



Roane County Schools

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December 15, 2023

Representative Monty Fritts
425 Rep. John Lewis Way N.
Suite 430 Cordell Hull Bldg.
Nashville, TN 37243

Dear Representative Fritts:

Thank you for your service to the citizens of Roane County and the great State of Tennessee.

On December 7, 2023, the Roane County School Board unanimously passed two resolutions:

- Resolution Opposing Governor Lee's Education Freedom Act.
- Resolution Opposing Consideration to Reject Federal Education Funding.

Please protect public education in Roane County by opposing both of these initiatives.

Thank you for what you do to support the children of Roane County. I hope you and your family have a blessed Christmas! I look forward to working with you in 2024!

Sincerely,

Russell K. Jenkins, Ed.S.
Director of Schools

cc: Roane County Board Members

RESOLUTION OPPOSING GOVERNOR LEE'S EDUCATION FREEDOM ACT

WHEREAS, the Constitution of the State of Tennessee, in Article XI, Section 12, states that the Tennessee legislature "shall provide for the maintenance, support, and eligibility standards of a system of free public schools;" and

WHEREAS, the fulfillment of this constitutional guarantee is heavily reliant upon adequate state funding, which is vital for equipping schools with the necessary resources to serve the various needs of Tennessee's students; and

WHEREAS, the Roane County Board of Education is charged with governing the school district so that all students, regardless of background, needs, or ability, receive the best possible educational opportunities in order to graduate prepared to enter a postsecondary institution or the workforce; and

WHEREAS, Roane County School System is an educational community that serves a student population of 6,290 students, with 58.3% of those coming from free and reduced lunch backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, Roane County School System offers an array of specialized programs including special education services, career and technical education training aligned with local workforce needs which are invaluable for meeting both individual student needs and the Tennessee Constitution's requirement of a free and public education; and

WHEREAS, Roane County School System is a cornerstone of the local community, not only providing education services to all students regardless of background, need, or ability, but also employing nearly 1,200 staff members;

WHEREAS, Roane County School System is committed to maintaining local control over its schools, ensuring that they are reflective of the community's needs and values; and

WHEREAS, Education Savings Accounts (ESAs) threaten the district's ability to maintain the quality of its educational offerings as ESAs would divert state funds to private actors and disrupt local control of education.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Roane County Board of Education hereby expresses its opposition to the Governor's "Education Freedom Act" as well as any other voucher or Education Savings Account legislation due to the detrimental impacts these programs will have on our students, schools, and community, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Roane County Board of Education urges the Tennessee General Assembly to consider the effects that Education Savings Accounts will have on local school districts and to instead seek out ways to support and strengthen public schools throughout the state.

THIS RESOLUTION is adopted as of this 7th day of December, 2023.
BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mike Miller
Mike "Brillo" Miller, Chairman


Russell Jenkins, Director of Roane County Schools

RESOLUTION OPPOSING CONSIDERATION TO REJECT FEDERAL EDUCATION FUNDING

WHEREAS, the Roane County Board of Education is charged with governing the school district so that all students receive the best possible educational opportunities in order to graduate prepared to enter a postsecondary institution or the workforce; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee receives approximately \$1.1 billion annually in federal kindergarten through twelfth (12th) grade funding; and

WHEREAS, while federal funding comprises a smaller portion of the Roane County Schools budget than either state or local funding comprises, federal funding contributes significantly to special education, school nutrition, and a host of other offerings; and

WHEREAS, the refusal of federal funds by Tennessee would lead to the reallocation of Tennesseans' federal tax contributions to other states, potentially even to states that compete with Tennessee economically; and

WHEREAS, rejecting federal funds and allowing those dollars to be reallocated to other states represents not only a financial loss for Tennessee taxpayers, but also a missed opportunity to meaningfully invest funds in the state's local public schools; and

WHEREAS, no other state in the nation has ever rejected federal kindergarten through twelfth (12th) grade funding and there are countless unknown factors associated with the rejection of these federal dollars; and

WHEREAS, federal funds are often disbursed on an established schedule, providing school districts with a degree of certainty about those funds and the programs they support; and

WHEREAS, it is currently unclear whether a state that rejects federal funds may request at a later time that federal funding resume and, if so, how long that process would take; and

WHEREAS, legal questions about the extent to which federal requirements might still apply to Tennessee's public schools even without federal funding would likely be settled in courts for an unforeseeable amount of time.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Roane County Board of Education opposes the General Assembly's current inquiry into rejecting federal education funding based on the potential detrimental impacts that such a decision might have on Tennessee's students, school districts, and taxpayers.

THIS RESOLUTION is adopted as of this 7th day of December, 2023.

ROANE COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mike Miller
Mike "Brillo" Miller, Chairman

Russell Jenkins
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