

A RESOLUTION TO OPPOSE EDUCATION SAVINGS ACCOUNT PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, the Murfreesboro City Schools Board of Education emphatically believes that public education is a critical contributor to local communities as pillars of education, employment, and family engagement;

WHEREAS, legislation proposed by Governor Bill Lee on November 28, 2023, would create an education savings account program that will, in part, allow taxpayer dollars to pay tuition and fees at participating private schools for approximately 20,000 students annually;

WHEREAS, proposed legislation would allocate approximately \$7,075.00 per student participating in the education savings account program which is more than the per pupil allocation that public schools receive from the State;

WHEREAS, Tennessee continues to rank in the bottom 10 states for school spending per pupil (U.S. Census Bureau) and does not provide adequate funding for its public schools, and any diversion of needed resources for an education savings account program would further diminish the ability of Tennessee public schools to meet mandated accountability standards and address achievement gaps among students;

WHEREAS, the Constitution of the State of Tennessee requires the Tennessee General Assembly to “provide for the maintenance, support, and eligibility standards of a system of free *public* schools” with no reference to the maintenance or support of private schools;

WHEREAS, private schools may choose to deny students, are not required to meet the same academic standards as public schools, and are not required report test results, graduation rates, or other performance measures to the public or parents whose children attend the private school;

WHEREAS, the Board believes that competition is beneficial for the overall quality of education, but asserts that competition must be on fair terms, especially when involving the receipt of taxpayer funding in the form of education savings accounts, vouchers, or similar taxpayer-funded programs; and,

WHEREAS, Murfreesboro City Schools provides a high-quality education to every student who lives within its geographic boundaries, is eligible to attend, and seeks an education at a district school, including students with needs beyond those of their typically developing peers, despite underfunded and unfunded mandates from the Tennessee legislature.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Murfreesboro City Schools Board of Education hereby opposes any legislation or other similar effort to create an education savings account, voucher, or similar taxpayer-funded program in Tennessee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that if legislation is considered by the Tennessee General Assembly to create an education savings account, voucher, or similar taxpayer-funded program

in Tennessee, such legislation should subject participating private schools to the same accountability standards and educational mandates of public schools for purposes of public transparency.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution shall be delivered to the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, the Speaker of the House, and every member of the General Assembly.

ADOPTED THIS 9th day of January 2024.

MURFREESBORO CITY SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION



Butch Campbell, Chair



Jimmy Richardson, III, Vice Chair



Wesley Ballard



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Bobby N. Duke III, Director of Schools



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