



Written Testimony: SB 61
House K-12 Education Budget Committee
John Allison, Superintendent, Olathe Public Schools USD 233
February 22, 2021

Chair Williams and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony opposing SB 61, which would amend the tax credit for low-income student scholarship program act to expand student eligibility.

Olathe Public Schools is the second largest school district in the state with approximately 30,000 students. We are known for excellent student results, including high graduation rates, high ACT and SAT scores, consistently performing above state and national averages. Though student learning looks a lot different this year as we adapt to keep students safe amid the pandemic, our Board of Education and staff have maintained their commitment to providing programs and services that help students progress emotionally and academically.

The Olathe Board of Education believes that 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.

Although this bill would require private schools receiving tax scholarship recipients to meet the same accreditation requirements as public schools, there are no requirements that private schools accept *all* students. Consequently, student populations with special learning needs may not be considered for admission by these academic institutions.

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 or jallison@olatheschools.org.

At-A-Glance: Our Students

Enrollment (headcount)	29,244	Free and reduced Lunch	26.8%
Ethnicity of the student population		Title I schools (elementary)	9
Caucasian	65.5%	Range of poverty, 52.6% to 82.2%	
Hispanic	17.3%	Graduation rate	92.4%
African American	7.6%	Graduates pursuing postsecondary ed	93.5%
Asian	4.4%	Dropout rate	.5%
Other	5.3%	ACT (average score)	22.6
Attendance rate	96%	Scholarship dollars awarded	\$18.7m