

Resolutions of Opposition to HB290 Are Needed: The Goshen Local School District Board Of Education Can Be Used as a Template

Boards of Education and public common school advocacy organizations and agencies should be adopting resolutions in opposition to HB290.

The group campaigning for HB290 has plenty of money, a huge staff, and a hefty presence at the Statehouse.

The Board of Education of the Goshen Local School District, met in regular session at 7:00 o'clock p.m. on the 15th day of November, 2021, at the Goshen High School, with the following members present:

John Gray, John Benthien, Julie Casey, Bill Herrera, Deborah Gray

Mrs. Casey moved the adoption of the following resolution:

GOSHEN LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

RESOLUTION NO. 98-2021

RESOLUTION TO EXPRESS OPPOSITION TO THE PASSAGE OF HB 290

WHEREAS, House Bill 290 has been introduced to the House of Representatives of the Ohio General Assembly and has been subsequently referred to the House Finance Committee; and

WHEREAS, HB 290, also referred to as the "Backpack Bill," purports "To express the intent of the General Assembly to establish a school funding formula that allows families to choose the option for all computed funding amounts associated with students' education to follow them to the public and nonpublic schools they attend."; and

WHEREAS, the Bill would divert public tax dollars away from public schools to charter schools as well as private schools, which are not accountable to the taxpayer of Ohio; and

WHEREAS, the Bill ostensibly would provide a subsidy for parents whose children are already enrolled in private school; and

WHEREAS, evaluations of voucher systems in the past have determined that students who use such vouchers do not benefit from improved learning outcomes compared to similarly situated students attending public schools; and

WHEREAS, charter and private schools in Ohio are not subject to a plethora of laws governing education standards and teacher qualifications among other matters in public schools, and may not be held to the same standards for protecting against religious and disability discrimination; and

WHEREAS, Article VI, Section 2 of the Ohio Constitution provides in part that "The General Assembly shall make such provisions, by taxation, or otherwise, as, with the income arising from the school trust fund, will secure a thorough and efficient system of common schools throughout the state."; and

WHEREAS, the Ohio Supreme Court has held that the Ohio Constitution "calls for the upbuilding of a system of schools throughout the state"; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education finds that directly funding students does not constitute the funding of a system of schools as required by the State Constitution; and

WHEREAS, for every child diverted to a charter or non-public school through a voucher program, the public school district does not achieve a savings as it still has the same number of staff, buildings and infrastructure costs; and

WHEREAS, because nearly all Ohio districts receive less state funds per pupil than their per pupil deductions for charter students, public schools must effectively divert local tax dollars that have been approved by local taxpayers for a particular purpose for school operations. Universal vouchers would only exacerbate this inequity by also diverting local tax dollars to private schools; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education believes that every child has a fundamental right to a high-quality public education and that this should be the focus of the General Assembly.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Education as follows:

Section 1. The Board of Education hereby states its opposition to the enactment of HB 290 or any other legislation which purports to institute a universal voucher system in the state of Ohio.

Section 2. The Board of Education authorizes the Treasurer to forward a copy of this resolution to the District's representatives in the House, Jean Schmidt and Scott Lipps, and Senate, Terry Johnson and Steve Wilson, as well as Governor Mike DeWine, and the Interim Superintendent of Public Instruction, Stephanie K. Siddens, Ph.D.

Section 3. The Board believes that the public school districts of the State of Ohio must together express their common opposition to this Bill and any similar legislation introduced in the future and therefore encourages other districts in Ohio to adopt a similar resolution of opposition.

Section 4. This Board of Education hereby finds and determines that all formal actions relative to the adoption of this resolution were taken in an open meeting of this Board of Education; and that all deliberations of this Board of Education and of its committees, if any, which resulted in formal action, were taken in meetings open to the public, in full compliance with applicable legal requirements, including Section 121.22 of the Ohio Revised Code.

Section 5. This Resolution shall be in full force and effect from and immediately after its adoption.

Mr. Benthien seconded the motion that the above resolution be adopted.

Upon roll call and the adoption of the Resolution, the vote was as follows:

Yeas: Mr. Gray, Mr. Benthien, Mrs. Casey, Mrs. Gray, Mr. Herrera

Nays:

ADOPTED this 15th day of November, 2021.