if caught and supported in the public school, could be overcome or minimized by the time a student reaches graduation.

After careful consideration, we believe the answer to whether this program would actually benefit Kansas students and represent responsible stewardship of Kansas tax dollars is clearly “No.” We ask that you vote NO on HB 2218.

February 2, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Tonya Anton

TITLE: Kansas Citizen

EMAIL ADDRESS: antonts@msn.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

I don't have any children in school, but I have many nieces and nephews in Kansas. I do NOT want my public tax dollars to be used to subsidize private schools. I believe that good public schools are vitally important for communities and the future of our country.

Please vote NO on bill HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration.

Tonya Anton
Kansas Citizen
Olathe

From: Tatum Bandy tatumbandy@yahoo.com
Subject: HB2218
Date: Feb 2, 2023 at 8:55:43 AM
To: garret.belknap@house.ks.gov
Cc: tatumbandy@yahoo.com

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Tatum Bandy

TITLE: parent

EMAIL ADDRESS: tatumbandy@yahoo.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education
Savings Accounts

TESTIMONY: written

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. I

believe taxpayer money should stay with public

schools. If you choose to send your child to a private

school, that should be funded by the individual

household not the public.

I've had a child in both public and private school and

believe it was our responsibility to pay for a private

education not the taxpayer or government.

I'm asking to oppose or vote no on HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration

Thank you,
Tatum Bandy
Lawrence

February 2, 2023
Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Tiffany Broberg
TITLE: Parent and Substitute Teacher, Maize USD 266
EMAIL ADDRESS: tiffanysbroberg@gmail.com
BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts
PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent
ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only Testimony

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

We should not be diverting public tax dollars to private schools at a time when legislators should be focused on the **\$160 million shortfall in special education funding**. The state should fully fund special education, not private schools. While I previously overheard anecdotes from friends of the effects of underfunded special education in Kansas, as a substitute teacher since 2019, I now see the effects firsthand. Private schools are NOT required to accommodate students with special educational needs.

When our family purchased a home in 2009 in Kansas, moving from out-of-state, the deciding factor on our choice was location within the boundaries of Maize USD266. Public schools are economic drivers—businesses and families look for quality public schools when relocating.

In addition to my concerns over the actual bill, I am extremely concerned that bill HB2218 is being “rushed” through committee for a hearing, with little time for public awareness, let alone input.

Please oppose HB2218 by voting no.

Many thanks,

Tiffany Broberg
Parent and Substitute Teacher, Maize USD 266
Wichita, Kansas

February 2, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Tricia Chitwood

TITLE: Parent and Taxpayer

EMAIL ADDRESS: triciakae@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

I'm especially concerned about how this bill would affect our rural citizens. Education Savings Accounts aren't available to rural students who have little to no school options except public schools. Rural communities would therefore be subsidizing private school for students in metro areas. Further, loss of funding for rural public schools could cause school consolidation – meaning longer bus rides / drives for students – and will have big impacts on community life.

I am also concerned about how this bill would affect vulnerable students. Private schools that can choose which children they want to serve should not receive our public dollars.

I urge you to vote NO on HB2218.

Sincerely,

Tricia Chitwood
Spring Hill

February 2, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

Teri Craig
Teridactyl80@gmail.com
HB2218 Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

Opponent

Written Only Testimony

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

I am a parent of two young children in the Shawnee Mission School District where school is FREE. Private schools get funding from people paying them! We cannot afford to send our kids to private schools and now you're wanting to give them taxpayers dollars. Don't they already get taxpayer dollars for their churches which are usually associated with schools. I oppose HB2218 because it diverts public tax dollars from our **public school** children. Public schools are required to educate *all children* – even “the least of these.” Private schools can choose to admit children at their discretion which means my daughter probably wouldn't even be allowed due to her soon having an IEP with the school. Our state is strong because our citizens all had an equal chance at a quality education. I implore you to vote NO on this bill. Also no more incentive for home school parents. Kids need socialization and access to FREE school. If millions are pulled then all education will go down the drain. Its hard enough finding teachers, if you pull the funding public schools will have to start charging for school and then there will be millions of families without the ability to send their kids to school. Please think of the big picture here.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Teri Craig
Leawood KS

February 2, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Tiffany Jones

TITLE: Parent

EMAIL ADDRESS: tiffanywine@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

I attended public schools in Kansas growing up and now my 2 boys do as well. I would like to think that the education my sons are receiving is as good or better than the education I received. My son Porter has an IEP. The additional assistance he receives as part of his IEP will benefit him throughout the remainder of his education and throughout his life.

