

Educator Voices: Full Written Responses from the MMEA House Bill 2 Survey

This document contains the complete collection of written comments submitted by Mississippi music educators in response to the Mississippi Music Educators Association's survey regarding House Bill 2. These comments were provided voluntarily as part of an anonymous survey distributed statewide and represent the firsthand perspectives of educators serving students across diverse districts and communities.

The purpose of this companion document is to preserve transparency and ensure that educator voices are fully represented beyond summarized data and selected quotations. Comments are presented as written, with minor redactions made only to protect confidentiality and remove identifying information.

When reviewed alongside the survey summary and findings, these responses offer important qualitative context to the quantitative data and underscore the depth of concern expressed by music educators regarding the potential impact of House Bill 2 on public education and student access to music and arts instruction.

This document is intended to be read as a companion to the MMEA House Bill 2 Survey Summary and Findings.

1. Briefly explain your perspective:

Please briefly explain your perspective.

I think Mississippi has done well to improve the education system without this bill. I think this bill will be detrimental to the profession and we will lose more teachers than ever. No amount of a "pay raise" will be worth the mess this will create.

I, personally, do not support this bill for reasons outside of my and my job. My school is considered a "choice" and is not funded the same way as a public school district but my fellow educators who are not just friends to me, but family – will be impacted. Many of these educators are already at schools where they are getting by on pennies and this could potentially shut down their schools entirely. Arts is always the first to lose when funds are tight.

Music and the arts are already underfunded and overlooked. A lot of schools only offer the minimum because they are forced to. We are already fighting for every dollar that we can. I wouldn't be surprised if this leads to the elimination of our programs by de-funding them and eliminating the need for certified teachers. In other states these kinds of laws have lead to public school closures. If this happens then I foresee the arts being the first to go.

Homeschoolers joining already established extracurricular programs - making sure this is handled fairly to all involved is a major concern

At this point, there is no knowledge of how many students a school will have. There is a planning issue.

HB 2 could negatively impact Music Education in Mississippi by making funds less accessible for all art forms.

When funds are pulled from the public school system to private and charter schools, public schools will not be able to sustain extra programs like music and other arts. In addition, public schools will lose funding for faculty and staff creating a worse staffing shortage than we currently have. This will in turn increase the workload on the remaining workforce. I am also concerned that this will cause segregation and lower performing schools to perform even lower. Other areas have done this and are seeing these very things.

If money is being transferred or taken from the schools, the arts and music classes will always be affected in the process whether good or bad. It won't be big, but it will be felt.

HB 2 hurts the public school system. Funding for public schools is crucial to the success of our students. Loss of funding means loss of money for programs like those of music education. Students exposed to quality music education programs have proven to thrive academically and emotionally. With funding being passed as a result of HB 2, music education programs will slowly be cut due to a lack of funding. This cannot happen for the sake of our students.

Money would be diverted from public school funds

I currently already work at a district that is overwhelmingly full. Many of my students do not have the appropriate income or resources to thrive on a regular day today basis. This raises red flags for not over crowding and not enough funding to ensure that every student receives the fair education

they deserve.

Music education is critical to student education

I am genuinely terrified of what this bill will do to education in the state of MS. Fear of its passing has made me consider if I will continue in education.

The money that homeschool families receive to attend a public school band program should, at least in part, go to the band program if that is the reason they attend the public school. This would also apply to sports and/or other activities.

As it relates to Music Education, I do not see any significant impacts in my area. We may gain a few new musicians, but I do not see that it will negatively impact my department.

I believe that public schools will ultimately be adversely affected by the loss of money that would normally given to public education. Where will all this money come from? We already suffer financially. I am totally against this bill!

House Bill 2 poses serious risks to music education in Mississippi. Because the bill diverts public school funding into private school vouchers and education savings accounts, many districts will face budget cuts that typically fall hardest on arts programs. Music classes, ensembles, and related staff—already underfunded—could be reduced or eliminated entirely. This creates unequal access to music education, especially for students in rural and low-income communities who rely on public schools for these opportunities. Music programs are not extras; they are essential to student development and school culture. HB 2 jeopardizes these programs by weakening the financial stability of the very schools that provide them.

Music funding is already limited and seen as "extra" in the state the claims we are the "Birth place of American Music." This will cut programs ability to service and continue to create gaps in music education.

I'm not sure "school choice" is a great idea in general, but anytime changes are made to education, it has been my experience that the Arts are impacted the most negatively.

We will lose students therefore lose funding

I previously worked in Central Florida for 9 years. What House Bill 2 wants to do is exactly what Florida has been doing for years. In Florida, it felt like funds were stretched across both charter and public schools. Often the charter schools were not as successful and the public schools did not often have the funds to help students in resources that were essential to a school.

I believe this approach takes away the ability for those who can not afford to move schools to receive the same benefits and educational choices. I believe all students and teachers should all be set up for success and this bill will not allow all students and teachers to choose for themselves.

I am honestly torn between the positives and negatives. I believe every child deserves the best education possible which is where school choice would benefit all children. Arts are especially important to keep students in school. Those who do not excel academically may find their home in the fine arts department and their love of music/arts may keep them in school despite academic struggles. It gives students a break in their day for creativity and movement, which is important to all children in the state. However, as a music educator with a full schedule of teaching already on top of having to do other duties as assigned (intervention instructor, before/after school duties, completing the yearbook on my own, annual music programs with full backdrops/sets/coordinating speaking parts, etc.), having extra classes and/or larger classes would impact my job greatly. Would we have enough instruments for added students? We don't have a music budget, so who would provide funds for extra instruments, etc.? Grants are limited. Parents are already overwhelmed with fundraisers. Would transfers prioritize after school performances? Would they be able to come depending on where they live? If they did participate, we would have to have extra performance dates/times for music programs due to higher numbers of students and parents attending. The workload would greatly increase to meet the needs of more students and this could also affect classroom management depending on any behavioral issues with numerous incoming transfers. So it puts even more of a work load on teachers when we are already overwhelmed with what is expected without any additional pay. Teachers are already stressed to the max, overworked, under paid...and every year the work load and expectations increase. In general, I see this being an issue with things added to this bill overall. I like the concept of school choice, but if more educators are not hired at the schools to help with the work load, I feel it could negatively impact us and our overall teaching morale.

Public schools will lose funding because, when parents are able to send their child to a private school without having to pay for it, they will choose the prestige of a private school over a public school. Most of these private schools will be completely unregulated by the state. Parents who often receive notices about child attendance may choose a private school in order to avoid the attendance policies that public schools must adhere to.

When funding is taken from public schools, extracurricular programs such as music and the arts will suffer. Class numbers will also grow causing new teachers to choose to work in the private sector as well.

I am in a Minority, Poverty, Title 1 School District. If this happens, we could lose students, which would mean funding losses for our district. Funding losses could potentially mean teacher cutbacks. If you're looking at teacher cutbacks, we all know that the arts will be the first thing they cut.

School choice is a disguised way of allowing segregation to return.

Depending on the enrollment of public schools, the teacher to student ratio could be astronomical leading to overworked and understaffed educators, which leads to student resources falling short of adequate. If student to teacher ratio is not proportional, the enrollment in arts education will have to be limited, reducing student access to arts.

Money will be sourced to schools that do not offer what the public schools have to offer in the regards of music. Once money is funneled away from public schools, the public schools will immediately take the already limited funding away from the arts.

This will take funds and resources away from our most vulnerable students.

I believe that this bill is framed as something that allows "good education" for all, but in practice, it will allow for private schools to push for higher tuition, and will not allow for those students who do not have the means. And now, we are taking money away from public schools and programs that are succeeding, and give it to private schools.

I feel like money will be taken away from art programs

When budget is tight, arts education tends to go

Policies marketed as "school choice" or universal vouchers risk exacerbating existing inequities in Mississippi's education system rather than expanding genuine access. While these initiatives are often framed as offering families greater freedom, in practice they disproportionately benefit families who already have financial, transportation, and informational advantages.

Voucher amounts frequently fail to cover the full cost of high-performing private schools, leaving lower-income families unable to participate fully. In addition, many private schools lack transportation services and the infrastructure or legal obligation to adequately serve students with disabilities. Admission policies and discipline standards can also change in ways that effectively exclude students with fewer resources or greater needs. As a result, families may initially transfer out of public schools only to return months later after discovering that the promised options are not realistically accessible.

Meanwhile, the diversion of public funds weakens the very public schools that serve the majority of Mississippi students, particularly those from low-income communities and students of color. When funding and support are reduced, these schools are then criticized for declining performance, despite having had their resources systematically removed.

It is important to note that Mississippi's recent educational gains were achieved through the work of public school educators operating under long-standing funding challenges, not through privatization. Undermining public education threatens to reverse that progress and concentrate opportunity among those already positioned to succeed.

Education is a pathway to civic and economic power. Any reform should strengthen access and equity for all students, not shift public resources in ways that deepen disparities. Policymakers should prioritize fully funding and supporting public schools and their educators, while pursuing reforms that ensure accountability, inclusion, and opportunity for every child.

It is a terrible thing for public schools. We should be advocating for our students, not letting the legislative system bully the public into thinking they have an actual choice. This ruins the lines that have been clearly set for a reason. This will ruin MHSAA sports, band, and choir programs and gives wastes tax dollars. It is a big NO for me!

Public schools are required by law to provide for every student, no matter how much resources are required - staffing, facilities, additional instruction, etc. If students who require the least amount of resources leave and their funding goes with them, the surplus funding cannot be utilized to provide for those students who require far and above the amount of funding provided for them. Where will the money come from? Judging by past occurrences, it will probably mean cutting teachers, cutting teacher aids, larger class sizes, and cutting anything that can possibly be without losing accreditation. While sports often bring income into a school district, particularly football and basketball, music and the arts may exist only for their own sake - as an outlet for student expression - something that society critically needs right now. Students will not feel the need to exert extra effort into their academics if they need an outlet to express themselves, work with a team, set long-term goals, and discover that their effort matters.

I believe that the ability of music education to be equitable is my biggest concern. Many students will be bouncing around and may not receive the proper music education that they deserve. It will lead to bigger schools being even more sought after job opportunities and it may leave the smaller schools to crumble away. I also believe that over time these smaller schools won't be able to sustain their ability to perform and compete with others due to lack of students and funding.

While some programs will benefit because enrollment going up, others will greatly suffer as students move to more financially equipped programs. Thus vastly hurting the program and risk getting them cut due to funding. The arts always the first to go.

When students leave the school the money leaves with them. This begets budget and staffing cuts. Parents will take their children to schools that offer even less than the larger public school they left providing them with fewer opportunities. Public school band programs will be left with fewer students, staff, and money making the activities we currently participate in less sustainable, etc...

Taking into account that a lot of districts already draw district lines based on racial/economic biases, this bill will gut those school districts that are already under funded and under performing. Tate Reeves is a horrible governor for this touting claims that he made Mississippi better. HE did nothing but take our money and use to better him. This program will great impact music education in many areas where band and/or choir programs are an outlet for students. Taking funding away from school in general will effective erase music programs. I am ashamed

I can see cuts to the already meager band budget.

Fine arts are generally the first to be cut due to a decrease in school funding.

Band programs in smaller and less-resourced schools can and will die because there won't be enough students to sustain it. More resources go to the haves and the have-nots just cease to exist. Students coming from poorer districts into more affluent districts don't always have the same level of income as students already in those districts. That means students may not do band because of the costs associated with band in bigger and more affluent districts.

I believe this could be destructive for public schools throughout the state of Mississippi. Public money should go to public schools. PERIOD.

I am vehemently against diverting public funds to private schools. As a taxpayer, I do not get say so in where my taxes are allocated. Free and appropriate public education is a given right in this country. I worry about the loss of funding that this will bring and its impact on the state of music education in the state.

Public dollars do not belong in private schools. Full stop.

Larger districts that have funs will receive more students, get more funding, and the smaller programs will lose students, funding and the ability to perform.

I think this is a terrible thing for our schools

The program is most likely to suffer from the provisions of this bill are those in rural and urban settings. These programs often struggle anyway, with resources and funding. If more students (and the funding that comes with them) are pulled away to larger or more attractive schools and programs, it will ultimately exacerbate the issues that many of these schools and districts already face. Furthermore, Mississippi does not have the infrastructure to support this plan. Many of our schools and districts are isolated with miles and miles of land and road from school to school. Receiving school districts will struggle to have space to accept students and the families of the students who may want to move, will still struggle getting their students to the new district. Therefore, they will be stuck in a school with less funding, less resources, and more problems than they started with.

