



STEPHEN LINKOUS
CHIEF OF STAFF

January 26, 2021

Written Testimony In-Opposition to HB 2068

Submitted by Stephen Linkous, Chief of Staff, Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools

Dear Chairperson Williams and members of the committee.

KCKPS stands in opposition to HB 2068.

HB 2068 will shift tax dollars from Kansas public schools to school entities not fully accredited by the Kansas State Department of Education. The lack of accountability will adversely affect the quality of opportunity for Kansas students and their families. Without state accountability, the ability to provide equitable opportunities to all students will be hindered.

The new language in HB 2068 greatly expands the number of students eligible and is a fundamental shift away from the lowest performing 100 elementary schools. It appears to be an effort to greatly expand the reach of the program with no coinciding effort to deal with the lack of accountability standards

With more eligibility inevitably more tax dollars will flow away from public schools to this new program. This will shift public tax dollars away from existing schools that open their doors to all students.

Please note the impact of this funding has been evident in the last 24 months, especially Pre-COVID 19, as we continue our new direction for the district. Pre-COVID 19, we saw significant gains in student proficiency levels in the areas of Language Arts, Mathematics and Science as measured by the KAP. Respectively, our Language Arts rose 4.3% points, Mathematics 6.2% and Science 3.9% points. Our pre-pandemic 2019-2020 KAP Interim scores were projecting growth of 5%-8% points in those same academic areas last school year. As you work through legislation in this committee, please consider the impact your decisions will have on the achievement of our students in KCKPS and across the state of Kansas, as all districts work to make every student in Kansas College and Career Ready.