Warren County School District

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May 20, 2024

Senator Scott Hutchinson

Senate Box 203021

Harrisburg, PA 17120-3021

Dear Senator Hutchinson:

The Warren County School District respectfully urges the Senate to reject Senate Bill 795 and any associated amendments that divert public tax dollars to support private or religious schools. Strengthening state investment in our public education system remains a crucial goal for Pennsylvania, especially in light of the recent court ruling deeming the current funding model unconstitutional. It's imperative that we now concentrate on the comprehensive process of evaluating and reconstructing our education funding framework to ensure fair allocation of resources, facilities, and opportunities for students across all 500 school districts.

While we appreciate the ongoing discussions surrounding public education funding reform, we firmly believe that considering tuition vouchers before rectifying the constitutional deficiencies in our funding system would be premature and harmful to the majority of Pennsylvania students who rely on public schools. The Warren County School District stands firmly against Senate Bill 795 and any similar proposals, as they would only serve as distractions from the urgent task of equitably funding public education in the upcoming state budget.

Furthermore, introducing initiatives like Senate Bill 795 duplicates existing efforts, such as the Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit program, and undermines the progress made in advancing equitable education funding through avenues like the Community Engaged Schools model. We commend the unanimous passage of SB 97 (Langerholc) Community Engaged Schools by the Senate Education Committee, a proven and research-backed approach to supporting students in underserved communities.

As we navigate the complexities of implementing a constitutionally compliant state budget and address the broader issue of education funding equity, we urge the Senate to reject Senate Bill 795. Vouchers are not a viable solution, especially at this critical juncture. Let us seize this opportunity to propel our public schools forward by prioritizing funding, redefinition, and innovation to meet the needs of all students in Pennsylvania.

Respectfully,

Paul J. Mangione

Board President