



School Social Work Association of America Resolution Statement

Preserving Public Funds for Public Education

The School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA) supports the expenditure of public funds only for public education. The public education system serves all children, regardless of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, religion, disability, gender identity, or geographic location. Diverting public funds to private and religious schools through mechanisms such as vouchers, tax credits, direct tuition payments, education savings accounts, and portability will weaken and undermine the public education system, a critical pillar of a democratic society.

SSWAA believes public funds should be invested in public schools. Unlike public schools, private schools are not accountable to the public and lack any oversight regarding academic standards, professional qualifications, use of funds, disciplinary practices, or requirements to report on student achievement.

Private schools are free to discriminate among students they accept and what services they provide. For example, private schools do not have to honor the civil rights of students with disabilities under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) when their parents enroll them using a private school voucher. The IDEA requirements of a "free appropriate public education, the guarantee of services to meet the student's individual needs, and the right to due process are lost when the child enters a private school using a private school voucher.

In addition, low- and middle-income students and students in rural areas do not have the same access to private schools, even with a school voucher. Very few private school options are available in rural communities, and private school vouchers rarely cover the full tuition for high-quality private schools where they do exist. These schools also are not required to provide transportation, and often other hidden costs, including supplies and textbooks, increase the amount parents may have to underwrite.

Students already enjoy a range of choices in public schools, including traditional schools, charter and magnet schools, and other types of alternative education programs designed to meet students' educational and social and emotional needs.

Social justice, including equal educational opportunity, is a key hallmark of the profession of school social work, as well as the broader social work profession. School social workers are actively engaged within public school systems, working to remove barriers to learning for all students. School social workers foster educational environments that are safe and supportive, assisting children and youth to achieve educational success and social and emotional well-being. They also identify resources to assist families to address a wide range of issues, focused always on ensuring positive supports for children and youth across the educational continuum.

Diverting federal and state funds for private education will undermine the public school system that exists to educate all children and youth and result in poorer outcomes for many students. SSWAA

believes instead that Congress and state lawmakers should focus on a stronger investment in high-quality public education, which is critical to ensuring every child has the opportunity to succeed in school and life.

Approved by the Board of Directors, 7-03-17