



January 20, 2023

Dear Honorable Members of the Iowa House and Senate,

ADMINISTRATION

Shannon Bisgard,
Superintendent

Nathan Wear,
Associate Superintendent
& Chief Academic Officer

Bob Read,
Associate Superintendent

David Nicholson,
Chief Financial Officer &
Chief Operating Officer

Karla Christian,
Chief Officer of HR &
Executive Director
of Public Relations

Leisa Breitfelder,
Executive Director of
Student Services

Jeri Ramos,
Executive Director of
Technology Services

Brittania Morey,
School Board President

DISTRICT SCHOOLS

Bowman Woods, PreK-4
Tina March, Principal

Echo Hill, PreK-4
CJ McDonald, Principal

Indian Creek, K-4
Kelly Kretschmar, Principal

Linn Grove, PreK-4
Lori Manley, Principal

Novak, JrK/K-4
Carol O'Donnell, Principal

Westfield, K-4
Ed Rogers, Principal

Wilkins, PreK-4
Amanda Potter, Principal

Boulder Peak, 5-6
Dan Ludwig, Principal

Hazel Point, 5-6
Chad Buchholz, Principal

Excelsior, 7-8
John Christian, Principal

Oak Ridge, 7-8
Travis Axeen, Principal

High School, 9-12
Jeff Gustason, Principal

Compass Alternative Center
Steve Goodall, Principal

The Linn Mar Community School District Board of Education would like to urge you to vote NO on HF 68 and SF 94. This establishment of Education Savings Accounts and the levels of funding outlined by Governor Reynolds office would be detrimental to Iowa's public schools.

Establishing Education Savings Accounts will lead to decreased funding for Iowa's public schools. In year one alone the estimate for this program is \$108 million in tax-payer dollars to fund private school tuition. Over the first four years the estimated cost of this program is \$900 million in new funding, with an estimated \$300-\$400 million annually to sustain the program. The only way to sustain this funding to private schools is to either raise taxes or to reduce funding. Following the historic tax cuts provided by Governor Reynolds, with more potentially on the way through property tax caps, we know public schools will continue to see reduced funding.

Public schools are already not being funded at a level that keeps up with the cost of doing business or the record levels of inflation. The results across Iowa are rising deficits which will result in continued teacher resignations, reductions in staff, increased class sized, and less individualized attention to students. Iowa families deserve more. Iowa communities deserve more.

It is our position that public tax dollars should be used to fund public schools And ONLY public schools. Unlike private schools, public schools provide educational opportunities to ALL students, regardless of race, gender, or socio-economic status. Private schools pick and choose who they accept. Unlike private schools, public schools must follow all guidelines established by the Americans with Disabilities Act and Individual with Disabilities Education Act. Unlike private schools, public schools must provide accountability and transparency to their community and to the State of Iowa. This legislation would benefit a few, at the expense of many.

Private schools do not have the same financial transparency as public schools. Private schools are not required to defend budgets or get voter approval for additional expenditures. Only public schools are required to have locally elected officials who oversee the policies and provide oversight to the community. Private schools have no required local oversight and thereby have no accountability to the community or the taxpayers that would fund them through the program created by HF 68 and SF 94.

Further, this bill outlines additional flexibility in categorical funding, however districts are counseled not to use one-time funds for ongoing expenses such as teacher salaries. This categorical flexibility does not increase school funding in a way that truly impacts rising deficits and teacher shortages.

Rather than diverting tax dollars to private entities, it is imperative to provide our public schools with the resources they need. Public schools educate 90% of Iowa students. The focus of public tax dollars should be on public schools. Our public schools need additional funding, not fewer resources. HF 68 and SF 94 do not address the needs of the 90% - the majority of Iowa families - and we ask you to vote "NO" on this legislation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Brittania Morey, School Board President
Clark Weaver, School Board Vice President
Barry Buchholz, Board Member

Sondra Nelson, Board Member
Melissa Walker, Board Member
Rachel Wall, Board Member