Our Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children. Instead of funding private and home schools, the legislature should focus on fully funding special education. Private schools that can choose which children they want to serve should not receive our public dollars.

I respectfully ask you to vote NO on bill HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration.

Tiffany Jones

Leawood, KS

Feb. 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

Traci Mayberry

Citizen of Kansas & TAXPAYER

traci@nationalsportsclinics.com

Bill HB2218

OPPOSED

WRITTEN testimony only

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my absolute opposition to HB2218.

While many of the so-called conservatives in this state won't say it out loud, it's common knowledge that they want full control over what our students learn in our public schools. It doesn't seem to matter to them that few, if any, are qualified or competent to decide what curriculum should be taught on any subject matter in Kansas public schools. My suggestion to all of those that believe stealing PUBLIC TAX DOLLARS that are NOT designated or intended for private schools is to go meddle in the private schools and try to impose your religious and antiquated political beliefs on them.

My question to you and your colleagues that support this bill is: How many of you received a public-school education? I'm guessing most of you. So what was good enough for you is not all the sudden not good enough for everyone else's kids because corporate dollars are now flowing to you to get your vote. Sickening. I won't even go into those of you who are or were public-school educators, literally earning your living (and likely now your retirements) off the backs of Kansas taxpayers, who support this trash.

Your attempts to cripple our public schools, which will have negative impacts for many students, parents, teachers, staff and countless others, is sickening. It's clear that your ideology is outdated and rejected by the majority of people in this country. So, because GOP voters don't educate themselves about the people they vote for, you have a majority in this state and you think you can arrogantly ram your hateful, racist, bigoted views down the throats of our kids. Guess what? We aren't going to stand for it.

You have a lot of power, and it would stand to reason that you would want to use it to benefit the people of this state – ALL the citizens of Kansas. But, no, you are hung up on sticking your noses where they don't belong. Whatever happened to limited government that the GOP supposedly believed in? It's a joke, that's what.

I received an excellent public school education as did my entire family. I come from a family of educators – all of whom believe that EVERY single child deserves a quality FREE K-12 education – and they've worked their entire careers to provide the best education possible for the kids in their classrooms, buildings and districts. I might add, that NONE of them include their political or religious beliefs in their lesson plans.

I'm so disgusted with this attempt to destroy our public schools that I can't even find the words to accurately describe my feelings about all of you in favor of this bill. If you want your kids educated in private schools, write your checks and send them there. LEAVE THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS ALONE!

Traci Mayberry

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Thomas J. Melia

TITLE: Retired Kansas Public School Teacher

EMAIL ADDRESS: tjmelia29@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Testimony Only

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. Public schools are critically important to our communities. I am a life-long Kansan, a product of Kansas Public Education, as are my wife and our two children. I retired from the Blue Valley School District after the 2020-2021 school year after 33 years teaching middle school science. I worked to educate ALL of my students, not just the few. I chose to be a part of an institution that serves the public good. It has been demoralizing to see this commitment decline to the point that we have to fight every legislative session to maintain funding. There are a myriad of reasons why bill HB2218 is bad for our public schools and bad for Kansas:

- Public tax dollars should not be diverted to private schools at a time when legislators should be focused on the **\$160 million shortfall in special education funding**. The state should fully fund special education, not private schools.
- Public schools are economic drivers. We stayed in Kansas after graduating college for the schools, and know many, many people who moved to Kansas because of the schools, despite having jobs across the state line in Missouri.
- Using public dollars for private schools drains the public schools of needed resources for successful student learning.
- Private schools do not have to educate all students and can deny admission based on academic ability, physical ability, religion, sexual orientation, etc. Additionally, private schools are not held to the same accountability standards and are not required to participate in state testing. Public funding should go to our public schools which educate **all students**.
- There are no oversight provisions in Bill HB 2218, and it has no mechanism to evaluate the progress and achievement of students receiving public funds to attend private or home schools.
- Research continues to show that **private school vouchers do not improve student achievement**.

Our tax dollars should be used to educate all Kansas students, and therefore I am asking you to **please vote NO on Bill HB2218**.

Thank you for your consideration.

Thomas J. Melia
Prairie Village, KS

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Theresa Moore

TITLE: Parent of 2 public school kids

EMAIL ADDRESS: theresammoore9@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: written

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

I have two children in public schools believe public tax dollars belong with public schools that accept and educate all children.

