

February 9, 2023

Testimony to the Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee

Carisa Stejskal

Parent of student in USD 497 Lawrence, KS

carisalynns@gmail.com

SB 128, Opportunity Tax Credit

OPPONENT

Written only testimony

Dear Chair & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill SB 128. 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.

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 Kansas-accredited public schools have requirements for instructional time, keeping our students in the classroom learning.

Teachers in public schools are required to have certification and yearly training to stay current on educational research and methods. Kansas State Regulations do not hold private schools to the same standards. An educational degree is not required to teach in private schools. A degree in education provides more than just mastery in various subjects. Educators are trained in classroom management, communication, lesson planning, research, learning theories, human growth and development, principles of child psychology, educational policy, and health and safety. Our well-trained teachers are the reason our Kansas public schools are performing well despite the low funding and large class sizes they've been handed.

Our publicly funded schools follow state guidelines and curriculum standards. Private schools do not have the same state-mandated requirements for accountability and transparency. Public funds should stay in our public schools that are held accountable to taxpayers. This bill isn't good for students, taxpayers, or our democratic community.

I ask that you vote NO on bill SB 128.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Carisa Stejskal

Lawrence, KS