



Testimony: SB 83 – Private Tax Credit Scholarship (Opponent)
Senate Education Committee
February 7, 2023
By: Dr. Tonya Merrigan, Superintendent (written only)

Thank you for the opportunity to enter written testimony opposing SB 83, which would expand the current Tax Credit for Low Income Students Scholarship Program eligibility from the requirement that they be eligible for the free and reduced lunch program, to include students *up to 250% of the federal poverty level*.

The bill also expands qualifying student factors to include those in foster care or kinship care placements and children of parents who are emergency medical technicians, firefighters, and law enforcement officers.

Further, SB 83 would increase from 70%- to-100% the tax credit available to qualifying corporate donors, beginning in FY23, thereby reducing state revenue.

Blue Valley has a student population of more than 21,800 and consistently ranks in the top tier of high performing schools, both in the state and in the nation. (See "Quick Facts" at end of testimony.) Currently, there are no students in the Blue Valley school district participating in the tax credit scholarship program.

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, including governance by an elected local school board.

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.

Before ending, we want 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	21,858	ACT District Composite Average*	23.6
Early Childhood—grade 12 Enrollment	22,412	ACT Statewide Average	19.8
Average Daily Attendance	91.7%	SAT District Average	1297
Graduation Rate	97.5%	SAT Statewide Average	1243
Teacher's with Master's Degree or Higher	74%	*with 92.3 % taking ACT	