Close by asking members of the committee to vote NO on bill HB 2218

Thank you for your consideration.

Theresa Moore

Parent

Overland Park, KS

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House of K-12 Budget Committee

Taryn Myers

Kansas Citizen, parent and employee in USD 266 Maize Kansas School District

tarynmyers@gmail.com

HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

Opposing - Written Only Testimony

2/6/2023

Dear Chair and members of the committee:

I have two children that attend public schools. One in 6th grade and the other in 8th grade. I also spent 5 years serving as a paraprofessional in an elementary school and currently substitute teach across the USD 266 district. My public school experience as a parent and employee has a great experience up to this point. However, it's been eye-opening to see first-hand the struggles the public school system has. We greatly feel that passing Bill HB2218 will have a vastly negative impact on our public school system. I am writing to voice my opposition to the HB2218 Bill. This bill will wreck public schools. I have experienced how public schools are currently run. I would refer to it as a shoestring budget. They do their best with what they have. It's NOT enough. I have been the President of the PTO Organization in our district (at the elementary school level and the middle school level) and know the only way schools in my area are getting by is because thankfully they have a wonderful non-profit Parent Teacher Organization to fill in the gaps with classroom needs. Not all schools are this fortunate. The special education departments struggle even more because their needs are so much greater. I have watched teachers and staff pour their OWN money into resources their students need on a daily basis. These are resources the state budget is already not providing and now it's possible that MORE is going to be taken from them? We should not be diverting public tax dollars to private schools when legislators should be focused on the \$160 million shortfall in special education funding. Using public dollars for private schools will only drain the public school of EVEN MORE resources!! Resources we don't even have currently!!

Our low-income population in our area is increasing. The voucher program will only hurt these students more. They can't afford private school tuition and the neighborhood school will lack even more funding if this bill passes.

I do not understand how this bill passing is beneficial to the public-school students in Kansas. Please VOTE NO on Bill HB2218. Give the public-school students of Kansas a fighting chance!

Thank you for your consideration,

Taryn Myers

Kansas Citizen, parent, and employee in USD 266 Maize Kansas School District

tarynmyers@gmail.com

Sedgwick County, Maize Kansas

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

Travis Porter

Parent, Shawnee Mission School District

tArvis.kansascity@gmail.com

HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

Opponent

Written only testimony

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to strongly voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

My family is like most families in Johnson county. We moved here specifically to be in the Shawnee Mission School District. I went to college in Kansas City and throughout my career I have worked in Kansas City. While I enjoyed the time I spent living in the city when it came time to raise a family we decided to move and live in Overland Park for the schools and the community.

That is why **I strongly oppose school vouchers**. They will undermine that sense of community and divert public tax dollars to private schools. I do not want this legislator to defund public schools by sending my tax dollars to private, for-profit schools that play by a different set of rules and are not accountable to the parents and residents in this community.

I also believe public schools in Kansas are underfunded until special education is fully funded. And this legislator should be focused on fully funding our public schools, not diverting public money to private interests.

I am asking you to oppose HB2218. It is not good for our children or our community.

Thank you for your service to Kansans

Travis Porter

Parent, Shawnee Mission School District

Overland Park, KS

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Trisha Sanborn

TITLE: Kansas Citizen

EMAIL ADDRESS: trishasanborn@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY

Dear Chair & members of the committee:

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

Not only am I servant to the public schooling system, I am a grandmother to some amazing kids who rely on public schools for a quality education. The Sunflower Education Savings Accounts pull critical resources away from my students and my grandchildren. Public schools educate a massive majority of Kansas children, where private schools pick and choose who they want to admit. If you want to increase student achievement, invest in the majority.

I implore you to vote NO on bill HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration.

Trisha Sanborn

Kansas City, KS



Written Testimony: HB 2218 - Sunflower Education Equity Act (opponent)
House K-12 Education Budget Committee
February 6, 2023

By: Dr. Tonya Merrigan, Superintendent, USD 229 Blue Valley Schools

Madam Chairwoman and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments *opposing HB 2218*. USD 229 Blue Valley has a strong history of working with this committee and our community, as we mutually seek to enhance student learning opportunities in our state. It is our hope that we continue growing these relationships, no matter the issues or challenges confronting K-12 education and the students we serve.

