

**A SCHOOL BOARD RESOLUTION URGING THE IOWA GOVERNOR AND STATE LEGISLATURE TO FULLY FUND OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND PHASE OUT THE EDUCATION SAVINGS ACCOUNTS (ESAs)**

WHEREAS, 91% of Iowa students are enrolled in public schools; and

WHEREAS, public schools are universally accessible and do not discriminate; and

WHEREAS, the Cedar Falls Community School District's mission is to educate each student to be a lifelong learner and a caring, responsible citizen, guided by the vision "Every student, every day"; and

WHEREAS, public schools are accountable to local communities through nonpartisan, democratically-elected school boards; and

WHEREAS, the Cedar Falls Community School District Board of Education is a nonpartisan, locally elected governing body accountable to the residents of Cedar Falls and surrounding district communities; and

WHEREAS, the state of Iowa has underfunded public schools for decades averaging just a 2.0% annual increase of State Supplemental Aid (SSA) since 2012; and

WHEREAS, Iowa is experiencing one of the worst teacher shortages in the country ; and

WHEREAS, private schools receiving ESAs are not held to the same accountability, transparency, and legal standards as public schools; and

WHEREAS, Iowa's ESAs defund our public schools and have cost Iowa taxpayers \$129 million in 2023-24, \$218 million in 2024-2025, and is estimated to cost \$315 million in 2025-26 with all income eligibility caps removed; and

WHEREAS, rising ESA costs increase pressure on local school budgets and may reduce resources available for staffing, student services, and educational programming in districts such as Cedar Falls; and

WHEREAS, the vast majority of private schools in Iowa are religious, and publicly funding them blurs the line between separation of church and state; and

WHEREAS, independent studies in Indiana, Louisiana, Ohio, and Washington DC show that student performance and achievement go down as private school voucher programs expand<sup>ii</sup>; and

WHEREAS, all of us – including future generations – benefit from strong public schools because they have helped to make our country far more equal, educated, and democratic.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CEDAR FALLS COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION:

1. The Cedar Falls Community School District Board of Education do hereby urge the Governor of Iowa and the State Legislature to fully fund public schools by an annual 5% increase of State Supplemental Aid rate (indexed to inflation); and
2. The Cedar Falls Community School District Board of Education do hereby petition the Governor of Iowa and the State Legislature to keep the income cap in place for ESAs, phase the program out over the next 5 years, and use public funds for public schools only.

PASSED AND ADOPTED ON \_\_\_\_\_ 2026

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i Data compiled by the National Conference of State Legislatures

ii How School Voucher Programs Hurt Students (2023), Professor Josh Cowen

<https://time.com/6272666/school-voucher-programs-hurt-students/>