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School Choice in the States: *A Policy Landscape*

Acknowledgements

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- **Providing research and development support to the Innovation Lab Network**
by facilitating the design and implementation of a plan for research and evaluation
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by organizing internal resources, growing a web presence, and pursuing ways to better connect members with external expertise

For more information about this publication, please contact the author, Jennifer Davis, at jenniferd@ccsso.org.

School Choice in the States: A Policy Landscape

Executive Summary

The issue of school choice policy – whether and how to offer students the option of attending a school other than the one assigned by their residence – is a hotly debated question with substantial implications for chief state school officers. In order to provide support to its members around this issue, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) seeks to address the often-asked question “What are other states doing?” by creating an ideologically-agnostic landscape analysis of school choice policies across the states.

By highlighting policy coverage and characteristics from *best available data* across the states and for the full spectrum of existing school choice options, CCSSO intends to help chiefs contextualize their policy sets within national and international trends. The paper does *not* attempt to comment on which policy trends are favorable, nor does it answer key questions about outcomes or consequences of specific policies within the states. Nevertheless, the policy landscape provides a knowledge base upon which subsequent inquiry can occur.

Key findings from the policy landscape analysis include

General trends

- All states make at least some alternatives to residence-based enrollment available to at least some students, while no state provides all options to all students. Open enrollment and homeschooling policies are most common across states; private school voucher and tuition tax credit policies are least common.
- **Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Louisiana, and Wisconsin** each offer 10 of the 11 types of school choice to at least some students.
- Although it is difficult to gauge which states serve the most students through various school choice policies, **Florida** and the **District of Columbia** may be among those with the most coverage. States whose policies may cover the smallest percentages of students likely include more rural states such as **Vermont, West Virginia, and Wyoming**.

Trends in open enrollment

- Open enrollment is available in some form to at least some students in all states.
- Approximately 15% of school-age children choose a school other than their school of residence through open enrollment programs.
- Open enrollment is popular internationally, with 75% of Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) member and partner nations offering free choice of public schools to all students. Only a small minority of countries restrict this choice within districts, municipalities, or regions.

Trends in public support for private school choice

- 38 states and the District of Columbia offer some form of publicly-subsidized support to students choosing private school, most often in the form of transportation or textbooks.

- Voucher and tuition tax credit programs are relatively scarce and serve less than a fraction of a percentage of all school-age children in the U.S.
- Only 11 states and the District of Columbia offer voucher programs, which typically target low-income or special-needs students. **Wisconsin** serves the highest percentage of its student population at 2.7%.
- Only 14 states provide tuition tax credits for private schooling, most often targeting low-income or special needs students. Among types of tuition tax credits, tax credit scholarships are the fastest-growing. **Arizona** serves the highest percentage of its student population at 2.8%.
- Vouchers and tuition tax credits are uncommon internationally.

Trends in charter schools

- Charter schools are available in 41 states and the District of Columbia and serve 3.7% of students nationwide. The **District of Columbia, Arizona, Colorado, Michigan, and Delaware** enroll the highest proportions of students in charter schools.
- All states with charter schools require the application of state standards and assessments in charter schools, and most states require state reporting of student performance data.
- Less than half of the states with charter schools require all teachers to be certified without exceptions, and half exempt all charter schools from collective bargaining.
- Half of the states with charter schools restrict growth through caps, although some states enable faster growth by allowing more than one authorizing option.

Trends in online and virtual schools

- Among state-sponsored virtual options, full-time multi-district online (FTMDO) schools and supplemental state virtual schools are growing in prevalence, but currently only serve a fraction of 1% of all school-age children in the U.S. Twenty-four states offer FTMDO schools and 30 states feature state virtual schools.
- **Arizona** serves the highest percentage of students through FTMDO schools, while **Florida** and **North Carolina** serve the highest percentages of students through state virtual schools.

Trends in homeschooling

- Homeschooling is available in all states and serves 3% of U.S. school age children.
- Most states require parental notification of the intent to homeschool, and a slight majority of states also require accountability through testing or professional evaluation. Relatively few states (6) mandate additional requirements such as curriculum approval, parental qualifications, or home visits.
- Homeschooling is relatively uncommon internationally, offered in 53% of OECD member and partner nations and covering only 0.4% of students globally. Most countries with homeschooling require the use of standardized curriculum, while a minority stipulates employment and certification standards for homeschoolers.

The following pages briefly define each type of school choice and provide further information about national and international trends in policy coverage and characteristics.

Introduction

The question of whether and how to offer students the option of attending a school other than the one assigned by their residence is a hotly debated issue with substantial implications for policymaking. Whether pursued as an effort to increase the availability of high-quality options in communities without equal access; to drive improvement through marketplace competition; or to promote individual liberty, school choice options are undoubtedly increasing across America. Yet in the midst of expansion, the body of research literature suggests that the impact of school choice programs on outcomes — such as student success, school and community composition, and system improvement — is poorly understood and can vary greatly across programs. Some research shows positive effects, while other research shows negative effects or unintended consequences. Numerous studies show no generalizable effects, suggesting that outcomes heavily depend on context and policy design.

Therefore, in order to support its member chief state school officers in making critical decisions about school choice policies, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) has undertaken an effort to encourage the discussion of school choice policies across its membership. As an initial follow-up to its recent policy statement on school choice (below), CCSSO has attempted to address the often-asked question “What are other states doing?” by creating an ideologically-agnostic landscape analysis of school choice policies across the states. By highlighting policy coverage and characteristics from best available data across the states and for the full spectrum of existing school choice options, the paper intends to help chiefs contextualize their policy sets within national trends. The paper does *not* attempt to comment on which policy sets are “right,” nor does it answer questions about outcomes or consequences. Nevertheless, the policy landscape provides a knowledge base upon which subsequent inquiry can occur.

CCSSO Policy Statement on Opportunities and Options for Students

As state chiefs, we commit to ensuring that every student has access to a high quality education resulting in readiness for college and career. To meet this goal, we will pursue innovations in policy, practice, and structure to offer high quality options to meet the needs of all students, regardless of circumstance.

Further, we commit to developing and expanding learning opportunities that are not bound by time and place so that all students have opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills they need. We acknowledge the responsibility of each state to determine the guidance and support that parents and students will need to make decisions about educational opportunities throughout the K-12 experience. We recognize as well that states believe that it is their responsibility to accelerate all schools toward greatness.

CCSSO affirms the authority and responsibility of each state to determine how choices and options will be made available and to safeguard quality and equity through accountability. CCSSO will provide support, guidance, and information to states as they pursue appropriate educational options to students within the laws, norms, and contexts of each state.

Background: Types and Prevalence of School Choice

A variety of types of school choice exist today, each with its own rules, target populations, scope, and structures. This paper focuses only on publicly-funded school choice, although a number of privately funded options exist in every state. Figure 1 illustrates the five main categories and subcategories that comprise the focus for this landscape analysis. The brief definitions that follow distinguish between the types of school choice and describe their recent growth.

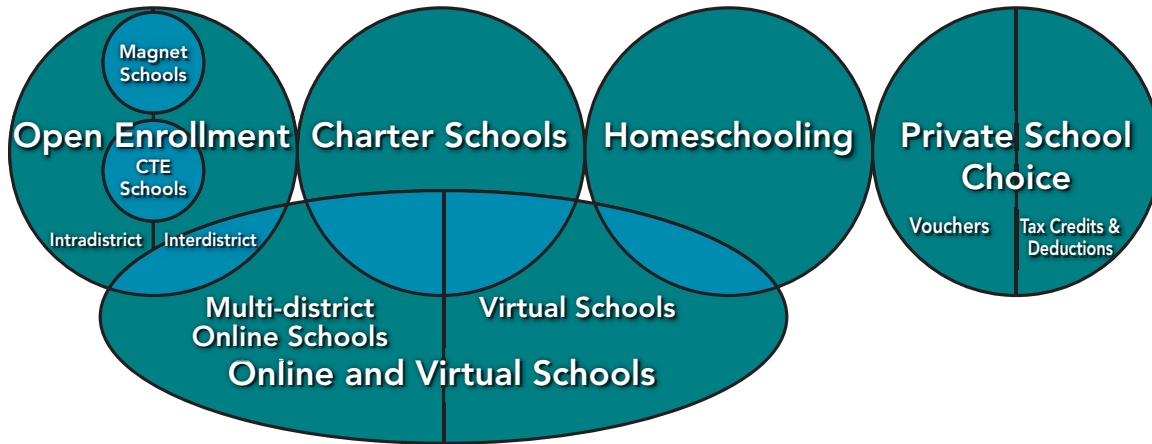


Figure 1. Conceptual Diagram of School Choice Types Included in the Policy Landscape. Size of individual categorical shapes is *not* meant to be indicative of program size or scope.

Open enrollment describes district or statewide choice programs that permit families to choose a public school other than the one assigned to them by their residence. *Interdistrict* open enrollment allows families to choose schools in other districts, whereas *intradistrict* choice allows families to send their children to a different school within the district. The most prevalent open enrollment schools are *magnet schools*, which are usually governed by a local school district board but may permit either intra- or interdistrict enrollment. Magnet schools often feature a topical or pedagogical focus and receive some supplemental federal funding. Another type of school that often operates with open enrollment is a *Career and Technical Education (CTE)* school. Whereas CTE programs may exist within schools, many CTE schools offer CTE courses exclusively and enroll students from within or across districts.

Open enrollment programs date back to the introduction of alternative schools in the 1960s. Magnet schools rapidly increased in the 1970s and 1980s with the aim of increasing racial integration. Today, inter- and intradistrict open enrollment plans are the most widespread form of school choice, with close to half of all school districts offering some form of mandatory or voluntary open enrollment (Miron, Welner, Hinchey, & Mathis, Eds., 2012) in which somewhere around 15% of American school-age children participate.¹

¹ Percentage extrapolated from Grady & Bielick (2010).

Public support for private school choice describes several means by which states support student attendance at private schools using public resources. States typically provide private school choice through voucher programs or tuition tax credits and deductions, although additional state support for private school enrollment may be provided through state-funded transportation, textbooks, and learning aides. *Voucher programs* provide payment for families to enroll their children at a private school of their choice. Very few states currently have operating voucher programs, and those that do typically target families with special needs students or low-income families. *Tuition tax credits and deductions* provide a less direct (and therefore often more politically viable) means for states to use public funding toward private school choice. States may give income tax credits or deductions to families who send their children to private school. Alternatively, many states have established so-called “neovouchers” in which a nonprofit organization is privately established to grant scholarships to students who attend private schools. The state then offers tax credits to individuals or corporations who donate to the scholarship fund.

The idea of school vouchers was popularized by economist Milton Friedman and put into practice in the 1970s, though they were sometimes used as a way to perpetuate segregation through vouchers to privately segregated schools. Since then, voucher and tax credit programs have shifted to specifically assist low-income students in urban centers. In the 1990s the first neovoucher tax credit was created, and it is now growing considerably faster than any other form of private school choice. Still, voucher and tax credit programs together serve a mere 0.3% of school age children in the U.S. (Miron et al., 2012).

Charter schools are nonsectarian public schools that provide school choice under a charter approved by an authorizing entity that is either legislatively recognized or publicly appointed. Like conventional schools, charters receive local, state, and taxpayer funds, but they are exempt from many state or local regulations such as those pertaining to enrollment, autonomy, human capital, and so on. In exchange for greater flexibility, charters are held to contractual performance targets that, if not met, could result in a revoked or non-renewed charter. The nature of charter contracts and the performance targets therein differs greatly from state to state. The first charter school was founded in Minnesota in 1991. Since then, charters have grown to enroll roughly 3.7% of all public and private school students in the U.S. (Miron et al., 2012).

