

THE ABCs OF SCHOOL CHOICE

The comprehensive guide to every private
school choice program in America

2021 EDITION



ABOUT EDCHOICE

EdChoice is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to advancing full and unencumbered educational choice as the best pathway to successful lives and a stronger society. EdChoice believes that families, not bureaucrats, are best equipped to make K-12 schooling decisions for their children. The organization works at the state level to educate diverse audiences, train advocates and engage policymakers on the benefits of high-quality school choice programs. EdChoice is the intellectual legacy of Milton and Rose D. Friedman, who founded the organization in 1996.

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Happy 25th anniversary to EdChoice—formerly the Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice!

We’ve spent the past quarter-century fighting to expand educational opportunities for all students regardless of their income level or ZIP Code, and we’ll keep pursuing that fight for as long as it takes to level the playing field for all children. I hope you’ll join us throughout the year as we remember our past—and our founders—and look toward the future.

Each year, we issue this publication to provide detailed information about private school choice programs across the country. Some are brand new; others are decades old. They are a reflection of the hard work that parents, educators, policymakers and advocates have undertaken to improve our K–12 landscape.

Along with the ABCs, we also publish companion pieces—*EdChoice 101* and *The EdChoice Study Guide*—in Spanish and English to help break down the basics for those who are new to the issue of school choice. We’ll also be introducing *EdChoice Legal 101* to make it clear why school choice is constitutional and explain the legal history that’s evolved over the decades.

As we have in past editions of the ABCs, this year we break down private school choice programs into four categories, but we place more emphasis on education savings accounts (ESAs), vouchers and tax-credit scholarships because they provide the most direct support to those who utilize them.

We also want to highlight other mechanisms available for families to choose schools, including charter and magnet schools, inter- and intra-district transfer programs, homeschooling and microschooling—the reimagining of the one-room schoolhouse, where class sizes are usually fewer than 15 students of varying ages, and the schedule and curriculum is tailored to fit the needs of each class.

As always, you can find more information about schooling types and school choice programs on our website, which is updated with new data throughout the year. You also can order additional free copies of the ABCs as well as our companion publications.

The past year presented new challenges for families as they navigated the economics and academics of a global pandemic, with many parents bringing classrooms into their living rooms or scrambling to find new schooling types. Some who didn’t previously have a choice were empowered to try new options. Others realized the system wasn’t working for them—and wanted to find a way out.

We will work in the coming years to make sure that all families can access what they need to educate their kids because, quite honestly, it’s just that simple. We appreciate your support for educational choice and your commitment to our work and our future.

Yours sincerely,



Robert C. Enlow
President and CEO

Types of Private School Choice

EDUCATION SAVINGS ACCOUNTS

ESAs allow parents to withdraw their children from public district or charter schools and receive a deposit of public funds into government-authorized savings accounts with restricted, but multiple, uses. Those funds—often distributed to families via debit card—can cover private school tuition and fees, online learning programs, private tutoring, community college costs, higher education expenses and other approved customized learning services and materials. Some ESAs, but not all, even allow students to use their funds to pay for a combination of public school courses and private services.

SCHOOL VOUCHERS

Vouchers give parents the freedom to choose a private school for their children, using all or part of the public funding set aside for their children's education. Under such a program, funds typically expended by a school district would be allocated to a participating family in the form of a voucher to pay partial or full tuition for their child's private school, including both religious and non-religious options.

TAX-CREDIT SCHOLARSHIPS

Tax-credit scholarships allow taxpayers to receive full or partial tax credits when they donate to nonprofits that provide private school scholarships. Eligible taxpayers can include both individuals and businesses. In some states, scholarship-giving nonprofits also provide innovation grants to public schools and/or transportation assistance to students who choose alternative public schools.

INDIVIDUAL TAX CREDITS & DEDUCTIONS

Individual tax credits and deductions allow parents to receive state income tax relief for approved educational expenses, which can include private school tuition, books, supplies, computers, tutors and transportation.

Other Types of School Choice

CHARTER SCHOOLS

Charter schools are independently run public schools exempt from many rules and regulations in exchange for increased accountability. Typically, if charters receive more applications than they have open seats, they must accept students based on a lottery. Families do not need to use ESAs, vouchers or tax-credit scholarships to pay to enroll their children in charter schools as these schools are already publicly funded.

MAGNET SCHOOLS

A magnet school is a public school that offers specialized curricula and programs not available in traditional neighborhood public schools. Magnets are designed to attract students with a common interest or skillset, and students must apply and be accepted to enroll. Families do not need to use ESAs, vouchers or tax-credit scholarships to pay to enroll their children in magnet schools as these schools are already publicly funded.

