

Colorado House of Representatives  
Education Committee Chair Rep. B. Petterson  
February 13, 2017

**Statement Re: HB 17-1089**

**Katherine J Amato, PhD**  
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Madame Chair and Committee Members, I'm Katherine Amato, a retired public policy and ethics professor with two Dakota Ridge HS graduates, Littleton. I own homes in Lakewood and Centennial CO. Our family has been a part of public and private schools in nine states. [CO, KY, IL, NE, OR, CA, PA, IA, NV plus one on-line for-profit university.] My three graduate degrees are from The University of Chicago and I have taught at a public university, a private college and a private Protestant seminary.

I'm here to ask one question about HB 17-1089

Can Parent Choice Programs succeed --  
specifically, could my children have succeeded with a PC Account?

PCAs promise opportunity to buy great schooling. Their size is limited only by the per pupil expenditures [PPE] of the failing district. My kids' story reveals the PCA limits.

They attended private schools in Illinois and Kentucky and public schools in Colorado. The chart I've compiled compares tuition and PPEs.

Assume my family's living in Centennial [Littleton Public Schools] the district fails, and we need an elementary and a high school. Could PCAs afford this? Based on experience I'd seek comparable schools. If I'm going to tear them from a failing district and their neighborhood, the alternative better be a step up.

Littleton Public Schools' PPE is \$8,653. We go shopping. Aspen Academy and Kent Denver School are ideal. They're geographically convenient. Tuition falls between the highest and lowest bills at our previous schools [on the chart]. An Aspen 4<sup>th</sup> grader needs \$16,670. One year at Kent is \$26,530. Total tuition: \$43,200.

The PCA offers a total of \$17,306. That's \$25,894 short. Let's say I blow my savings and cough it up. But that's not all.

Nothing was subsidized in private schools.

The cafeteria charges restaurant prices. In the 1990's my first grader paid up to \$7.50 per lunch. Even just \$5 a day adds \$900 to the annual cost. My kid could walk to Arapahoe HS from our place but would need a student RTD pass to Kent -- \$450 a year.

Sports teams at JeffCo and Cherry Creek schools supply uniforms and equipment, though fees range from \$90-150 per sport. In private schools, parents pay. Art classes, science labs, technology, parents pay. Field trips to Museums, parents buy tickets and drive the kids or rent the bus. Overnight trips, (2 a year launched in 1<sup>st</sup> grade) annual long trip, (beginning in 6<sup>th</sup> grade); all books and supplies—all add up. Teacher Christmas gifts can run \$50-100 per student!

Parents volunteer in classrooms, do fund-raising and donate to the annual fund [and endowment if possible. An NSCDS all school auction of our kids' art works raised \$200,000 the year my daughter was in pre-Kindergarten. Last year NSCDS raised \$1.2 million for the annual fund. Even if you guess alums and big events pay half of that and current families the rest, that's another \$1100 per kid.

If Aspen & Kent are similar to our experience, the total tops out about: 4<sup>th</sup> grader: \$18,720, 10<sup>th</sup> grader: \$28,270. The PCA offers \$8653 each; Shortfall = \$29,684! [See Table B for guesstimates of hidden fees/costs for Aspen & Kent based on IL & KY private schools]

Additionally, tuition increases in higher grades (in KY, IL & as Aspen), although at Kent it stays at \$26,270 for 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>. However, the entire school's tuition scale increased just about every year in our experience. Public school per pupil expenditures don't rise as fast or go as high, especially when bond issues fail. I can't tell how much PPE variance there is from grade to grade, if any. Data I found was all averaged, K-12. Even so, if I drew on a PCA when my kid was in 4<sup>th</sup> grade. The same PCA lost purchasing power every year.

Perhaps, instead of a private, school why not home school or transfer to a public district? Most parents are busy working to pay for their kids' education. They aren't teachers and can't home school.

Is jumping districts even allowed? How would migration among districts work? I don't recall HB 17-1089 mandating or restructuring districts' geographic restrictions or property tax funding or "local control" beliefs. My home is a couple miles from Cherry Creek and Douglas County districts. Could either accommodate a massive influx from Centennial? New buildings and staffing would be required and the taxpayers in those districts would likely revolt.