Online and virtual schools fall within the broad spectrum of recently-emerging online programs. Distinguished from supplemental online programs to which students within existing brick-and-mortar schools can enroll, which are not within the scope of this landscape, *multi-district online schools* (also known as *cyber schools*) enroll students full-time and are often either charter- or district-run. By contrast, *state virtual schools* typically offer supplemental programs to students

who enroll from existing brick-and-mortar schools across the state. Although state virtual schools are not full-time, they are included in the policy landscape in response to increasing public discourse around programs of this type. State virtual schools are state-run, unlike single-district supplemental programs that are not included in this report.

Multi-district online schools are relatively recent choice options, dating to the 1990s and later, and serve only a small fraction of a percentage of school-age children in the U.S. (Watson, Murin, Vashaw, Gemin, & Rapp, 2012). State virtual schools are equally young and similarly low in overall coverage, and are growing at a slower rate than cyber schools, although the exact number of students served is difficult to discern because enrollment is typically counted by courses rather than students. The fastest growing form of online learning is single-district supplemental online or blended programs, but because these are not state-run they fall outside the scope of this report.

Homeschooling describes the education of children at home by parents or tutors in the absence of formal enrollment in public or private schools. States differ in their guidelines or requirements for homeschooling as well as the extent to which they provide supplemental resources for homeschooled children. Homeschoolers may also make use of supplemental online programs such as state virtual schools. Homeschooling grew in prevalence during the 1980s and was offered in all 50 states by the mid-90s (Mead, 2012). As a group, homeschoolers represent the equivalent of 3.4% of all public and private school students (or 3.1% of all school-aged children) (Miron et al., 2012).

All together, these various forms of publicly-funded school choice currently serve approximately 22% of school-aged children. Figure 2 illustrates the relative prevalence of each school choice option in 2011-12, while Figure 3 illustrates relative rates of growth since 1991.

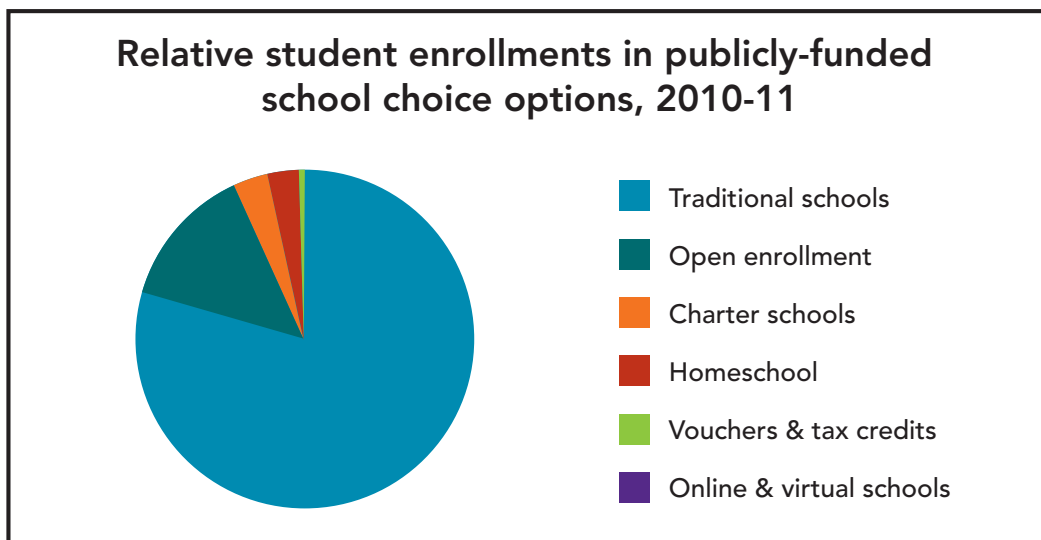


Figure 2. Relative student enrollments in publicly-funded choice options, 2010-11. Data sources: National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Common Core of Data (2012); Miron et al. (2012); and Watson et al. (2012).

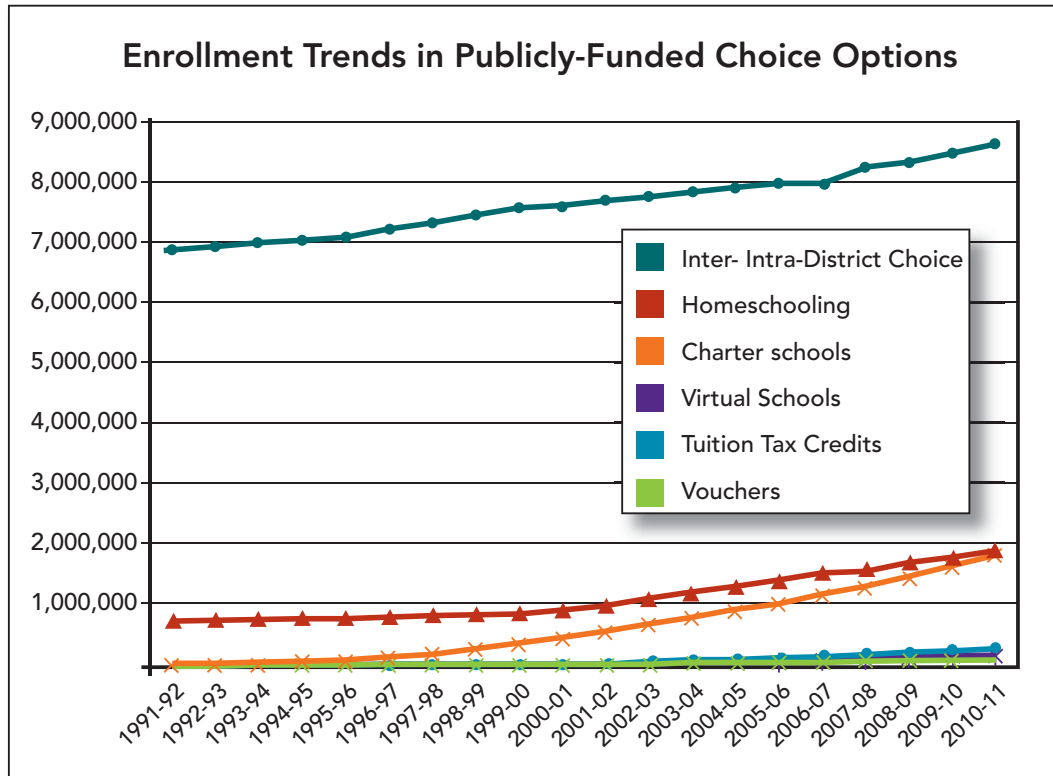


Figure 3. Estimated enrollment trends in publicly-funded choice options in the United States, 1991 to 2011. Reprinted with permission from Miron et al., (2012).

Trends in School Choice Options Across the States

Overview

Of the 11 types of school choice included in this policy scan, all states make at least some options available to at least some students, but no state makes all options available (Table 1). The choice options most commonly provided across the states (not accounting for important differences in program size and coverage) are homeschooling (100% of states), interdistrict open enrollment (82%), and charter schools (80%). Yet when actual numbers of students served are accounted for, actual coverage is much smaller. The choice policies least often provided are private school voucher programs (available in only 24% of states) and private school tuition tax credits and deductions (27%).

When states are compared, the states employing the most diverse portfolios of choice options are **Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Louisiana, and Wisconsin**, each offering 10 of the 11 types of school choice to at least some students. **Arizona, Colorado, Michigan, Utah, and Virginia** follow, each offering 9 types of school choice.

Of course, making more choice options available does not necessarily equate to having more students enrolled in choice options, since some options may target only small regions, populations, or subgroups within the state. Accounting for the coverage of programs is tricky, however, because there may be overlap between some options (e.g., some online schools may be charters), and because accurate counts of interdistrict and intradistrict open enrollment participation were not available at a state-by-state level. The latter is particularly problematic because open enrollment coverage nationwide is double that of all other options combined. Nevertheless, with these caveats in mind, a scan across the policy landscape suggests that the **District of Columbia** and **Florida** may be among the jurisdictions with the highest percentages of students served across all programs (Table 2). Other states whose percentages may exceed the national average likely include **Arizona, Idaho, Michigan, North Carolina, South Carolina**, and possibly others. States that may have the least percentages of students served by publicly funded choice programs likely include **Vermont, West Virginia, and Wyoming**; however without more accurate data, none of these statements are certain.

In the following sections, we will consider trends in both coverage and policy characteristics for each type of school choice separately.

Table 1: Summary of school choice options currently available to at least some students in each state

	Open Enrollment				Private School Choice				Charter schools	Online & Virtual Schools		Home-school
	Magnet schools, 2012	CTE schools, 2011	Intra-district open enrollment, 2011	Inter-district open enrollment, 2011	Voucher programs, 2012	Tuition tax credits & deductions, 2012	Other state support to private school choice, 2012	Charter schools, 2013		Full-time multi-district online schools, 2012	State virtual schools, 2012	
Key: Yes = Option is available to at least some students No = Option is not available * = available only in rural communities without schools ** = program closed in 2012												
Alabama	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Alaska	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Arizona	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Arkansas	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
California	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Colorado	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Connecticut	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
District of Columbia	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Delaware	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Florida	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Georgia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hawaii	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Idaho	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Illinois	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Indiana	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Iowa	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Kansas	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Kentucky	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Louisiana	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Maine	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes*	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Maryland	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Massachusetts	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Michigan	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Minnesota	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

Mississippi	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Missouri	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Montana	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nebraska	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No**	Yes	Yes
Nevada	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
New Hampshire	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
New Jersey	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
New Mexico	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
New York	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
North Carolina	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
North Dakota	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ohio	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Oklahoma	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Oregon	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Pennsylvania	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Rhode Island	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
South Carolina	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
South Dakota	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tennessee	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No**	Yes	Yes
Texas	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Utah	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Vermont	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes*	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Virginia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Washington	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
West Virginia	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Wisconsin	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Wyoming	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Number of states with option available to at least some students	35	39	31	42	14	14	27%	14	14	34	67%	41	24	28	51
Percentage of states with option available to at least some students	69%	76%	61%	82%	27%	27%	27%	27%	27%	67%	47%	80%	47%	55%	100%

Table 2: Relative coverage of school choice options in each state

	Open Enrollment					Private school choice		Charter Schools		Online and virtual schools		Home-school
	% magnet schools in state, 2012	% students in magnet schools, 2012	CTE Schools as a percentage of all high schools, 2011	Intradistrict program participation, 2011	interdistrict program participation, 2011	% Students served by private school voucher programs, 2012	% Students served by tax credits and deductions for private school, 2012	% charter schools in state, 2012	% students in charter schools, 2012	% students enrolled in full-time multi-district online school, 2011	State virtual school course enrollment / state public HS population, 2011	
Alabama	2%	2%	10%	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	17%	Y
Alaska	3%	5%	1%	M	—	—	—	5%	4%	—	—	Y
Arizona	—	—	36%	M	M	<1%	2.8%	22%	12%	3%	—	Y
Arkansas	4%	5%	8%	V, Mf	Mf, Ml	—	—	3%	2%	<1%	2%	Y
California	†	5%	5%	M	V	—	—	8%	6%	<1%	—	Y
Colorado	1%	1%	2%	M	M	<1%	—	9%	9%	2%	1%	Y
Connecticut	5%	4%	9%	V	V	—	—	2%	1%	—	<1%	Y
District of Columbia	2%	4%	—	—	—	2.3%	—	42%	38%	—	—	Y
Delaware	1%	2%	21%	M	M	—	—	8%	7%	—	—	Y
Florida	9%	17%	8%	Mf	—	0.9%	1.4%	10%	6%	<1%	33%	Y
Georgia	3%	4%	<1%	Ml	V	0.2%	0.5%	3%	3%	<1%	3%	Y
Hawaii	—	—	—	V	—	—	—	11%	5%	1%	3%	Y
Idaho	<1%	<1%	7%	M	M	—	—	5%	6%	2%	18%	Y
Illinois	2%	4%	8%	M	—	—	—	1%	2%	—	1%	Y
Indiana	1%	1%	8%	M	V	0.4%	0.6%	3%	2%	<1%	—	Y
Iowa	—	—	—	—	M	—	2.2%	1%	<1%	—	<1%	Y
Kansas	2%	3%	—	—	V	—	—	2%	1%	1%	—	Y
Kentucky	3%	6%	24%	Mf	Mf	—	—	—	—	—	1%	Y
Louisiana	6%	6%	2%	M*	M*	0.3%	new	5%	4%	—	5%	Y
Maine	<1%	<1%	22%	M	V	—	—	†	—	—	—	Y
Maryland	6%	10%	9%	—	—	—	—	3%	2%	—	—	Y
Massachusetts	†	—	13%	M	V	—	—	3%	3%	<1%	—	Y
Michigan	12%	14%	3%	Mf	V	—	—	8%	7%	<1%	3%	Y
Minnesota	3%	4%	2%	—	M	—	—	7%	4%	1%	—	Y
Mississippi	2%	1%	35%	—	M	<1%	—	<1%	<1%	—	3%	Y

