



**Cedar Rapids
Community School District**

February 18, 2022

Dear Honorable Iowa Senate Member,

The Cedar Rapids Community School District Board of Directors would like to urge you to defeat Senate Study Bill 3080. The Student First Scholarships proposed by this bill would be detrimental to the public schools of Iowa.

This legislation would weaken support for our public-school students. Rather than shifting scarce resources away from public schools, the State of Iowa should be promoting and fully investing taxpayer resources in public schools. In light of the recent passage of a meager 2.5% SSA, any further resources shifted away from public schools will seriously compromise the ability of our public schools to provide a high-quality education to ALL Iowa students.

Our public schools are held to high standards mandated by the state and federal government. Oversight of public schools is provided by locally elected school boards. These boards are accountable to the public, unlike the governing bodies of private schools. Private schools have no publicly elected oversight.

Establishing a Student First Scholarship program, even if limited to ten thousand students, will lead to decreased funding for our public schools. 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 a free education to all students, regardless of race, gender, or socio-economic status. 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. Private schools are not universally accessible by Iowa families. This legislation would benefit a few, at the expense of the many.

By diverting 30% (\$2,270) of the per pupil cost to rural districts, the legislature would be creating yet another inequity among Iowa school districts. We applaud you for recognizing and mitigating the existing inequities in transportation costs and per pupil spending. Creating this inequity seems counterproductive to your goals.

Rather than diverting tax dollars to private entities, it is imperative to provide our public school with the resources they need. Public school funding has not kept up with costs in recent years. Our public schools need additional funding, not fewer resources.

We believe that Iowa public schools provide a strong educational experience for all students. And that taxpayer funds should only be used for public education. Senate Study Bill 3080 does not serve the majority of the families of Iowa and we encourage you to vote "no" on this legislation.

Sincerely,

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