A potential outflux of students in a lower achieving district will significantly impact funding and could ultimately even lead to the dissolution of teaching positions in the arts. Inversely, an influx of students into higher achieving districts might bring more funding, but would create sustainability issues related to facilities - where do we put the new students, what if they're behind and we have to differentiate to catch them up (with no additional resources), etc.

The school a student should attend should be decided upon by professionals. Parents are students are not professionals.

Many districts already view the arts and in particular band and what a band program costs as unnecessary or above and beyond the minimum expectation for a public school. The funds that could be lost by public schools due to this bill would almost certainly impact the arts first.

Public mony should not be used for private schools. If you can afford pravate school, you don't need public funds. It is greedy and wasteful and will no doubt drive taxes even higher than they already are.

Allowing a constant fluctuation of student enrollment between various schools and districts would hurt, if not destroy the sustainability efforts of the majority of rural music programs (and other activities) across our state.

To my knowledge, it will shift public school funding to private schools. The consolidation of our district is certain to affect the fine arts budget and staffing

Everybody knows that the 1st thing to be cut will be the music programs. Also, home school students who want to be in a performing group will not be held to the same requirements as those who attend school.

Students in districts without adequate music education will have a chance to choose a school that does have adequate programs. Also, home school students will have access to participate in local music programs which I personally would welcome. Additionally, the schools that have done a good job of supporting arts education will see an influx of students where as the ones that are not doing so well, will ultimately lose students

Less funding equals, program funding, less teachers and increased workloads.

This bill is a disaster. It would have a very negative impact on the musical arts, as many private schools don't have music programs or their music program is very under funded and/or unsupported.

We can't plan for the year if we don't know what students were going to have. If students can change quickly that info won't get to us until the first day of school when they show up.

I teach in a low socioeconomic community and given the option to transfer to the neighboring school that is a very high socioeconomic, I fear our students would vacate our program and it would be disastrous for us. If that happens, our program would not be sustainable and would be lost in a few short years.

Positive and much needed change!

Band directors could have less students and less financial support.

Vouchers take money and recourses from public schools and funnel them to private institutions. It harms most students in greater need in order help the wealthy few who already have the they need recourses. It's just a terrible idea all around.

As far as music education, I think it would negatively affect smaller schools as those that are strongly interested in music may transfer to larger schools with larger music programs thus increasing the difficulty of growing the program and obtaining community support for the program.

Also, it is already difficult to find teachers to work in small or critical need schools, weakening the program makes it more difficult to hire teachers.

Additionally, if funding travels with the student, then there is less money in the district to buy needed equipment or make repairs to equipment or facilities. It also limits hiring professionals to choreograph, arrange, compose, etc.

HB 2 will negatively impact music education, due to loss of funding at smaller districts, as well as issues with students moving in and out of music programs. Stability is important for any successful program, and having students move in and out of programs will not serve those students.

We're already understaffed and underfunded. I don't see this helping public schools. I see this causing more hurdles in our system and private schools benefiting. A better proposal to help students have better access to their education would be providing free breakfast/lunch, better support services, reducing restrictions on bus drivers/teacher's certification/recertification, investing in facilities and technology, teacher pay (especially assistants), school safety, etc.

It would be nice if students in the private school in my area had the same opportunities to experience public school extra curricular activities that they would otherwise not be exposed to. On the other hand, higher performing schools would have all the best students and teachers would have to deal with the overload.

It feels as if we are opening the floodgates to encourage instability within music education programs. If parents decide to push their students elsewhere suddenly, important members of ensembles can up and disappear and have to start over, elsewhere. There could be influx of large amounts to certain schools and districts, causing mass panic within programs of having to rework programs, chair orders, instrumentation, or even having to develop babysitting parameters due to a multitude of students leaving or joining programs suddenly and educators not knowing what to do with sudden influx. Students that were important members of smaller/weaker programs may disappear due to parental choice and leave those programs stranded, even though they live in the district of that school.

House Bill 2 will affect school funding, and music programs are often the first programs to receive budget cuts, or to be cut completely. A lot of programs in Mississippi also have limited resources (not enough space in the choir room for show choir, not enough funding for sheet music, having to borrow instruments from other districts so kids can participate in band). A significant issue is also staffing; if students flood a school to participate in a music program, the administration isn't immediately going to hire more staff members, leading to increased classroom management issues and teacher burnout.

The only positive impact I can see from this bill is homeschool students having access to strong music programs. As a choir director, I've had multiple kids switch to homeschooling and still ask if they can participate, with the answer of course being no. I do like the idea of expanding music education, but I don't know if it would be worth the negative possibilities.

There is no world in which expanding school "choice" leads to strong, sustainable arts programs with adequate funding, proper staffing, and good experiences for students. As a Director of Choral Activities at an institution of higher learning, this bill will likely erode the skill level of incoming students and make recruiting more difficult.

Because private schools are not required to follow certain state and federal mandates, moving resources to private/charter schools will reduce resources for public school teachers and does NOT mean students who are CHOSEN to attend private school will receive the education opportunity promised by state and federal laws.

This has dismantle public schools as in music programs we grow our kids. We will not only loose children but the program will decrease or we may gain or maintain. With the population we have more may leave than stay.

I anticipate that as high achieving schools attract transfers, schools that are losing students will lose the critical mass necessary to sustain quality band programs.

I think that most programs will suffer losses due to the parent choice.

Funding shortages, staffing shortages and increased academic time for students can all result in negative impacts in the arts.

From my perspective, the bill would likely have a mixed but overall negative impact on music education. While education savings accounts could help some students access private music lessons, the redirection of funds away from public schools would weaken school-based music programs, which rely on stable enrollment and funding. Because music is not a tested or mandated subject, it is especially vulnerable to cuts, leading to fewer ensemble opportunities and reduced access—particularly for students in under-resourced districts.

If money leaves the schools because families are able to take the money to a different school then school districts all over the state and not just rural ones like mine will have to make up for that loss in funding somewhere. Extracurriculars and the amount of staff able to be employed by schools will be directly affected because of the loss of funding. Schools will prioritize core curriculum, as they should. But it will be at the cost of cutting extracurriculars and even support staff for core teachers. The loss in funding will also affect school's ability to hire staff to teach courses not needed for graduation such as advanced maths and sciences.

Whereas this bill has some much needed reforms that eventually will be welcomed, the effects that some parts of this bill will have on small & rural schools with small choral programs will cause some districts to make difficult choices to eliminate electives and faculty, including entire music programs, even if they currently are participating in MHSAA each year. Some school districts already are discussing these contingency plans should the bill be passed.

This bill will have a very negative impact on Mississippi Public Education. Spending state revenue in the private sector without any guard rails in place is a recipe for fraud and personal gain at the expense of others. Accountability is WAY more complex than just test scores. Public schools are held to standards and PUBLIC scrutiny based on factors that are not even addressed in this bill. This type of legislation adopted in surrounding states HAS NOT HELPED or even BEEN BENIFICAL to the students of those states. If these ideas worked those states would appear ahead of Mississippi in the national rankings. This legislation is a perfect example of "An answer looking for a problem", Is our current system perfect? I think we all would agree that it is not, but we should concentrate on fixing it and not destroy what is working.

Too many unknown variables if this passes. Nothing positive for local communities

I feel as though given school choice, many of the students in the outlying areas of our county will attend smaller schools that are of equal distance to their homes, assuming that smaller schools will be able to provide more one on one experiences, leading to a drastic decline in our enrollment. Therefore, our school will have to find creative ways to adjust the budget. As an already rural school with not much local tax funding, we are already missing foundational components of our schools essential needs. I feel as though the arts program will be cut, moved to an after school program, or severely understaffed.

Giving resources to private and home schools is not as simple as it sounds. Giving means taking away, and public schools are where those resources will be taken from. This bill does not prioritize ALL students in our state, and it directly takes away the things that our students desperately need to make it through school before entering college or the workforce. As a music educator, this bill has the possibility of taken away music education from students all together.

Short answer: when a school district's funding cut the arts are the first to go (resources, budgets, personnel). If students are allowed to change schools or districts, smaller schools districts will suffer.

School funding has the potential to be eliminated with the passage of this bill.

Funding will be the biggest problem long term. Already struggling schools will have funds pulled causing sustainability problems. Schools having to close due to bad ratings will not "remove underperforming schools and make the rest competitive". It will cause students to have to travel 45-60 minutes to get an education that is required of them. That itself will cause more budget problems for required bus routes to expand school zones to take in those students. It will also decrease participation in extracurricular activities of all kinds which will also impact budgets.

It will also open the door for "transfer portal" like scenarios between high schools for sports/activities which will cause problems with planning a child's education. When a student switches schools, it is already a mess keeping up with what classes a student has had and still needs. This will only make it worse. High school's are not designed to work like college's because of the requirement for ALL children to go to school.

A major fear I from just coaches/directors is that if a student doesn't like a punishment they receive or something of like manner, they will just up and switch schools.

The ONLY argument I have heard that attempts to justify HB 2 is that it better justifies private school paying parent's taxes going towards public schools and not their own. But just the fact of a better educated public/society that their child will enter after school-age, is worth the nominal amount of their taxes that go towards public education.

Section 5-6: Any funds diverted from public institutions could impact public school's ability to fund arts education effectively.

Section 8: Creates inequity in the application of standardized test requirements between public and private institutions.

Section 9: Potentially incentivizes school districts to make curricular (academic course offerings, staffing, academic schedules, etc.) decisions to satisfy fund manager as opposed to preparing students academically for college and careers.

Section 11: Incentivizes students to choose accelerated graduation that will limit enrollment in fine arts or music coursework in the hopes of saving MSA funds for post secondary education.

Section 13: Limits ability of school districts to serve local population due to lower enrollment from interdistrict transfers. This will impact the opportunity for students unable to transfer to participate in public school music and arts programs.

Section 14: Would require a school district to fund student participation in arts activities for students who's funding has been diverted.

Section 39-57: Allows for charter schools to be established in local areas without regard for public school issues, increasing likelihood of the limiting of music and arts offerings to students in that locale.

Several Sections: Increase financial burden to local school districts while potentially decreasing their ability to maintain solvency.

District funding is key to any successful music program. As funding is reduced to public schools, there will be an increased need for families and communities to pay out-of-pocket expenses through fees or fundraisers. This will limit accessibility to our programs.

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I feel like it will give cause many county bands to suffer, because now those students who live closer to a bigger city will opt out for being in a bigger city band rather than the small county bands which will destroy those smaller band programs. It may also cause those county schools to be forced to consolidate depending on how many students chose to go to the city. A consolidation would destroy the decades of the small town traditions build in those smaller schools and cause many problems down the road. It would hurt those city schools because they would in turn have way more band students to teach than before and take away from more one on one time with their band directors. This will change the very foundation of small bands across the State and cause many Music programs to go under.

School Choice could negatively impact hundreds of schools and programs around our state. Currently, we have highly successful band programs at many of our schools. Including smaller schools. Many students in smaller programs could choose to leave that program to join a larger band program. If this were to happen it could shut down small band programs across the state. It could also negatively impact other larger programs in our state. If the neighboring band program is "placing higher" students from a highly successful band program could transfer to a neighboring program simply to "win a medal" or trophy.

Additionally, should these things happen, access to music education for all students could be significantly impacted. Finding teachers to teach in these circumstances when there is no opportunity to build a program is not likely. Furthermore, schools are not going to be able to sustain funds to retain and hire music teachers/band directors when interest and participation in the program decreases at this level.

This affects more than the average person believes. School music programs provide more than a music education to students. They provide life skills, they help with graduation rates and attendance, they help with test scores, they help with school spirit and school pride.

Taking music out of the equation entirely, this bill destroys education in Mississippi and undoes all that the teachers, administrators, assistant teachers, and many others have done over the years to begin to rebuild and restore a quality education for our students.

This bill will mainly affect funding based on student numbers. Funding affects ALL aspects from teacher units, budget requests (resources), and equity/inclusion.

Anything that will help enhance the future of music education.

When schools are fully funded, music education thrives. My concern is for public funding to be spread too thin. Additionally, retention numbers within music programs will most likely not be consistent and affect overall performance quality throughout the state.

It's stupid. All of it.

If this bill is carried out, public schools will be denied the financial support of the public, and the people who can afford private education will receive benefits that those who cannot afford it will not. It will decimate funding for activities, including the personnel to manage those activities. In short, politicians and others who do not teach or have not taught in a public school setting should not be creating policy that drastically affects the infrastructure of public schools.