Missouri	1%	2%	12%	—	M	—	—	—	2%	2%	—	1%	Y
Montana	—	—	—	—	M	—	—	—	—	—	—	10%	Y
Nebraska	—	—	—	M	M	—	—	—	—	—	—	<1%	Y
Nevada	4%	8%	1%	—	V	—	—	—	6%	3%	2%	—	Y
New Hampshire	—	—	<1%	V	V	—	new	—	3%	1%	—	18%	Y
New Jersey	—	—	15%	—	V	—	—	—	3%	2%	—	—	Y
New Mexico	<1%	<1%	1%	M	V, Mf	—	—	—	8%	5%	—	4%	Y
New York	‡	—	3%	—	V	—	—	—	3%	2%	—	—	Y
North Carolina	5%	5%	<1%	—	—	—	new	—	4%	3%	—	21%	Y
North Dakota	—	—	6%	—	V	—	—	—	—	—	—	8%	Y
Ohio	—	—	8%	M	V	1.4%	—	—	9%	6%	2%	—	Y
Oklahoma	—	—	—	—	M	<1%	new	—	1%	1%	1%	—	Y
Oregon	—	—	—	—	V	—	—	—	8%	4%	1%	—	Y
Pennsylvania	2%	2%	13%	—	V	—	2.3%	—	4%	5%	2%	—	Y
Rhode Island	—	—	22%	—	V	—	0.2%	—	4%	3%	—	—	Y
South Carolina	—	11%	19%	—	V	—	—	—	3%	2%	1%	6%	Y
South Dakota	—	—	2%	M	M	—	—	—	—	—	—	10%	Y
Tennessee	2%	2%	6%	V	V	—	—	—	1%	1%	—	2%	Y
Texas	—	4%	—	V, Mf	V	—	—	—	6%	3%	<1%	1%	Y
Utah	2%	2%	4%	M	M	—	—	—	7%	7%	<1%	8%	Y
Vermont	1%	<1%	—	—	M**	—	—	—	—	—	—	<1%	Y
Virginia	8%	11%	12%	V	V	—	new	—	<1%	<1%	<1%	2%	Y
Washington	—	—	3%	M	M	—	—	—	—	—	<1%	—	Y
West Virginia	—	—	24%	V	V	—	—	—	—	—	—	4%	Y
Wisconsin	<1%	<1%	1%	V	M	2.7%	—	—	9%	4%	<1%	1%	Y
Wyoming	—	—	—	V	—	—	—	—	1%	<1%	1%	—	Y
SOURCES:	National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (2012)		National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium (2012)	ECS State Notes (2011), ECS State Policy Database (2012), Miron (2012)	National School Board Association (2012), American Federation for Children (2012), Center on Education Policy (2011), Miron (2012), ECS State Policy Database (2012)		National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (2012)		National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (2012)		Watson (2012), Miron (2012)		Home School Legal Defense Association (2012)

‡ Reporting standards not met. Data reported for less than 80 percent of schools in the state or jurisdiction.

* Recovery district
 * Mandatory for recovery district, voluntary all others

** Mandatory for high schools, voluntary all others
 Mf: Mandatory for low-income families V: Voluntary

Legend:
 M: Mandatory
 Y: Yes / available
 —: No / not available

Open Enrollment

Open enrollment is available in some form in every state, and is the most prevalent form of publicly-funded school choice, serving roughly 15% of students across the U.S.² Thirty-one states have intradistrict open enrollment policies in which district participation is either mandatory (16 states), voluntary (10 states), or mandatory specifically for low-income students or students in failing schools (6 states; Table 3). Forty-two states have interdistrict open enrollment policies, but the majority of these policies allow district participation to be voluntary (23 states) as opposed to mandatory (15 states). An additional 3 states require district participation in interdistrict open enrollment specifically for low-income students and students in failing schools.

Since open enrollment programs often require students to travel beyond their neighborhood, the cost of transportation is a key policy consideration. Policies assigning responsibility for open enrollment transportation costs vary by state, with a mix of intradistrict programs placing the burden on the district and/or on the parent or guardian. Interdistrict open enrollment transportation policies are similarly mixed, with 4 states placing burden on the sending district, 1 state on the receiving district, 11 states on the parent, and 8 states stipulating a shared burden among sending and receiving districts and/or the parent or guardian.

While specific numbers of students participating in intradistrict or interdistrict open enrollment in each state are difficult to obtain, data showing enrollment in magnet schools and CTE schools – two types of specialized schools that operate with open enrollment– are more readily available. NCES Common Core of Data (2012) shows that in 2009-10, 34 states and the District of Columbia provided magnet schools that enrolled roughly 2 million students nationwide (4% of public school students). **Florida** had the highest percentage of public school students enrolled in magnet schools (17%), followed by **Michigan** (14%), **South Carolina**, **Virginia**, and **Maryland**. **The Virgin Islands** also offered magnet schools which enrolled 9% of its student population (Figure 4).

Diploma-granting CTE schools that offer CTE courses either exclusively or primarily are available in 39 states. According to the National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium (2012), **Arizona**, **Mississippi**, **Kentucky**, and **West Virginia**, have the highest percentage of CTE schools among public high schools (Figure 5). However, because many of these schools serve a relatively small student population, and because most are specific to high school students, the actual percentages of students served by CTE schools is much lower than what Table 3 might suggest.

² Percentage extrapolated from Grady & Bielick (2010).

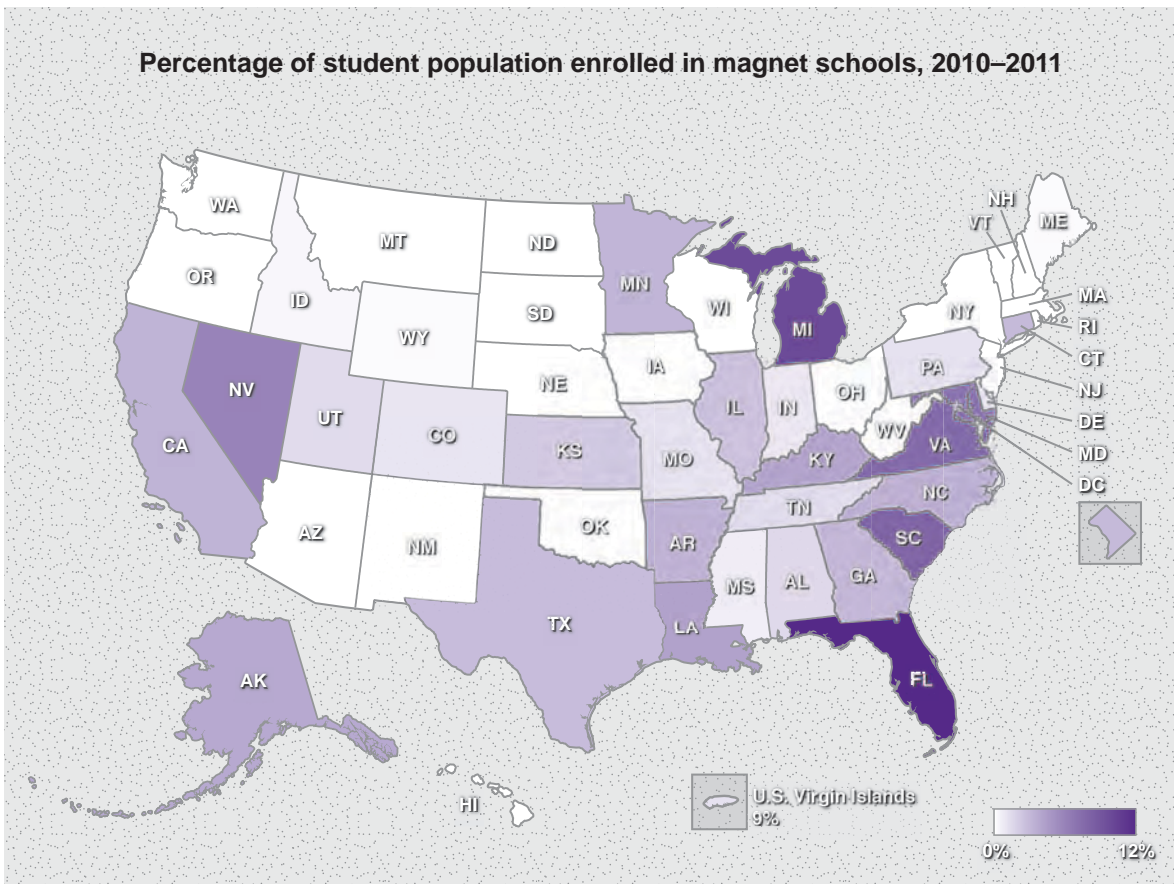


Figure 4. Percentage of student population enrolled in magnet schools, 2010-2011. Source: NCES Common Core of Data (2012).

