

Putnam County Board Special Called Meeting
January 25, 2025 12:00 PM
1400 E Spring St.
Cookeville, TN 38506

- I. Discussion relating to a possible resolution regarding Tennessee's school vouchers bill.

Putnam County Board of Education
Resolution

**RESOLUTION OPPOSING THE
EDUCATION FREEDOM SCHOLARSHIP ACT OF 2025**

WHEREAS, the Tennessee Constitution, Article XI, Section 12, mandates that the General Assembly shall "provide for the maintenance, support, and eligibility standards of a system of free public schools"; and

WHEREAS, school choice already exists via district transfers, charter schools, home schools, virtual schools, and private schools; and

WHEREAS, Putnam County School System educates every eligible student in our community who wishes to enroll; and

WHEREAS, Putnam County School System serves a diverse student body with programs and resources designed to meet individual student needs, including students from economically disadvantaged households, students with disabilities, and English learners; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Education Freedom Scholarship Act would create a program that diverts public funds to private institutions, thus threatening the ability of public schools to provide high-quality education and maintain local control; and

WHEREAS, under this proposed legislation, private schools receiving these funds would not be held to the same accountability standards as public schools, and public dollars would be used without assurances of equitable access for all students, including those with disabilities or limited income; and

WHEREAS, while the proposed legislation guarantees that an LEA's funding will not decrease due to student disenrollment, this static funding fails to account for rising operational costs, and without continued enrollment growth, districts lose the opportunity for future per-student funding increases that would otherwise offset expense growth, creating a widening disparity over time; and

WHEREAS, as a result of static funding amidst rising expenses, districts may be forced to reduce essential programs and opportunities for students or seek additional funding from local governing bodies, placing an increased financial burden on communities and undermining the quality of public education; and

WHEREAS, while investments in teacher pay and the construction and maintenance of public school buildings are critically needed, these initiatives should not serve as enticements tied to voucher legislation that jeopardize the long-term stability and quality of public education, but instead each should be evaluated and implemented on their own merits; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Putnam County Board of Education expresses its opposition to the Education Freedom Scholarship Act of 2025; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Putnam County Board of Education urges the Tennessee General Assembly to prioritize investment in public schools, strengthen teacher recruitment and retention efforts, and ensure that all students receive the support they need to thrive; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Putnam County Board of Education calls on stakeholders, including parents, community members, and policymakers, to support public education as a cornerstone of democracy and an essential foundation for the future of Tennessee.

Adopted this _____ of _____, 2025

[Board Chair]

Date