House Bill 2 could negatively impact public school music programs by decreasing enrollment and funding, as students and funding are diverted to private, charter, and homeschool settings that are not required to offer music education. This poses a barrier to equitable access for low-income students and the long-term viability of music programs. Decreased public school funding could lead to staffing cuts, which can increase teacher workload for remaining music educators.

Private school tuition should not be paid with public funding. This bill is pulling funding away from already underfunded public school districts, lessening the offerings for educational opportunities as the first programs cut due to inadequate funding are music and arts programs. Furthermore, If students are allowed to transfer out of their public school districts, this will further segregate education based on income and racial status leading to expanding inequality of opportunity. Additionally, a measure of approval of transfers for limited spaces in private schools will further segregate communities. Public schools accept all students; private schools don't.

Public schools are held to educational standards that private schools are not. This means that programs, such as music, are free-for-all curriculums if a music program even exists in private schools. Due to public funding, public schools are able to offer robust extra curricular and arts program opportunities.

Rural schools may suffer because of transfers

I'm concerned that schools will see a funding cut and I am worried that the arts will be cut. I am also concerned with having consistency in a music program, with the influx or lack of students. Will students be changing between schools mid year more than normal? I feel this will not be good for music programs. I'm concerned with how this will affect the overall structure of the public schools across the state and what they will be able to offer their students.

Allowing parents choice in their educational decisions for their students could increase music education participation through homeschool students participating. Also, it could more easily create music charter schools. Hybrid schools are becoming a popular choice and provide more opportunities for individual instruction and not primarily large ensemble focused classes rooms. To put it simply, it does what the name of the bill implies. Provides freedom concerning the music education choices of the parents.

Students who transfer districts or go to home school decrease the students who are getting qualified music instruction. This also impacts the retention of the school band. Funding would be a nightmare.

Nothing further

Coming from a small school setting, I am very concerned on how this bill will affect our day to day life here. If students were to start moving to a different district, it would pull money away from our current budget. I am concerned that if that were to happen, the arts would be one of the first things

to go.

Equity is essential to the success of education in Mississippi. Tax dollars should fund public education only so that every child has an equal opportunity to learn, regardless of socioeconomic status. If HB2 passes, it will have a negative effect on public education in Mississippi, including equal access to music education.

I believe that with HB2, many schools (Not All) will see a significant decline in their programs when it comes to funding and participation. I think it's safe to say that district funding is going to depend on how many students are enrolled within a particular district. School districts that may be low performing academically but performing strongly in the arts are going to see a decrease in the participation within their fine arts programs due students moving out of these districts that perform low academically. Fine arts instructors are also going to see a decrease in the amount of funding that they receive based on the number of students leaving the district as well.

Public schools who lose students would lose money. The first thing to usually go is arts funding.

Terrible Bill

Ultimately school choice will result in further dividing our student bodies by socioeconomic status and will have a devastating impact on schools and children in rural and poor areas. It will be a critical blow to education and literacy in our state.

I believe that in giving out vouchers for private and charter schools there will be a significant amount of money taken away from public schools especially smaller rural ones like where I work. Less money for public schools means less money for band programs and at my 1a school that means pretty much no band program. This bill seems like it markets itself for accessibility but actively does the opposite. It appears to me to be a "rich get richer" kind of program. I know that the effects of this bill will surely mean many small band programs like my own will cease to exist.

School transfers disrupt access to music education in a course that relies on long-term, sequential instruction. Band programs are not standardized across schools; differences in curriculum, pacing, instructional time, and resources result in varying skill levels from grade to grade and from school to school. When students transfer, they often enter programs that do not align with their prior training, limiting meaningful participation and slowing progress. This instability reduces instructional efficiency, strains program funding and resources planned months in advance, increases teacher workload due to assessment and remediation demands, and ultimately threatens the long-term sustainability of band programs and the student opportunities they provide.

If the students at my school have the choice to go elsewhere, they will.

Fine Arts programs in the public system notoriously receive little-to-no financial support of their programs. This bill will take funds away from those programs that receive anything and will prevent those that already receive nothing from even having a chance. Public funds should be allocated to public sources, period.

Less public funding means salary cuts, position cuts, budget cuts, and all of this affects the music students, teachers, and programs in general

Well Mississippi is in the bottom for education year after year. It would seem that if we really raise teacher pay, like the starting salary is 60K for first year teachers, then you will attract higher pool of qualified teachers to apply for these jobs. Better teachers will lead to some improved results. Those working on bringing jobs to rural areas need to work a lot harder to improve that. Jobs that actually pay \$25-\$45 an hour. Employing hundreds. Again, more qualified skilled workers move into these communities with smart kids attending schools. . Poor underperforming school districts are turned around with the local economies and higher paying jobs attracting more educated people to the community. Vouchers should not be funded by the state, it's only works for those that can afford to uproot.

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Before wrecking an already lacking but improving situation, government has a responsibility to include educators. Period.

I am concerned that students will leave my district for other districts, and the funding for my position may disappear.

I have worked at Title I schools and non Title I schools and am concerned with the emmigration from some of these Title I schools and potentially decimating the program, leaving the students who can't move left behind to pick up the pieces of a broken group. Schools that are in low income communities struggle to acquire instruments to begin with and then with the removal of students who use vouchers to change schools, the money that the program utilized will dwindle even further due to the lower number of students in attendance at the school in question. This will continue to perpetuate the cycle of struggling these Title I schools are faced with.

I am concerned for the teacher workload as well. With the numbers in student attendance being inconsistent each year, directors will not be able to effectively plan for the following school year. Activities such as marching band and show choir take time to plan. Effective and efficient lesson plans are created in the time frame that is currently given and taking that time away will result in a decline of educational rigor within these programs, not due to a lack of caring, but instead due to a lack of time for preparation. Mind that I don't believe this will happen everywhere, but I am most concerned about the smaller schools that may have only one or two directors per program. The workload of a teacher is already fairly stacked and time is valuable beyond belief. With having to make parent contact, plan appropriately scaffolded lessons that create engagement within a class, grade materials and give valuable feedback that will benefit the student in their educational journey, as well as prepping for testing season, a teacher does not have much time to plan farther in the future.

Taking funds from public schools will cause a negative impact on overall education in Mississippi. Instead, we should be focusing on how to fund public schools arts programs and raise teacher salary.

With students able to choose where they want to attend school, this makes sustainability of program harder than ever. Basically we have educational free agency.

If this passes, I believe that many of our wonderful students and families would leave the public school for opportunities at private schools due to the availability of vouchers. If that happens, they will be entering schools without as many fine arts options that they have at the public school- we have marching band, concert band, multiple levels of middle school bands, jazz band, private lessons, small chamber ensembles, concert choir, show choir, multiple levels of arts classes- many of which hone in on one specific form of art (ceramics, drawing, sculpting, etc.) theatre, etc. Even though there are multiple private schools in our area, NONE of them provide the same amount of classes/groups/ensembles for students to be a part of nor do they provide the same quality of groups. Just last year, we had a family move their children to Hartfield Academy (a local private school) and the students had to quit band due to there not being a band program there. This situation is going to happen MANY TIMES OVER if this bill is passed.

Uncertainty about where students will go will have a negative impact on programs trying to plan for future years. Having greater consistency by students staying in their school districts is very helpful for the long-term success of band programs.

My concern is that with school choice potentially effecting enrollment at some school districts, will in turn pull away any resources that the music and arts programs at our schools. As well as potentially spreading thin the teachers across campuses, widening the load they already have if funday is effected.

Simply stated, this bill will severely limit resources for our rural schools.

As a 30 year veteran teacher of music in the state, we have always had to fight for the arts. If this passes there will be more chances for districts to cut the arts because of the possible lack of resources that will be needed for general education. Public school should be the highest priority in our state. We have so much to be proud of right now!!

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I honestly do not think the "powers that be" thought of the ramifications that House Bill 2 will have on education as a whole. I know these people did NOT think about the music and arts programs across the state! With school choice looming, the funding for public schools will be cut because students will leave for other schools. Therefore, cutting the funding for the music and arts programs across the state. Students may choose to go to a private school or another public school in our area causing our numbers in our programs to drop significantly. If a 7A school has only 50-75 people left in the high school band program, it is not fair to have them compete against schools that now have over 300 students in their band. The smaller band's budget will be cut and we will not be able to have new/nice props on the field or the instrumentation needed for symphonic and marching band to be successful. There will also not be funds available for instrument repair of school owned instruments and that also means no new school owned instruments. Once an instrument breaks and the program cannot afford to buy a new one nor repair the broken one, the instrumentation of the band will significantly change. The percussion, tuba, baritone/euphonium, French horn/mellophone, and lower reed sections would eventually cease to exist. If this house bill goes into effect, the music and arts programs would be affected because a reduced student population means less money the district receives and the very first programs that will be cut will be music and arts. This is due to the fact that schools will now lose teacher units. Since the core subject classes must be taught according to the state of Mississippi, there will be no teacher units available for music or art programs. Even if the music program is not cut, the schools will not have the funds to pay band techs, percussion instructors, choreographers, color guard instructors, assistant band directors, nor any additional staff that the band is used to having. This will add even more stress to the band director who may or may not know about the visual arts for marching season. The band director will not be able to teach all of the instrumentation they need because they are the only one left to teach all students. There just is not enough hours in the day to teach every instrument in the lower grades. Yes, we as band directors know how to play every instrument, but we are stronger on some instruments and weaker on others. Talk about our plate being overloaded! It is already full with all of the staff that we currently have. Some band directors would quit the profession or move to another state where school choice is not implemented. All of this will affect our band program for years to come. This could also cause students to no longer be able to join a college band and receive scholarships because they will not perform well on their auditions. Therefore, keeping some band students without the ability to pay for college. Another thing to consider is that higher income families may choose to send their students to private or more affluent schools leaving lower income students who have no choice but to remain at their current school because they do not have the ability to move to a different school. I am not saying that lower income students should be viewed differently. However, these students and families may feel that they are less important than others. House Bill 2 is a HORRIBLE idea!

MS House Bill 2 expands public school transfer options in Mississippi but does so without addressing the significant impact that increased enrollment volatility has on programs that rely on stability, such as music and fine arts education. Music programs are not standalone electives; they require certified educators, specialized equipment, and multi-year, sequential instruction in order to be effective. Even small and unpredictable shifts in student enrollment can disrupt staffing decisions, ensemble balance, scheduling, and budgeting, making these programs especially vulnerable when districts face uncertainty.

As students transfer more freely between districts, public schools experience funding losses while fixed operational costs remain unchanged. In these circumstances, school leaders are often forced to prioritize tested academic areas, and music and fine arts programs—despite their well-documented academic and social-emotional benefits—are frequently reduced or eliminated first. MS House Bill 2 does not include safeguards to protect arts staffing, instructional time, or program continuity as transfer flexibility increases.

The consequences of this instability fall most heavily on rural and under-resourced districts, where public schools often provide the only access students have to music education. Unlike more affluent communities, these districts cannot offset program losses with private lessons or community-based enrichment. As a result, MS House Bill 2 risks widening existing inequities in access to a well-rounded education and diminishing opportunities for students whose engagement and success in school are often strengthened through participation in music programs.

If Mississippi is committed to developing the whole child and preserving educational opportunities that foster creativity, discipline, collaboration, and academic growth, then we wouldn't include policies that expand school choice that ignore intentional protections for music and fine arts education. MS House Bill 2 intentionally erodes programs that are essential to student engagement, community culture, and the long-term strength of Mississippi's public schools.

I worry about the amount of kids coming to our school and taking opportunities away from the students presently here. I am VERY concerned with how LARGE my general music classes will be...I currently teach 4 sections.

This is going to ask more of teachers with fewer resources.

The arts are already underfunded in most districts throughout the state. By creating transferable tuition vouchers between public and private schools, this is only going to make public school funding stretch even thinner. It is hard enough to obtain quality music curriculum and materials as it stands. With public schools losing funding as more people transfer districts or from public to private schools, it will be even harder to sustain the arts in general.

This will absolutely create a biggest social class divide in a school system that is already rampant with inequality. Our own areas in music are already high effected with class inequality, and once the schools get worse, small band programs will cease to exist or be able to keep up with the possibilities of the larger programs.

N/A

As a music educator of 45 years experience, I feel that students from smaller music programs with few offerings will transfer to larger schools with more offerings in their programs.

Resources are already scarce for the performing arts. To further funnel funding away to private or home school settings, where there is often no band program, simply drains limited resources. Furthermore, allowing homeschool students to participate without being enrolled in the school day on campus causes enormous logistical problems.