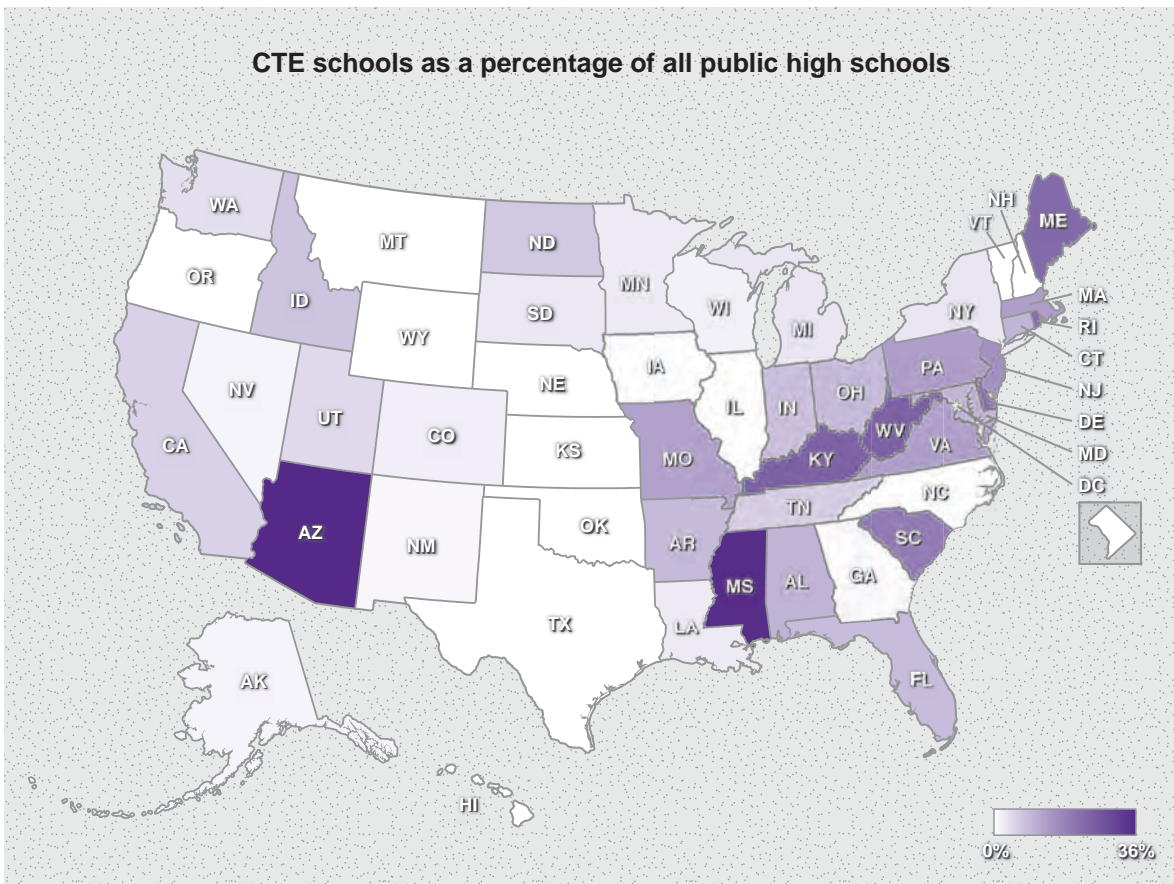


Figure 5. CTE schools as a percentage of all public high schools, 2010-2011. Source: National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium (2012).

Table 3: Open enrollment policy coverage and characteristics

	Open Enrollment											
	Magnet school coverage		CTE school coverage		Intradistrict Policy Characteristics			Interdistrict Policy Characteristics				
	% schools in state 2012	% students in state, 2012	Schools as a percentage of all high schools, 2011	All students, 2011	Low-income students, 2011	Students in failing schools, 2011	Transportation costs, 2011	All students, 2011	Low-income students, 2011	Students in failing schools, 2011	Transportation costs, 2011	
Alabama	2%	2%	10%	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Alaska	3%	5%	1%	M	M	M	D	—	—	—	—	—
Arizona	—	—	36%	M	—	—	P	M	M	—	—	—
Arkansas	4%	5%	8%	V	—	M	—	—	M	M	S or P	—
California	‡	5%	5%	M	—	—	D or P	V	—	V	—	—
Colorado	1%	1%	2%	M	M	M	—	M	V	—	—	—
Connecticut	5%	4%	9%	V	—	—	P	V	—	—	—	—
District of Columbia	2%	4%	<1%	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Delaware	1%	2%	21%	M	—	—	P	M	—	—	—	P
Florida	9%	17%	8%	—	—	M	D	—	—	—	—	—
Georgia	3%	4%	<1%	—	M	—	P	V	—	—	—	P
Hawaii	—	—	<1%	V	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Idaho	<1%	<1%	7%	M	—	—	P	M	—	—	—	P
Illinois	2%	4%	8%	M	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Indiana	1%	1%	8%	M	—	—	—	V	—	—	—	P
Iowa	—	—	<1%	—	—	—	P	M	—	—	—	—
Kansas	2%	3%	<1%	—	—	—	—	V	—	—	—	S-R
Kentucky	3%	6%	24%	—	—	M	D	—	—	M	—	—
Louisiana	6%	6%	2%	M*	—	—	—	M*	—	—	—	—
Maine	<1%	<1%	22%	M	—	—	—	V	—	—	—	S or P
Maryland	6%	10%	9%	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Massachusetts	‡	‡	13%	M	—	—	—	V	—	—	—	P
Michigan	12%	14%	3%	—	—	M	—	V	—	—	—	P
Minnesota	3%	4%	2%	—	—	—	—	M	—	—	—	R or P
Mississippi	2%	1%	35%	—	—	—	—	M	—	—	—	S-R or P

Missouri	1%	2%	12%	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	S	
Montana	—	—	<1%	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	S-R	
Nebraska	—	—	<1%	M	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	P	
Nevada	4%	8%	1%	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	S	
New Hampshire	—	—	<1%	V	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	P	
New Jersey	—	—	15%	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	S	
New Mexico	<1%	—	1%	M	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
New York	‡	—	3%	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
North Carolina	5%	5%	<1%	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
North Dakota	—	—	6%	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	S	
Ohio	—	—	8%	M	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	R	
Oklahoma	—	—	<1%	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	S-R	
Oregon	—	—	<1%	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Pennsylvania	2%	2%	13%	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Rhode Island	—	—	22%	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
South Carolina	—	11%	19%	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
South Dakota	—	—	2%	M	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	S or R	
Tennessee	2%	2%	6%	V	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	P	
Texas	—	4%	<1%	V	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Utah	2%	2%	4%	M	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	P	
Vermont	1%	<1%	<1%	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Virginia	8%	11%	12%	V	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Washington	—	—	3%	M	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
West Virginia	—	—	24%	V	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Wisconsin	<1%	<1%	1%	V	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	P	
Wyoming	—	—	<1%	V	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
SOURCES:	National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (2012)	National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (2012)	National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium (2012)	ECS State Notes (2011), ECS State Policy Database (2012), Miron (2012)	ECS State Notes (2011), ECS State Policy Database (2012), Miron (2012)	ECS State Notes (2011), ECS State Policy Database (2012), Miron (2012)	ECS State Notes (2011), ECS State Policy Database (2012), Miron (2012)	ECS State Notes (2011), ECS State Policy Database (2012), Miron (2012)	ECS State Notes (2011), ECS State Policy Database (2012), Miron (2012)	ECS State Notes (2011), ECS State Policy Database (2012), Miron (2012)	ECS State Notes (2011), ECS State Policy Database (2012), Miron (2012)	ECS State Notes (2011), ECS State Policy Database (2012), Miron (2012)	ECS State Notes (2011), ECS State Policy Database (2012), Miron (2012)	ECS State Notes (2011), ECS State Policy Database (2012), Miron (2012)	ECS State Notes (2011), ECS State Policy Database (2012), Miron (2012)	ECS State Notes (2011), ECS State Policy Database (2012), Miron (2012)	ECS State Notes (2011), ECS State Policy Database (2012), Miron (2012)	ECS State Notes (2011), ECS State Policy Database (2012), Miron (2012)	ECS State Notes (2011), ECS State Policy Database (2012), Miron (2012)	ECS State Notes (2011), ECS State Policy Database (2012), Miron (2012)

‡ Reporting standards not met. Data reported for less than 80 percent of schools in the state or jurisdiction.

Legend:
D: District responsible
M: District participation is mandatory

P: Parent or guardian responsible
R: Receiving district responsible
S: Sending district responsible

* Recovery district
St: State
V: District participation is voluntary
-- : Not available

* Mandatory for recovery district, voluntary all others
** Mandatory for high schools, voluntary all others

Public Support for Private School Choice

Currently, 38 states and the District of Columbia offer some form of publicly-funded support to students choosing private school, although support programs tend to be small and targeted toward low-income students, students at failing schools, or special needs students (Table 4). Most common forms of support include compensating transportation costs (28 states) and providing textbooks and learning aides (19 states), although the majority of states prohibit the use of public resources toward private schools that are religiously affiliated.

Private school voucher programs are relatively uncommon, with 11 states and the District of Columbia providing programs (2 of which are available only to select counties or cities within the state, Figure 6). According to the American Federation for Children, **Wisconsin** (Milwaukee and Raikes) and the **District of Columbia** serve the highest percentages of students through voucher programs, at 2.7% and 2.3%, respectively.³ The median percentage of students served among states with voucher programs is much lower at 0.2%. All states with voucher programs require recipient students to take statewide tests with the exception of Florida, whose state test is made available by parental request.

Private school tuition tax credit and deduction programs are also relatively scarce and are offered in 14 states. Tax credit scholarships, also known as “neovouchers,” are the most common and fastest growing tax credit policy (see the “Background” section for a more detailed description). Only six states provide more direct tax incentives for private schooling such as individual tax credits or deductions. Like vouchers, most tax credit policies target low- or middle-income families or families with special needs students, although four of the states have no such restrictions (Figure 7). In terms of the proportion of students served, **Arizona** provides tuition tax scholarships to the highest percentage of in-state students (2.8%), followed by **Pennsylvania** (2.3%) and **Iowa** (2.2%).⁴

3 Percentages extrapolated from the American Federation for Children database (2012).

4 Percentages extrapolated from the American Federation for Children database (2012).

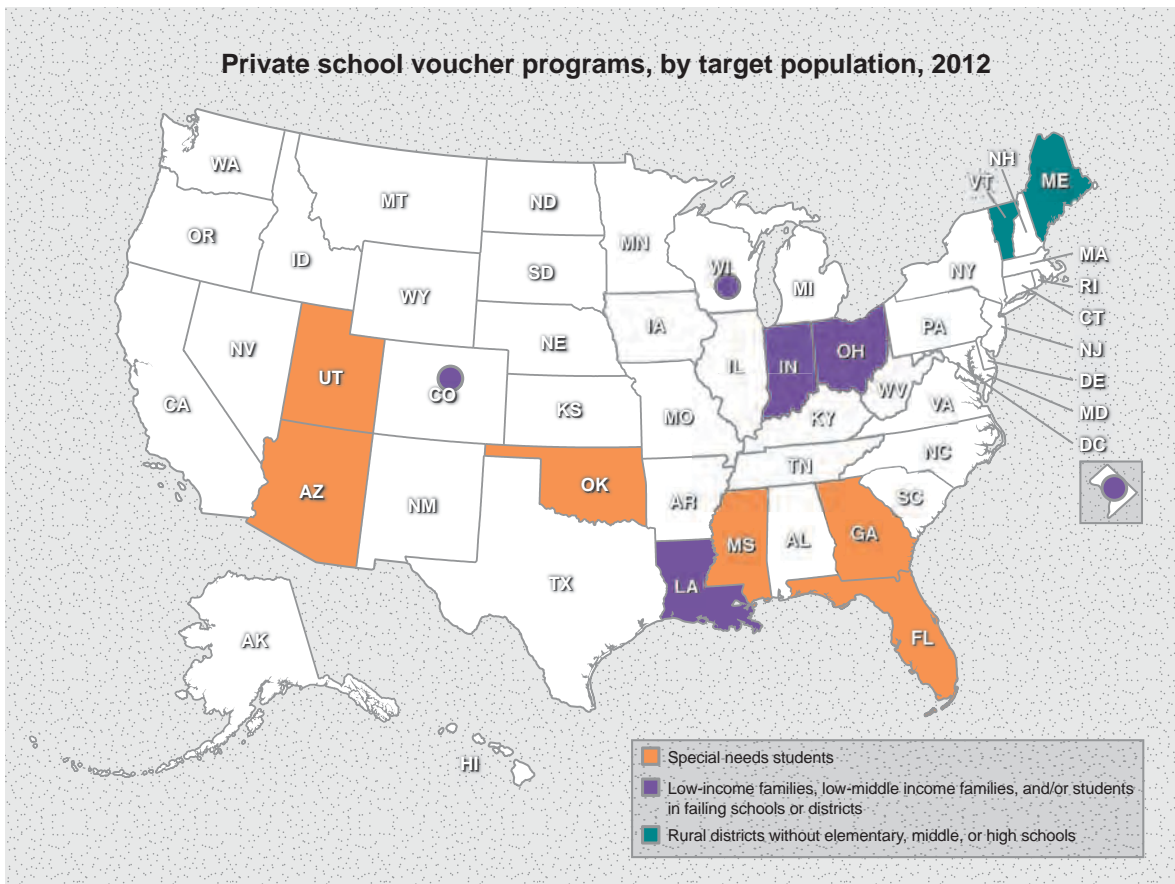


Figure 6. Private school voucher programs, by target population, 2012. Sources: American Federation for Children (2012) and ECS (2012b).