INTER/INTRA-DISTRICT PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE

Sometimes referred to as open enrollment, inter- and intra-district choice laws allow families to choose traditional public schools other than the ones the government assigned based on their ZIP Codes. Intra-district choice allows families to choose from among more than one public school within their assigned district. Inter-district choice allows families to send their children to any traditional public school in their resident state or a defined region. Typically, these open enrollment options still allow public schools to give enrollment preference to students within their assigned district lines.

HOMESCHOOLING

Homeschooling is an alternative form of education for children outside of public or private schools, typically within their own homes. Homeschooling is regulated differently from state to state.

ONLINE LEARNING

Online learning allows students to work with their curriculum and teachers over the internet—in combination with, or in place of, traditional classroom learning. Online schools can be public or private. Families may also use some educational choice options, such as ESAs and vouchers, to pay for online and virtual schooling.

CUSTOMIZED LEARNING

Customized learning is unique to every child. As an example, some students might use ESA or course choice programs to mix courses from public schools with privately tutored classes at home, online courses, special education therapies and a work-study internship. The possibilities are endless, especially as new innovations in learning continue to emerge.

TOWN TUITIONING

Generally speaking, town tuitioning allows students who live in towns that don't have district public schools to receive their per-pupil education tax dollars to pay tuition at a neighboring town's public school or a private school of their choice—sometimes even across state lines for families who live close to state borders. This type of school choice functions much like a school voucher, and only a handful of rural states in the northeast use it.

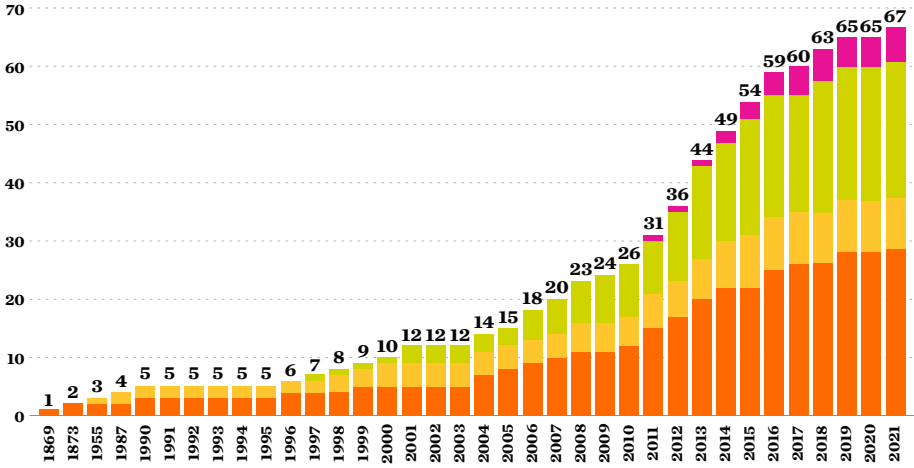
MICRO-SCHOOLING

Micro-schooling is the reimagining of the one-room schoolhouse, where class sizes are usually fewer than 15 students of varying ages, and the schedule and curriculum is tailored to fit the needs of each class. This model of schooling can operate in either public, private or charter schools or separately on its own.

