

Opponent to HB – 2003 // January 19, 2023

The Salina Diocese consists of 15 total schools, including five high schools in North Central and Northwest Kansas, including Thomas More Prep – Marian in Hays, Tipton Catholic, St. John's in Beloit, Sacred Heart in Salina and St. Xavier in Junction City. We have 372 students in grades 9-12 and 91% of them are Catholic.

Just this last spring we wrapped up our Five Year Accreditation Cycle, and a survey of our families showed that the top three reasons they enrolled their children in our schools were: Catholic Identity, Class Size and Academic Reputation of our schools. Not one parent on the surveys noted athletic programs.

This proposed multiplier, if instituted, would impact one of the high schools, Sacred Heart right away.

Sacred Heart is a 1A/2A school located in a 5A school district, and we have 5 team titles in the last five years. We are over 20% free/reduced lunch.

Over the last five years, Sacred Heart has won 4 golf titles as a team. We missed out on one title due to the cancellation of the spring season of 2020. We have a group of committed golfers who love the sport and play any time the weather allows them to. This has led to much success at our level, and we are very proud of them. Our girls tennis team also won a state in the fall of 2020. It was a small team of girls who enjoy the sport and we were pumped to present them with a State Banner to hang on the wall!

The success of our boys golf team and girls tennis team in the last five years, would have a major impact on our other teams at school. Just one example would be the football team.

Win totals the last four seasons for Sacred Heart are 0, 2, 0 and 4. Going 6-29 against schools with similar enrollment. Moving up a classification due to titles in golf and tennis does not make sense nor does it seem fair, or the right thing to do for our kids. During a 27 game stretch we were outscored 1,195 to 197, That's 998 points or 142 Touchdowns. The average score of each contest over this time is 44-7. We do not have our own home field, and there are no students from Salina South or Salina Central that have recently enrolled at our school to play sports, like many people assume happens at Catholic Schools. Our enrollment trend is holding steady. There is no steep increase due to local youth golfers wanting to come play.

We are all competitive people and we all love what sports do for our schools, public or private. Adding this proposed multiplier to private schools would purposely hurt our students. There are public schools all over the state opening their doors to out of district students, even posting to social media that it is first come, first serve. Please consider all the private schools when thinking about the multiplier, and not just the one that the proponents of this bill have in mind.