Blue Valley has a total student population of more than 22,000 and **consistently ranks in the top tier of high-performing schools, both in the state and the nation.** (See Quick Facts at the end of testimony.) Our patrons, our board, and our teachers are committed to providing educational opportunities that *don't just meet performance standards, but, rather, exceed performance expectations and prepare our students for success far beyond their years in our district.*

The Blue Valley Board of Education has a long-held policy position that states:

[Blue Valley] opposes public funding of private schools, including offering public tax credits that decrease state revenue, that do not comply with the same standards and requirements of public school districts, including governance by an elected local school board.

Major School Finance Reform

HB 2218 proposes a momentous shift in education finance, policy and accountability, by directly diverting public education funds into savings accounts dedicated to private and home-school education settings. Because the changes represent such a significant shift in the way the Kansas Constitution contemplates public education funding be channeled and supervised, **we believe this legislation would be well-served by appointing an interim committee to further study and vet the various moving parts.**

Accountability and Oversight

The Blue Valley Board of Education sets high academic and aspirational goals for all students entrusted to our district. Parents and businesses in our district expect academic excellence from our schools and our Board appropriates resources necessary to achieve that.



Our district strives to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars and supports a transparent budget process that allows parents and others to provide input toward ensuring funds are used to support excellence in student learning.

Blue Valley's budget is audited annually by an external accounting firm to ensure integrity and compliance with generally accepted accounting practices. Further, the district is annually audited by KSDE to ensure compliance with state and federal laws.

HB 2218 proposes a substantial difference between how public and private schools are supervised and does not provide the same accountability in academic performance standards or in fiscal resource oversight as required of public education options.

Blue Valley is **committed to a transparent budget plan for how public funds are to be expended and of supervision by a locally-elected school board**. Blue Valley taxpayers expect nothing less than rigorous oversight and accountability for all public funds.

In closing, we want to reiterate our appreciation for the K-12 Education Budget Committee's commitment to improving student learning opportunities and achievement across our state. USD 229 shares that commitment and *has a vision of excellence in student performance and learning opportunities, so our students may have the strongest hope of future success throughout the globe*. We wish that for all students.

USD 229 Blue Valley Schools: Quick Facts

K-12 Student Enrollment	21,858	ACT District Composite Average*	23.6
Early Childhood—grade 12 Enrollment	22,412	ACT Statewide Average	19.8
Average Daily Attendance	91.7%	SAT District Average	1297
Graduation Rate	97.5%	SAT Statewide Average	1243
Teacher's with Master's Degree or Higher	74%	*with 92.3 % taking ACT	



House K-12 Education Budget Committee

Testimony on HB 2218, establishing the Sunflower Education Equity Act (written opposition)

Dr. Brent Yeager, Superintendent

February 6, 2023

Chair Williams and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in opposition to HB 2218, which would create the Sunflower Education Equity Act, which would establish scholarship accounts for students pre-school age through post-secondary education.

Olathe Public Schools is the second largest school district in the state, with a student population of approximately 30,000 students. We are known for excellent student results, including high graduation rates and high ACT and SAT scores, consistently performing above state and national averages. We are a school district committed to narrowing achievement gaps and providing an excellent education to all students.

The Olathe Board of Education and staff are committed to providing programs and services that help students progress academically and emotionally. We have a long-standing tradition of working collaboratively with organizations and businesses in our community to create opportunities for students to excel. And, our district looks forward to continuing to work with the legislature to address challenges and enhance learning for all students.

The Olathe Board of Education has a long-standing policy position that states:

Schools receiving public funding should be required to meet state accreditation requirements, provide information about students and financing on the same basis as public schools, and accept all students on an equal, non-selective basis.

HB 2550 proposes substantive changes in education policy, finance, and accountability.

Academic accountability

Olathe Public Schools is continually adapting programs, creating new learning opportunities, and working with our business partners to provide students and parents with programs that challenge students academically. We recognize the learning experience needs to be highly individualized. That is why we remain focused on outcomes and providing our students with the high-quality learning opportunities that prepare them for success.

Our district continues to work with families to provide students the best possible learning experience. Student academic progress is monitored, assessed, and communicated to both

students and their families in various ways, including conferences and online reporting. We respect that parents may prefer alternative learning opportunities, whether it be homeschooling or enrolling their children in private schools, but we believe those programs should be held to the same rigorous academic and reporting standards as the school district.