For a bill designed in part, to ostensibly help low-performing school districts improve academic achievement, HB 17-1089 is shockingly sparse on guidance for doing so. Given it's aim to give "parents' choice" it instead creates a cruel hoax offering families the hope of buying a "better education" than their neighborhood option, when in fact no such product exists at comparable prices. HB 17-1089 is as much a bill to improve education and give parents choice, as a recent federal Executive Order masquerading as a "travel plan" that judges nationwide have found thinly disguises a "Muslim Ban" that has been promised for months.

So, what would it take for HB 17-1089's PCP's to pay for my kids' K-12 education? Dramatic restructuring of school districts statewide and tons more money.

This parent has no choice -- Vote No on HB 17-1089.

## A. PUBLIC/PRIVATE SCHOOL COSTS PERSONAL EXPERIENCE IL, KY, CO

Katherine J Amato, PhD [kavh@comcast.net](mailto:kavh@comcast.net)

Presentation to Colorado House of Representatives Education Committee

Re: HB 17-1089 Hearing February 13, 2017

### ILLINOIS

PUBLIC SCHOOLS	Per Pupil Expenditures Most current data available
<b>IL Statewide Average</b>	\$7,712 Instructional      \$12,821 Operational
#Evanston – Skokie Community Consolidated 65	\$14,948
PRIVATE SCHOOL	Tuition FY 2016-17
*North Shore Country Day School (NSCDS)	\$18,975 Jr Kindergarten      \$21,550 Sr Kindergarten \$26,050 1 <sup>st</sup> -5 <sup>th</sup> Gr      \$29,075 6 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> Gr \$31,650 9 <sup>th</sup> -11 <sup>th</sup> Gr      \$31,750 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade

### KENTUCKY

PUBLIC SCHOOLS	Per Pupil Expenditures Most current data available
<b>KY Statewide Ave</b>	\$10,192 average K-12
#Fayette Cty Schools	\$10,803 average K-12
PRIVATE SCHOOLS	Tuition FY 2016-17
*The Lexington School	\$18,380 Sr Kindergarten \$21,630 Gr 1-8 \$30,240 Learning Center
*Providence Montessori	\$11,441 Primary 3-5 y/o \$ 8,945 Lower Gr 1-3 \$ 8,997 Upper Gr 4-6 \$12,869 Middle Gr 7-8
*Lexington Catholic HS	\$11,536 (non-RC) Gr 9 -12

### COLORADO

PUBLIC SCHOOLS	Per Pupil Expenditures Most current data available
<b>CO Statewide Average</b>	\$8,893 Average K-12
#Littleton School District 6	\$8,653 Average K-12
*#JeffCo Schools R-1	\$8,095 Average K-12
Cherry Creek School District 5	\$8,562 Average K-12
Douglas County School District RE-1	\$7,431 Average K-12
PRIVATE SCHOOLS	Tuition FY 2016-17
Aspen Academy PreK - 8	\$15,680 JK-3 <sup>rd</sup> \$16,220 4 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup>
Kent Denver School	\$26,270 6 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup>

\* One or both of my children attended

# Schools I currently fund through property taxes

#Schools I funded in past

## B. PUBLIC/PRIVATE SCHOOL COSTS PERSONAL EXPERIENCE IL, KY, CO

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### ILLINOIS

PUBLIC SCHOOLS	Hidden Fees/Costs excluded from PPE [paid by parents]	Total Per Pupil Expenditures
<b>IL Statewide Average</b>	n/a	\$7,712 Instruction \$12,821 Operational
#Evanston – Skokie Community Consolidated 65	n/a	\$14,948 Ave K-12
PRIVATE SCHOOL	Hidden Fees/Costs estimates based on experience	Total Tuition + Hidden Fees/Costs
North Shore Country Day School Tuition: \$18,975 – 31,750	Overnight Trips \$400      Lunch \$900 Annual big trip \$600      Bus \$450 Books, Suplies, Xmas \$300      Donation \$1100 Sports \$300      Classes \$200      Field Trips \$200	Range \$23,420 - \$36,195

### KENTUCKY

PUBLIC SCHOOLS	Hidden Fees/Costs excluded from PPE [paid by parents]	Total Per Pupil Expenditures
<b>KY Statewide Ave</b>	n/a	\$10,192 average K-12
#Fayette Cty Schools	n/a	\$10,803 average K-12
PRIVATE SCHOOL	Hidden Fees/Costs estimates based on experience	Total Tuition + Hidden Fees/Costs
*The Lexington School Tuition: \$18,380 – 21,630	Overnight Trips \$400      Lunch \$900 Annual big trip n/a      Bus n/a Books, Suplies, Xmas \$200      Donation \$800 Sports \$300      Classes \$200      Field Trips \$200	Range \$21,380 – 24,630
*Providence Montessori Tuition: \$8,945 – 12,869	Overnight Trips \$400      Lunch n/a Annual big trip \$600      Bus n/a Books, Suplies, Xmas \$200      Donation \$500 Classes \$100      Field Trips \$200	Range: \$10,945 – 14,869
*Lexington Catholic HS Tuition: \$11,536	Books, Suplies, Xmas \$200      Donation \$500 Classes \$100      Field Trips \$200	\$12,536

