

As both a parent of a special-education student in our Kansas public schools, and as a member for the last six years of BVSEAC (Blue Valley Special Education Advisory Council) I ask you to reject House Bill 2395. Instead of spending yet more legislative time and taxpayer dollars on attempts to advance private school vouchers and take control from local school districts, I ask you to comply with the Kansas Supreme Court order to fund our schools and move along to other pressing matters of state.

My wife Sarah and I have seen our child grow tremendously, both socially and educationally, due to the incredible work done by individuals in the Blue Valley District, Through my work on BVSEAC, I have also seen many students benefit from the efforts of teachers, counselors and administrators at Blue Valley. I also know that my son, and others on the autism spectrum, have absolutely nothing to gain in the ongoing effort to privatize public education and take funds and from our local control of school districts. Our kids should not be pawns in this game of chicken with the Kansas Supreme Court, either. In electing Governor Laura Kelly, Kansans sent a clear message of support for public education. The path is clear, obstructed only by those who will not abide by the will of voters.

And why is this bill being brought forward and voted on when so many parents, both those with children with special needs and those whose are neurotypical, would write in opposition to this bill are out of town on Spring Break with their children? Luckily we have groups and individuals that keep their eyes on the legislature and inform us when public education is under attack.

One final personal note. When my son Elijah entered school he was almost completely non verbal and my wife and I were sure his challenges would make school an absolute nightmare. Though he still is "developmentally delayed" and is on an IEP, he has flourished in the public school system. . As a freshman in high school he is a member of the school orchestra, is mainstreamed in some core classes and on April 12th will be singing a song he wrote and composed, on stage at the Blue Valley Ability Showcase. That is what public education has done for my son and to think that funds that have helped him reach this point could be diverted to NON QUALIFIED private schools that promote hatred and bigotry (when a voucher is used to pay for a student at Westboro Church-and yes it will happen!) I am sickened. I don't think you want to be the one to explain that scenario to a special needs parent.

Thank you for listening to my point of view.

Jeffrey Nessel