

## **Resolution of the Cleveland School District Board of Trustees Opposing School Choice and Voucher Legislation in Mississippi**

**WHEREAS**, the Cleveland School District serves all students within its boundaries, regardless of background, ability, or need, and is committed to providing a high-quality education that is transparent, accountable, and equitable for every child; and

**WHEREAS**, members of the Mississippi Legislature have introduced proposals to expand “school choice” through vouchers, education savings accounts (ESAs), and unfunded open-enrollment mandates, including public statements by legislative leadership that school choice is a policy priority; and

**WHEREAS**, these proposals would divert public taxpayer dollars from public schools to private and unregulated entities that are not bound by the same standards of transparency, accountability, or nondiscrimination as public schools; and

**WHEREAS**, school choice programs undermine districts' ability to plan and budget effectively by creating unpredictable enrollment fluctuations that occur after teacher contracts are issued and budgets are set, making it impossible to accurately project student numbers, allocate staff appropriately, or secure adequate resources to meet student needs while maintaining the infrastructure and capacity required to serve the community; and

**WHEREAS**, private schools maintain the ability to select which students they admit, while public schools must serve every student, including those with disabilities, English learners, and students with significant academic or behavioral needs; and

**WHEREAS**, school choice proposals in other states have resulted in negative student academic outcomes, increased costs to taxpayers, athletic inequities and recruiting, and weakened local public schools by siphoning away critical funding without reducing the obligations of the districts left behind; and

**WHEREAS**, unfunded mandates related to open enrollment and transportation place a disproportionate burden on working-class families, rural communities, and local school districts that are already tasked with doing more with limited resources; and

**WHEREAS**, the Cleveland School District has consistently demonstrated strong academic performance, fiscal responsibility, and commitment to continuous improvement, and further diversion of state resources undermines the district's ability to sustain and grow this success for all students.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Cleveland School District Board of Trustees:

1. **Formally opposes** any legislation that diverts public taxpayer funds to private schools, homeschooling subsidies, or other nonpublic education entities without holding them to the same accountability and transparency standards as public schools.
2. **Formally opposes** unfunded open-enrollment and transfer mandates that reallocate resources from local districts.
3. **Urges** Speaker Jason White, Chairman Rob Roberson, Lt. Governor Delbert Hosemann, Chairman Dennis Debar, and the entire Warren County legislative delegation to reject school choice proposals and instead prioritize:
  - o Full and stable funding of the Mississippi Student Funding Formula (MSFF),

- Adequate support for special education and related services,
- Investments in teacher recruitment, training, and retention,
- District-level innovations within the public school system, and
- Greater local control and flexibility in curriculum and district operations.

4. Directs the Superintendent to transmit this resolution to the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Speaker of the House, the Chairs of the House and Senate Education Committees, and all members of the Bolivar County legislative delegation, and to post it publicly on the District's website.

Adopted this 18<sup>th</sup> day of Dec, 2025, by the Board of Trustees of the Cleveland School District.

BOARD MEMBER VOTED

Board Member Paulette Howze Voted: yes  
 Board Member Richard Boggs Voted: yes  
 Board Member George Evans Voted: yes  
 Board Member Lucille Holmes Voted: yes  
 Board Member Beverly Janoush Voted: yes

Having received the affirmative vote of the majority of the Board members, this Resolution passed on this the 18<sup>th</sup> the day of December, 2025.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE CLEVELAND  
SCHOOL DISTRICT

By: Paulette K. Howze President

ATTEST: Lucille Holmes  
Secretary



See  
12/19/25