

RESOLUTION 38-2023-24

A RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE CLARKSVILLE CITY COUNCIL OPPOSING THE EDUCATION FREEDOM SCHOLARSHIP ACT IN TENNESSEE

- 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 Montgomery County School Board 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 think critically and to graduate prepared to enter a postsecondary institution or the workforce; and
- WHEREAS, the Clarksville Montgomery County School System is an educational community that serves a student population of 38,900 students, with 51% of those coming from economically disadvantaged backgrounds; and
- WHEREAS, the Clarksville Montgomery County School System offers an array of specialized programs, including special education services, career and technical education training aligned with local workforce needs, grow your own initiatives, dual enrollment for college and trade schools, AP (Advanced Placement) courses, a band program, trauma-informed schools, the Campora Resource Center, a collaborative partnership with the Prevention Coalition, ESP (Extended School Program), and mental health resources (social workers, counselors, and advocates), which are invaluable for meeting both individual student needs and the Tennessee Constitution's requirement of a free and public education; and
- WHEREAS, the Clarksville Montgomery 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 5,564 staff members;
- WHEREAS, Clarksville Montgomery 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.
- WHEREAS, the Clarksville Montgomery County School System is committed to providing quality education for all students within our district; and

WHEREAS, the Education Freedom Scholarship Act proposed in Tennessee seeks to divert public dollars away from public schools, thereby jeopardizing the financial stability of our public education system; and

WHEREAS, the Education Freedom Scholarship Act may undermine the ability of public schools to fulfill their mission of providing a comprehensive and equitable education to all students, including those with diverse learning needs and backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, the Council believes that public education is a vital component of a democratic society and a key driver of social and economic progress; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF CLARKSVILLE, TENNESSEE:

opposes the Education Freedom Scholarship Act in Tennessee and urges legislators to consider the following principles in their decision-making:

- Public dollars should remain with public schools to ensure the continued strength and stability of the public education system.
- Accountability measures are essential to guarantee that taxpayer dollars are used effectively and transparently to benefit all students.
- Fiscal conservatism should guide educational policies to promote responsible stewardship of public funds.
- Supporting all students, regardless of background or learning style, is a fundamental principle that public schools are uniquely positioned to uphold.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Tennessee School Board Association, the Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents, Senator Bill Powers, Representative Ronnie Glynn, Representative Curtis Johnson, and Representative Jeff Burkart urging them to consider the potential impact of the Education Freedom Scholarship Act on public education in Tennessee and to vote and advocate against its passage.

Adopted