



**KANSAS ASSOCIATION
OF SCHOOL BOARDS**

Serving Educational Leaders, Inspiring Student Success

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Testimony before the
House Committee on Education
on
HB 2457 - amending the Tax Credit for Low Income Students Scholarship Program
by

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Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on **HB 2457**. KASB strongly supports the Kansas State Board of Education's new vision statement — *Kansas leads the world in the success of each student*. That vision is the goal we have set, not what we have already achieved.

To achieve this goal, KASB believes schools first must have clear educational expectations and be held accountable through assessment and other measures of student success used to accredit schools; second, must have adequate and equitable resources to meet these expectations, and third, meet our constitutional framework for public schools to serve the needs of all students under the leadership of locally elected boards, accountable to their communities.

We oppose **HB 2457** because it fails to meet any of those standards.

- It would increase the availability of tax credits that reduce state revenue in order to support private schools that are not required by the bill to provide any means of public accountability for student learning or success.
- It would reduce state revenue \$8 million to \$12 million based on estimates from the Department of Revenue and Department of Education, when state funding for school operating funds per pupil has been less than the rate of inflation for four of the past five years and is projected to trail inflation this year and next year.
- If such revenues are really available, they could help reduce the lack of statutory funding for special education, provide funding for teacher bonuses, or expand counseling services to help student better prepare for postsecondary success under the Rose standards.

- The bill would direct state funding to schools that are not required to admit all students or use a random process of admission. Such schools are therefore not required to serve students with the greatest need. If the purpose of this program, as expanded by this bill, is truly to give all students a choice in education and to improve educational success for all students, this must be changed. If not, it is simply a tax break for students who have already made the choice and may already be successful, at the expense of those who have not.

We would also note the bill fails to meet the criteria recommend by the 2015 Interim Committee on Taxation, which recommended: “the standing tax committees develop a continual process to evaluate exemptions and credits, which should employ measurable goals and standards, and implement a sunset schedule for all current and future credits and exemptions, excluding those that are legally required, applicable to governmental entities, or which otherwise would result in double taxation if repealed.”

We recognize that all of these objections might be overlooked if such of program would really improve education outcomes for Kansas. To test this, we looked at evidence from other states.

First, we used data from the Friedman Foundation for Education Choice to determine which states have some type of program using public funds to support private schools:

State	Education Savings Account	Individual Tax Credit/Deduction	Tax-Credit Scholarship	Voucher
AL		X	X	
AR				X
AZ	X		X	
CO				X
DC				X
FL	X		X	X
GA			X	X
IA		X	X	
IL		X		
IN		X	X	X
KS			X	
LA		X	X	X
ME				X
MN		X		
MS	X			X
MT			X	
NC				X
NH			X	
NV	X		X	
OH				X
OK			X	X
PA			X	
RI			X	
SC		X	X	
TN	X			
UT				X
VA			X	
VT				X
WI		X		X

Next, we wanted to examine programs large enough and established long enough to be reasonably to have an impact on student achievement in a state. Our researcher, Ted Carter, used the same source to determine which state programs started before 2012, and then which of those programs had a participation rate of at least 5 percent of eligible students.

All with programs started before 2012:		... with participation 5% or more
Education Savings Account		
AZ		
Individual Tax Credit/Deduction		Individual Tax Credit/Deduction
IA		IA
IL		IL
IN		IN
LA		LA
MN		MN
Tax Credit Scholarship		Tax Credit Scholarship
AZ		FL
FL		IA
GA		PA
IA		
IN		
PA		
RI		
Voucher		Voucher
CO		FL
FL		IN
GA		LA
IN		ME
LA		OH
ME		VT
OH		WI
OK		
UT		
VT		
WI		

We then compared educational performance of states in the three major types of programs: Individual Tax Credits or Deductions, Tax Credits for Scholarships (the program expanded by this bill); and Voucher programs sending public funds directly to private schools. Here are the results.