### COLORADO

PUBLIC SCHOOLS	Hidden Fees/Costs excluded from PPE [paid by parents]	Total Per Pupil Expenditures
<b>CO Statewide Ave</b>	n/a	\$8,893 average K-12
# Littleton School District 6	n/a	\$8,653 Average K-12
*#JeffCo Schools R-1	n/a	\$8,095 Average K-12
Cherry Creek School District 5	n/a	\$8,562 Average K-12
Douglas County School District RE-1	n/a	\$7,431 Average K-12
PRIVATE SCHOOLS	Hidden Fees/Costs guestimates based on experience	Total Tuition + Hidden Fees/Costs
Aspen Academy PreK – 8 Tuition: \$15,680 – 16,220	Overnight Trips \$400      Lunch n/a Annual big trip \$600      Bus n/a Books, Suplies, Xmas \$200      Donation \$1000 Classes \$100      Field Trips \$200	Range: \$18,180 – 18,720
Kent Denver School Tuition: \$26,270	Books, Suplies, Xmas \$200      Donation \$1100 Classes \$200 Sports \$300      Classes \$200	\$28,270

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### SOURCES LIST

- Colorado School Finance Project: Support Children Support the Future
  - Sept 2016 Chart: 'Per Pupil Spending — Comparing 2002-03 to 2012-13 (based on most recent available data)
  - <http://www.cosfp.org/HomeFiles/NCES/2016/StatePerPupilSpendingComparison2002-03to2012-13.pdf>
- Called to Account: New Directions in School Accountability — Colorado State Highlights 2016
  - By: Education Week Research Center "A Special Supplement to Education Week's Quality Counts 2016"
  - <http://www.edweek.org/media/ew/qc/2016/shr/16shr.co.h35.pdf>
- Map: How Much Do Colorado's School Districts Spend Per Pupil?
  - By, Nathaniel Minor 04/18/2016 11:27 a.m
- MAP: Spending per Pupil by School District nationwide w/individual state detail
  - CO: Jefferson County School District R-1
  - CO: Douglas County School District RE-1
  - CO: Littleton School 6
  - CO: Cherry Creek
  - IL: Evanston Consolidated School District 65
  - KY: Fayette County School District
  - <http://www.cpr.org/news/newsbeat/map-how-much-do-colorados-school-districts-spend-pupil>
- Aspen Academy Admissions
  - 5859 S. University Boulevard Greenwood Village, Colorado 80121 TEL (303) 346-3500 FAX (303) 379-7744
  - <https://www.aspenacademy.org/aspenadmissions>
- Kent Denver School
  - Facts: [http://www.kentdenver.org/uploaded/admissions/2015-16\\_fact\\_sheet.pdf](http://www.kentdenver.org/uploaded/admissions/2015-16_fact_sheet.pdf)
- Evanston/Skokie IL School District 65 Budget-at-a-Glance 2016-2017FY
  - 2016-2017 Budget Highlights (p. 6)
  - Student Enrollment: History and Projections FY2008-FY2021 (p. 5)
  - [http://www.district65.net/cms/lib8/IL01906289/Centricity/Domain/91/D65%20Budget%20at%20a%20Glance\\_FY17\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.district65.net/cms/lib8/IL01906289/Centricity/Domain/91/D65%20Budget%20at%20a%20Glance_FY17_FINAL.pdf)
- North Shore Country Day School
  - Tuition & Affordability <http://www.nscds.org/page/apply/tuition--affordability>
  - Fast Facts <http://www.nscds.org/page/about/fast-facts>
- KY State per pupil spending Kentucky Education Facts Published: 2/6/2017 2:06 PM
  - <http://education.ky.gov/comm/edfacts/Pages/default.aspxEndFragment>
- IL State per pupil spending: Illinois Report Card
  - <https://www.illinoisreportcard.com/State.aspx?source=environment&source2=perstudentspending&Stateid=IL>