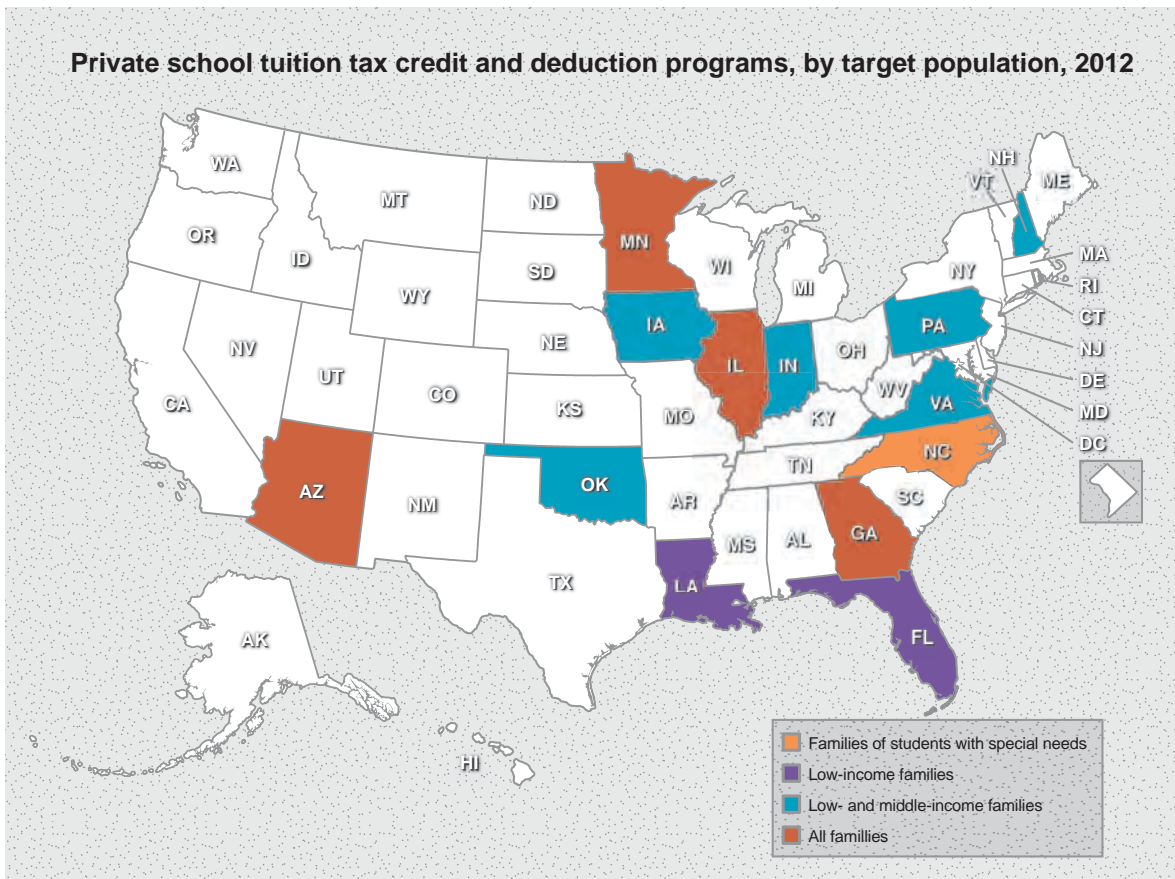


Figure 7. Private school tuition tax credit and deduction programs, by target population, 2012. Sources: American Federation for Children (2012) and ECS (2012b).

Missouri	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Montana	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Nebraska	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Nevada	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
New Hampshire	—	—	—	—	—	new	Lm	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
New Jersey	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
New Mexico	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
New York	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
North Carolina	—	—	—	—	—	new	S	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
North Dakota	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ohio	1.4%	St&C	F,L,S	Y	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Oklahoma	<1%	St	S	—	—	new	Lm	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Oregon	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Pennsylvania	—	—	—	—	—	2.3%	Lm	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Rhode Island	—	—	—	—	—	0.2%	Lm	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
South Carolina	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
South Dakota	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Tennessee	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Texas	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Utah	0.1%	St	S	Y	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Vermont	7.4%	St	R	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Virginia	—	—	—	—	—	new	Lm	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Washington	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
West Virginia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Wisconsin	2.7%	C	L	Y	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Wyoming	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
SOURCES:	National School Board Association (2012), American Federation for Children (2012), Center on Education Policy (2011), Miron (2012), ECS State Policy Database (2012), ECS Policy Brief (2005)																			

* Recovery district

* Mandatory for recovery district, voluntary all others

** Mandatory for high schools, voluntary all others

Legend:
A: All students
C: City program
F: students at failing schools
L: Low-income students
Lm: low- and middle-income students

R: Rural areas where public elementary, middle, or high schools are not available
S: Special needs students
St: State
Y: Yes / available
--: No / not available

Charter Schools

Currently one of the fastest-growing forms of school choice, charter schools are available in 40 states and the District of Columbia (Table 5). In 2011 there were roughly 5,000 operating charter schools, representing 5% of schools and 3.7% of students nationwide. The **District of Columbia** serves the largest percentage of students through charter schools (38%), followed by **Arizona** (12%), **Colorado** (9%), **Michigan**, and **Delaware**. Most states assign charter schools their own independent local education agency, although some states retain a conversion charter school (that is, one that began as a traditional public school but was converted to a charter) within the district. According to the Education Commission of the States (2010), charter schools receive funding through the district in 17 states; through the state in 7 states; and in 12 states, through the state or district depending on charter school origins (Figure 8).

Most charter schools are localized within urban centers, therefore figures reporting statewide coverage can be misleading. 2011-2012 figures compiled by the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools report 111 school districts nationwide with at least 10% of district public school students attending charter schools (2012). New Orleans Public School System charters have the highest market share at 76% of public school students, followed by Detroit Public Schools at 41%.

Most states assign charter schools their own independent local education agency, although some states retain a conversion charter school (that is, one that began as a traditional public school but was converted to a charter) within the district.

The source of funding for charter schools varies considerably. According to the Education Commission of the States (2010), charter schools receive funding through the district in 17 states; through the state in 7 states; and in 12 states, through the state or district depending on charter school origins.

Charter school policy characteristics vary widely across the states. According to ECS and the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (2013), the following policy trends can be observed:

Charter school policy characteristics vary widely across the states. According to ECS and the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (2013), the following policy trends can be observed:

- All states with charter schools require that state standards and assessments apply to the charter schools.
- Most states (37 of 40) and the District of Columbia require annual reports including student performance data.
- Most states (38) and the District of Columbia have clear statutory provisions for financially and legally autonomous schools with independent governing boards, at least to some degree.
- Most states (38) and the District of Columbia permit conversion charter schools in addition to new school start-ups.

- Roughly half the states with charter schools (21) place caps on the number of charter schools permitted. Some states (14) facilitate the growth of charters by allowing more than one authorizing option for new applicants.
- A minority of 13 states requires teacher certification for all charter school teachers, while 13 states permit exceptions or allow certification requirements to be waived, and another 13 states require only a defined perportion of teachers to be certified while allowing others to have temporary or alternative certification or be uncertified. Four states do not have (or did not report) teacher certification requirements.
- Roughly half the states (21) and the District of Columbia exempt charter schools from collective bargaining, while another 14 states permit exemption for some but not all charter schools or employees, often depending on the nature of the school's charter

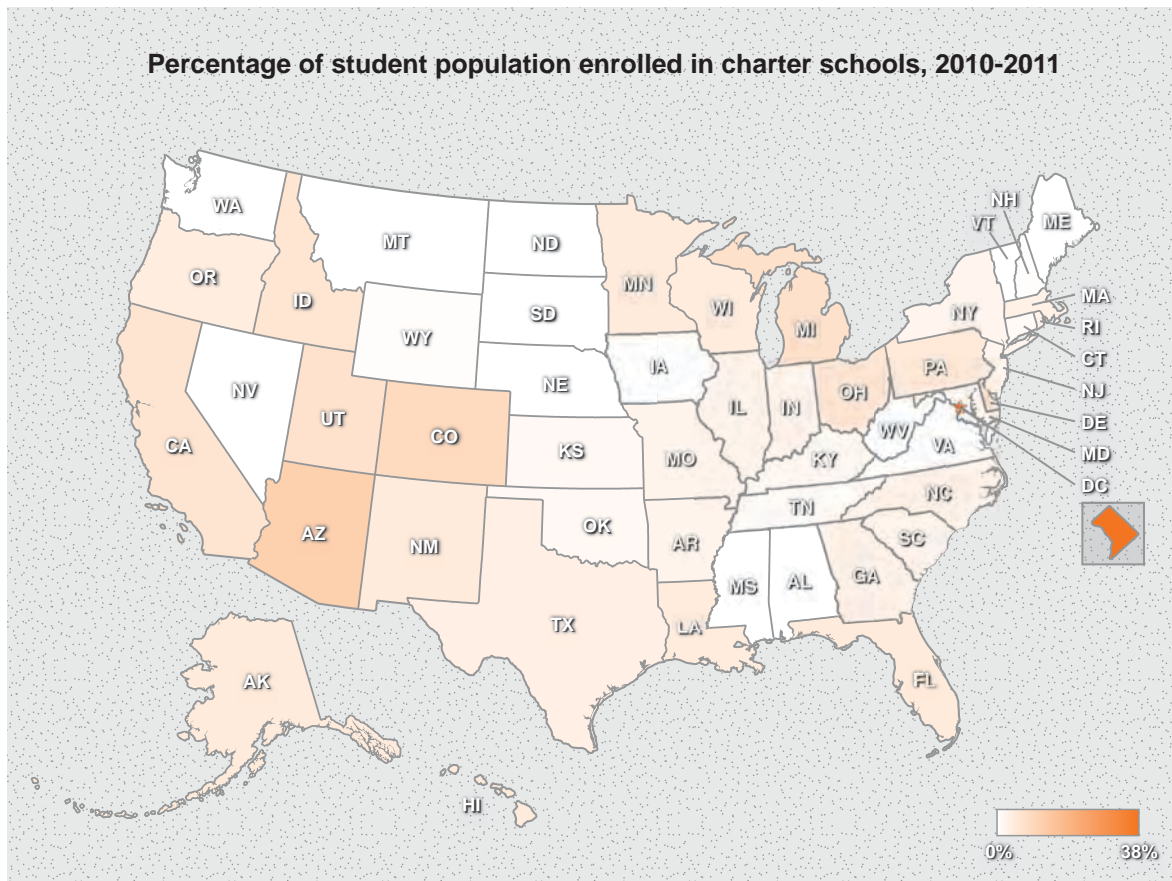


Figure 8. Percentage of student population enrolled in charter schools, 2010-2011.
 Source: NCES Common Core of Data (2012).

