

Proponent Testimony to the House K – 12 Education Committee of the State of Kansas

HB 2048

Delia Shropshire

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Good morning/afternoon distinguished ladies and gentleman, I am Dr. Delia Shropshire, President of Holy Savior Catholic Academy in the Diocese of Wichita. I am both humbled and honored to speak on behalf of school choice and what it has meant to our inner core Catholic school. First and foremost, the impact on families has been tremendous in that families who would not normally have the opportunity to enroll their children in a Catholic school now have that choice. We have seen a significant increase in enrollment due the expansion of the law. Holy Savior Catholic Academy enrollment has increased over the years as demonstrated by this chart.

	2018		2020	2021	2022
PK	29	43	33	30	62
k	24	23	27	25	26
1	19	24	23	22	26
2	16	22	22	20	27
3	18	17	27	17	24
4	14	16	17	22	22
5	17	19	20	19	23
6	14	16	23	21	22
7	12	16	17	29	24
8	12	12	18	17	25
K-8	146	165	194	192	219

Additionally we have seen a growth in students from other faith traditions because the qualifying students are accepted irrespective of their religious beliefs.

Growth of Non-Catholic Students:

Year	Percent Catholic
2008	57%
2007	41%
2008	27%
2009	27%
2010	26%
2011	27%
2012	36%
2013	48%
2014	48%
2015	48%
2016	42%
2017	50%
2018	40%
2019	37%
2020	37%
2021	35%

2022	24%
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As the law expanded so did our enrollment. From the NO Child Left Behind designated schools, to the lowest performing 100 schools designation, to no list just but just meeting the “free lunch” economic requirement, to free or reduced requirement, to K-8 Schools, our enrollment increased with each expansion of the law. We were able to meet the needs of more students some of whom were dually enrolled and receiving service at the public school because of the requirement of their IEPs. This year there are 23 tax credit scholarship students in the Wichita Catholic High schools and we are sending more from this year’s graduating classes. Thirteen of Holy Savior Catholic Academy’s twenty-four 8th grade graduating class of 2023 are recipients of the tax credit scholarship.

We know that it is not about public vs. private, it is about our children being successful. We also know that every child develops, learns, and flourishes in different environments. With this opportunity, we can ensure that every child has the chance to learn, grow and develop in an academic environment that meets their needs academically, culturally, socially, emotionally and spiritually. This year our number of tax credit students increased in our school by 50% while many other schools’ enrollment declined due to COVID-19.

In the Adverse Childhood Experience Study (ACES) it has been identified that children who live in poverty experience more stress and trauma than children who do not. Childhood trauma and stress adversely impact the brain and the brain cannot recover until certain social

emotional conditions are met according to brain scans and medical studies. Children in at-risk, in trauma and/or under stress (not, will not, or refuse to learn) but cannot learn until they are in an environment where they feel accepted. School choice is necessary for families to match a learning environment with their child's need so they can learn and be successful.

Every child that becomes a successful contributing member of society saves the state millions of dollars. We have a student who has entered our school through this wonderful opportunity of School Choice in Kindergarten from a low income family. He is an African American male who has academic and social –emotional challenges. The stressors of the family were not only difficult for him but also he did not have the tools to positively express himself. Initially it appeared to be a behavior or deficiency issue. However, in our classroom with a 12:1 ratio and with many adults positively rallying around him, especially our School Resource Teacher who we have been able to add to our team due to tax credit funding, he now receives the support and help he needs. Additionally, he now receives services from the public school for his IEP which he qualified for in the 2nd Grade. This student is now in the third grade. The family also receives support from our Social Worker and Counseling Services.

Imagine how many students we can help if the law is expanded even more. Imagine how much more successful schools can be when we share the enormous tasks of educating today's youth.