The Olathe Board of Education has invested in evidence-based programs and services that support the youngest children in our community, and opportunities for our students preparing to leave the K-12 classroom setting. The district has a robust early childhood program that works with families to provide the best possible experiences for children ages birth to five years old. We provide, upon parent request and at no cost to the family, developmental screenings and provide services for children who demonstrate a significant delay in one or more areas of development. The district coordinates with other organizations when appropriate and necessary to provide additional support.

At the other end of the learning spectrum, our district works with post-secondary institutions to provide opportunities for students to earn college credit(s) before graduating from high school. We also work collaboratively with businesses to create apprenticeships and work-study programs that provide alternative learning environments and better prepare some students for entry into the workforce.

Fiscal accountability

The Olathe Board of Education strives to be a good steward of taxpayer dollars. We are not only required, but support, a transparent budget process that allows parents and community members to have input and ask questions about how resources are used to support student learning. The district holds budget workshops and board meetings that invite public participation. An external accounting firm annually audits our budget to ensure we follow generally accepted accounting principles. That budget is also subject to an audit by the Kansas State Department of Education to ensure that expenditures comply with state and federal laws. And, at the discretion of the legislature, our district is audited by the Division of Legislative Post Audit – often to ensure that we are in compliance with state laws, and that we are achieving the outcomes intended by the legislature. All this information and additional budget resources are publicly available for patrons.

HB 2218 does not appear to impose these same requirements or establish similar expectations for nonpublic entities, whether private schools or other nonpublic learning environments. There are few financial requirements other than submitting receipts for educational expenditures (broadly defined). Unlike school districts, there is no requirement that private entities meet a minimum standard of submitting or publishing a budget plan for how public dollars will be utilized to achieve outcomes for students – something that has been an essential part of our conversations related to K-12 education funding and policy discussions with policymakers. The funds being directed to nonpublic entities are taxpayer dollars, and we believe they should be held to the same level of accountability as our district.

The Olathe Board of Education appreciates the legislature’s investment and interest in working with us to ensure that each child has the opportunity to learn. We know we are making a difference in our students’ lives and remain committed to working with you to address the needs of all students. If you have any questions, please contact me at (913) 780-8022.

At-A-Glance: Our Students (2022-2023)

Enrollment (headcount)	29,186	Free and reduced Lunch*	30.4%
Ethnicity of the student population		Title I schools (elementary)*	10
Caucasian	63.8%	Range of poverty, 55.6% to 85.14%	
Hispanic	18.4%	Graduation rate*	93.4%
African American	7.7%	Graduates pursuing postsecondary ed*	93.0%
Asian	4.3%	Dropout rate*	.8%
Other	5.8%	ACT (average score)*	22.2
Attendance rate*	93.4%	Scholarship dollars awarded *	\$45.5m

*Student achievement based on the most recent year available, 2021-2022



Written testimony before the House K-12 Education Budget Committee in opposition to House Bill 2218

Francisco Litardo, Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools (KCKPS/USD 500)
Community Engagement Educator/Government Liaison francisco.litardo@kckps.org

February 6, 2023

Madam Chair, Members of the Committee:

Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools (KCKPS/USD 500) is the largest school district in Wyandotte County and the fifth largest school district in the state of Kansas with just over 22,000 students enrolled. We are determined to empower every one of our students to reach their full potential: academically, socially, and emotionally. With this focus, we can ensure that by 2031, all our students will graduate with a Diploma+ endorsement prepared for college and careers.

We oppose HB 2218 because we believe it will dilute public education opportunities in Wyandotte County. KCKPS believes that the State of Kansas should strive to provide a constitutionally adequate and equitable educational opportunity for ALL Kansas students.

HB 2218 became available in written form on January 30, 2023, and USD 500, as well as many other districts, have struggled to understand the details included in this newly proposed educational funding model. In our initial review, we identified a number of areas of concern. We are not at this point prepared to say this is an exhaustive list and promise to continue to evaluate it. Hopefully, we will be given the opportunity to provide future comments.

Before addressing our concerns, we want to express our unequivocal and fundamental belief that every parent or guardian should continue to have the right to send their child to the best educational opportunity they desire. KCKPS and other Kansas public schools are responsible for providing that opportunity for all children. Therefore, public resources should go to public schools.

