

**Opponent, written testimony before the
House K-12 Education Budget Committee**

on

HB 2068 - AN ACT concerning education; relating to the tax credit for low income students scholarship program act; expanding student eligibility for the program

by

Gail Jamison,

USD 265 Board of Education Representative

January 23, 2021

Madam Chair, Members of the Committee:

My name is Gail Jamison, and I am privileged to serve the 6,000 students and families as a non-partisan elected representative to the USD 265 Board of Education. This is my third term as a board of education representative and my 26th year in volunteer service to the students of our Goddard Public Schools.

Along with my fellow board members, I am guided by our district's mission to *educate all students for lifelong success*. Like all Kansas public schools, we educate and serve all children. The Goddard District has experienced continuous growth over the last 30+ years, and we continue to meet the diverse needs of the students that enroll in our schools. This school year has presented unprecedented challenges to safely educate all children and provide for a multitude of needs. Our dedicated administrators, educators and staff are meeting those unique needs and they will continue to prepare all students with the skills for lifelong success.

Our district, which educates all students, has been recognized for our student achievement and innovative programs. Included are our Project Lead The Way Distinguished Schools that have achieved exemplary results from their PLTW programs to ensure students have the knowledge and skills to be successful and career ready. Additionally, schools have been recognized with the Governor's Achievement awards and multiple schools have received a National Blue Ribbon designation for academic excellence and progress in closing achievement gaps among student subgroups.

Public monies supporting constitutional funding for public schools matters in the work we do to educate all students. I do not support the diversion of public funds to private schools that do not accept all students.

I am writing in opposition to the tax credit scholarship expansion, as this program funnels public funds to private schools; private schools that are not required to accept all students.

This private scholarship program funded by public monies allows private schools to selectively "choose" students for acceptance. Since the tax credit scholarship program act was adopted in 2014, we continue to see annual attempts to expand the voucher program. This year, the terms "eligible student", "public school" and "qualified school" have been re-defined to provide for the expansion of the voucher program at the expense of public education funding that serves the 472,641 students enrolled in our Kansas public schools.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments addressing public monies for private schools.