

New Salem-Almont School District #49

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Brian Christopherson, Superintendent

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Brian Olson, High School principal

“To ensure that each child achieves his/her full potential through student-centered practices.”

March 13, 2023

Chairman Elkin and Senate Education Committee Members:

RE: HB 1532

I am submitting this written testimony on behalf of the New Salem-Almont School Board. On Monday, March 13, 2023, at our regular board meeting, our school board voted unanimously to oppose HB 1532. We believe that these public funds need to be spent in an accountable manner, similar to the same criteria that our school district is held to.

As a public school district, New Salem-Almont is subject to an annual audit of our records. Under HB 1532, private schools would receive public funds with no accountability to taxpayers. Any individual can request to view financial information from a public school, which is not the case with a private school. The open meetings laws also pertain to any meeting held with our school board, be it a committee meeting or regular board meeting. The same cannot be held true for a private school. We cannot stress enough that this expenditure of public funds would lack transparency on so many different levels.

We also feel that this bill would favor private schools that are located in the larger cities and rural students would not see a benefit from these funds. Majority of the private schools are all located in larger cities and many students do not have the access to choose this option for a school over their local public school.

In closing, please vote “do not pass” on HB 1532 unless you are willing to hold private schools to the same standards as public schools. Keep our tax dollars transparent.

Sincerely,

Monica Reiner-Pletan

New Salem-Almont School Board President