

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
SMITHVILLE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**

RESOLUTION

**REGARDING
MECHANISMS THAT REDUCE PUBLIC EDUCATION FUNDING
AND THE LEGISLATURE’S DUTY TO SUPPORT AND MAINTAIN
TEXAS PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

STATE OF TEXAS §
 §
COUNTY OF BASTROP §

WHEREAS, Article 7, Section 1 of the Texas Constitution recognizes that “the general diffusion of knowledge is essential to the preservation of liberties and rights of the people;”

WHEREAS, Article 7, Section 1 of the Texas Constitution requires that the Texas Legislature "establish and make suitable provision for the support and maintenance of an efficient system of public free schools;

WHEREAS, the Smithville Independent School District’s Board of Trustees (“Board”) believes that public education is a critical contributor to quality of life and the economic strength of our community;

WHEREAS, the Board believes that competition is good for the overall quality of education, but asserts that competition must be on fair terms, particularly when competition receives state funding, including in the form of an education savings account plan, voucher or similar taxpayer-funded mechanism;

WHEREAS, according to the 2023 Education Data Initiative and virtually all other publications, Texas ranks in the bottom ten states in the country and is at least \$4,000 behind the national average in funding per student in public schools;

WHEREAS, despite inflation and increased costs for Texas school districts, the Legislature has not increased average daily attendance funding for Texas schools since 2019;

WHEREAS, a taxpayer-funded education savings account or voucher program would cost the State of Texas billions and reduce the amount of state funds available for public schools; and for example, funding education savings accounts of \$10,000 per year for the estimated 70,000 pre-kindergarten students currently choosing private or home school would cost the State over half a billion dollars in the first year and more than \$7 billion over their 13-year school career, not accounting for the additional estimated one million current home school or private school students who could apply for an education savings account, let alone those who would use an education savings account to exit public schools;

WHEREAS, Texas public school districts accept every student, and the Smithville Independent School District (“District”) provides a high-quality education to every student who lives within its boundaries, is eligible to attend and seeks an education at the District, including students with needs beyond those of their typically developing peers, despite underfunded and unfunded mandates from the State legislature and an increasing number of students with special needs;

WHEREAS, education savings accounts and other voucher schemes give private schools, not parents, the right to choose;

WHEREAS, Texas public schools adhere to state-mandated academic and financial accountability standards;

WHEREAS, private schools are not required to meet the same academic standards as public schools, and they do not report test results, graduation rates, and other performance measures to the public;

WHEREAS, private schools in the State of Texas may choose to deny educational services to students for any variety of reasons, without consequence or oversight from the State;

WHEREAS, private schools are not required by law to have a Board of Directors or Trustees who are responsible for the oversight of the administration of private schools and, ultimately, the quality of education for children attending the private school;

WHEREAS, the Board and District’s Administration believe parents are partners in their child’s education, and work diligently to involve parents in the District’s business and educational system;

WHEREAS, school choice already exists in the Texas via public school districts, charter schools, inter- and intra-district transfers, home schools, virtual schools, and private schools;

WHEREAS, education savings accounts and similar voucher schemes eliminate public accountability of schools and tax dollars;

WHEREAS, using tax dollars to pay for tuition at private and religious schools would grow into a costly entitlement program;

WHEREAS, a taxpayer-funded voucher program would reduce the amount of state funds available for all schools, harming many rural Texas communities where families have few, if any, private school options; and

WHEREAS, Texas parents who accept a voucher would lose out on a long list of important parental rights outlined in Texas state education code and in federal law, especially the right to access full information concerning school activities of their child (as set forth in Texas Education Code § 26.008) and protections for students receiving special education services;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Smithville ISD Board of Trustees calls on the Texas Legislature, and specifically our elected representatives State Senator Charles Schwertner and State Representative Stan Gerdes to reject any diversion of public dollars to private entities in the form of education savings accounts and similar voucher schemes.

PASSED and APPROVED on this 31st day of March, 2025.

President

Vice President

Secretary

Trustee

Trustee

Trustee

Trustee