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## **“Educational Choice for Children Act.”**

**May 15, 2025**

**Submitted Jointly by: Dr. Tonya Merrigan, Blue Valley Schools**

**Dr. Brent Yeager, Olathe Public Schools**

**Dr. Michael Schumacher, Shawnee Mission School District**

Greetings:

As the superintendents of Blue Valley, Shawnee Mission and Olathe public schools, we are writing to express our unified and urgent opposition to the **Educational Choice for Children Act**, currently under consideration by the U.S. House Ways and Means Committee. This legislation would expand school vouchers and divert public funds to private education. Collectively, our three districts serve more than 70,000 students and families in Kansas. While each of our communities is unique, the consequences of this proposal would be similarly damaging across the board.

Kansas has a long history of supporting strong public schools. Our Legislature has consistently rejected broad voucher programs, instead opting for a carefully limited tax credit scholarship initiative. That decision reflects the values of our state—values that prioritize public education, local control and equitable opportunity for every child. This legislation undermines those values and would impose a model Kansans have not chosen.

It’s important to note that Kansas families already have educational choices. Parents may choose private, religious or homeschool options—and many do. However, nonpublic schools are not held to the same standards of access or accountability. They:

- May deny admission to students with disabilities, behavioral needs or limited English proficiency
- Are not required to provide special education services or mental health supports
- May exclude students based on family background, religion or identity
- Can dismiss students who struggle academically or behaviorally

Public schools cannot—and would not—turn students away. We educate every child who walks through our doors. We provide comprehensive services for students with disabilities, English learners and those facing mental health challenges. We operate transparently, comply with public accountability requirements and responsibly manage taxpayer dollars.

This legislation would reduce funding for public schools that are already challenged to address rising costs in areas such as special education, staffing, health care, technology and infrastructure. Meanwhile, evidence from other states is clear: voucher programs largely benefit families already enrolled in private schools, drive up tuition rates and fail to improve academic outcomes. They weaken the public education system without expanding opportunity.

We urge the Kansas congressional delegation to reject the Educational Choice for Children Act. Public dollars should remain in public schools—where every child is welcomed and served, every dollar is transparently and responsibly managed, and every effort is made to deliver on the American promise of equitable, high-quality education for all.

Sincerely,



Dr. Tonya Merrigan,  
Blue Valley Schools



Dr. Brent Yeager,  
Olathe Public Schools



Dr. Michael Schumacher,  
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