



## Schools for Quality Education

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### House K-12 Education Budget Committee House Bill 2150

Submitted on February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2019 by  
**Dr. Troy Pitsch, Superintendent of USD 294 – Oberlin,**  
**a member of Schools for Quality Education**

Chair Williams and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today in opposition to **House Bill 2150** that would divert vital funding from Kansas public schools towards private school vouchers for any student who reports an incident of bullying to a school official. While this bill may be a genuine attempt to address the social-emotional health needs of a public school student, it presumes the following misconceptions that erode its validity as a serious response to the challenges of bullying faced by all schools in Kansas:

- “Bullying is more infrequent in private schools” – There is no peer reviewed research or empirical evidence to suggest that bullying happens less or at a lower severity in private schools when compared with public schools. To the contrary, a recent peer reviewed study released in 2018 revealed that the data on issues of cyberbullying and stress favored public over private schools (Journal of School Violence, v17 n3 p381-391 2018).
- “Removing the victim of bullying will fix the problem” – **House Bill 2150** does nothing to address the core issue of bullying, but rather entices the victim to leave their resident school district under the banner of the previous false premise.
- “The Kansas hope scholarship will pay for the education of any student who has experienced an incident of bullying in public schools” – The calculated BASE student aid diverted to vouchers will not fully cover the cost of attendance in many private schools. This would leave families with the responsibility of paying the remaining cost for enrollment in a private school. For families with limited resources, this would be a financial burden that would render **House Bill 2150** as little more than a sorting mechanism that would further widen the opportunity gap between economic classes.

- "Private schools enroll every student that applies." - Simply put, there is absolutely no guarantee that any private school will enroll a given student. The "choice" is a two-way street for both the student and the receiving entity.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this matter. I believe that it is an important issue and would ask that **House Bill 2150** not be passed to ensure that we can provide a successful educational experience for the children of Kansas, both in the present term and for future generations.

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