



1489 US Highway 701 South
PO Box 37
Elizabethtown, NC 28337

Phone: (910) 862-4136
Fax: (855) 860-6170

Jason B. Atkinson, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Board of Education
Tim Benton, Chair
Glenn McKoy, Vice Chair
Chris Clark
Harfel Davis
Dennis Edwards
Steve Kwiatkowski
Keith Locklear
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Mackie Singletary

Resolution in Support of Prioritizing Public Schools and Opposing Unaccountable, Taxpayer-Funded Private School Vouchers

WHEREAS, North Carolina's public schools are vital components of our communities, providing transformative education, fostering opportunity, and contributing to economic prosperity; and

WHEREAS, 84% of North Carolina's school-aged children and over 80% of school aged-children in Bladen County attend public schools, reflecting high levels of parental satisfaction and confidence in the quality of education provided; and

WHEREAS, it is imperative to continue investing in public schools to uphold their critical role as pillars of community cohesion and economic prosperity; and

WHEREAS, North Carolina's public schools are governed by our local communities, and it is imperative that local leaders advocate for our public schools and the successes and challenges they face in providing a sound basic education for all students; and

WHEREAS, North Carolina's public schools have achieved significant milestones, including record-high graduation rates, increased workforce credentials earned by students, and national recognition for educators; and

WHEREAS, despite these accomplishments, North Carolina faces challenges such as inadequate funding for public education, ranking near the bottom nationally in K-12 funding, and lagging behind our neighboring states in teacher compensation; and

WHEREAS, diverting taxpayer funds towards unaccountable, taxpayer-funded private school vouchers undermines the integrity and effectiveness of North Carolina's public education system; and

WHEREAS, private schools receiving public money through vouchers lack accountability measures such as reporting how students perform, what is being taught, or whether they employ licensed teachers; and

WHEREAS, the diversion of public funds to private schools through taxpayer-funded vouchers poses a significant financial threat to public schools, potentially depriving them of essential resources and compromising the quality of education for all students; and

WHEREAS, in the first year of taxpayer funded private school voucher expansion, our state's public schools could lose more than \$200 million in state funding, and Bladen County could lose \$2 million or 10-15% in state funding, with hundreds of millions lost in coming years; and

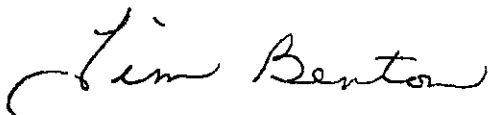
WHEREAS, instead of funding private school vouchers, resources should be allocated towards expanding access to pre-kindergarten and quality child care, increasing teacher salaries, providing necessary school supplies, enhancing educational facilities, and ensuring equitable opportunities for students with disabilities.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED

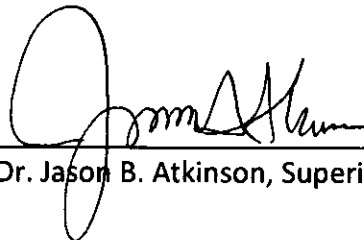
That the Bladen County Board of Education hereby urges the North Carolina General Assembly to prioritize public schools by:

1. Substantially increasing teacher salaries in order to pay teachers as the professionals they are and to attract and retain qualified educators; and
2. Allocating significant funding towards early childhood education, quality childcare, and pre-kindergarten programs to ensure all children have access to a strong educational foundation; and
3. Placing a moratorium on taxpayer-funded private school vouchers until public schools are fully funded, ensuring taxpayer resources are invested in accountable and regulated public education institutions.

Adopted by the Bladen County Board of Education this 8th day of July, 2024.



Tim Benton, Board Chair



Dr. Jason B. Atkinson, Superintendent