This bill will definitely affect budgets for rural schools. I do like the fact homeschooled students can participate in extracurricular activities, but some funding will be needed.

While there are benefits from the bill, such as homeschool students being allowed to participate in public music programs and assistant teacher pay raises, the ability for students to move to any program they wish will hurt smaller programs. Talented students who wish to move to a more "successful" program will hurt their programs they are leaving. Small band programs at smaller schools could lose necessary funding and could possibly even be cut.

HB 2 diverts public dollars away from the public schools; therefore, already underfunded programs (including music education programs) will be further underfunded, possibly even cut due to lack of funding. Overall, this bill is bad news. States that have passed similar bills (TN, AZ, etc.) are seeing public education crumble due to this type of legislature. It seems like MS is always taking one step forward in education to then only take 5 steps back.

HB 2 diverts public funds away from public schools that serve the overwhelming majority of Mississippi children—particularly rural students, students with disabilities, and students from low-income families. When funds are taken away the arts are usually the first things to get cut. When that occurs, not only will jobs be lost but students will no longer have the full curriculum classes to take to complete their well-rounded education. As Plato said, "I would teach children music, physics, and philosophy; but most importantly music, for in the patterns in music and all the arts are the keys to learning". Redirecting public funds will ensure that our public schools will decrease and decline in the classes it has to offer especially in the fine arts. Students will suffer as will teachers in the loss of their jobs.

Pulling money from the schools and limiting what is available is never a recipe for success.

HB2 could be the end of music education programs at small schools if enrollment from those schools drops.

With funding following students, smaller schools may cut music programs to save and keep Math, ELA, Science, and History teachers on staff.

I don't doubt there will be some students positively influenced by this bill, but that will far outweigh the risks and headaches that are forthcoming.

I'd sacrifice the pay raise if that means this bill doesn't pass. I think the \$2,000 increase for teachers is hush money for all of the other nonsense.

Students schedules are always constrained, and you want to throw another required course? Financial literacy is already a part of the curriculum of college and career readiness. FL is also the job of the parents.

I don't like it

HB2's school choice section allowing public money to be funneled to private schools will see many small school's programs suffer and/or be cut. Less money for the public school district means something will be cut, whether it's music teacher positions, fine arts budgets, resulting in less quality materials and/or teacher available for the students in these schools.

The bill could negatively impact music education and cause a "snowball" cycle. Some programs may lose a large number of students and cause tough decisions to be made by administrators as a result of.

Shifting in Federal funds from one district to another will surely result in arts and activities budgets being the first victims of budget cutting to make up for lost funds.

Though I do believe that home school students should have musical and sports opportunities, without any extra added funds from those students, programs that struggle financially are going to struggle more. This will lead to less opportunities available to our students.

We will also have a harder time being able to include some home school students if they aren't able to be present for our regular class time. Would this bill force us to teach them anyways or make extra class time outside of contracted hours to accommodate for those students?

All of these things will only exacerbate the problems that a lot of small and rural programs face. This will lead to increased teacher burnout. Especially if those teachers can't have extra help with assistants to help handle the added work load.

If students are moving into schools using the money from the state then they probably are not going to have the money to afford instruments to use for band. This situation might make band less appealing.

I feel like if schools begin to desegregate, then certain schools will get more funds and others might be lacking. I also feel like some students may not have as much access to the same resources as

others.

As a rural school this will greatly hurt our budget which will hurt music education's funding.

This bill will cause many, many Music Education jobs in the state to vanish. If this passes, most of the smaller school's Fine Arts programs will die out.

I fear that school choice may favor higher achieve if students and higher achieving schools. Which May effect the funding for smaller schools.

Choosing where to send your child can cut into the funding for the schools, when funding is cut so are the arts. We are looked at as "extras".

There will be budget cuts which will lead to major changes in every district and subsequently to every school.

This bill is not responsible in any manner. Students will lose resources, the state will lose money. There is clear evidence from states that have implemented school choice.

One thing that stands out is the school choice. This will negatively impact small music programs in the vicinity of larger, more dominant ones.

It seems the bill will divert essential public funding to private schools. It may create unequal education systems, potentially hurting underfunded, rural public districts.

This in my eyes is going to largely affect the arts funding in our school district as well as the amount of student involvement. We get money based off of how many students attend our schools. Therefore allowing school choice will allow parents the choice to take their students to these other schools. It will signification impact our funding as a school and a district. The arts already get the short end of the stick when it comes with funding.

If you choose not to have your child participate in public schools, that's fine, but your taxes still go there. I have never had my house burn down, but my taxes still go to fire departments. I have never had a child, but my taxes still go to fund education. If you are choosing to give your child an alternate route, that's fine, but your taxes should still go to public education.

N/A

I am concerned already limited funding will be taken away from arts in public schools and allocated to other places.

When public schools lose funding, the first thing to suffer will be the arts.

Some schools don't have choir or orchestra. This would allow students to attend a school that does.

If students are allowed to leave, it could affect funding and so much more

The funding isn't where it needs to be to have some of the things on HB2 successful. I also don't like that there are so many things in one bill. That's like a teacher punishing the whole class for something tha one students did. It's not right and fair. They should each be separate or put into smaller categories.

Could be good, (might have new great talent) could be bad (poor behavior, little parental involvement)

The positives would be gaining more students potentially but at the expense of losing some of your budget potentially from other students lost therefore making harder to have a long-term sustainable program.

Music educators must have one of the highest scores on Praxis II. There are little to no incentives to going into education in Mississippi. Any bill that is not addressing this urgent problem is nothing more than a joke.

If funds for Public education will be taken away in any capacity, it could greatly impact what's needed in the classroom in every capacity. Being that choir is new in my area since Covid, funding for supplies, trips, and much more has already been a struggle.

The proposed bill puts undue extra strain on resources and teachers for music education, with many already exhausted and overwhelmed.

I am against the passing of this bill

Less funding: HB 2 pulls money from public schools, leaving fewer dollars for music programs, instruments, and supplies.

Program cuts: Music is often the first area reduced when budgets shrink.

Fewer teachers: Schools may lose music teachers or increase class sizes.

Limited access: Many private schools are not required to offer music, reducing student opportunities.

Equity concerns: Public schools serve all students; HB 2 can widen gaps in access to arts education.

Weaker programs: Choir, band, and enrichment ensembles may be eliminated or reduced.

I teach in a district where music education is not a priority, so I can foresee the music program being the first one cut if funding decreases due to students moving out of district or to private schools.

I think this bill endangers many smaller schools. Schools will close, those music Ed jobs will disappear. Fewer music educators will be expected to teach larger groups or when money becomes tight, the arts will be the first to be cut.

Decreased funding in underfunded schools often results in the elimination of arts programs.

Can't answer this if I'm really not familiar

The thought sounds pretty on paper, however, this bill WILL create an unfair advantage for already underserved schools. While fairly well staffed and funded for now, my program could suffer if student enrollment were to drop. Unfortunately music programs that are high performing in low performing schools will lose students, funding, and ultimately their program as 'parent's' choice begins to have a negative impact on more than just the local schools. The bill is not nearly thorough enough to combat the problems it will bring instead of the 'solutions' it supposedly offers.

1. Additional feedback:

What concerns, if any, do you have regarding House Bill 2?

There will be overcrowded schools and schools trying to keep students that are hanging on by a thread. There will be no middle ground with this bill.

I'm concerned that this bill is going to devastate our education system that we are barely making strides in already. I'm concerned that this bill is a poorly disguised excuse for classism and racism.

How will the implementation of the Bill allow for organization and planning for student transfers?

The purpose of taxes for education is to provide a free education to all. Shifting that money to private schools, allowing affluent families who have more means of transportation, more resources, etc to participate in school choice, and creating charter schools undermines the foundation of public education. Choosing another option for education is within every parent's right to decide what is best for their child, however it is not the financial responsibility of the tax payers when public education is available.

Besides the elimination of income tax, was there a way or an idea for the first bill to be changed or added to House Bill 2?

How will special needs services be provided to students outside of the public school system.

Lack of accountability with diverted funds

Over crowding of schools and lack of availability of the appropriate educators to support those needs.

Funding, homeschool participants, quality of education, standards

Same as stated earlier.

Where will the funding come from? School districts are already strapped financially.

House Bill 2 raises serious concerns beyond the loss of arts funding. By diverting public money to private vouchers and education savings accounts, the bill threatens the financial stability of public schools and risks widening inequities for low-income and rural students who may have no realistic access to private options. It also sends taxpayer dollars to institutions that are not held to the same academic, financial, or accountability standards as public schools, creating gaps in oversight and quality. Students with disabilities may lose guaranteed support, districts may face teacher shortages or cuts, and communities could see weakened public schools that no longer serve as shared, stable centers of learning. Overall, HB 2 prioritizes shifting funds rather than strengthening the public education system that serves the majority of Mississippi students.

I am worried it is going to gut music programs in rural areas like mine.

I do not have a problem with parents moving their student from one public school/district to another, but I do not believe public funds should be used for students whose parents CHOSE to put them in private school, charter school, or home school.

Public schools will lose funding

I am worried all students and teachers will lose control their educational institutes and subjects. Students who help feed successful education programs will go to certain schools when other students who can't afford won't. Students will not be able to all have the same opportunities for growth and learning.

Work load on educators without a pay increase; more and more assessments are added every year and these students are tested to death. Adding more assessments on top of what is already in place and state testing is a lot for one teacher in a classroom to have to do constantly. As a mom of a 2nd grader with an IEP and 9th grader, I can attest to the fact that there is already way too much testing/assessments. If students transfer but then have major behavioral issues/violence issues or cannot adjust to the current school environment, is there any way for a school to tell them they cannot come back? What leg does the transfer school have to stand on? Or are they just stuck with the transfers even if it is not a good fit and/or there are major problems that occur? Where are the funds coming from for everything listed in this bill? Educators need to know how this will affect our pay and funding for our schools.

I am on the verge of retirement but I am concerned for future students and teachers. This bill is ridiculous! I don't know why anyone in public education would support it.

I want all students to have arts as part of their educational process. However, I am very afraid of the implementation of House Bill 2 will mean to arts education and our arts teachers.

I worry it will further segregate MS's already troubled schools.

I am concerned on the possibility of this bill negatively impacting students and educators all across the state.

It's a horrible idea. Here we are, rising in our educational stats, and now they want to tank it? Makes zero sense! The private schools are already doing fine without state funded money. The state should continue to look into failing districts and have them absorbed or run by successful districts.

Law makers are making these decisions without thinking about our vulnerable students.

money to private schools

House Bill 2 serves the dollar, not the student.

Tax dollars being used for students out of district.

The equity of who deserves a waiver and who doesn't.

The fact that it is not going to be "capped" at 20,000 and where and who decides when to stop the madness?

It is going to ruin class sizes for teachers, making the work load unbearable.

Teachers are already struggling enough, this would just push us into overdrive.

I am concerned for the financial support of public schools.

The lack of rules regarding the transfer of students. There needs to be more rules and accountabilities in place for students not jumping around and moving place to place multiple times a year or in consecutive years.

Cultural and economic impact on a program.

The fact that Tate Reeves will be governor. Also that this will affect and negatively impact students of color

I just think that it should be left alone. I don't think people truly understand that they will have to pay out-of-pocket, even with the voucher.

How will this affect our state long term?

Public funds should not go to private schools. Students should live in the district they attend school. And those schools should be well-maintained and resourced appropriately.

While this will have a negative impact on all public schools across the state, this will be devastating for rural schools and school districts. Schools will lose money, resources, and quite frankly teachers in a state where we already struggle in all three of those areas.

Public dollars do not belong in private schools. Full stop.

This is only going to benefit the students who already have options. Poor students won't have the means to go to better areas. This also will mean cutting the areas students leave from whether that be in funding, facilities, faculty, and available programs further limiting the smaller districts and being a disservice to the students that cannot leave

there are too many things in this bill. They are padding this bill with things to try to get it passed. If lawmakers truly care about the 30-35 retirement plan, assistant pay raises, etc. they would put those in a separate bill instead of trying to lure people to vote for this unpopular school choice proposition. it's disgraceful to put all of those in one bill to try and get it passed. if lawmakers truly cared, they would separate them.

Ultimately, it's not even a true choice bill. If a school district can pick and choose who comes, then they will turn away students they feel are undesirable to their district, and the parents will still be left with no choice. However, our government should work on fully funding public education and seeing that the school districts that are struggling, get the support systems that they need in order to improve. Snatching children and money away from schools that are an improvement will ultimately make the struggle that much more difficult.

HB2 is a slap in the face to every public educator that has worked and sacrificed to raise test scores and increase student achievement to such a historic level over the last several years.