	Kansas	Individual Tax Credit/ Deduction	Tax Credit Scholarship	Voucher	All Choice Programs
National Assessment of Educational Progress - 4th and 8th Grade Reading and Math					
NAEP Combined All Students Pct Basic	76.00	75.60	76.67	76.43	76.73
NAEP Combined Free/Reduced Lunch Eligible Pct Basic	65.00	64.20	65.00	65.86	65.00
NAEP Combined Free/Reduced Lunch Ineligible Pct Basic	88.00	87.00	87.00	86.71	87.27
NAEP Combined All Students Pct Proficient	36.00	37.20	37.67	37.14	38.09
NAEP Combined Free/Reduced Lunch Eligible Pct Proficient	22.00	22.80	23.00	23.43	23.18
NAEP Combined Free/Reduced Lunch Ineligible Pct Proficient	51.00	50.60	52.00	50.57	51.64
High school Completion					
Adjusted Freshman Graduation Rate - All Students	85.70	82.64	83.60	82.76	83.41
Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate - All Students	86.00	82.80	84.00	82.86	83.55
ACGR - Economically Disadvantaged Students	76.60	73.52	74.63	73.64	73.56
ACGR - Limited English Proficiency Students	75.00	65.00	66.83	64.07	64.95
ACGR - Students with Disabilities	75.00	65.00	66.83	64.07	64.95
Percent of 18- to 24-year-olds who were High School completers	87.20	84.76	86.63	85.73	86.34

Note that Kansas has higher 4th and 8th grade national reading and math scores on 8 comparisons and is lower on 15 comparisons. However, Kansas has higher high school completion rates on multiple measures than *any* comparison. Kansas performs best on all 24 measures.

	Kansas	Individual Tax Credit/ Deduction	Tax Credit Scholarship	Voucher	All Choice Programs
Preparation for College					
ACT - Percent Meeting All 4 Benchmarks	32.00	29.60	31.33	32.86	33.45
ACT Percent of Graduates Tested	74.00	77.20	56.00	57.86	61.09
ACT Percent Meeting All 4 Benchmarks Adjusted Rank	12.00	18.80	27.67	22.71	19.27
SAT Mean Score - Combined	1,748.00	1,696.60	1,558.00	1,565.14	1,616.00
SAT Percent of Graduates Tested	5.00	18.00	48.67	46.57	37.36
SAT Mean Score - Combined Rank Adjusted	16.00	19.00	27.33	27.86	22.27
18-24-year-old Postsecondary Completion					
18-24-year-olds with some college or AA Degree	50.8	46.0	47.3	45.4	46.2
18-24-year-olds with BA or higher	9.2	10.0	9.9	9.1	9.6

In terms of preparation for and completion of postsecondary education, Kansas has a higher percentage of students meeting all college ready benchmarks on the ACT test than two comparison groups, and tests a much higher percentage of students than the other two comparison groups (testing more students usually means lower results). When adjusting for participation, Kansas also has a higher rank for ACT benchmarks and SAT mean scores than the average of any comparison groups.

Finally, Kansas is several percentage points higher than any comparison group in 18-24 year-olds with some college or a two-year degree, and less than one percentage point below or above the comparison groups for 18-24 year-olds with a four-year degree.

Overall, Kansas does somewhat less than comparison states in fourth and eighth grade basic skills, but does better for graduation, preparation for college and college completion. However, it is also important to note that every comparison group of states provides more funding per pupil than Kansas, both in actual dollars and when adjusted for regional cost differences.

	Kansas	Individual Tax Credit/ Deduction	Tax Credit Scholarship	Voucher	All Choice Programs
Resources					
Total Revenue Per Pupil	11,596	12,722	12,641	13,055	13,422
Total Revenue Per Pupil - Regional Price Parity Adjusted	12,743	13,491	13,175	13,796	14,043

In other words, if states providing more private school support do better than Kansas, they also provide more resources to *public schools*. In other cases, Kansas gets better results at a lower cost without providing more school support. Overall, if Kansas results are “mediocre,” so are the results in states doing what this bill seeks to expand. We do not believe the facts indicate this bill will help Kansas reach its educational vision of success for each student.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this issue. We hope this information has been helpful. Please contact us if you would more like more detailed information.