

RESOLUTION OPPOSING ESA VOUCHER PROGRAMS (SB 2)
BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE PHOENIXVILLE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania school districts provide countless academic and extracurricular opportunities for learning and growth of all students, preparing them for higher education and careers; and districts have continued to make steady gains in academic achievement, with Pennsylvania students consistently ranked in or near the top 10 nationally on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) exams for reading and math; and Pennsylvania has been named a national leader in providing Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) education programs; and

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania also maintains a greater high school graduation rate and a larger percentage of students moving on to higher education than the national average; and

WHEREAS, more than 80% of Pennsylvania students enrolled in career and technical centers or programs are achieving at the competent or advanced level on industry-based skills assessments, enabling them to earn credentials leading to meaningful employment or college credit equivalencies at cooperating institutions; and

WHEREAS, public schools strive ensure that each student with a disability receives a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in compliance with federal and state law and regulations, with students and their families having the benefits of a system of procedural safeguards; and

WHEREAS, Education Savings Account (ESA) voucher programs such as those under Senate Bill 2 undermine Pennsylvania's responsibility to ensure every student in every community has equal access to public education; and schools targeted under Senate Bill 2 are already in under-resourced districts; and state money for ESAs would be deducted, on a per-student basis, from a school district's basic education subsidy; and not only would school districts' state aid be sent to unaccountable private schools, but such money could also be diverted to higher education, tutoring services and other "qualified education expenses," not even ensuring students receive full-time educational instruction; and

WHEREAS, in the current version of Senate Bill 2 students who utilize Education Savings Account (ESA) voucher programs may remain in their home district, therefore utilizing additional funding from already under-resourced districts while still participating in programming in district requiring the district to pay the amount of the ESA in addition to the amount spent annually on students; and

WHEREAS, the voucher program in Senate Bill 2 benefits families regardless of income or need, including students already enrolled in private schools or never having attended a targeted public school; and voucher systems in other states have been shown to be vulnerable to financial fraud and abuse; and

WHEREAS, unlike private schools, public school districts accept, educate and protect the rights of all children who come to their doors, as opposed to those institutions that can reject applicants based on any number of factors and are not required to uphold the rights of students with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, public schools are held to strict accountability standards that measure student achievement and academic progress, unlike private schools which are not required to use the same standard assessments and reporting requirements as public schools; and provisions under Senate Bill 2 would not require participating private schools to use the same standardized assessments, making comparison and evaluation of academic progress unachievable; and

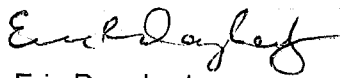
NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Phoenixville Area School District opposes Senate Bill 2 and any other legislation or any effort by the General Assembly to implement tuition vouchers or any other program that would have an effect of a tuition voucher program, and conveys the importance of supporting and improving the quality of all public schools in the Commonwealth.

Adopted this 8th day of February, 2018.

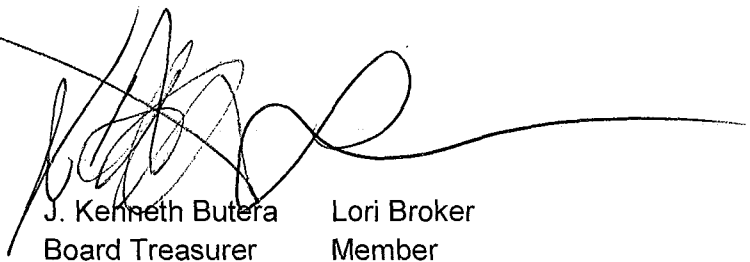
Signed,



Lisa Longo
Board President



Eric Daugherty
Board Vice-President



J. Kenneth Butera
Board Treasurer

Lori Broker
Member



Christopher Caltagirone
Member



Blake Emmanuel
Member

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Member



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Member