HB 2 adds unnecessary attention on factors that have nothing to do with improving the quality of education in our country.

Potentially losing my position or funding within the program.

We still do not fully fund public education in this state. Funding private institutions will draw even more funds away from public institutions. The entire point of a private institution is to be independent from government regulations and oversight and to exclude people they deem undesirable. Taking public funds erodes their independence. It all sounds like a slippery slope back towards segregation.

HB2 seems like a theoretical answer to the problems of a very few, while creating a mountain of uncertainty for the majority of public school districts regarding funding, teacher units, space, and overall inability to plan accurately for future school years.

I don't want to lose the funding that supports our fine arts programs

Public funds to private schools without the restrictions. Basically a gift for private schools at taxpayer expense.

It does not do enough to eliminate useless testing. There is far too much "assessment". LET THE TEACHER'S TEACH!!!

Pulling funding from public to private schools. This only aids those that can already afford private school education. The government has a mandate to provide and fund public education. When you take the more money away from public school under School Choice, you are punishing schools and restricting the strides that have been made in public education in Mississippi.

My main concern is how it will immediately affect music programs as well as the longevity of music programs.

Funding for public schools. Transfer deadlines for students.

HB 2 is not giving an equal opportunity for all students. If I pay taxes in my community, that money should stay in my community and not given to another because of this bill.

It should pass unopposed

It is going to destroy many programs and families. It's a terrible idea proposed by terrible people.

I support the teacher assistant pay raise, the modifying of PERS, and the voluntary prayer, but that's about it.

One major concern is that HB 2 will actually hurt disadvantaged students, not help them. Students who cannot afford to attend private school now will not magically be able to afford to because of this bill. Students who live in impoverished districts will not be able to afford transport to another district.

This bill only helps those who can already help themselves.

Funding and accountability

The loss of public funding that would go towards private schools and the overload of successful districts with receiving districts not having control of approving student transfers.

Many of my colleagues, of which hold high-standing degrees and positions within the field, are very strongly opposed and have raised their concerns on social media about this Bill. It is clear that the impact of this bill is almost extreme on education as a whole within the state. I do not understand what 'problem' we are attempting to solve, as it sounds that this bill may introduce a multitude of new issues for educators to put up with. The number of educators is weak enough as it is, why must we create new complications?

I'm concerned about the quality of instruction, the qualification level of teachers, equity issues for students, the negative impact on arts programs, and the draining of state and federal money into private schools, which lowers quality for everyone. If parents want to send their students to private schools, they can do so on their own dime. Public money should never be used to subsidize private enterprise.

Taxpayer funds going to private schools

Public funds following students to a private school not held under same public school guidelines.

My main concern is that House Bill 2 could unintentionally weaken public school programs—especially music and other arts—by redirecting funding without providing protections for non-tested subjects. Music education depends on stable enrollment, certified teachers, and long-term program continuity, all of which are vulnerable when funding follows students without accountability for comprehensive offerings. I am also concerned that increased flexibility for charters and private providers may lead to uneven quality and access, widening gaps between districts and students.

Loss of funding that currently supports extracurriculars, advanced courses, and teacher support.

We as a society must trust the training and professional knowledge of professionals in every discipline. The decisions regarding this legislation has zero input from the professionals in the area of public education. Elected officials are NOT educators. The "Mississippi Miracle" is no miracle at all. We were given the opportunity to focus all of our early childhood education on the basic principals of reading. Once school districts were allowed to focus on reading first the bar moved. Previous legislation forced classroom time to be equally divided into too many educational disciplines. Now that these young learners can read we can focus in the areas of math, science, technology, etc. Please consider legislation that supports ideas like this.

Lack consistent and foreseeable support for local public schools

I do not understand how a school will be able to secure teaching positions in a timely manner if they do not know how many students they will have. If a school of my size decreases in student number, they still have to maintain a facility designed for a larger amount of students. Teachers will not know what resources they will need or be able to receive for the next school year. I do not understand how this bill will provide an equal education to all students. No single teacher-public, private, microschool that I have any connection to is in favor of this bill, and other than this survey, no one has asked for teachers' opinion.

The effects it will have on minorities and students living in poverty. The effects it will have on resources like special education, intervention, athletics, and music & arts.

Even though I see some benefits in the bill, the speed at which the bill is being passed is concerning. I believe people in the education profession are not being taken into account or the implication that this could cause on smaller schools and school districts.

This does not need to pass.

Funding will be the biggest problem long term. Already struggling schools will have funds pulled causing sustainability problems. Schools having to close due to bad ratings will not "remove underperforming schools and make the rest competitive". It will cause students to have to travel 45-60 minutes to get an education that is required of them. That itself will cause more budget problems for required bus routes to expand school zones to take in those students. It will also decrease participation in extracurricular activities of all kinds which will also impact budgets.

It will also open the door for "transfer portal" like scenarios between high schools for sports/activities which will cause problems with planning a child's education. When a student switches schools, it is already a mess keeping up with what classes a student has had and still needs. This will only make it worse. High school's are not designed to work like college's because of the requirement for ALL children to go to school.

A major fear I from just coaches/directors is that if a student doesn't like a punishment they receive or something of like manner, they will just up and switch schools.

The ONLY argument I have heard that attempts to justify HB 2 is that it better justifies private school paying parent's taxes going towards public schools and not their own. But just the fact of a better educated public/society that their child will enter after school-age, is worth the nominal amount of their taxes that go towards public education.

Lack of accountability for institutions or schools that receive federal funds. Public tax money should be used for public schools.

Band students opting out of being in the small county bands and moving into the larger band programs killing the smaller county band programs across the state.

Where is the money to build charter schools private schools, etc going to come from. We are not just talking about a redistribution of money to preexisting schools. Has anyone thought about this?

How many schools/districts will this close?

How many students will this affect when bus routes are no longer able to pick students up for school?

How many students are going to be robbed a great education because schools are competing with each other for students?

Who does this benefit the most? What is the hidden agenda here?

When schools are fully funded, music education thrives. My concern is for public funding to be spread too thin. Additionally, retention numbers within music programs will most likely not be consistent and affect overall performance quality throughout the state.

I'm primarily concerned that elected officials won't listen to anybody. It's like telling a child the stove is hot...sometimes you need to let them burn their finger to believe it.

I am worried I will not have a job because my position will not have financial support. Also, we are already seeing a massive flight from public schools to private schools in our area...who will I teach when those students are no longer here?

I am concerned about student enrollment in public school music programs and funding redistribution.

There are some positives in the bill such as a minimum salary for assistant teachers (although not enough), but small positives are aiding in covering the primary reason for this bill...continually underfunding public schools.

Student access to the arts

I do not feel that they are thinking about what this will really look like for our rural areas, workload for teachers, and obviously the extracurricular areas such as music and arts programs.

Selection bias in the process of who has access to MSA's.

I am concerned about the funding of and retention of students for my band program.

The passing of HB2 will negatively effect access to music and other fine arts in Mississippi.

I would first like to say that I have read up on a little bit of HB2 but not all of it. As a parent and teacher I see how this bill can be a double edge sword. I understand how this bill could help families who are living impoverished and who may not be able to move out of a lower performing school district. But I also see how this bill will affect students, schools, and programs negatively.

I also want to know what system is going to be implemented by MHSAA to ensure that homeschool students are meeting the same eligibility requirements as the students enrolled in public schools. Are there going to be more requirements for coaches and Directors to ensure that homeschool students are meeting the eligibility requirements of MHSAA? On that same issue, are homeschool students being allowed to participate in private school athletics/extra curriculars or are they only being allowed to participate in public school athletics/extra curriculars.

As a choral director, I don't see how some programs across our state are going to sustain long term. My fear is that the quick passing of this bill without proper research or justification will cause not only music and arts programs to suffer, but ALL programs to suffer.

Also, what about schools that are already busting at the seams with students right now. Will there be adequate funding provided to improve and expand facilities so that more students can fit?

I don't know what the answer is right now.

I am concerned about programs that already suffer from impacts of socioeconomic divide and this will further impact those arts programs.

I stated before that my concerns are for small rural schools that may end up ceasing to exist

Fine Arts programs in the public system notoriously receive little-to-no financial support of their programs. This bill will take funds away from those programs that receive anything and will prevent those that already receive nothing from even having a chance. Public funds should be allocated to public sources, period.

I have many concerns that this house bill will deeply impact our schools across the state, especially in our rural areas (which is the majority of the state).

Funding, tax structures, access, etc

I am very concerned about the possibility of unlimited public school choice, and I am also concerned about my taxpayer dollars going towards schools that are allowed to discriminate.

I believe there is too much packed into this bill to begin with and that it is forcing constituents to compromise their beliefs in order to see the improvement in specific areas. For example, teaching assistants are due a raise more than what is being offered in this bill. Good assistants are leaving because they cannot afford to live on the salary provided by this position. This in turn leaves students to struggle with a rotating door of assistants who may or may not care about the student and potentially does not know the child(ren) well enough to effectively aid them in their educational needs. While this a firm belief of mine, I will not back this bill because there are too many other things that should not be supported such as home school participation. How will home school participation look? With fine art courses such as band and choir being a performance based curriculum, how will the teachers require these home school students to show up? What are the ramifications for not attending a state level evaluation? Removal from the program? Will these home school students participate only in after school hours or during school hours as well? Will they be graded in these classes? My concern is that the politicians will pass this bill and then say it is the teacher's responsibility to streamline an appropriate plan for engagement with home school students. If a politician can put this in a bill, then they should be able to give us an outline of how it looks to better aid us in creating a standard expectation.

This will worsen overall education in Mississippi. It's a step backwards, and distracts from the already underfunded programs and teachers in this state.

I have many..both professionally as a teacher and personally as I have a child that will be growing up in the community in which I teach. I fear that we will have wonderful families and students to leave the public school due to the availability of vouchers. I fear that tax dollars will be providing vouchers for students to attend private schools vs. students leaving a public school for another public school. I fear that the money that will be going to vouchers for private school or homeschooling will cut into the (already underfunded) education budget in Mississippi. I fear that public schools that have many students leave (I believe my public school WILL BE one that has many students leave) will start to lose funds. I fear that public schools will be undesirable places to work due to overcrowding and being understaffed. I fear that fine arts budgets will be cut due to funding issues. I fear that MORE teachers will leave the profession because it's hard to find jobs in public schools. I fear that the progress that has been made in education in Mississippi will stall.

My concern is predominately the large shift that could arise with teacher's jobs, but also the overall access for our students to a consistent environment that allows music programs to flourish.

diverting public funds to private schools, raising fears of draining public schools, potential resegregation, lack of accountability for private entities, and worries about high school sports transfers exodus.

Lose qualified teachers to other states because public school is not supported fully.

I think it is disgusting, repulsive, abhorable, and a slap in the face to all teachers in Mississippi for the Governor to claim that the gains in education over the past few years were due to POLICY MAKERS! That is such a joke! These people have NOT been the ones in the classrooms teaching their behinds off to TEACH our students! These people would NOT be able to last one day inside the classrooms trying to do our jobs! The saying is "those who can't, teach" however, this should be changed to "those who can't, pass laws about things they know NOTHING about!"

The lawmakers and the Governor should look at other states around our nation that have school choice. They will see that those states are NOT doing well academically, socially, or mentally! I honestly do not think the "powers that be" thought of the ramifications that House Bill 2 will have on education as a whole.

Lawmakers and the Governor should think about the expectations of our public schools to perform at the same level as other schools. The State of Mississippi requires public schools to have state tests in grades three through eight, Algebra, Biology, and English. These are standardized tests used to rate each school on a scale from A to F. With House Bill 2 passing, it will cause some A rated schools to become failing schools in one year. Why is it that this bill "exempts private or homeschooled from accountability measures our states public schools are held to. HB 2 provides that private schools cannot be required to adjust their admissions or academic standards, administer statewide assessments, or be subjected to the state accountability system?"

What happens to the students with learning disabilities or those with mental issues? Public schools are required by law to educate EVERY student who walks through our doors. We educate, feed, and provide transportation for every student in our school and we do that without hesitation because we love teaching and instilling our love for all of our students. Private schools will not have to do any of that. They can require all students to be transported to school by a family member or drive once they are of age. They do not have to freely feed students. Heck, they do not actually have to teach nor instill a love for learning. Some of these private schools are a sham of what education should be. About seven years or so ago, there was a private school in Mississippi who submitted fraudulent reimbursement claims for uncertified teachers and staff of over \$2,000,000 to the state. Because the "school" was run by a mother and son who were major campaign contributors to Governor Tate Reeves and former Governor Phil Bryant, this school was deemed as a great private school and any child would be lucky to attend. However, the fact was that this sham of a school was not educating their students properly. The mother and son were indicted on multiple federal charges. Even today these two are still facing state charges related to the misuse of these funds through the Mississippi Department of Human Services. So, what is to stop this from happening again? If private or homeschooled are not required to be under the accountability standards, practices, and expectations, why would the State of Mississippi give these schools money that should be given to public schools?