Table 5: Charter school policy coverage and characteristics

		Charter Schools										
		Coverage		Policy Characteristics								
		% schools in state, 2012	% students in state, 2012	Source of funding	Clear statutory provisions for fiscally and legally autonomous	State standards and assessments apply	State law or statute requires annual reporting of student	Teacher certification required	Exempt from collective bargaining	Caps are placed on charter school growth	State allows authorizing option for more than one applicant	Existing schools can convert to charters
Alabama	—	—	—									
Alaska	5%	4%	D			Y	Y	—	—	—	—	Y
Arizona	22%	12%	S		Y*	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Arkansas	3%	2%	S or D		Y*	Y	Y*	Y*	Y*	Y	—	Y
California	8%	6%	S or D		Y*	Y	Y*	Y*	Y	Y	—	Y
Colorado	9%	9%	S or D		Y*	Y	Y	Y	Y	—	—	Y
Connecticut	2%	1%	S or D		Y	Y	Y**	Y*	Y*	Y	—	Y
District of Columbia	42%	38%	C		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	—	Y
Delaware	8%	7%	S or D		Y	Y	Y	Y*	Y	—	—	Y
Florida	10%	6%	D		Y*	Y	Y	Y	Y	—	—	Y
Georgia	3%	3%	S or D		Y*	Y	Y	Y*	Y	—	Y*	Y
Hawaii	11%	5%	S		Y	Y	Y	Y	—	—	—	Y
Idaho	5%	6%	S		Y	Y	Y	Y*	Y	—	Y*	Y
Illinois	1%	2%	D		Y*	Y	Y	Y**	Y	Y	—	Y
Indiana	3%	2%	S		Y*	Y	Y	Y**	Y	—	Y	Y
Iowa	1%	0%	D		—	Y	Y	Y	—	—	—	Y
Kansas	2%	1%	D		—	Y	—	—	—	—	—	Y
Kentucky	—	—										
Louisiana	5%	4%	S or D		Y*	Y	Y	—	Y*	—	—	Y
Maine	†	—	—		Y	Y	Y*	Y*	Y*	Y	Y	Y
Maryland	3%	2%	B		—	Y	Y	—	—	—	—	Y
Massachusetts	3%	3%	D		Y	Y	Y*	Y*	Y	Y	—	Y
Michigan	8%	7%	A		Y*	Y	Y*	Y	Y	Y	Y	—
Minnesota	7%	4%	S		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	—	Y	Y
Mississippi	—	—	—		Y*	Y	Y*	—	—	Y	—	—*

Missouri	2%	2%	Y	Y	Y	Y**	Y	Y	Y	—	Y	—	Y
Montana	—	—											
Nebraska	—	—											
Nevada	6%	3%	Y*	Y	Y	Y**	Y*	Y	Y	Y	—	Y	—
New Hampshire	3%	1%	Y	Y	Y	Y**	Y	Y	Y	—	Y	—	Y
New Jersey	3%	2%	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y*	Y	Y	—	Y	—	Y
New Mexico	8%	5%	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	—
New York	3%	2%	Y	Y	Y	Y**	Y*	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
North Carolina	4%	3%	Y	Y	Y	Y**	Y*	Y	Y	—	Y	—	Y
North Dakota	—	—											
Ohio	9%	6%	Y*	Y	Y	Y**	Y*	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Oklahoma	1%	1%	Y	Y	Y	—	Y	Y	Y	—	Y	—	Y
Oregon	8%	4%	Y	Y	Y	Y**	Y	Y	Y	—	Y	—	Y
Pennsylvania	4%	5%	Y	Y	Y	Y**	Y	Y	Y	—	Y	—	Y
Rhode Island	4%	3%	Y*	Y	Y	Y	Y*	Y	Y	—	Y	—	Y
South Carolina	3%	2%	Y	Y	Y	Y**	Y*	Y	Y	—	Y	—	Y
South Dakota	—	—											
Tennessee	1%	1%	Y	Y	—	Y	Y	Y	Y	—	Y	—	Y
Texas	6%	3%	Y*	Y	Y	Y*	Y*	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Utah	7%	7%	Y	Y	Y	Y**	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Vermont	—	—											
Virginia	0%	0%	Y*	Y	Y	Y	—	Y	Y	—	Y	—	Y
Washington	New	New	Y	Y	Y	Y*	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
West Virginia	—	—											
Wisconsin	9%	4%	Y*	Y	Y	Y*	Y*	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Wyoming	1%	0%	Y*	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
SOURCES:	National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (2012)	ECS Charter School Database (2010)	National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (2013), ECS Charter School Database (2010)										

± Reporting standards not met. Data reported for less than 80 percent of schools in the state or jurisdiction.

* to some degree

*Yes with exceptions OR yes unless a waiver is granted

* Some but not all schools or employees are exempt

* With limitations

* Only chronically underperforming schools may convert

** a specified proportion may have temporary, alternative, or no certification

Legend:
A: Charter authorizing body
B: Local school board
D: District

S: State
Y: Yes / available
-- : No / not available

Online and Virtual Schools

The fastest areas of growth in online offerings for education are blended and online programs occurring at the district level. However, since such programs are often single-district programs or are otherwise not run by the state, they fall beyond the reach of this report.

Among the emerging portfolio of state-promoted online learning programs, full-time multi-district online (FTMDO) schools and state virtual schools are two forms of school choice that operate at an above-district level and therefore have been included in this study. According to recent data sponsored by the International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL, among others), 24 states now support FTMDO schools and 30 states feature state virtual schools (Watson et al., 2012, Table 6). The majority of programs operate at the high school level.

Full-time multi-district online schools are still relatively scarce, with **Arizona** having the highest percentage of students served at 4% of public school students statewide (Figure 9). **Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, Ohio, Pennsylvania,** and **Washington** each serve 2% of their public school students through FTMDO.

State virtual school enrollment is much harder to gauge because virtual schools are supplemental, meaning that enrollments are counted by course and not by student. If one considers the number of virtual high school course enrollments as a percentage of public high school population, **Florida** has the most with 33%, followed by **North Carolina** (21%), **Idaho** (18%), **New Hampshire** (18%), and **Alabama** (17%, Figure 10). We emphasize that these numbers approximate coverage among high school students and do not represent percentages of the entire statewide student population.

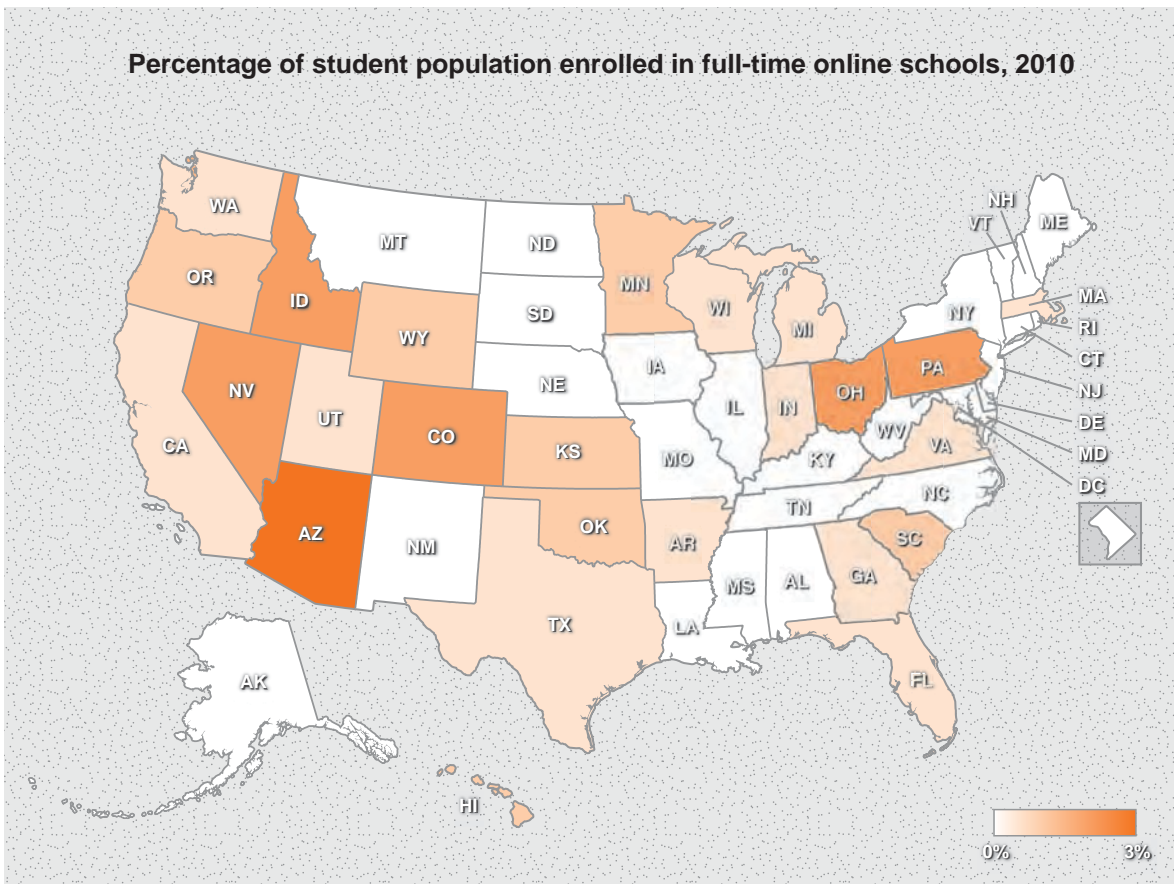


Figure 9. Percentage of student population enrolled in full-time online schools, 2011. Source: Watson et al., 2012

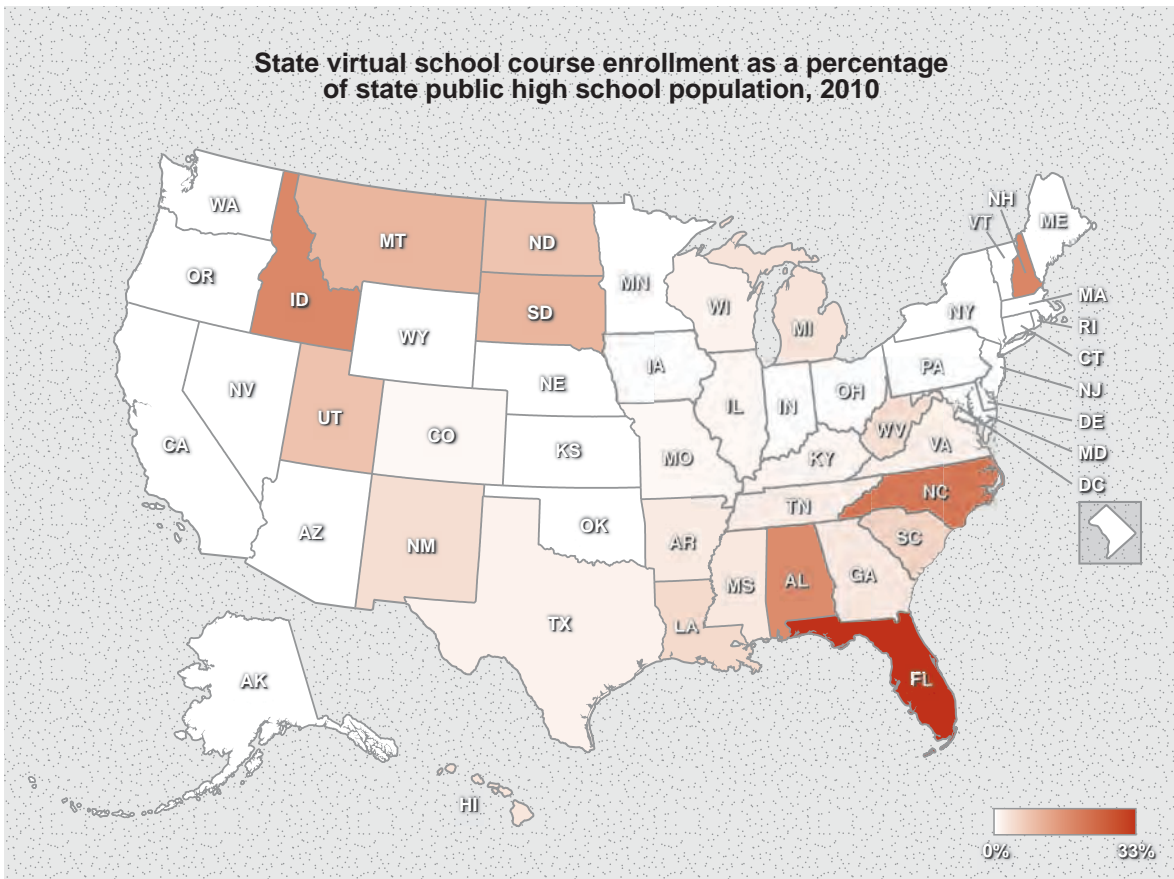


Figure 10. State virtual school course enrollment as a percentage of state public high school population, 2011. Source: Watson et al., 2012

