

Mead School District
Board of Directors
2323 E Farwell Road
Mead, WA 99021

October 27, 2026

The Honorable Bob Ferguson
Governor of Washington
PO Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Dear Governor Ferguson:

Thank you for the leadership you showed for our region in the aftermath of the Spokane Complex fires. Your willingness to set politics aside, request a federal Major Disaster Declaration, and work to unlock resources for families and communities made a real difference when people here needed it most. We are writing in that same spirit of practical partnership.

The Mead School District Board of Directors respectfully asks you to opt Washington into the Federal Scholarship Tax Credit Program by January 1, 2027. This program creates an additional stream of privately donated resources that public-school students can use for tutoring, technology, transportation, extended-day programs, and special needs supports. **With both state and local education budgets under real pressure, this is one more tool we can use to support students without reducing any of the funding we already receive. Declining this mechanism would deny students practical supports they can use while remaining enrolled in their public schools.**

We have reviewed the concerns raised in Superintendent Reykdal's October 9 letter. We believe several of those points do not accurately reflect how the program works, and are simply objections based on political animosity. The program is funded entirely by voluntary private donations that receive a federal tax credit. It does not draw on state appropriations, local levies, or any other public-education dollars. Existing funding for Mead and every other public school district remains fully intact. New York Governor Kathy Hochul, after reviewing the same federal rules, chose to opt her state in for this reason, she concluded the program can bring additional dollars to students and families without taking a single dollar from public schools or from state or local budgets. The Washington Student Success Coalition, whose members include Microsoft, the Seattle Metro Chamber, the Bellevue Chamber, and education organizations, has similarly endorsed the program as a way to bring substantial new resources to Washington public-school students, for tutoring, after-school programming, and other supports.

Students who attend public schools are eligible for these supports, and eligibility covers the large majority of families in Mead and across the state. Even modest participation by Washington taxpayers could generate tens of millions of dollars a year for students, with higher participation potentially reaching several hundred million. All of it comes at no detriment to the state or district budgets.

If Washington does not opt in by January 1, 2027, Washington taxpayers can still claim the federal tax credit, but their donations would go to support scholarship organizations in other states. Resources generated by Washington taxpayers would then help students elsewhere, while Mead students and other public-school students here would receive no benefit.

The Board has adopted a resolution asking you to elect Washington's participation. We are looking at every practical option that can put more resources in front of our students without adding cost to the district or reducing existing public funding. This program is one of those options. We ask that you consider opting Washington in by January 1, 2027, so public school students across the state can access these supports in the program's first year. We would welcome the chance to discuss how districts can participate constructively.

Thank you again for the way you stepped forward for Spokane families after the fires. We hope you will bring that same willingness to set politics aside and help Washington students by keeping this additional funding source available when budgets are tight.

Sincerely,

BrieAnne Gray

Board Chair

Mead School District Board of Directors

cc: Mead School District Board of Directors

Superintendent of Mead School District