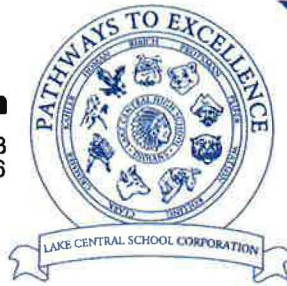


Lake Central School Corporation

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Dr. Lawrence Veracco, Superintendent
Cindy Sues, School Board President
Dr. Janice Malchow, School Board Vice-President
Howard Marshall, School Board Secretary
Sandy Lessentine, School Board Member
Dr. Jennifer Medlen, School Board Member

February 16, 2021

Dear Members of the Indiana General Assembly,

As the proud governing Board of one of the largest school districts in the State of Indiana, we want to share our concerns about the proposed "school choice" legislation currently being considered by your members. The decisions made over the past several years, that siphoned money away from public schools to support families who choose private schools, should also be reviewed. We oppose these decisions for a variety of reasons.

Public schools are open to all, and we help our students to reach great potential. This includes children from impoverished households, as well as those with significant learning differences and severe English language deficits. Public schools serve the neediest among us, and we need appropriate resources to complete our mission. We open our doors to every student who is rejected by private schools for a variety of reasons or for *no stated reason*.

Laws governing schools are passed to improve the quality of life for children in our state, and yet, private schools are permitted to pick and choose the guidelines they want to implement. Not too long ago, a local charter school failed to administer the statewide test and was still allowed to operate. If a law is passed for the good of public school students, then shouldn't it also apply to all students? If accountability of public schools is important to protect students and taxpayers, shouldn't accountability of all schools who accept tax dollars be the logical way to operate?

Indiana ranked 39th in per-pupil spending in 2018. The past ten years of increases in state support, while appreciated, has not kept Indiana's teacher salaries from falling behind salaries in neighboring states and across the nation. Not coincidentally, the beginning of the stagnation of wages, resulting in a teacher shortage in Indiana public schools, corresponds with the implementation of a voucher system that has seen growth in the amount of taxpayer dollars going to support children in private schools. Our teacher shortage concerns Governor Holcomb, and he commissioned the Next Level Teacher Compensation report that was released in December 2020. In a year where our Governor states he is interested in addressing the teacher shortage, moving a large portion of new K-12 support to private schools does not make sense.

We implore you to stop increasing support to schools that are not open to all and do not answer to taxpayers. As you work toward making Indiana a better place to live, learn, and work, remember that Indiana's public schools serve over 90% of our students. The inclusiveness of public schools should be the overriding factor used by our leaders when determining how our state disburses its financial support. Indiana elected leaders, thank you for faithfully serving the citizens of Indiana and for your consideration of our plea.

Lake Central School Board of Trustees

Cindy Sues, President

Janice Malchow, Vice President

Howard Marshall, Secretary

Sandy Lessentine, Member

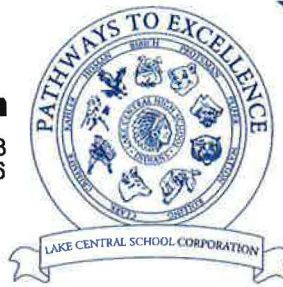
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Resolution Opposing and Condemning the Establishment of Education Savings Accounts

WHEREAS, the Indiana General Assembly during the 2021 legislative session is considering the establishment of education savings accounts (ESAs) that funnel state funding to parents who withdraw their children from public schools.

WHEREAS, education savings accounts give parents the equivalent of a taxpayer-funded debit card to pay for private school tuition, unregulated home schools, and educational services such as tutoring.

WHEREAS, public funds should be invested in public schools, which serve all children.

WHEREAS, public schools are subject to fiscal transparency, public oversight, and taxpayer accountability. Non-public schools are not. All schools that receive public funds should be held to the same set of standards.

WHEREAS, education savings accounts would be funded out of the K-12 tuition support appropriation at the expense of public schools and would consume much of Governor Holcomb's recommended tuition support increase of two (2) and one (1) percent for Fiscal Year 2022 and Fiscal Year 2023, respectively.

WHEREAS, House Bill 1005 seeks to create an education savings account scheme to be called the "Indiana education scholarship account program".

WHEREAS, Senate Bill 412 seeks to create an education savings account scheme to be known as the "Indiana personalized education grant program".

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved, the school board of the Lake Central School Corporation opposes and condemns the establishment of education savings accounts as proposed by members of Indiana's General Assembly in House Bill 1005 and Senate Bill 412.

Approved this 17th day of , 2021.


Cindy Sues, Board President


Janice Malchow, Board Vice-President


Sandy Lessentine, Board Member


Howard Marshall, Board Secretary


Jennifer Medlen, Board Member