

Resolution of the Yazoo County School District Board of Trustees:

Opposing Public and Private School Choice Programs and Voucher Legislation That Undermine Public Education in Mississippi

WHEREAS, the Yazoo County School District serves all students within its boundaries – regardless of background, ability, or need – and is committed to providing a high-quality education that is transparent, accountable, and equitable for every child. The Yazoo County School District Board of Trustees recognizes the fundamental role of strong, accessible, and adequately funded public schools in providing educational opportunities for all children; and

WHEREAS, the State of Mississippi, through the work of the Mississippi Legislature, the Mississippi Department of Education, the State Board of Education, and local school boards, has established nationally recognized standards and measures for accountability in public education; and

WHEREAS, members of the Mississippi Legislature have introduced proposals to expand “school choice” through vouchers, education savings accounts [ESAs], and unfunded open-enrollment mandates, including public statements legislative leadership that school choice is a policy priority; and

WHEREAS, these proposals would divert public taxpayer dollars from public schools to private and unregulated entities that are not bound by the same standards of transparency, accountability, or nondiscrimination as public schools; and

WHEREAS, vouchers eliminate public accountability by channeling tax dollars into private schools that do not face state-approved academic standards or accountability measures, 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 those that ensure the rights of students with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, school choice programs undermine districts’ ability to plan and budget effectively by creating unpredictable enrollment fluctuations that occur after teacher contracts are issued and budgets are set, making it impossible to accurately project student numbers, allocate staff appropriately, or secure adequate resources to meet student needs while maintaining the infrastructure and capacity required to serve the community; and

Resolution of the Yazoo County School District Board of Trustees:

Opposing Public and Private School Choice Programs and Voucher Legislation That Undermine Public Education in Mississippi

WHEREAS, Mississippi's public schools serve the vast majority of the state's students, including those most vulnerable, and represent a cornerstone of community cohesion and opportunity; and

WHEREAS, private schools maintain the ability to select which students they admit, while public schools must serve every student, including those with disabilities, English learners, and students with significant academic or behavioral needs; and

WHEREAS, "school choice" initiatives—including vouchers, education savings accounts (ESAs), tax-credit scholarship programs, and tax credits for donations to private schools—redirect critical public funds away from local public school districts and instead subsidize private, unaccountable education providers; and

WHEREAS, school choice proposals in other states have resulted in negative student academic outcomes, increased costs to taxpayers, athletic inequities and recruiting issues, and have weakened local public schools by siphoning away critical funding without reducing the obligations of the districts left behind; and

WHEREAS, numerous studies have shown that voucher and ESA programs do not reliably improve student outcomes and more typically result in lower academic performance when compared to traditional public schools; and

WHEREAS, vouchers and other choice programs divert critical public resources to pay private school tuition for students, including many who already attend private schools; and

WHEREAS, unfunded mandates related to open enrollment and transportation place a disproportionate burden on working-class families, rural communities, and local school districts already tasked with doing more with limited resources; and

WHEREAS, the diversion of these resources weakens the financial viability of public school systems and undermines public trust in the state's commitment to a quality education for all students; and

WHEREAS, vouchers are an inefficient and inequitable use of taxpayer money because they compel taxpayers to support two school systems—one public and one private—the latter of which is not accountable to the public; and

Resolution of the Yazoo County School District Board of Trustees:

Opposing Public and Private School Choice Programs and Voucher Legislation That Undermine Public Education in Mississippi

WHEREAS, the Yazoo County School District is the lifeblood of the Yazoo County community—attracting families, supporting local economic growth, and fostering the camaraderie, pride, and teamwork that strengthen the fabric of the community and the overall quality of life; and

WHEREAS, the State of Mississippi provides no funding for K–12 facilities, and the citizens of Yazoo County have invested their local tax dollars to ensure smaller class sizes, modern facilities, and excellent academic, athletic, fine arts, and career-technical programs; and

WHEREAS, out-of-district students' families do not contribute local property taxes to Yazoo County, and allowing out-of-district students to attend Yazoo County schools without fiscal accountability may lead to overcrowded classrooms and impose additional financial burdens on local taxpayers who would be responsible for future facility expansions;

WHEREAS, the Yazoo County School District has consistently demonstrated academic growth, fiscal responsibility, and a commitment to continuous improvement, and further diversion of state resources undermines the district's ability to sustain and expand this success for all students;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Yazoo County School District Board of Trustees:

1. **Opposes** any legislation or policy that diverts public funds from Mississippi's public schools to private or unregulated educational programs and the establishment or expansion of school choice programs—whether public or private—that divert public funding or support away from Yazoo County's traditional public schools.
2. **Urges** Yazoo County's legislative delegation, the Mississippi State Legislature, and the Governor to oppose school choice and invest in strengthening public education by fully funding the Mississippi Adequate Education Program (MAEP), supporting teachers and staff, and expanding services that directly benefit students and families within the public school system.
3. **Supports** efforts to ensure accountability and transparency in all publicly funded educational programs and opposes the use of taxpayer dollars to subsidize private education without equivalent oversight, accountability, or student protections.

Resolution of the Yazoo County School District Board of Trustees:

Opposing Public and Private School Choice Programs and Voucher Legislation That Undermine Public Education in Mississippi

4. **Commits** to advocating for policies that prioritize public education as a public good open to all children in Yazoo County and across the State of Mississippi.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the **Yazoo County School District Board of Trustees** this ____ day of _____, 2025.

Signed:

Gregory Moseley, Board President

Attested:

Millicent Ledbetter, Board Secretary