Table 6: Online and virtual schools: policy coverage and characteristics

	Online and virtual schools					
	Coverage		State led/sponsored programs	Policy characteristics		High school programs
	% students in state-sponsored full-time multi-district online school, 2011	State virtual school course enrollment / state public HS population, 2011 ¹		Middle school programs	High school programs	
Alabama	—	17%	Y	—	Y	
Alaska	—	—	Y	Y	Y	
Arizona	3%	—	—	—	—	
Arkansas	<1%	2%	Y	—	Y	
California	<1%	—	Y	—	Y	
Colorado	2%	1%	Y	—	—	
Connecticut	—	<1%	Y	—	Y	
District of Columbia	—	—	—	Y	—	
Delaware	—	—	—	—	Y	
Florida	<1%	33%	Y	Y	Y	
Georgia	<1%	3%	—	—	—	
Hawaii	1%	3%	Y	—	Y	
Idaho	2%	18%	Y	Y	—	
Illinois	—	1%	Y	—	Y	
Indiana	<1%	—	—	—	—	
Iowa	—	<1%	Y	—	—	
Kansas	1%	—	—	—	—	
Kentucky	—	1%	Y	Y	Y	
Louisiana	—	5%	Y	—	—	
Maine	—	—	—	—	Y	
Maryland	—	—	Y	—	Y	
Massachusetts	<1%	—	Y	—	Y	
Michigan	<1%	3%	Y	—	—	
Minnesota	1%	—	—	Y	Y	

Mississippi	—	3%	Y	—	Y
Missouri	—	1%	Y	—	—
Montana	—	10%	Y	—	—
Nebraska	—	<1%	—	—	—
Nevada	2%	—	—	—	Y
New Hampshire	—	18%	—	—	Y
New Jersey	—	—	—	Y	Y
New Mexico	—	4%	Y	Y	Y
New York	—	—	—	Y	Y
North Carolina	—	21%	Y	—	Y
North Dakota	—	8%	—	Y	Y
Ohio	2%	—	Y	—	—
Oklahoma	1%	—	—	Y	Y
Oregon	1%	—	Y	Y	Y
Pennsylvania	2%	—	—	—	—
Rhode Island	—	—	—	Y	Y
South Carolina	1%	6%	Y	—	—
South Dakota	—	10%	Y	—	—
Tennessee	—	2%	Y	Y	—
Texas	<1%	1%	Y	—	—
Utah	<1%	8%	Y	—	Y
Vermont	—	<1%	Y	—	—
Virginia	<1%	2%	Y	—	—
Washington	<1%	—	—	—	—
West Virginia	—	4%	Y	—	Y
Wisconsin	<1%	1%	Y	—	Y
Wyoming	1%	—	—	Y	Y
SOURCES:	Watson (2012), Miron (2012)				

Legend:

Y: Yes/available

—: No/Not available

Homeschool

Homeschooling is offered in every state (Table 7). Approximately 3% of all school age children in the U.S. are homeschooled, roughly equal to the percentage of charter school enrollments (Miron et al., 2012).

Homeschool policies vary widely by state. Most states (40) and the District of Columbia require parents to notify the state that their child will be homeschooled (Figure 11). In addition to parental notification, a slight majority (27 states) also require accountability through testing or professional evaluation. Further, 6 states (**Massachusetts, New York, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont**) add additional requirements such as curriculum approval, parent qualifications, and/or home visits.

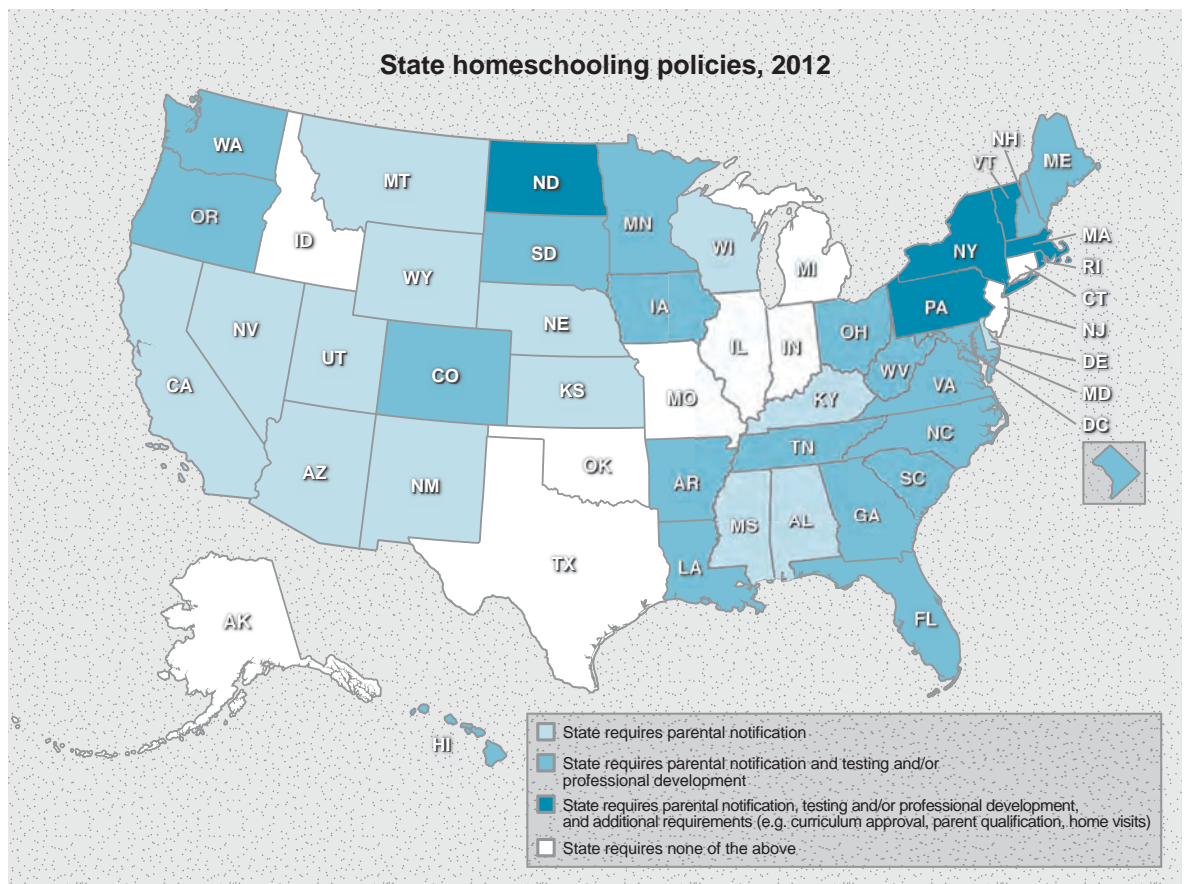


Figure 11. State homeschooling policies, 2012. Source: Home School Legal Defense Association (2012).

Table 7: Homeschool policy characteristics

	Homeschool		
	Policy characteristics		
	Parents must notify state	Test scores and/or professional evaluation are required	Additional requirements (e.g. curriculum approval, qualification of parents, home visits)
Alabama	Y	—	—
Alaska	—	—	—
Arizona	Y	—	—
Arkansas	Y	Y	—
California	Y	—	—
Colorado	Y	Y	—
Connecticut	—	—	—
District of Columbia	Y	Y	—
Delaware	Y	—	—
Florida	Y	Y	—
Georgia	Y	Y	—
Hawaii	Y	Y	—
Idaho	—	—	—
Illinois	—	—	—
Indiana	—	—	—
Iowa	Y	Y	—
Kansas	Y	—	—
Kentucky	Y	—	—
Louisiana	Y	Y	—
Maine	Y	Y	—
Maryland	Y	Y	—
Massachusetts	Y	Y	Y
Michigan	—	—	—
Minnesota	Y	Y	—
Mississippi	Y	—	—
Missouri	—	—	—
Montana	Y	—	—
Nebraska	Y	—	—
Nevada	Y	—	—
New Hampshire	Y	Y	—
New Jersey	—	—	—
New Mexico	Y	—	—
New York	Y	Y	Y
North Carolina	Y	Y	—
North Dakota	Y	Y	Y
Ohio	Y	Y	—
Oklahoma	—	—	—
Oregon	Y	Y	—
Pennsylvania	Y	Y	Y
Rhode Island	Y	Y	Y
South Carolina	Y	Y	—
South Dakota	Y	Y	—
Tennessee	Y	Y	—
Texas	—	—	—
Utah	Y	—	—
Vermont	Y	Y	Y
Virginia	Y	Y	—
Washington	Y	Y	—
West Virginia	Y	Y	—
Wisconsin	Y	—	—
Wyoming	Y	—	—
SOURCES:	Home School Legal Defense Association (2012)		Legend: Y: Yes —: No

International Context for School Choice

Compared to other countries, the U.S. offers more variety in school choice options within the public sector, but the actual percentage of students enrolled in choice schools may be lower. For example, whereas few other countries offer choice options such as vouchers, charter schools, or homeschooling, most Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) member and partner countries (75%) offer free choice of public schools (i.e., open enrollment) to all students (Figure 12) (OECD, 2011). Looking only at countries that outperformed the U.S. on the 2009 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)⁵, the proportion is a slight majority at 53% of countries. The U.S. leaves open enrollment participation up to states and districts, whereas a minority of other countries restricts choice of public schools within districts or municipalities (23%) and/or regions (26%).

In contrast to the U.S., many countries both subsidize and regulate private schools as part of their public educational offerings. Among the countries that do offer independent private schools, a minority provide vouchers (28%) and tuition tax credits (26%) for independent private school tuition (Figure 12). If we focus only on countries that outperformed the U.S. on the 2009 PISA, the percentage of countries with independent private schools that offer tuition tax credits is smaller at 15%.

Homeschooling is much more prevalent in the U.S. compared to other countries. 100% of U.S. states offer homeschooling compared to 53% of OECD countries and 20% of top-performing OECD nations (Figure 12). Homeschooling has expanded in the U.S. in recent decades, whereas a slight minority of 42% of other nations has seen an increase in homeschooling since 1985. In terms of coverage, the U.S.'s record 3.1% of all school-age children homeschooled is trailed by New Zealand, a distant second with only 0.9% (Miron et al., 2012). The average among OECD member countries is 0.4% of students.

Unlike the majority of U.S. states, most countries with independent private schools or homeschooling require the use of standardized curriculum (74% and 70% of countries with private schools and homeschooling, respectively), and most high-performing nations also require all independent private school personnel to meet employment and certification standards (92%) (OECD, 2011). Few nations offering homeschool choice require such personnel standards (11%).

In the U.S., opportunities for publicly-funded school choice have expanded since 1985 while restrictions have become more relaxed. Reforms have permitted greater autonomy for existing public schools as well as new funding mechanisms to promote school choice. Internationally, these trends are also true among most countries, although substantial variation exists (Figure 13).

