



JOHNSON CITY SCHOOLS

Post Office Box 1517, Johnson City, TN 37605 www.jcschools.org (423) 434-5200 Fax: (423) 218-4968
Dr. Steve Barnett, Superintendent of Schools

Johnson City Schools' Board of Education

Resolution In Opposition to Governor Lee's Proposed Education Freedom Scholarship Act

WHEREAS, the Johnson City community has a long history of providing an exemplary public-school system in our community;

WHEREAS, the Johnson City Board of Education works diligently with our city leaders, administrators, staff, and students to ensure all students in our community have equitable access to educational opportunities; and

WHEREAS, the Constitution of the State of Tennessee requires that the Tennessee General Assembly "provide for the maintenance, support and eligibility standards of a system of free public schools," with no mention of the maintenance or support of private schools; and

WHEREAS, the proposed voucher process may benefit families with the greatest financial resources, it disadvantages those students with families unable to bear the full cost of a private school education, who will remain in a public school with fewer students, less state funding, and a reduction in resources.

WHEREAS, more than 50 years have passed since private school vouchers were first proposed, and during that time proponents have spent millions of dollars attempting to convince the public and lawmakers of the concept's efficacy, and yet, five decades later, vouchers remain controversial, unproven, and unpopular; and

WHEREAS, the State of Tennessee has, over the past two decades, established nationally recognized standards and measures for expected outcomes in public education that hold all public schools to a high degree of accountability; and

WHEREAS, vouchers eliminate public accountability by channeling tax dollars into private schools that do not face state-approved academic standards, do not make budgets public, do not adhere to open meetings and records laws, do not publicly report on student achievement, and do not face the public accountability requirements contained in major federal laws, including special education; and

WHEREAS, vouchers have demonstrated negligible impact on student choice and improved achievement in previous efforts; and

WHEREAS, vouchers leave many students behind, including those with the greatest needs, because vouchers channel tax dollars into private schools that are not required to accept all students nor offer the special services they may need; and

WHEREAS, vouchers give choices to private schools, not students and parents, since private schools decide if they want to accept vouchers, how many and which students they want to admit, and the potentially arbitrary reasons for which they might later dismiss a student; and

WHEREAS, voucher programs divert critical dollars and commitment from public schools to pay private school tuition for a few students, including many who already attend private schools; and



BOARD OF EDUCATION

Kathy Hall, Chair Paula Treece, Vice Chair Beth Simpson, Secretary
Dr. Ginger Carter Herb Greenlee Thomas Hager, Jr Jonathan Kinnick

The mission of the Johnson City Schools is to enable all students to achieve excellence.



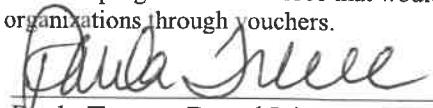



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NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED ON THIS 8th DAY OF JANUARY 2024, that the Johnson City Schools Board of Education unanimously opposes the Education Freedom Scholarship Act or any legislation or other similar effort to create a universal voucher program in Tennessee that would allow public tax dollars to be diverted to private schools or organizations through vouchers.



Kathy Hall, Board Chair


Paula Treece, Board Vice-Chair


Beth Simpson, Board Secretary


Dr. Ginger Carter, Board Member


Herb Greenlee, Board Member


Thomas B. Hager, Jr., Board Member


Jonathan Kinnick, Board Member



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