**Statement on Amendment 2**

The Kentucky Academy of Science (KAS), comprised of over 4,000 members from all across the Commonwealth who educate, mentor, and support Kentucky students of all ages, hereby formally opposes the passage of Amendment 2. This amendment would allow the Kentucky General Assembly to use tax dollars to pay for educational expenses outside of the public school system.1

Similar efforts were made in Kentucky in the past, and in 2022, were struck down by the Kentucky Supreme Court as unconstitutional.2 School choice programs harm public education, disproportionately affecting rural districts and already disadvantaged children.3 Over the past 15 years, school funding in Kentucky has been cut, leading to reductions in educational time, student health & support services, enrichment programs, and course offerings, including STEM classes. If Amendment 2 passes, the Kentucky Center for Economic Policy estimates it would divert between $199 million and $1.19 billion dollars from public schools, exacerbating these cuts and further harming STEM education in the state.4

Recent rigorous studies in Ohio, Louisiana, and Indiana demonstrated that students who received state funding to attend private schools had lower reading and math test scores, received less instructional time, and did not recover from these achievement losses over the three-year study period.5 Additionally, studies showed that increased investment in public pre-service teacher training, early childhood programs, after- and summer-school programs, student health and nutrition programs, and increased standards for science, reading, and math all resulted in higher returns on investment than school choice programs.6 A report from the Center for American Progress claims that ‘school voucher programs are the equivalent of missing 68 days of school’.7 This learning loss would majorly affect the educational and workforce goals set out in the 2023 state Science & Technology plan.8

In addition to negatively impacting academics, school choice programs are known to have discriminatory effects. Jefferson, Kenton, and Fayette counties contain over 50% of Kentucky’s private schools, so many students who live in a more rural area could not take part in any school choice program due to lack of availability.4 Additionally, private schools are not bound by the same restrictions as public schools, and can discriminate against students based on religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, and disability status. According to The Century Foundation, school voucher programs led to increased segregation of students by race, ethnicity, religious background, and income.9

The Kentucky Academy of Science strongly supports STEM education via the public education system in our state and encourages you to vote ‘NO’ on Amendment 2.

**Sources**

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