

A RESOLUTION OPPOSING PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAMS THAT UNDERMINE PUBLIC EDUCATION

WHEREAS, The Board of Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Vicksburg, Mississippi, recognizes the fundamental role of strong, accessible, and adequately funded public schools in providing educational opportunities for all children; and

WHEREAS, the State of Mississippi, through the work of the Mississippi Legislature, the Mississippi Department of Education, the State Board of Education and local school boards, has established nationally recognized standards and measures for accountability in public education; and

WHEREAS, vouchers eliminate public accountability by channeling tax dollars into private schools that do not face state-approved academic standards or accountability measures, do not make budgets public, do not adhere to open meetings and records laws, do not publicly report on student achievement, and do not face the public accountability requirements contained in major federal laws, including special education; and

WHEREAS, Mississippi's public schools serve the vast majority of the state's students, including those most vulnerable, and represent a cornerstone of community cohesion; and

WHEREAS, the Vicksburg Warren School District is the lifeblood of the Vicksburg community, attracting young families and economic development, and providing the local camaraderie and team spirit that foster the high quality of life our citizens enjoy; and

WHEREAS, "school choice" initiatives—including vouchers, education savings accounts (ESAs), tax-credit scholarship programs, and tax credits for donations to private schools—redirect critical public funds away from local public school districts and instead subsidize private, unaccountable education providers; and

WHEREAS, numerous studies have shown that voucher and ESA programs do not reliably improve student outcomes and more typically result in lower performance when compared to traditional public schools; and

WHEREAS, vouchers give choices to private schools, not students and parents, since private schools decide if they want to accept vouchers, how many and which students they want to admit, and the potentially arbitrary reasons for which they might later dismiss a student, and because private schools often charge tuition well above what the voucher covers; and

WHEREAS, vouchers and other choice programs divert critical public resources to pay private school tuition for students, including many who already attend private schools; and

WHEREAS, the diversion of these resources weakens the financial viability of public school systems, and undermines the public's trust in the state's commitment to a quality education for all students; and

WHEREAS, vouchers are an inefficient use of taxpayer money because they compel taxpayers to support two school systems: one public and one private, the latter of which is not accountable to all the taxpayers supporting it; and

WHEREAS, the state of Mississippi provides no funding for K-12 facilities, and the citizens of Vicksburg have elected to raise their local taxes to ensure smaller classes, world-class facilities, and excellent academic, athletic, fine and performing arts, and other programs; and

WHEREAS, out-of-district students' families do not pay local property taxes in our community, and allowing out-of-district students to attend the Vicksburg Warren School District will create large classes and crowded classrooms, and the citizens of Vicksburg will be responsible for further raising our local taxes to add classrooms to accommodate out-of-district students; and

WHEREAS, the Mississippi Constitution mandates the establishment, maintenance, and support of free public schools, and this constitutional promise is jeopardized when public funds are used to support separate, unequal systems; and

WHEREAS, the Mississippi Constitution further mandates that no religious or other sect or sects shall ever control any part of the school or other educational funds of this state; nor shall any funds be appropriated toward the support of any sectarian school, or to any school that at the time of receiving such appropriation is not conducted as a free school;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that The Board of Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Vicksburg, Mississippi:

1. **Opposes** the establishment or expansion of school choice programs—whether public or private—that divert public funding or support from our community's traditional public schools;
2. **Urges** Warren County's legislative delegation, the Mississippi State Legislature, and the Governor to oppose school choice and invest in strengthening public education by fully funding the state's school funding formula, supporting teachers and staff, and

expanding services that directly benefit students and families within the public school system;

3. **Supports** efforts to ensure accountability and transparency in all publicly funded educational programs, and opposes the use of taxpayer dollars to subsidize private education without equivalent oversight, accountability, or student protections;
4. **Commits** to advocating for policies that prioritize public education as a public good open to all children in Vicksburg and across Mississippi.

SO RESOLVED this the ____10th____ day of December, 2025.

Willis Thompson, Mayor

Thomas J. Mayfield, Alderman

Vickie Y. Bailey, Alderwoman

ATTEST:

CITY CLERK

CERTIFICATE

I, Deborah A. Kaiser-Nickson., the duly appointed, qualified and acting City Clerk and lawful custodian of the Minutes of The Board of Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Vicksburg and Seal of said City, certify that the foregoing is a true and exact copy of a Resolution Adopted by The Board of Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Vicksburg at an adjourned Board Meeting held on December 10, 2025.

WITNESS my signature and official seal of office this the 10th day of December, 2025.

DEBORAH A. KAISER-NICKSON, CITY CLERK