Yes, HB 2 also gives a raise to teachers and assistant teachers who are desperately underpaid. However, I would rather NOT have a raise than for this bill to pass! House Bill 2 is a HORRIBLE idea!

Mississippi has made significant and well-documented progress in education, recently ranking 16th in the nation. Those of us working in public schools are proud of these gains and are deeply concerned about policies that could jeopardize this momentum. MS House Bill 2 threatens to undermine this progress by weakening the very systems that have contributed to our recent success.

I would like to highlight a few key concerns:

1. Funding Impacts

The redistribution of funding tied to enrollment would diminish instructional capacity in neighborhood public schools. When students leave, schools lose per-pupil funding while still maintaining fixed operational costs. This limits schools' ability to sustain academic programs, reduce class sizes, or provide targeted interventions—particularly for students with IEPs and 504 plans. These resource constraints directly affect curriculum quality and student achievement.

2. Academic Segregation

School choice often enables families with greater social capital, academic awareness, and resources to select schools more easily. As a result, higher-performing and more advantaged students may become concentrated in certain schools, while traditional public schools serve a disproportionate number of students with academic, behavioral, or socioeconomic challenges. This concentration is associated with lower aggregate academic performance due to increased instructional demands and reduced peer academic supports.

3. Instructional Instability

School choice can introduce significant organizational and instructional instability. Fluctuating enrollment makes it difficult to plan staffing, maintain consistent academic programming, and sustain long-term improvement initiatives. Students who transfer frequently—often a byproduct of choice systems—experience learning gaps caused by curriculum misalignment and disrupted instruction. Additionally, the closure of underperforming choice schools can cause major learning interruptions and academic regression for displaced students.

4. Teacher Retention

Mississippi already faces one of the most significant teacher retention challenges in the nation. School choice would likely exacerbate this issue due to increased employment instability, weaker labor protections, and heightened workload and role strain for educators. These factors make it more difficult to recruit and retain high-quality teachers, particularly in high-need communities.

5. Facilities and Infrastructure

Mississippi does not provide state funding for school facilities, placing the burden on local taxpayers to fund construction, renovations, and repairs. This has resulted in substantial disparities across districts. Students in communities with a low ad valorem tax base risk losing instructional time due to inadequate facilities—such as non-functioning HVAC systems, leaky roofs, or unusable restrooms—conditions that research consistently links to lower academic achievement.

The foundation of public education is its commitment to ensuring every student receives a fair and equitable education, regardless of zip code, family income, or background. MS House Bill 2 shifts focus away from strengthening public schools and toward policies that fragment resources, destabilize

educators, and increase inequity.

I am quite concerned how they tried to gain the support of teachers by including a \$2000 raise and then it "went away."

This will be a detriment to our state and all the progress we have made. It has made me question whether or not I will continue a career in education.

Public school funding is already low, particularly in the arts. This will only further the gap.

This concept only works in a perfect world, and we are far from that. We must stand up for students and families that will not benefit from this.

Students from small rural programs will not have a choice (or many choices) of other schools they could attend due to distance and travel issues. This could also affect negatively funding for these smaller rural schools.

Draining of limited resources, lack of sustainability as students can move freely among districts, recruiting from other areas could reduce populations in rural schools that are otherwise successful.

I do not feel that public/tax money should go to schools that are not under the same standards as public schools. We have had students go to private schools due to state testing. All schools should be on the same playing field if receiving tax money. In my opinion students are tested too much in public schools and not enough time to actual creative teaching. We are always worried about test scores and end up teaching toward the test. More time teaching and less time standardized test. I have been teaching 34 years, and children have basically not changed. Children are going to do what they are allowed to do. The biggest and most evident change has been the parents. All the money in the world is not going to change anything until we address parental attitudes and involvement.

Program stability, funding, ability to keep talented students that benefit your program.

Too many to list.

HB 2 diverts public funds away from public schools that serve the overwhelming majority of Mississippi children—particularly rural students, students with disabilities, and students from low-income families. It offers no accountability standards comparable to those imposed on public schools, no guarantee of academic outcomes, and no requirement to serve all students equitably. Choice without responsibility is not reform. It is abandonment.

Public schools are not failing Mississippi as evidenced by all the praises offered regarding our state's educational gains. They are stabilizing communities, providing meals, transportation, special education services, and safe environments for children whose families have no alternative options. Weakening that system while celebrating its success is contradictory.

If Mississippi truly wants to sustain momentum, the path forward is clear:

1. Fully fund the Mississippi Student Funding Formula so districts can operate reliably.
2. Increase investments in early literacy, math coaches, and intervention programs especially in high need and rural districts.
3. Support teacher recruitment, retention, and development, particularly in rural areas.
4. Strengthen supports for special education, fine arts education, counseling, facilities maintenance, and technology – not just core instruction.
5. Encourage innovation within public systems – magnet programs, dual enrollments, career-tech centers – rather than outsourcing to private alternatives.

Mississippi's educators are not obstacles to progress. We are the reason progress exists.

The loss of money for smaller districts and the way it will pull students away in rural districts.

Listed earlier.

Teacher pay raise

The reallocation of funds from public schools to private schools. Private schools being able to receive public school funds without any oversight of what to do with it. It could just go to a higher salary for the headmaster. Private schools could use it to recruit other new kids they may want similar to NIL offers for sports from colleges.

Criteria and data analysis.

The same concerns listed previously. In addition to public funds should remain public funds. Not be funneled into private or charter schools.

That it will be hastily done and be riddled with errors and when implemented cause a host of issues that no one thought about

No others

Funding

All of this funding going into the hands of people who aren't accountable to the standards set by MDE set a unattainable precedent that public schools should be judged, but private/charter don't have to. This will cause communities to be lost, and money wasted.

If students frequently fluctuate between schools it will not positively impact their education.

School funding

School choice and funding

This bill will destroy public education and financially cripple the state.

School choice

The same concerns I listed above.

I typed them in my previous answer, however lack of funding, for all schools and all arts. This will be a huge impact on a already existing problem

If you choose not to have your child participate in public schools, that's fine, but your taxes still go there. I have never had my house burn down, but my taxes still go to fire departments. I have never had a child, but my taxes still go to fund education. If you are choosing to give your child an alternate route, that's fine, but your taxes should still go to public education.

Taking away funding and students

If funding is taken away from public schools and consolidation occurs, I am fearful I may not be able to find employment as a music educator.

Rural schools will suffer greatly and lose funding. Those kids will lose access to music education most likely.

Changing in school funding

Restating what I said earlier. The bill has too many things included on it. There are some things that I agree with and then some things I disagree with. We wouldn't assess all students as one grade. We take each student separately and access them so that they get their individual needs. That's how HB2 should be treated as well. I also don't believe that people are being informed at schools either so that they have all the information needed to make an informed decision. Our administration hasn't even mentioned it to anyone. I don't think that we have our "ducks in a row" to make this successful. Mississippi is FINALLY make national news for being at the top and we decide to change it. Don't change something if it isn't broken.

Poor behavior, lack of parental involvement

There needs to be amendments where the teacher pay increase takes place but no public funding is lost.

It doesn't address the major problem of education. Please refer to the number of college students enrolled in education programs.

What will the classroom for public schools truly look like if this bill pass? Will it really be profitable for teachers? Has this bill been thought through, not just from a financial standpoint, but a realistic point of view?

Specifically how it relates to MHSAA - can MHSAA maintain their status independently. Or will student musicians start to move

Funding public schools

Equity across the board, workload for teachers, and unfairness and parents and teachers of communities of impoverished areas

Also, the unfairness of private schools getting public dollars and not having to go by the same rules and regulations and testing.

I am concerned that House Bill 2 will increase the gap between the poor and the wealthy, especially in districts that are already struggling. From my standpoint, this is just a form of legalized segregation.

It's a massive change in how our education system is set up. I don't think anyone has thought about its effect on the arts.

Public money should never be diverted to private institutions. There's also concerns of lack of accountability in the acceptance of said funds. This bill will also take already underfunded schools and make the plight of education worse.

I don't like lawmakers making decisions about music programs and have never taught or know the different situations Music Educators have to deal with.

Several. Music education aside, it is not a level playing field for all involved. ALL parties receiving any form of public funds should be required to follow the same expectations for learning. Pulling money from the public school system and giving it to a private institution that doesn't follow the same evaluation system is creating an unfair advantage to a system which is already tilted in the private institutions favor. This does not even discuss what effect it will have on public schools whose student population begins to dwindle while other schools that may already be at max capacity are starting to receive more students than they can adequately handle. This bill is being proposed and pushed by those who most likely have not graced a school's hallways since their own graduation. These same people will criticize our failures while taking credit for our wins.

2. Are there considerations or concerns you would like to share with lawmakers about HB 2 and its impact on public K-12 music programs and music educators in Mississippi?

Are there considerations or concerns you would like to share with lawmakers about HB 2 and its impact on public K-12 music programs and music educators in Mississippi?

N/A

N/A

I think our lawmakers need to talk to actual teachers and spend time in physical classrooms throughout the state to get a good look of what we do day to day. I think they should talk with teachers from other states who have taught before and after similar laws have gone into place and see if it is really worth passing this bill. Bills like this only help a certain type of person and those people are in the minority. This is going to hurt us in the long run. Its going to hurt our schools and most importantly, its going to hurt our students. Our state is constantly coming in last place because of such idiotic policies like this.

See above

Have music programs been considered at all in the discussion process? We are part of a well-rounded education.

Please keep music education in our public schools! Our students thrive because of the access they have to a well rounded education which includes all art forms.

Listen to those who have already experienced this shift in education. Why do we think the same things won't happen to us?

We shove millions of dollars to state testing companies instead of consolidating to one standardized test that follows the students to higher education (ACT on all levels) yet our lawmakers are content to send public school funds to private schools who do not have to participate in the same testing.

Sports and activities in public schools are held to MSHSAA rules and regulations, but other entities do not follow the same guidelines. Anyone receiving public education taxes should have to follow all of the same guidelines, policies, and procedures as public schools.

An analogy: I am happy to provide my teenager with a car now that she is of age to drive, however, it will be a car that I feel is adequate for her use at her age. If she refuses this free car because she wants something different, something more like what her friends have, something fancier, etc, she is welcome to purchase it herself.

Final thought: Anyone who does not have children in public education and has not worked in education in recent years has no business making decisions for public education.

A small, but noticeable hit will impact the arts and music. Will this bill impact this in any way? If so, by money or by program?

Please vote NO for the sake of music education and our students education.

I strongly oppose the bill.

Will there be a cap of student to teacher ratio that districts will be required to follow? If so, how soon will that take effect?

None

They need to look at what these programs have done to Texas and Florida.

Politicians should get input from teachers and school officials for HB 2 and music educators as it pertains to their programs.

no

The teacher pay raise was a total slap in the face....

When speaking with lawmakers, it's essential to question how House Bill 2 will protect the stability of public school funding and prevent further inequity for rural and low-income students who may have no real access to private options. Lawmakers must explain how they will ensure accountability for private institutions receiving public dollars and how they will safeguard services for students with disabilities. You should also press them on how they plan to prevent cuts to music, arts, and other enrichment programs that make education well-rounded but are often first on the chopping block when budgets shrink. Finally, ask for evidence that this bill will improve long-term academic outcomes and not simply weaken the public schools that most Mississippi families rely on.

Do not vote for HB 2!

Same as above

Public schools will lose funding

yes

I am concerned about music educators being overworked and underpaid. Speaking from an elementary music educator's point of view, added transfer students increases classroom sizes (not enough instruments and no funding to get more) and number of classes increasing meaning more classes to teach during the day (less planning time to work on extras like programs with sets/backdrops and other duties as assigned like helping with intervention and doing the yearbook alone). Teachers are already overworked. Every year there is more required of us and the stress mounts. I want what is best for all children in Mississippi, but something needs to be done to lessen the stress of educators and/or compensate us accordingly. A \$2000 increase spread out by 12 months after taxes and after our insurance comes out (which is more and more every year) gives us barely any take home increase each month. That is concerning and causes educators undue financial stress on top of work stress. There is no mention in this bill about educator pay increase except for assistant teachers who are also extremely underpaid and deserve that increase. If you are going to increase the teacher workload, then you need to compensate them accordingly.

