



## **Ankeny Board of Education**

### **Resolution in Opposition of Senate Study Bill 1065 - Governor's School Choice Omnibus Bill**

The Ankeny Community School District is committed to its mission of preparing every learner to achieve a lifetime of personal success. As a Board we take very seriously the primary focus to educate every student across the district. Furthermore, we recognize, support and are grateful to all employees who play a role in the success of Ankeny Community Schools. In support of our children and our staff we feel it is our duty to advocate to protect strong public education across the state.

In our role as Directors and as part of our board operational expectations, it is important we stay engaged with state legislation which could be a detriment to our ability to provide the educational experiences our children deserve.

We are against any legislation that would take public school monies and allow them to be used for private school tuition; therefore, we affirm the Iowa Association of School Boards position that Student First Scholarships are wrong public policy for Iowa and an inappropriate use of public tax dollars.

#### **Student first scholarships are vouchers.**

Unlike a true savings account, parents do not open the account and put in their own money. The proposal gives selected parents a taxpayer-funded debit card loaded with state taxpayer dollars to use however they wish. We agree that parents should have the choice to enroll their child in a private or religious school but not with public taxpayer funds.

#### **Public dollars should be used for public schools.**

The public's investment should be used to support public community schools, which are open to all students regardless of race, religion, gender, socio-economic status and disability.

#### **Public funds require public accountability and transparency.**

Public schools are overseen by a publicly elected citizen governing board, are required to report academic results to the general public, have an annual public financial audit, and be transparent with all expenditures and decision-making. Private and religious schools are not held to that same public standard. Taxpayers have a right to know how their funds are being used, but are left in the dark about the use and impact of voucher funds.

#### **This legislation is a slippery slope toward a costly and expansive voucher program.**

This voucher program may start small, but as has been seen in other states, once a program is established, it is easy to expand. This will pull more resources away from public schools.

#### **Our state government should be investing in Iowa's public schools, which educate 94% of Iowa students.**



More than \$65 million in state tax dollars already support the education of Iowa students in private and home school settings according to the [Iowa Fiscal Policy Project](#) analysis. That's \$65 million for 6% of our student population. This voucher program will add up to an additional \$54 million in funds that will go towards educating 10,185 students.

**Vouchers represent a rural to urban shift of resources.**

The survival of rural schools depends on adequate state funding, and there are many areas of the state where public schools are the only choice.

We encourage the Ankeny community to pay attention to any potential educational legislation and to advocate for what they believe is best for our Ankeny students and all students across the state. We take great pride in the quality education Ankeny Schools provide. We believe our legislators should focus on providing adequate funding that support our efforts to sustain a world-class education.