

Resolution 2021329-2

Opposing the Expansion of Voucher Programs and the Creation of Education Savings Accounts and Requesting Greater Transparency of Public Monies Used to Support Private and Parochial Education

WHEREAS, the Indiana General Assembly during its 2021 legislative session is considering the establishment of Education Savings Accounts (ESAs) and significantly expanding Indiana's investment of public monies to support private and parochial education beyond its current investment, which totals more than \$1 billion since the program's inception; and

WHEREAS, public monies expended by public schools must be approved in a public meeting by a local Board of School Trustees; and

WHEREAS, public monies expended by public schools must be audited by the Indiana State Board of Accounts; and

WHEREAS, public monies expended by public schools must also be summarized in a myriad of state-mandated reports; and

WHEREAS, the minutes of public meetings conducted by the local Board of School Trustees, the audit reports certified by the Indiana State Board of Accounts, and the submitted state-mandated reports provide curious community members a way to learn how public schools expend public monies; and

WHEREAS, private and parochial schools accepting and using public monies by way of vouchers currently are not required to have these public monies audited by State Board of Accounts or publicly report how these monies are expended; and

WHEREAS, Ball State Economist Michael Hicks concludes that since Indiana took over full responsibility for providing monies to public schools via the state tuition formula, Indiana's public schools experienced a 7 percent reduction in overall funding after adjusting for inflation; and

WHEREAS, Ball State Economist Michael Hicks further concludes that since Indiana took over full responsibility for providing monies to public schools via the state tuition formula, Indiana's investment in the state tuition formula as a percentage of Indiana's Gross Domestic Product has decreased by more than 0.4 percent, which equates to divestment in public schools by more than \$1 billion; and

WHEREAS, Governor Holcomb's Next Level Teacher Compensation Commission identified a need for the Indiana General Assembly to invest at least an additional \$600 million into the state tuition formula supporting public schools; the Next Level Teacher Compensation Commission concluded that this investment is necessary to achieve competitive teacher compensation and increase Indiana's ability to recruit and retain teaching talent; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of School Trustees of Northwest Allen County Schools does hereby go on record, to ask the public and the Indiana General Assembly to require public monies supporting private and parochial education to be audited by the Indiana State Board of Accounts.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of School Trustees of Northwest Allen County Schools asks the public and the Indiana General Assembly to require transparency of public monies by requiring audit reports of public monies supporting private and parochial education to be available to the public.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of School Trustees of Northwest Allen County Schools asks the public and the Indiana General Assembly to oppose expanding Indiana's investment of public monies to support private and parochial education and to oppose creating ESAs by opposing House Bill 1005 and Senate Bills 412 and 413 and by opposing language similar to what is contained in these bills if the language is amended to other bills during the legislative session.

ADOPTED this 29th day of March 2021.

Kent Somers, President

Liz Hathaway, Vice President

Kristi Schlatter, Secretary

Steve Bartkus, Member

Ron Felger, Member