A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF KNOX COUNTY, TENNESSEE, CALLING FOR VOLUNTARY SUPPORT FOR KCS STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, AND STAFF

RESOLUTION NO. 26-003

PREPARED BY:
STEVE TRIPLETT
BOARD MEMBER, DISTRICT 7

APPROVED AS TO FORM BUT NOT SUBSTANCE:

DIRECTOR OF LAW, Deputy

Date: 7/13/2026

WHEREAS, the Knox County Board of Education is elected by the people of Knox County to govern Knox County Schools and to support the academic success, safety, and well-being of approximately 57,000 students across the district; and

WHEREAS, the Knox County Board of Education approved the proposed Knox County Schools FY27 General Purpose Budget on April 23, 2026; and

WHEREAS, Knox County Schools sent the approved FY27 General Purpose Budget to Knox County Government and it was included as part of the Mayor's Proposed FY27 Budget for Knox County Government; and

WHEREAS, on June 15, 2026, the Knox County Commission voted to redirect two pennies in property tax revenue, amounting to approximately $4 million, away from Knox County Schools in order to double the salary increases for county employees from 3% to 6%; and

WHEREAS, on June 30, 2026, Knox County Schools learned that its final Tennessee Investment in Student Achievement (TISA) allocation from the State of Tennessee would be $3.8 million less than initially projected; and

WHEREAS, the combined reductions in local and state funding created a $7.8 million shortfall in the Knox County Schools operating budget; and

WHEREAS, in response to this shortfall, Knox County Schools was obligated to develop a plan to balance the reduced budget while also preparing for the start of the 2026-2027 school year; and

WHEREAS, the district's revised FY27 General Purpose Budget includes a five-day furlough for all employees on 255-day and 260-day contracts, including district office staff, executive principals, and systemwide hourly employees; and

WHEREAS, the district's revised FY27 General Purpose Budget also includes reducing the contract hours of elementary assistant principals by five days and eliminating one teaching position from every middle school and high school; and

WHEREAS, in addition to these budget revisions, Knox County Schools will leverage reserve funds to the extent possible, updated sales tax revenue projections, a moratorium on purchasing technology devices, and unspent summer learning dollars in order to mitigate the impact on employees; and

WHEREAS, Knox County Schools has made these difficult decisions while preserving critical investments in people, including salary increases of 2% to 2.5% percent for staff; and

WHEREAS, these reductions do not represent choices the Board of Education would have made without the loss of local and state revenue, and they will have real impacts on employees, schools, and district operations; and

WHEREAS, Article VI, Section 6.03 of the Knox County Charter requires that salaries for members of the Knox County Board of Education mirror the salaries of members of the Knox County Commission, as determined by the budget passed by the Knox County Commission each year; and

WHEREAS, the approved 6% salary increases for county employees also applies to members of County Commission and, by extension, members of the Board of Education; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education recognizes that receiving such an increase during a year in which Knox County Schools employees are facing furloughs, reduced contract days, and position eliminations is not appropriate; and

WHEREAS, the Board further recognizes that a voluntary donation of their approved salary increase cannot make up for the loss of pay, contract time, or positions experienced by Knox County Schools employees; and

WHEREAS, the Board nevertheless believes such a gesture can demonstrate to educators and education staff, that the Board affirms the critical importance of their work, and recognizes their significance to the future of Knox County; and

WHEREAS, because Board member compensation is governed by the Knox County Charter, any such commitment must be made voluntarily by each individual Board member and in the manner of that member's choosing;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE KNOX COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION AS FOLLOWS:

That the Knox County Board of Education acknowledges the significant budgetary and staffing challenges facing Knox County Schools as a result of the combined $7.8 million reduction in local and state revenue.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board recognizes the impact these budget revisions will have on Knox County Schools employees, including furloughed employees, elementary assistant principals, and schools impacted by staffing reductions.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that, in recognition of the budgetary and staffing challenges facing Knox County Schools employees, the Board of Education calls upon the Knox County Commission to vote to reduce the salaries approved for members of the commission for Fiscal Year 2027 by 6%.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that, because the Knox County Charter requires salaries for members of the Knox County Board of Education to mirror the salaries of members of the Knox County Commission, any such reduction in County Commission salaries would result in a corresponding 6% reduction in Board of Education salaries.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Knox County Board of Education further calls upon members of the Knox County Commission to transfer an amount equivalent to 6% of their Fiscal Year 2027 salaries to Knox County Schools.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that any funds received by Knox County Schools through such donations, together with savings resulting from any corresponding reduction in Board of Education salaries, shall be used to support Knox County Schools students, educators, schools, and the district's educational mission.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Knox County Board of Education reaffirms its commitment to supporting Knox County Schools students, educators, and education staff, and to advocating for the resources necessary to serve the future generations of Knox County.

Confirmed as an action of the Board:

Kristi Kristy, Chair

Date: July 9, 2026