



Board Statement to the Linn-Mar Community January 20, 2023

Iowa's public schools are the cornerstones of its communities. Public schools offer the promise that every child will find support, acceptance, and the hope of a better future through a quality education. It is through this promise that we build an educated society, foundational for all our success. Strong public schools enable communities to grow, attracting new families, new businesses, and new opportunities that benefit every citizen.

But that promise is being threatened. Public education has been under attack in recent years and today with her proposal of Education Savings Accounts (ESA), also known as vouchers or student-first scholarships, Governor Reynolds has delivered the greatest blow yet. This bill will funnel **\$918.1 million** over the next four years to fund private school tuition or homeschool curriculum, reducing the pool of funds available to the very public schools that vow to educate all.

Establishing Education Savings Accounts will lead to decreased funding for Iowa's public schools. The only way to sustain funding to private schools at the level of **\$918.1 million** is to either raise taxes or cut funding to public education. Governor Reynolds has cut taxes significantly over last year and promises additional cuts in the future. This leaves public education in an awful position, forcing us to make choices that undercut our promise.

Public schools are already underfunded. The proposed 2.5% increase in state funding to public schools this year represents an effective cut to Linn-Mar of **\$1.4 million** due to increased costs and rising inflation. Failure to increase public education funding to a level that keeps pace with these increasing costs will be devastating to Iowa's public schools. Rising deficits across the state will result in positions being eliminated, continued teacher resignations, increased class sizes, and less individualized educational opportunities for students. Iowa families deserve more. Iowa communities deserve more. Iowa kids deserve more.

The Linn-Mar community has always prided itself on providing our kids with a quality education. Time and again we see our community come together and support our schools. We need our community to come together now. We need our parents, our business partners and every community member who believes in the mission of public education to stand with us and denounce a bill that is an attack on our students. We must say no to educational savings accounts and demand an adequate increase in public school funding.

Debate has begun on these bills. Please reach out to all members of the House and Senate, not just those from Cedar Rapids and Marion and let them know that you support public funds for public schools. Tell them to vote NO on Education Savings Accounts and tell them public money should support public schools. Also tell them you want your public schools funded at levels that sustain our programs and create opportunities for ALL students and our communities.

To contact representatives, you can find emails at the following sites:

House of Representative Emails: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislators/house>

Iowa Senate Emails: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislators/senate>

Thank you for your continued support of our students.