



February 6, 2023
Kansas House of Representatives
K-12 Budget Committee

Dear Chair Williams and Members of the Committee,

Americans for Prosperity believes the purpose of education is to help students discover, develop, and deploy their unique abilities. Every student deserves access to an education that unleashes their extraordinary potential – regardless of their family income or ZIP code. We support policies that move us away from the one-size-fits-all approach that dominates our current education system and closer to an environment of personalized learning, where every student is empowered to realize their full potential. Because of this, we are asking you to support HB 2218 for three main reasons.

1. Families in Kansas want something different when it comes to education.

74% of parents with school-aged children in Kansas support ESAs.

Only 31% of Kansas residents think education is headed in the right direction in the state.

More than half of school parents in Kansas prefer one or more days of home-based schooling per week for their children

If given the option, over 50% of parents in Kansas would choose something other than their local public school to educate their child.

2. It's time to make a change.

Kansas is certainly not the first state to consider a program like this. In 2021, West Virginia passed the nation's first universal ESA. Arizona followed suit last year, expanding its ESA program that has been in existence since 2011 to every student in the state. And already this year, both Iowa and Utah have passed, and their respective Governors have signed into law, universal ESAs.

The momentum does not stop there.

Arkansas is expected to follow the lead of Iowa and Utah as Governor Sanders has made education her number one priority and has announced she plans to provide choice to every student in the state. Florida is also working to expand its current choice programs to every single student. And legislatures across the country are considering legislation to create ESAs this session with several already having passed that legislation out of at least one chamber.

3. HB 2218 is strong policy.

HB 2218 grants all students in Kansas the ability to access an ESA if they so choose.

Students may use their ESA funds on a wide variety of educational goods and services to create an education tailored specifically to them.

Each student will be eligible to receive 95% of the base state aid.

The program is overseen by a board made up of individuals representing families and students across the state.

Because of its universal eligibility, large list of eligible uses for the money, and adequate funding for each ESA, HB 2218 is designed to set students up for a lifetime of success. Education does not exist only in a classroom and there are many paths towards creating a life of purpose and meaning. This bill empowers students to pursue the path that makes the most sense for them and grants them the opportunity to seek opportunities that are not always available to them in their resident public school.

Education Savings Accounts give families and children choices to pursue alternative education options.

Every child is unique and education should reflect that. The current way of delivering education in Kansas is a one-size-fits-all approach that provides limited flexibility to families. And the data shows that families want the opportunity to customize and tailor education to their children's specific needs.

Through an ESA - like the one created by HB 2218 - families will be empowered to pursue the education goods and services that help their children discover, develop, and deploy their unique talents.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Patton

State Director

Americans for Prosperity- KS