Please vote "NO" on this bill! We must save public schools.

I wish that they would have listened to teachers and gotten their input and advice on this issue.

I believe education should be free for all regardless of background.

I would just like to ask lawmakers to consider the impact passing this bill will have, not on themselves because obviously there is no impact to them, but to the students and teachers that run public education.

See Previous answers.

The arts are already underfunded as it is. As funding is taken away from schools, arts programs will be the first to be cut from schools.

NA

Public schools need funding for music programs

no money to private schools

Yes. I have serious concerns that HB 2 would negatively impact public K-12 music programs and music educators across Mississippi. As public school districts face reduced and unpredictable funding, administrators will be forced to address immediate and legally mandated needs such as staffing shortages, transportation, special education services, and basic operational costs. In that environment, music and other fine arts programs, though essential to a well-rounded education, are often deprioritized and placed at risk for cuts.

Music programs depend on consistent funding for personnel, instruments, instructional materials, travel, and long-term program development. HB 2 would likely create additional financial strain, making it increasingly difficult for schools to sustain these programs. For many students, particularly those in rural or economically disadvantaged communities, public schools are the only place where access to music education exists. Reductions in funding would disproportionately affect these students and further limit equitable access to the arts.

Additionally, music educators already navigate challenges related to staffing, recruitment, and retention. Increased instability and uncertainty in school funding undermines morale and makes it more difficult to attract and retain qualified music teachers. Mississippi has made measurable progress in public education due to the dedication of its educators, and policies that weaken public schools risk reversing that progress.

I urge lawmakers to carefully consider how HB 2 could unintentionally erode music education opportunities and to prioritize policies that strengthen, rather than destabilize, public K-12 schools and the fine arts programs that serve Mississippi students.

Programs are unable to grow and flourish when they are asked to have a new and different batch of students every year. There will no longer be a sense of community or family in small districts because students will be coming in and out constantly. There is no way to fund programs that require funds to provide quality instruction, because there is no way to gauge how many students will return and who will be moving in. It is just all around a horrible plan and should be discussed with EDUCATORS, not the men in suits.

See previous

I'll speak to my representatives.

None

This is going to ruin many music programs, and likely force school districts to cut elementary music, band, and choir programs over the long term.

Think about all kids, not just the white ones

It is just a way for private entities to attempt to monetize education. I can also see someone committing fraud to get the state money for their own pocket.

Are lawmakers concerned for the long term impact that this could have on public education?

No

Listen to your local teachers and administrators. I have not met a single teacher or administrator who is for school choice.

Other states are suffering from similar school choice bills. We have made so much progress in public schools in Mississippi and I fear this will set us back decades. The arts tend to be on the chopping block when talks of budget cuts loom. I am very concerned that this will have an unintended consequence regarding the arts.

Public dollars do not belong in private schools. Full stop.

Most Arts programs are already suffering in small districts as they have little funding and support. They are always the first thing cut. Students leaving from the programs and having their funds removed from those districts will further shut those programs and other electives such as sport down.

there are too many things in this bill. They are padding this bill with things to try to get it passed. If lawmakers truly care about the 30-35 retirement plan, assistant pay raises, etc. they would put those in a separate bill instead of trying to lure people to vote for this unpopular school choice proposition. it's disgraceful to put all of those in one bill to try and get it passed. if lawmakers truly cared, they would separate them.

This bill is going to turn high school athletics and activities in this state into a giant transfer portal. An ultimately it will disrupt stability not only for band programs but athletics and the overall academic environment. Parents who don't understand how growth and achievement work in an education city will start pulling students from school to school every year just because they didn't like the football teams performance, the bands festival, ratings or the accountability level for that one year.

This bill has the power to drastically reshape the musical landscape of our state if it is passed as it stands now. Choice isn't going to be an option for everyone - students with parents that can afford to drive their students long distances to different districts or schools will ultimately be the ones that receive the benefit. This takes money out of a "less desirable" district, making it even more difficult to do our jobs if we happen to be teaching in one of those districts. On the flip side of that coin, higher achieving "more desirable" districts may be bombarded with requests that threaten sustainability and challenge the culture already established within the music program at that school.

Music education is fundamental to the well-being of our future contributing members of society. Doing anything to take away from the limited resources we have currently is only going to take our country further away from where we want to be.

If you feel so strongly that public schooling is inadequate in so many ways, removing funding from already struggling programs can only exacerbate the issue.

Fully fund public schools. The impact will be huge. As long as you continue to starve us for funds, the results will be underwhelming. Listen to educators who are actually in the field and have experience. If a person has less than three years of public school classroom experience, they don't know what they are talking about. HB2 reads like it was written by special interests who have never set foot in a public school much less an actual classroom. I doubt the authors even have a professional background in education.

Address the actual need for education in our state- fully fund MAEP.

The teachers are already filling the massive educational gaps caused by poor legislative leadership, so why create a new problem where students are allowed to move schools where the curricular alignment may not be met?

Fully fund the schools and leave the "choices" to remain in the private or homeschool sector.

I'm afraid of the impact this will have on my program. It would be unmanageable to run this band dept by myself

This bill will take our school music programs back decades. This is a very destructive bill aimed at providing private schools assistance with public dollars without the requirements that public schools have.

I have a feeling that if this does come to fruition, I will see an increase of students in my program.

With reduced funding and students, music and the arts will be the first to be defunded thus creating a lower quality of life and well rounded education. Music education isn't just about making music. We teach valuable skills such as creative and analytical thinking and problem solving that academic teachers are not teaching. Academics are teaching the test. We are teaching greater a more far reaching skills than a multiple question test.

I have already listed my concerns.

Our public schools have come too far to allow them to be broken because legislators think they know best. They have NEVER SET FOOT IN OUR SCHOOLS and have no idea what we do on a daily basis to support our students. For them to support this bill is kick in the stomach to all of us who have worked our entire adult lives making the lives of children better.

Thank you

Nothing

Do not do this!!

Already stated in a previous question.

This bill will have a negative impact on arts AND athletics. Students will be able to leave for "greener pastures" anytime they want to. Instead of students sticking with one program and being developed over time, they can simply say they are transferring to another district where they can be the starter.

Gotta fix the current system before trying to share the love to non-public groups. Doesn't make sense.
FUND PUBLIC SCHOOLS!

No.

Teachers are the cause of educational growth within the state. Not 'conservative policy.'

N/A

I would ask all lawmakers to consider the fact that music programs and music educators are often the lynchpins keeping students engaged in school. Damage to these programs hurts everyone.

A clear reading of the State Constitution states this is against the law. Now because times have changed they a certain population has decided to attend private schools does not mean they get "use" taxpayer resources to "supplement" their personal belief and decision to pay for their child's education.

Taking public money to give to private institutions leave public schools with less funding. How can the balance remain to keep schools open when teachers need jobs too?

n/a

N/A

See above.

I would urge lawmakers to consider how HB 2 could affect the long-term stability of public K-12 music programs. When funding follows students without explicit protections for arts education, ensemble-based programs like band, choir, and orchestra—which cannot be easily replicated through private or short-term instruction—are often the first to be reduced or eliminated. Music educators also face increased job insecurity as enrollment fluctuates and accountability systems prioritize tested subjects. Including safeguards that recognize music as an essential part of a well-rounded education would help prevent unintended harm to students, educators, and communities across Mississippi.

This bill has the potential to destroy the public school system in our state. Please consider the students that will be affected by this are not the students who will be able to use the funds to go to a different school. The students that will be affected are the ones that are stuck at a school that will be struggling due to the loss of funds. If enough students leave a school then how will that school support the students that remain. Cafeteria staff, bus routes, extracurriculars, teacher support, advanced courses will all be impacted. We (schools, teachers, admin) have made great strides in MS these past few years. This bill can completely undermine all of that forward progress.

See previous answer

Please consider the impact on areas of education that supports the overall growth and wellbeing of young people. We are not just talking about funding. Arts education is critical to the growth of young minds. The impacts of this legislation will crush districts without a strong tax base and large population.

Keep public dollars in public works.

Before you make educational decisions for these students, join us in the trenches. See what miracles we're already doing on a day to day basis. Ask for our opinion. You are our representatives.... speak FOR us, not about us.

When money runs out, the first programs that tend to be cut in schools are the music and arts. This affects thousands of children and hundreds of educators in our state, taking away jobs and removing something that not only improves the way students think but gives them a reason to keep pushing. Music education gives students a purpose and enriches them in so many parts of life that do not even involve music.

The impact on smaller schools and school districts

Small schools will suffer or become no existent with the passage of this bill

Funding will be the biggest problem long term. Already struggling schools will have funds pulled causing sustainability problems. Schools having to close due to bad ratings will not "remove underperforming schools and make the rest competitive". It will cause students to have to travel 45-60 minutes to get an education that is required of them. That itself will cause more budget problems for required bus routes to expand school zones to take in those students. It will also decrease participation in extracurricular activities of all kinds which will also impact budgets.

It will also open the door for "transfer portal" like scenarios between high schools for sports/activities which will cause problems with planning a child's education. When a student switches schools, it is already a mess keeping up with what classes a student has had and still needs. This will only make it worse. High school's are not designed to work like college's because of the requirement for ALL children to go to school.

A major fear I from just coaches/directors is that if a student doesn't like a punishment they receive or something of like manner, they will just up and switch schools.

The ONLY argument I have heard that attempts to justify HB 2 is that it better justifies private school paying parent's taxes going towards public schools and not their own. But just the fact of a better educated public/society that their child will enter after school-age, is worth the nominal amount of their taxes that go towards public education.

This legislation is a clear and obvious graft, intended to divert public funds into the hands of private business owners and religious institutions. It will inevitably decrease the quality of public education, create a less educated electorate incapable of financial stability or critical decision making, and further impoverish struggling communities while enriching individuals who may not even reside in our state. Ultimately, this is most definitely being done intentionally by the framers of this legislation. It is legislative malpractice that violates the public interest by those entrusted with safeguarding our future.

VOTE NO!

Throw it away

Yes. This bill would cause many sports teams, bands, and other extra curricular activities to suffer in the smaller county schools because the parents of those students would want them in the larger city schools. It would effect all extra curricular activities across the entire state. I feel as though many small band program would probably go under. I also feel like those larger programs would suffer because they would have more students that they are capable of teaching. The 1 on 1 time with smaller band programs stops all those less talented players to get more instruction to make them better players than many of the larger schools in the city. I also feel like there would be a major drop in participation in Music because once those kids transferred to a larger school they would not feel so important in their role in the band and eventually lose interest all together. Furthermore, I feel like this would eventually effect college band recruitment because these community colleges and universities would not have as many band program and band students to recruit from.

Music programs will be shut down over this. Music for every child in every school will no longer be possible.

Would music and the arts be cut due to funding cuts, while private schools or alternate schooling offer these programs because of the shift in funds? Considering teacher shortages in MS and the impact this bill if passed would have on funding, would music educators be required to teach and become licensed in other courses such as english and math, in order to stay employed or risk losing their jobs and seeking other employment? Would they be forced into early retirement due to program cuts?

M/A

When schools are fully funded, music education thrives. My concern is for public funding to be spread too thin. Additionally, retention numbers within music programs will most likely not be consistent and affect overall performance quality throughout the state.

They need to know we all think they're stupid.

If there are no public school funds, there is no arts education in Mississippi. We cannot teach with no funding at all, and we cannot teach students who have fled with state tax monies to private schools. If there are no students, then quality teachers will lose jobs and public schools will continue to struggle with test scores without the arts to augment the student engagement and enrichment.

Diverting student enrollment and funding toward non-public schools poses a threat to funding for music education positions and resources for school music programs.

Music programs will be cut in public schools if this passes. Teachers in the arts and the programs will be fired due to inadequate funding.

How will this affect smaller schools' budgets for the arts

I would like for lawmakers to look at other states and really see if this is working. I am concerned that there will be even less equality among the music programs. I also see music programs being dismissed and with that, many students who will not have the experiences, life lessons, responsibilities, that are learned through the discipline and benefits of participating in music/arts programs. Music programs make well-rounded and successful people with a sense of community and responsibility--well-rounded citizens for the future. It is obvious that with funding cuts, I am worried about my job security.

I know I am an outlier in my field. However, I still firmly believe that freedom and options are a good thing. If anything, it may force music educators to think outside of the box to learn how to compete with schools that are creating more attractive musical choices and freedom.