These are some of the more specific concerns we have with this bill:

- HB 2218 sets up a separate organizational board to administer this program. Article VI 2(a) of the Kansas Constitution says *The legislature shall provide for a state board of education which shall have general supervision of public schools, educational institutions, and all the educational interests of the state.* This proposed bill appears to conflict with Article VI.
- HB 2218 provides for a transfer of funds from the state general fund to the students' parents, or guardians for use in a non-accredited educational setting. The language appears to be open to any student in the public or private setting. It also appears to provide state resources for services currently not available in public schools. The size and scope of this program could ultimately destroy our public education system, which is the only system in our state that serves all students.

- Nothing in this bill ensures that the state appropriation will pay for the actual cost of the non-accredited educational setting. There is no protection for the student or family against additional costs that may be required by the non-public educational setting they are interested in attending. ESA funds provided to students and families often would not cover tuition costs alone. For many families, an ESA and a tax credit scholarship would be necessary to meet the overall cost of the non-accredited educational setting.

USD 500 is greatly concerned with the increasing education “reform” rhetoric and disingenuous culture wars surrounding public schools. The needless debate around Education Savings Accounts and education tax credit scholarship programs are tactics that seek to divert critical public school funding to the private sector.

Despite claims that school voucher programs lead to corresponding gains in student success, no credible research has suggested that vouchers improve academic performance. If anything, some programs have been found to have a negative impact on student achievement. Non-accredited school settings are not required to provide performance data.

We respectfully ask that you reject HB 2218 and direct future efforts to fully fund the Kansas public school system.

Written Testimony on **HB 2218**
submitted to the
House Committee on K-12 Education Budget
by
Jim Edwards – Lobbyist Representing
Topeka Public Schools – USD 501
February 6, 2023

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to **HB 2218**, a measure that could further erode the funding of Kansas public schools.

This measure would lead to more dollars being allocated to private education entities. Most of those same institutions have no required state or public accountability either in the students they initially accept or deny, the services they will or won't provide, the outcomes of the students enrolled nor how they deal with students when difficult issues arise. It makes sense that until private and home schools accept all students and operate under the same guidelines, restrictions and reporting requirements that are required of public schools, no expansion of funding should be provided.

The removal of accountability measures, no matter in what arena, seems to be quite contrary to not only this Legislature body, but also past bodies.

Once again, we stand in opposition to this measure and ask you to vote NO when this measure comes up for Committee action.

Thank you.

February 6, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Veronica Holtz

TITLE: Future USD 385 (Andover, KS) Parent

EMAIL ADDRESS: veroniceeholtz@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

I was born and raised in Wichita, KS where I attended The Independent School (a private college prep school in Wichita). I left Kansas to attend college in Oklahoma where I met my active duty Air Force husband. We have since lived in Texas, Massachusetts, and Louisiana, as well as traveling the country and the world. He will retire this year and we could choose to live wherever we wanted. We chose Wichita, Kansas. Initially, it was so our children (4 and 7) could attend The Independent School, but when we saw what Andover Schools had to offer, we decided to start there. Regardless, my husband and I understand the value public schools bring to our communities. They are an integral part of American life and we believe that tax payer dollars should in no way be diverted to private educational institutions.

I'm asking you to oppose HB2218 and keep taxpayer dollars out of private schools!

Thank you for your consideration.

Veronica Holtz

Concerned Parent and Native Kansan

Wichita, KS as of June 2023

February 2, 2023

Testimony to the House K-12 Budget Committee

NAME: Victoria Lynch

TITLE: Parent, Instructional Coach and Educator

EMAIL ADDRESS: VLuhrs@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only Testimony

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218. I have fifteen years of experience as an educator in Kansas schools including serving both the Kansas City, Kansas and Shawnee Mission Public School Districts and know the inner workings of our schools well. I urge you to oppose HB2218 because private schools do not meet the needs of ALL Kansas kids like the public schools do. Over the years, I have supported teachers and families as they transition to public schools because the private school down the road will not meet their students' needs. Our public schools deserve funding to meet the needs of the kids in our neighborhoods, regardless of their ability. We welcome everyone. Using public dollars for private schools drains the public schools of needed resources for successful student learning. We do not know that this experiment will work. Private schools are not held to the same accountability standards and are not required to participate in state testing, and in other states this gamble has NOT paid off for student achievement. Don't let Kansas make the same mistake.

Additionally, this will not be good for our home value. We live in the neighborhood where I work and where our children attend school. People chose our area because the public schools are great, and the homes are affordable. Public schools are economic drivers. Businesses and families look for quality public schools when relocating, and we are so proud of our historic part of Overland Park. Please do not divert public tax dollars to private schools in the bigger areas of the state – keep public funding public for all Kansas kids.

