



**RESOLUTION in Support of the Wisconsin Voucher Taxpayer Transparency Bill
(Assembly Bill 267 and Senate Bill 183)**

WHEREAS, the School District of Janesville Board of Education, administrators, educators, staff, parents, and community members of Janesville are united in our efforts to provide all children with the highest quality educational opportunities possible; and

WHEREAS, the School District of Janesville (SDJ) supports local control and the ability of the elected School Board to make decisions to support the learning of our students; and

WHEREAS, private school voucher advocates have consistently pushed for expanding the use of taxpayer-funded vouchers to pay for tuition for students in private schools in Wisconsin; and

WHEREAS, the Governor and members of the Wisconsin legislature have proposed expanding voucher programs into many more communities and have proposed increasing state payments to voucher schools; and

WHEREAS, a recent memo from the nonpartisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau demonstrated that payments to voucher schools under the Governor's proposed budget would range from \$7,757 to \$8,403 per student by 2018. Including all of Governor Walker's proposed increases, in some cases public school might receive as much as \$1,700 less per student at \$6,703; and

WHEREAS, the same memo also shows that tax dollars for voucher operators are increasing 12 times faster than total public school aids and that voucher payments would more than double over eight years. At the same time, net general aids that support public schools and reduce property taxes would fall by 1.3%; and

WHEREAS, the voucher amount is \$7,323 for pupils in grades K-8 and \$7,969 for pupils in grades 9-12; and

WHEREAS, Assembly Bill 267 and Senate Bill 183, the "Wisconsin Voucher Taxpayer Transparency Bill", authored by state Rep. Dana Wachs (D-Eau Claire) would require property tax bills to include information from the school district where the property is located regarding the amount of any net reduction in state aid, if any, to the district as a result of pupils enrolled in the statewide voucher program, the Racine voucher program, or the Milwaukee voucher program; and

WHEREAS, the increase in statewide property taxes due to school boards levying to offset lost aid due to the voucher system was over \$25 million in 2016-17. The statewide property tax impact is estimated to grow to \$37 million in 2017-18 and to \$47 million in 2018-19; and

WHEREAS, the SDJ was required to levy \$187,180 in taxpayer dollars to be allocated to the statewide voucher program for 2017-18, and local taxpayers are not provided with information about their tax dollars being spent on private and voucher schools. When private school voucher

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programs expand in our community, SDJ loses state aid (to the voucher schools) and our School Board must raise additional property taxes to replace the aid lost to the voucher schools or lose that funding permanently under the state-imposed revenue limits; and

WHEREAS, just as property tax bills show how much money goes to public schools and technical colleges, taxpayers deserve to know the cost of expanding the voucher program; and

WHEREAS, it bears repeating that voucher schools are not bound by most state instructional requirement or graduation standards, are not subject to either the state's accountability system, are not held to the public accountability requirements contained in major federal laws, including special education, are not governed by locally elected school board members who must stand for election or reelection, do not have to accept all students, nor do they have to provide students with the same due process protections in public schools, do not have to employ teachers who have a background in the subjects they teach, and do not have to adhere to open meetings and public records laws; and

WHEREAS, the voters of Wisconsin have never had an opportunity to vote on whether or not Wisconsin should have a taxpayer-supported voucher program; and

FURTHER, multiple studies throughout the nation have shown that school voucher programs do not perform better in reading and math than students in public schools, and the nonpartisan Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau released a five-year longitudinal study in 2011 which concluded that students in Milwaukee using vouchers to attend private schools perform no better on standardized tests than their counterparts in public schools.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the SDJ Board of Education calls on Governor Walker, the Wisconsin State Assembly, and the Wisconsin Senate to support the Wisconsin Voucher Taxpayer Transparency Bill in an effort to be open, honest, and transparent with the taxpayers of Janesville and Wisconsin.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned, being all the members of the School District of Janesville Board of Education, have executed this resolution this ____ day of _____, 2017.

Kevin Murray, President

Cathy Myers, Vice President

Greg Ardrey, Treasurer

Steve Huth, Clerk

Benjamin Dobson, Board Member

Karl Dommershausen, Board Member

Carla Quirk, Board Member

Jim Millard, Board Member

Michelle Haworth, Board Member