

Resolution by the McDowell County Board of Education
Concerning Universal Private School Vouchers

WHEREAS, the North Carolina State Constitution guarantees the opportunity to a sound basic education for all children in our state and according to Article 9 "the General Assembly shall provide by taxation and otherwise for a general and uniform system of free public schools, which shall be maintained at least nine months in every year, and wherein equal opportunities shall be provided for all students"; and,

WHEREAS, the North Carolina courts have upheld that the state of North Carolina, per the Leandro rulings, is not meeting its Constitutional obligation to provide the opportunity for a sound basic education to all public school students; and,

WHEREAS, HB 823/SB 406, Choose Your School, Choose Your Future, is a universal voucher program which is scheduled to direct billions of dollars of available public funds to private schools. Further, private schools are not equally available to all students and have no objective oversight process for how they use public dollars; and,

WHEREAS, unlike public schools, private schools can reject students based on discriminatory criteria established by the private school; and,

WHEREAS, providing public dollars to three separate schooling options, including traditional public schools, public charter schools, and private schools does not provide a "uniform" system of education for all students; and,

WHEREAS, the vastly different mechanisms for oversight and operation of these three education options create an uneven playing field; and,

WHEREAS, access to the various education options is limited to many students based on factors such as, but not limited to, availability of transportation, the need for special education instruction, the ability to provide breakfast and lunch, purchase school supplies, and parental engagement; and,

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Office of State Budget Management projects McDowell County School District will see its state funding drop significantly by FY 2026-27 if this universal voucher program is enacted; and,

WHEREAS, when state funding decreases, the percentage of per pupil funding going towards fixed costs, which includes electricity, water, sewer, gas, internet, fuel, etc., increases and the amount of per pupil funding going towards educating students decreases; and,

WHEREAS, the opportunity scholarship was established to provide an opportunity for students in low-income households to have a choice to attend a private school; and,

WHEREAS, the new program proposed by both chambers removes all income caps; and,

WHEREAS, high income families can already choose to attend private schools and do not need a public school voucher; and,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the McDowell County Board of Education opposes any voucher bill or budget provision that does not include a household income limit as part of

eligibility criteria and does not meet the North Carolina State Constitutional obligation to provide a free and uniform system of public education to ALL students; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the North Carolina General Assembly should create a new allotment to cover the fixed costs to operate school buildings that are not included in the per-pupil funding formula; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that

1. The Chair and Superintendent are authorized to disseminate this Resolution to members of the General Assembly and the Governor, and

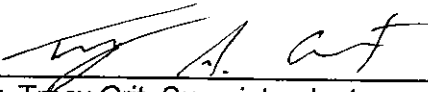
2. The Board encourages parents, students, and other community members to contact their North Carolina legislators to implore them to abide by their oath to uphold the North Carolina State Constitution.

Adopted by the McDowell County Board of Education this 10th day of July, 2023.



Terry English, Board Chair

07/10/2023
Date



Dr. Tracy Grit, Superintendent

7-11-2023
Date