

WE STAND FOR THE FUTURE WE STAND FOR ALL



Equity and innovation will create a world-class school system for all Texans.

Here is Where We Stand on Vouchers

Public Dollars Must Remain in Public Schools

Vouchers are taxpayer-funded government subsidies for private schools and vendors with no accountability for results. Vouchers reduce equitable access to educational

opportunity, weaken rights for students with disabilities, and expose taxpayers to fraud. The Legislature should reject any type of voucher. Instead, the state should strengthen investments in public schools, the only system with the capacity to educate the large and diverse student population of Texas.

Reject Any Types of Vouchers



Education Savings Accounts take money from the public schools and give it to parents so they can enroll their child in a private school.



Tax Credit Scholarships funnel tax credits to corporations or individuals who have donated to scholarship organizations that would pay for students to attend private schools.



Traditional vouchers strip money from public schools in the form of grants parents can use for their children to attend private schools.



Virtual vouchers divert funds from our public schools to private vendors in an effort to create a statewide network of publicly funded private virtual schools.

Implications of COVID-19

As Texas continues to respond to the economic and academic impacts of COVID-19 within our public schools, the Texas Legislature should refrain from investing state resources in programs that fail to support our students with the greatest need and create inequities in the public education system. This includes all forms of voucher programs, such as vouchers for remote or virtual learning from private vendors.

What Makes Public Schools a Good Investment?

Only public schools can deliver on the promise of quality school choice with transparency, accountability, and equity. State and local policy changes over the years have brought greater autonomy to our public schools, allowing them to customize education based on student, community, and industry needs. Examples include magnet schools, intradistrict transfers, in-district charter schools, open enrollment policies, and early college high schools.

The evidence is clear, vouchers do not deliver improved outcomes or educational innovation. They also lack transparency both in the use of taxpayer dollars and public accountability for educational outcomes.

A Comparison of Public Schools and Private School Vouchers



	Public Schools	Private Schools
Required to accept all students	✓	✗
Require annual assessment aligned to state curriculum to track student progress	✓	✗
Reporting and accountability for use of public funds	✓	✗
Public reporting and accountability for student performance	✓	✗
Require closure or state management for multiple years of low performance	✓	✗
Comply with federal protections for students with disabilities	✓	✗

What Does the Latest Research Say About the Effectiveness of Voucher Programs?

Research shows students enrolled in voucher programs have reduced scores on math state assessments. “We’ve started to see persistent negative effects of receiving a voucher on student math achievement,” said Joe Waddington, a University of Kentucky professor who has studied the Indiana voucher program. Other studies conducted in Louisiana and Ohio also showed students’ continued academic decline when enrolled in a voucher program.¹

Policy Recommendations

- ▶ Support quality school choice and innovative programs within the public school system.
- ▶ Oppose any form of taxpayer subsidy to private schools and vendors, such as Tax Credit Scholarships, Education Savings Accounts, vouchers for students in special education, and virtual vouchers.

¹ Barnum, Matt. *Do school vouchers ‘work’? As the debate heats up, here’s what research really says.* Chalkbeat. Retrieved from <https://www.chalkbeat.org/2017/7/12/21108235/do-school-vouchers-work-as-the-debate-heats-up-here-s-what-research-really-says>. February 21, 2020.

² Samuels, Christina. *What Can New Voucher Studies Tell Us About Students With Disabilities?* Education Week. Retrieved from https://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/speced/2017/06/voucher_studies_students_disabilities.html. June 27, 2017

Voucher Programs Fail To Protect The Rights of All Students

There are persistent negative effects on both math and English language arts scores on state assessments for special education students enrolled in voucher programs. The recent study of the Indiana voucher program showed special education students performed worse than students in the study as a group.²

In addition, vouchers do not provide the support students and their families need. This is especially true for students with special education classifications. Special education students give up their rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act when they enroll in a private school.

Public schools offer more avenues for parents to advocate for their child, including filing a complaint for discrimination with their state’s education department, a civil rights complaint to the U.S. Department of Education, or a civil lawsuit. Because voucher programs fail to adequately serve and protect the rights of all students, they limit parents’ educational choices for their children rather than expand them.