This bill will be terrible for public school and especially music education programs in our state.

Not at this time

na

As a public school educator and parent, I highly oppose this bill. If passed, HB2 could have a profoundly negative impact on all students' ability to receive arts education.

I think I have pretty much listed the majority of my concerns throughout this survey. My main concerns are:

1. How is funding going to change
2. Loss of students who leave districts that are low performing academically but high performing in the arts.
3. MHSAA requirements for homeschool students participating in extra curricular programs/sports.
4. My ultimate concern is, are we piling more on top of the educators and just expecting them to "deal with it"?

Not any that I haven't already shared

n/a

This is just an opportunity for "white flight" in our state, dressed up as allowing public funding to assist private schools and programs. Public funding is already thin and should not be allocated to people who chose to pull their children from public school areas.

In my county, there are 4 high schools. A private school, a large public school, and two smaller public schools that make up my district. We had a high school consolidated not long ago in this district. This bill would accelerate that process. My school as well as the other smaller school in my county would probably be consolidated into the private school and the larger public school in due time. That is not fair to this school or this community. We should not have to be at the whims of big money.

Mississippi House Bill 2 presents significant challenges for music education programs, particularly band, which rely on long-term, sequential instruction and stable student enrollment. Frequent or parent-initiated student transfers disrupt instructional continuity, limiting students' ability to develop instrumental skills and fully participate in ensembles. Because music programs are not standardized across schools, transferring students often encounter misalignment in curriculum, skill expectations, and instructional pacing, further hindering progress.

Extensive research consistently demonstrates that sustained participation in music education supports academic achievement, improves literacy and math outcomes, strengthens executive functioning, and promotes social-emotional development, discipline, and perseverance. Music programs also foster student engagement and school connectedness, which are critical factors in attendance, graduation rates, and long-term success. For many students, band participation provides access to higher education through performance-based scholarships—opportunities that may not otherwise be available.

HB2 introduces instability that undermines these benefits. Music programs plan instructional time, staffing, funding, and resources months in advance based on projected enrollment and ensemble balance. Unpredictable student movement strains budgets, reduces instructional efficiency, increases teacher workload, and threatens long-term program sustainability. Ultimately, HB2 risks weakening access to a proven, research-supported educational pathway that benefits students academically, socially, and economically.

Fine Arts programs in the public system notoriously receive little-to-no financial support of their programs. This bill will take funds away from those programs that receive anything and will prevent those that already receive nothing from even having a chance. Public funds should be allocated to public sources, period.

I see no benefits. Good teachers will be forced out of jobs and have to relocate because their salaries will be cut, or their programs will be cut altogether. We're already stretched thin as it is, and this will make everything worse. It will set off a chain reaction and our state will suffer.

State funding is the lifeblood of smaller band programs. Fundraising only goes so far.

Include those of us doing the work before reinventing the wheel

I strongly encourage lawmakers who are interested in the future of Mississippi's education to vote NO against HB 2, and the provisions contained therein.

I believe I have written as much as I can in the moment about this. My opinion is that HB 2 should not be passed and will ultimately harm most music programs in the state at the middle and high school level. I have no experience with elementary so I do not want to speak on their behalf.

Consider not doing that to us.

With students choosing where they will attend and moving around, program sustainability becomes harder than ever, program funding and staffing is uncertain. As I stated previously this is basically educational free agency and a transfer portal.

Yes- we DO NOT want this!!!! I would ask them to please look into the current lawsuits in Tennessee over school choice laws. It's not worth it! There is only a SMALL percentage of Mississippi that will benefit from this bill being passed- most students NEED public schools and need them to be strong. If we pass this bill, we are only helping more students get into private schools and to be homeschooled- we ARE NOT making public schools stronger. We are weakening them. Please reconsider.

It just seems that we are packaging decisions that I believe will be detrimental to our schools and potentially could eradicate some school's music programs. If extracurriculars are available for all, does that also mean funding is going to support those programs and this decision?

Yes, "school choice" components like private school vouchers (Magnolia Savings Accounts) will divert public funds, potentially weakening public school arts programs by reducing resources.

This bill will take away funds from public schools and the first area to cut historically is music.

programs to drop significantly. If a 7A school has only 50-75 people left in the high school band program, it is not fair to have them compete against schools that now have over 300 students in their band. The smaller band's budget will be cut and we will not be able to have new/nice props on the field or the instrumentation needed for symphonic and marching band to be successful. There will also not be funds available for instrument repair of school owned instruments and that also means no new school owned instruments. Once an instrument breaks and the program cannot afford to buy a new one nor repair the broken one, the instrumentation of the band will significantly change. The percussion, tuba, baritone/euphonium, French horn/mellophone, and lower reed sections would eventually cease to exist. If this house bill goes into effect, the music and arts programs would be affected because a reduced student population means less money the district receives and the very first programs that will be cut will be music and arts. This is due to the fact that schools will now lose teacher units. Since the core subject classes must be taught according to the state of Mississippi, there will be no teacher units available for music or art programs. Even if the music program is not cut, the schools will not have the funds to pay band techs, percussion instructors, choreographers, color guard instructors, assistant band directors, nor any additional staff that the band is used to having. This will add even more stress to the band director who may or may not know about the visual arts for marching season. The band director will not be able to teach all of the instrumentation they need because they are the only one left to teach all students. There just is not enough hours in the day to teach every instrument in the lower grades. Yes, we as band directors know how to play every instrument, but we are stronger on some instruments and weaker on others. Talk about our plate being overloaded! It is already full with all of the staff that we currently have. Some band directors would quit the profession or move to another state where school choice is not implemented. All of this will affect our band program for years to come. This could also cause students to no longer be able to join a college band and receive scholarships because they will not perform well on their auditions. Therefore, keeping some band students without the ability to pay for college.

If the music program is cancelled at some schools, athletics will also be affected because there is not going to be a band to support the team. There will not be a marching band to perform at halftime. Also, they should consider that band parents make up more than sixty percent of the fans in the stands. If there is no band, there will be no band parents to pay to get into the game. Thus the athletic budget will be reduced by over half or even more because the schools rely on football games ticket sales to make up part of their budget to pay for helmets, pads, and clothing. Some smaller schools may also lose all of their athletics in addition to losing the music and arts programs because schools cannot pay for coaches either.

Another thing to consider is that higher income families may choose to send their students to private or more affluent schools leaving lower income students who have no choice but to remain at their current school because they do not have the ability to move to a different school. I am not saying that lower income students should be viewed differently. However, these students and families may feel that they are less important than others. Wouldn't this division of income also be considered segregation because they are essentially separating the haves and the have nots.

HB 2 is NOT about empowering students to achieve their potential! It is NOT about making Mississippi on par with other states! It is about lining the pockets of lawmakers who are voting for this ridiculous bill! House Bill 2 SHOULD NOT be passed!

Yes, as previously stated

I want to know how a policy knows more about the education system and what's better for our communities. How is this fair? It only benefits the upper middle class and rich.

I implore you, please do not pass this bill. It will erase all of the progress Mississippi has made in education.

No one who supports this bill actually cares about our schools or students, or has real experience in and around school regularly. It is riddled with agendas and stinks of elitism.

We have strong band programs in numerous schools in Mississippi. These programs provide continuity, support, inclusion, involvement, guidance, education, and aid student retention. This bill puts all of that in jeopardy and serves only to weaken public education in our state.

This will definitely take money from schools that are already having funding issues. Rural schools do not have local tax base as urban schools. A lot of rural schools have cut or greatly reduced music programs especially in the elementary sector. We should try to fix the issues public schools instead of giving parents the choice to moving students. HB2 also feels like a way to segregate students.

Consider everything already stated. Consider how allowing students to transfer out and the funding that will be moved around and how it will effect smaller programs who need it.

I believe this is the beginning to the end of public education. This model has proven in other states to wreck public education. Why is Mississippi trying to follow suit and essentially destroy what it's worked so hard to achieve over the past several years.

I urge you to vote NO on HB 2 and truly consider writing a bill that will support and edify the public schools of Mississippi, including in that bill the proper funding for fine arts education. The TEACHERS (not policies) of Mississippi have worked tirelessly to improve the quality of education in our state and it would be shameful for our own lawmakers to take away that progress and put us back where we were at the bottom because you think funding should go to private schools with no accountability. People chose their private schools for a reason and with full knowledge of what it would require. That is no reason to make the public schools suffer for their "privilege". Put the money where it belongs in the STATE SCHOOL SYSTEM and show your own constituents, teachers, students and parents that you support them and have their best interest in hand! The state of Mississippi has a rich music history, music education and performance background and we lead the nation in many ways with that great musical culture. Don't take that away now! If the arts get cut, "sooner or later, these kids aren't go to have anything to read or write about" (Mr. Holland's Opus).

A policy maker has no knowledge of what a real educators are doing. There should be a long term study first.

All of the things I listed earlier.

The provisions of this bill are all shorting comings from your failure to fund public educators in previous years. Invest in the current system we have. The "Mississippi Miracle" didn't happen due to "conservative policies." It happened because a Mississippi Secretary of Educated enacted policies and held districts accountable.

Shame on lawmakers for sacrificing public education for political clout. It is insulting to hear politician say that "parents know what is best for their kids." Then what the hell did I go to college for if y'all know how to teach them best?

They need to leave public schools alone

Music and Arts Programs should be huge parts of consideration.

Funding. Arts will suffer due to funding. That's the first thing that gets cut. Less money for students equals less funding for the arts.

Developing Music programs across the state will be cut as a result of this bill. Jobs will be lost and money will be wasted. School with lower ratings have the most needs, yet the least amount of resources and the highest level of accountability. Some students only come to school to be in music, and it's their why. Don't take music away from the students.

Arts accept all students. Without them some students don't have the support they need in school.

School choice and funding

Music education promotes critical thinking. The benefits of public music education will be further suffocated by the illusion of school choice.

This may negatively affect funding for music education in public schools.

Do not pass HB 2.

If you choose not to have your child participate in public schools, that's fine, but your taxes still go there. I have never had my house burn down, but my taxes still go to fire departments. I have never had a child, but my taxes still go to fund education. If you are choosing to give your child an alternate route, that's fine, but your taxes should still go to public education.

It's not needed

Everyone deserves music education. It is the good stuff in life. Kids in poverty or low income areas will suffer because the money will follow more economically blessed kids to other schools. Those rural schools will be forced to cut music programs.

If this isn't passed mandate arts education in schools

Don't allow school allocated funds to shift

Repeat of above message.... Restating what I said earlier. The bill has too many things included on it. There are some things that I agree with and then some things I disagree with. We wouldn't assess all students as one grade. We take each student separately and access them so that they get their individual needs. That's how HB2 should be treated as well. I also don't believe that people are being informed at schools either so that they have all the information needed to make an informed decision. Our administration hasn't even mentioned it to anyone. I don't think that we have our "ducks in a row" to make this successful. Mississippi is FINALLY make national news for being at the top and we decide to change it. Don't change something if it isn't broken.

If new student will assimilate, no problem but if not, it will be a negative. Teachers have enough hats to wear now!

We struggle to get funding as it is and don't need to lose this through school choice!! We definitely need more pay as educators. Make the pay a separate bill instead of sneaking in school choice under a pay raise bill.

There will be no qualified educators much less music educators in 10 years or less if the salary and working conditions of teachers is not improved. Again, please see the enrollment of education majors in colleges that vs the job vacancies.

How will this truly benefit music educators and their students?

Public schools have been inadequately funded for years and have never had a level playing field with private institutions.

I think our lawmaker should listen to teachers parents and educators about how they feel on this issue. I don't know of any educator or anyone in a school building that is pro HB2. I even work with many people who have their own personal children in private schools and still don't agree with house bill 2. Listen to your people.

I would if I thought they would listen. At this point, I don't believe any of our legislators actually care what their constituents think. They are determined to vote for whatever is going to benefit them personally. God bless you for trying to make a difference, and I'm thankful there are people out there who are still willing to try.

Yes-This bill sounds like an attempt to give discounts to lawmakers who have kids in private schools with no thought to the implications it would have on public schools, athletics, and the arts.

Do not take money from our public learning institutions to fund private schools. Our state charter schools are underperforming and our private schools do not have the same requirement of rigor as the public schools. Do not pass this bill. The fall out will affect more than just public education.

Funds should be allocated to schools who need the resources the most, not to those that already have. There's greatness in smaller schools, too.

This will hurt the progress public education in Mississippi has had. Will these same lawmakers now accept and admit to these failures when they happen as quickly as they have to accept credit for our gains we've made in spite of them?
