

Testimony before the  
**House Committee for K12 Education Budget**  
on  
**HB 2119**  
by

**Kim Brown, Parent and Board Member, Piper School District**

Madam Chair and members of the committee

We stand as an opponent of HB 2119

Thank you for allowing us to share our perspective on HB 2119. Our School District is located in Wyandotte County serving approximately 2700 number of students. Piper USD 203 is a diverse Kansas public school district serving over 2,600 PK-Grade 12 students in western Wyandotte County. The school district consists of 32 square miles including the village of West/Kansas Speedway retail and destination area. The district serves as the community center for this area of Kansas City, Kansas.

Piper Schools offer modern facilities that include one K-3 elementary school, one 3-5 elementary school, one 6-8 middle school, and one 9-12 high school. Students benefit from cooperative agreements with Kansas City Kansas Community College and Vocational/Technical Center, Donnelly College, as a well as, cooperative special education services through the Kansas City Kansas Special Education Consortium.

Piper is currently the 3<sup>rd</sup> fastest growing school district in the state of Kansas with a five-year trend of growing 5% per year.

Like many districts in Kansas, we are extremely proud of our school district, the schools are central to our community. Following the recession in 2009 and the years to follow were difficult for our schools, we lost jobs, programs, and even students during those lean years. Prior to the pandemic, life was injected back into our schools. With the additional resources, an early childhood program was expanded, additional staff and technology resources came on board and new career programming at the high school. The expectation of success was growing again. Even though COVID it was the school that held the community together. Yes, we had difficult and uncomfortable conversations but, in the end, we learned what our students needed and we made it happen.

HB 2119 is a license to break down the public-school system and replace it with an “every student/family for themselves” mentality. We will have families try other options and, in most situations, they will fail. Unfortunately, it will be the students with the

greatest needs looking for the quick fix, and research shows in most cases the students fall further behind.

1. Under this legislation private schools can actually be harmful to students that are in greater need. Students that leave public schools with a voucher may give up protections provided them by special education laws. Private schools do not have the resources that public schools have for underperforming students. School vouchers fail to accommodate and support disabled and special-needs students.
2. Under this legislation private schools can discriminate if they wish. **Public dollars should not go to school that do not accept all students.** Examples of students that private can deny are: Special Education students, lower academic performing students, religious minorities, non-religious students, LGBTQ students and families, minority students.
3. There are rarely accountability or accreditation standards for private schools; Examples include: Teacher qualification, state assessments, and achievement reporting. Our District Strategic Plan is in place to ensure the district meets the standards expected through Kansas State Department of Education's annual accreditation process.
4. School vouchers usually do not cover the full costs involved in a transfer which could include tuition and/or transportation.
5. Vouchers take away funds from public schools. Fewer dollars makes it more difficult to provide for a quality education.
6. Vouchers do not improve academic performance. In a review of results from private and public schools there is little evidence that students in private schools outperform public schools' students.
7. During the current pandemic and the uncertainty of the state's current fiscal situation, it seems unreasonable the legislature would divert public dollars to schools in a separate system.
8. Some argue that with the Pandemic at-risk schools could not afford to offer full-time school, but that was not the case. Local Health Departments mandated the operations of schools during the Pandemic; it has never been tied to costs.

Respectfully submitted,

Mrs. Kim Brown  
Proud Piper School District Parent and Board Member