Please vote no on HB2218.

Victoria Lynch
Instructional Coach
Overland Park

February 2, 2023

Testimony to House K-12 Budget Committee

Vickie Trott

Kansas Citizen

vtrott@gmail.com

HB2218 Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

Opponent

Written Testimony

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

My parents moved to Kansas so that my sisters and I could benefit from the excellent public school system. My children attended schools in the Shawnee Mission School district and received excellent educations. I think people have the right to educate their children in private schools or at home, but not at the expense of the public school system that is accessible to every student in the state. Taking funding away from public schools will weaken them.

Please vote NO on HB2218.

Thank you for your consideration.

Vickie Trott

Lenexa, Kansas

February 2, 2023

Name: William Henderson

Title: Parent of two in the Shawnee Mission School District, Resident of Prairie Village.

Email: Whhenderson1234@yahoo.com

Bill Number: **HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts**

Position: **Opponent of Bill**

Written Testimony

Dear Chair & members of the committee:

I am writing to express my opposition to bill HB2218. Our family has one child at Shawnee Mission East High School and one child at Indian Hills Middle School in the Shawnee Mission School District.

Public tax dollars should not be diverted from public schools to private schools. The public schools continue to struggle to fund their ongoing education mission and mandate. Those tax dollars are necessary to successful student learning. Public tax dollars should not be diverted when the legislature has yet to fully fund the \$160 million shortfall in special education funding. That funding is essential to supporting those students with special education needs.

Public education like public tax dollars contributes to and benefits communities as a whole. Public education serves to provide an education to all children in the community regardless of their religion, economic status, or other constraint.

I urge you to oppose HB2218 and vote no.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

William Henderson

Prairie Village, Johnson County, Kansas.

NAME: Wendy Hill

TITLE: Parent, Kansas resident, Kansas public school graduate

EMAIL ADDRESS: wendyhill329@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB2218, Sunflower Education Savings Accounts

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB2218.

Public tax dollars are for the public good. Public schools are economic drivers for our community. When families make decisions on where to live, they make decisions based on public schools (we did). In addition, we benefit from property values based on great public schools.

Public funds should not be sent to private schools that can deny admission. Public funds belong in public schools who accept all and educate all.

I am asking you to oppose and vote no on bill HB2218. Thank you for your consideration and your vote to support public schools.

Wendy Hill

Parent, Kansas resident, Kansas public school graduate

Whitney Morgan
whitndavis@gmail.com
Written Opposition Testimony to HB 2218
Hearing Date/Time: 2-6-2023 at 3:30 pm

Members of the House K-12 Education Budget Committee,

I am writing to express my opposition to HB 2218. I have been a public school educator for 10 years.

HB2218 would have a detrimental impact on our Kansas kids and communities. Giving Kansans' hard-earned tax dollars to unaccountable groups, systems, or institutions, that completely lack taxpayer oversight, opens the door to public dollars funding private special interest groups and lining the pockets of elitist academic institutions and their benefactors. HB2218 prevents oversight and accountability measures and will usher in unchecked corruption, abuse, and fiscal waste. This bill enables private schools to primarily function as financial boondoggles rather than education systems –schools in which the bottom line is the bottom dollar, rather than the wellbeing of their students and community. It will also result in windfall profits for many already successful private schools who will simply take HB2218 as an opportunity to jack up tuition rates. HB2218's potential for state-funded, government bailouts of unaccountable education is manifest. Introducing this type of voucher system, once done, is incredibly difficult to undo because opportunists would then have a [government-funded] vested interest in seeing it maintained. HB2218 takes choice, voice, and dollars away from the people and places it in the hands of the positionally and financially powerful with no public oversight.

The most relevant question here is how should we spend public money? The answer is quite simple. Public dollars should fund public education. We know this to be true: robust, sustained funding of public education increases academic achievement, financial stability, career opportunity, and long-term well-being, not just for the students being serviced, but also the community at large. Communities with equitably-resourced, fully-funded public schools flourish in finances, health, safety, and continued community investiture through its people and local businesses. Our shared commitment to the public should be a commitment to empower the success of public education.

I urge you to drop this bill and not pass it out of committee. Let's work together to improve all of our community public schools and provide equitable funding and resources students need to thrive in Kansas.

Thank You,

Whitney Morgan
2019 Kansas Teacher of the Year