



House Committee on Education
Opponent Testimony (Written Only) HB 2136
February 5, 2025
Submitted by: Dr. Tonya Merrigan, Superintendent
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Chair Estes and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these written comments in opposition to **HB 2136**, which would expand student eligibility under the tax credit for low-income students scholarship program, increase the amount of the tax credit for contributions made pursuant to such program and provide for aggregate tax credit limit increases under certain conditions.

Blue Valley has a student population of more than 22,400 and consistently ranks in the top tier of high performing schools, both in the state and in the nation. (See "Quick Facts" at the end of testimony.)

The primary goal of the Blue Valley district is **to ensure every student attending our schools has the educational programming and opportunities, delivered by quality educators, to allow them to thrive long after they leave our doors.** We embrace every student who walks through our doors and always work to provide them with the tools to succeed.

The Blue Valley Board of Education has a long-standing priority position that states:

[Blue Valley] opposes public funding of private schools, including offering public tax credits that decrease state revenue, that do not comply with the same standards and requirements of public-school districts.

As stated in our position, our Board believes that private schools receiving public dollars, even by a decrease in state revenue, must be held to the same standards, requirements, and governance as that required of public schools. In addition, it appears the fiscal note of expanding this program may reach \$20M. For these reasons, we must **strongly oppose** HB 2136.

We would like to express our thanks to this committee for its work toward improved student learning in Kansas and, as well, our commitment to work with the committee toward that end.

USD 229 Blue Valley Schools: Quick Facts

K-12 Student Enrollment	21,767	ACT District Composite Average*	22.9
Early Childhood—grade 12 Enrollment	22,450	ACT Statewide Average	19.2
Average Daily Attendance	94.4%	SAT District Average	1357
Graduation Rate	96.7%	SAT Statewide Average	1256
Teacher's with Master's Degree or Higher	76%	*with 91.6 % of graduates taking ACT	