

**Resolution of the Pearl Public School District Board of Trustees
Opposing School Choice/Voucher Legislation in Mississippi**

WHEREAS, the Pearl Public 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, Pearl Public 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 Pearl Public 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 Hoesmann, Chairman Dennis Debar, and the entire Rankin County legislative delegation to reject school choice proposals and instead prioritize:
 - 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

Board Approved

Date 10/13/2025

- Greater local control and flexibility in curriculum and district operations.

Adopted this 13 day of October, 2025, by the Board of Trustees of the Pearl Public School District.

Sandra Odom

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