⁵ Higher-performing countries include Shanghai-China, Korea, Finland, Hong Kong-China, Singapore, Canada, New Zealand, Japan, Australia, Netherlands, Belgium, Norway, Estonia, Switzerland, Poland, Iceland, Germany, and Chinese-Taipei.

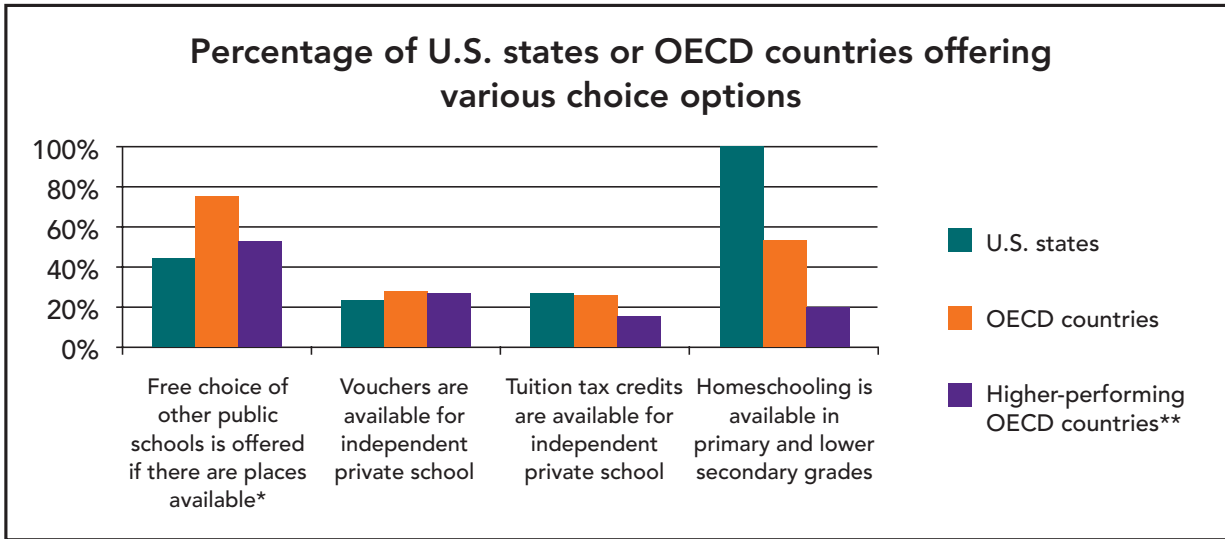


Figure 12. Percentage of U.S. states or OECD member or partner countries offering various choice options. U.S. data is from ECS (2011) and represents AY 2010-11. International data is from OECD (2011) and represents AY 2008-09. *Only U.S. states with mandatory district participation in interdistrict or intradistrict programs for all students are included. **Higher-performing countries are defined as those performing statistically significantly better than the U.S. in reading, mathematics, or science on the 2009 PISA.

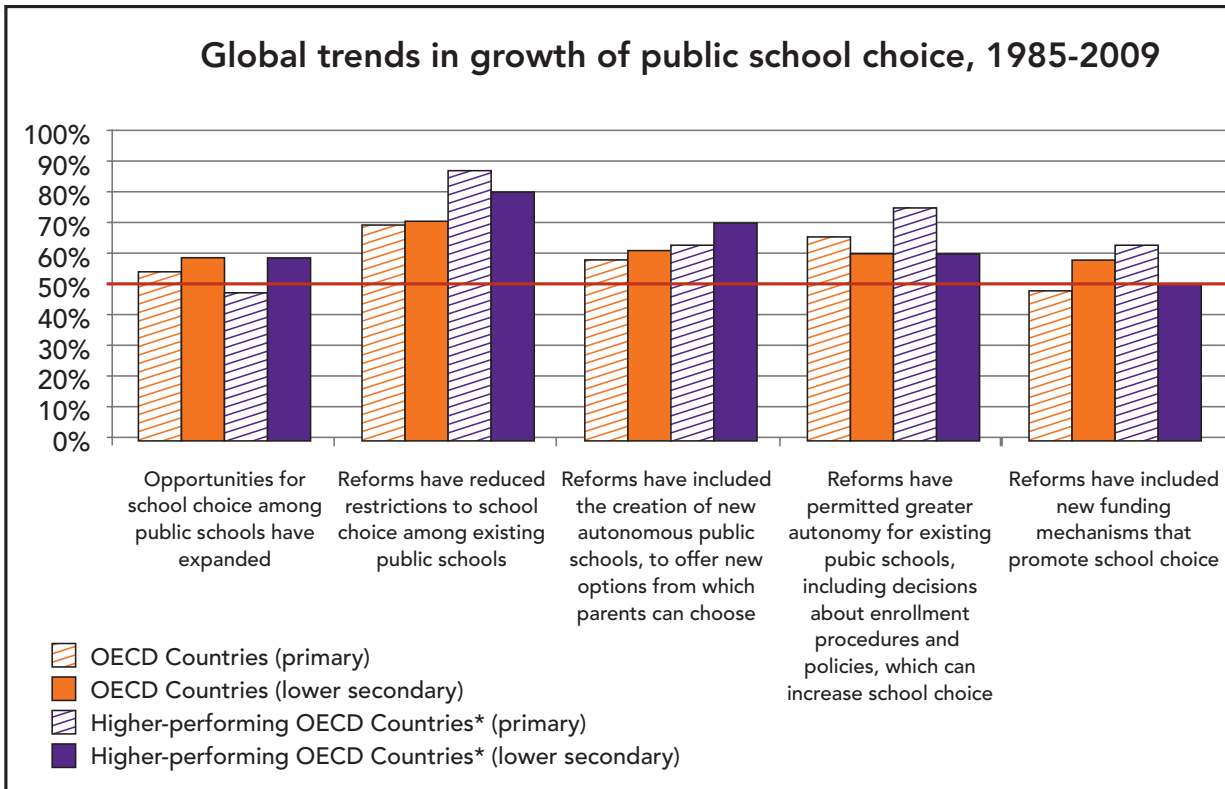


Figure 13. Global trends in growth of public school choice, 1985-2009. Data source: OECD (2011). *Higher-performing countries are defined as those performing statistically significantly better than the U.S. in reading, mathematics, or science on the 2009 PISA.

Accountability for School Choice

Often questioned is the extent to which school choice programs are held accountable to the state for the academic performance of the students they serve. Academic accountability provisions for school choice policies are summarized in Table 8. The following trends can be observed:

Open Enrollment: Public schools accepting students through interdistrict or intradistrict open enrollment programs are subjected to the same state standards, assessments, and accountability as all other public schools.

Voucher Programs: According to the Alliance for School Choice, a majority of state voucher programs require recipients to take standardized assessments, while half of the states with programs require public reporting of academic results. Only the District of Columbia requires independent evaluations of its voucher program.

Tuition Tax Credit Programs: According to the Alliance for School Choice, only a minority of states with tuition tax credit programs require standardized testing, public reporting of academic results, and/or independent program evaluations. Florida is the only state to require all three.

Charter Schools: All states with charter schools and the District of Columbia require state standardized assessments for charter school students. Most states and the District of Columbia require annual reporting of student outcome data and have closed charters based on poor academic data or other non-fiscal compliance issues with their charter contracts.

Online and virtual schools: In almost all cases, students enrolled in full-time multi-district online schools and state virtual schools are subjected to the assessment and accountability provisions of traditional public or public charter schools in the state.

Homeschooling: A slight majority of states require standardized assessment and/or professional evaluation for homeschoolers, while a minority have additional requirements such as curriculum approval, parental qualification, and home visits.

Table 8: Accountability Provisions for Selected School Choice Options

	Accountability Provisions for Selected School Choice Options										
	Voucher Programs			Tax Credit Programs			Charter Schools			Homeschooling	
	Standardized assessments required for recipients, 2013	Public reporting of academic results required, 2013	Independent evaluation required, 2013	Standardized assessments required for recipients, 2013	Public reporting of academic results required, 2013	Independent evaluation required, 2013	State standards and assessments required, 2013	State law or statute requires annual reporting of student outcome data, 2013	Charters have been closed due to poor academic performance or other non-fiscal compliance issue, 2002-2011	Test scores and/or professional evaluation are required, 2012	Additional requirements (e.g. curriculum approval, qualification of parents, home visits), 2012
Alabama	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	No	No
Alaska	—	—	—	—	—	—	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Arizona	‡	‡	‡	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Arkansas	—	—	—	—	—	—	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
California	—	—	—	—	—	—	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Colorado	Yes	Yes	No	—	—	—	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Connecticut	—	—	—	—	—	—	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
District of Columbia	Yes	Yes	Yes	—	—	—	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Delaware	—	—	—	—	—	—	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Florida	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Georgia	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Hawaii	—	—	—	—	—	—	Yes	Yes	‡	Yes	No
Idaho	—	—	—	—	—	—	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Illinois	—	—	—	‡	‡	‡	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Indiana	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Iowa	—	—	—	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Kansas	—	—	—	—	—	—	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Kentucky	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	No	No
Louisiana	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Maine	—	—	—	—	—	—	Yes	Yes	‡	Yes	No
Maryland	—	—	—	—	—	—	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Massachusetts	—	—	—	—	—	—	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Michigan	—	—	—	—	—	—	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Minnesota	—	—	—	‡	‡	‡	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Mississippi	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	No	No
Missouri	—	—	—	—	—	—	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Montana	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	No	No
Nebraska	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	No	No
Nevada	—	—	—	—	—	—	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
New Hampshire	—	—	—	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
New Jersey	—	—	—	—	—	—	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
New Mexico	—	—	—	—	—	—	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
New York	—	—	—	—	—	—	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
North Carolina	—	—	—	‡	‡	‡	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
North Dakota	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Yes	Yes
Ohio	Yes	Yes	No	—	—	—	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Oklahoma	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Oregon	—	—	—	—	—	—	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Pennsylvania	—	—	—	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Rhode Island	—	—	—	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	‡	Yes	Yes
South Carolina	—	—	—	—	—	—	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
South Dakota	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Yes	No
Tennessee	—	—	—	—	—	—	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Texas	—	—	—	—	—	—	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Utah	Yes	No	No	—	—	—	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Vermont	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Yes	Yes
Virginia	—	—	—	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Washington	—	—	—	—	—	—	Yes	Yes	—	Yes	No
West Virginia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Yes	No
Wisconsin	Yes	Yes	No	—	—	—	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Wyoming	—	—	—	—	—	—	Yes	No	No	No	No
SOURCES:	Alliance for School Choice, Glenn (2013)						National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (2013)		Center for Education Reform (2011)	Home School Legal Defense Association (2012)	

Conclusion

Publicly-funded school choice policies vary widely across the states in their availability, scope, and characteristics, but in general the availability of school choice is expanding both nationally and internationally. All U.S. states offer some form of support for school choice in the public sector to at least some students within the state. Open enrollment policies, in which students may choose other public schools in their own or other districts, are currently the most prevalent form of school choice, serving roughly 15% of school-age children in the nation. Charter schools and homeschooling are among the faster-growing options, but are still relatively small in scale, serving 3.7% and 3.4% of school-age children, respectively. And while they might make several choice options available to students, most states place caps on the number of students that can be served through a given program or option. Standards for curriculum, assessment, accountability, and professional certifications also vary across states and school choice types, but in general most states require such standards to be met for most forms of publicly-funded school choice.

It is not the intention of this analysis to comment on which trends, if any, represent progress or lead to favorable outcomes. While research does exist on the impact of various choice programs throughout the states, the body of literature is complex, contradictory, and warrants lengthier discussion. Therefore, the authors of this policy landscape leave it up to individual states to contextualize their school choice policy sets and determine which national and international trends are worthy of attention, if any.

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One Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20001-1431
voice: 202.336.7000 | fax: 202.408.8072