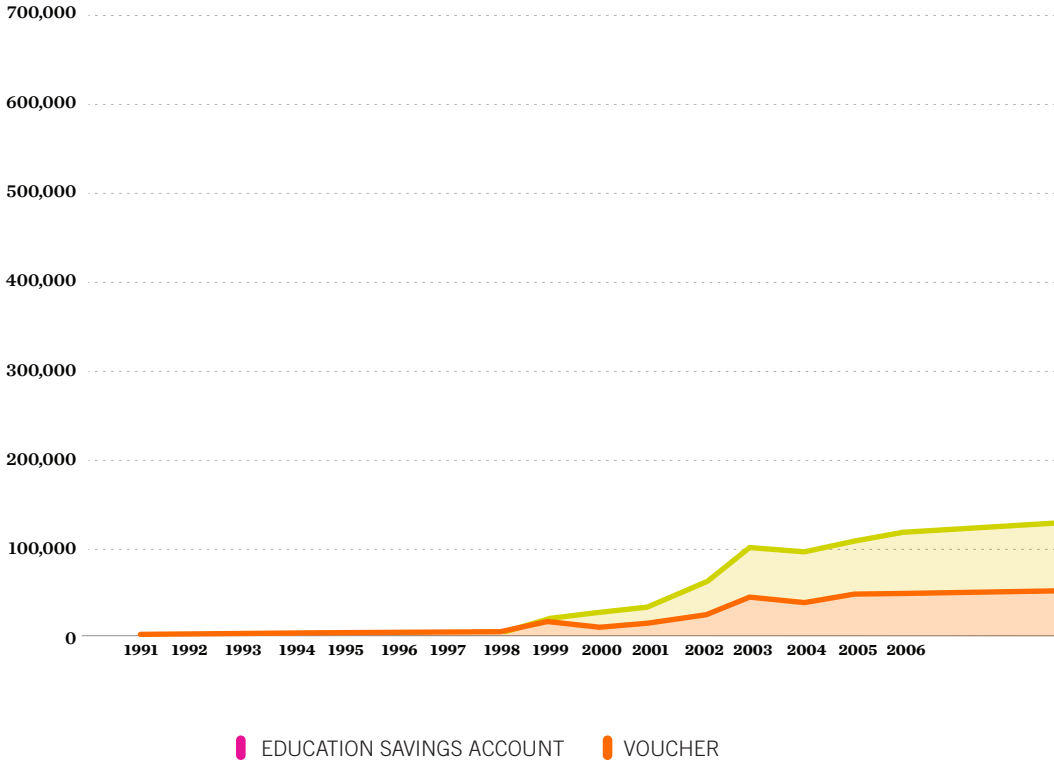
HYBRID HOMESCHOOLING

Hybrid homeschooling is an educational model where students split their time between homeschooling and a traditional classroom setting.

Number of Currently Enacted Private School Choice Programs by Year Launched

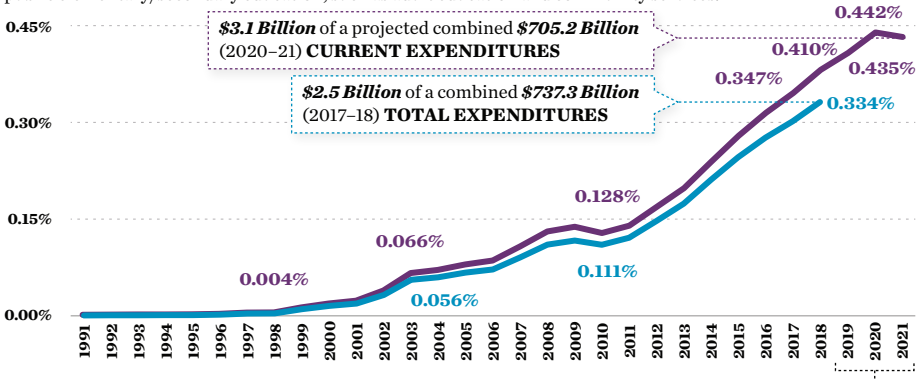


Number of ESAs, Vouchers and Tax-Credit Scholarships



Spending on ESAs, Vouchers and Tax-Credit Scholarships as a percent of combined program and public K–12 current and total expenditures

Current expenditures include instruction, support services, food services and enterprise operations. Total expenditures include those categories and also capital outlay, interest payments on debts and programs outside of public elementary/secondary education, such as adult education and community services.



Note: Only includes expenditures in states and Washington, D.C.

Sources: EdChoice (2021), *The ABCs of School Choice: The Comprehensive Guide to Every Private School Choice Program in America*, 2021 Edition; National Center for Education Statistics, Table 163. Total expenditures for public elementary and secondary education, by function and subfunction: 1989-90 to 1994-95, retrieved from nces.ed.gov/ipeds/data/ipedsdatatools/ipeds/data/ipeds_data_files/ipeds_data_files/163.pdf; National Center for Education Statistics, Table 165. Summary of expenditures for public elementary and secondary education, by purpose: Selected years, 1919-20 through 2004-05, retrieved from nces.ed.gov/ipeds/data/ipedsdatatools/ipeds/data/ipeds_data_files/165.pdf; National Center for Education Statistics, Table 236.10. Summary of expenditures for public elementary and secondary education and other related programs, by purpose: Selected years, 1919-20 through 2015-16, retrieved from nces.ed.gov/ipeds/data/ipedsdatatools/ipeds/data/ipeds_data_files/236_10.pdf; National Center for Education Statistics, Table 236.10. Summary of expenditures for public elementary and secondary education and other related programs, by purpose: Selected years, 1919-20 through 2016-17, retrieved from nces.ed.gov/ipeds/data/ipedsdatatools/ipeds/data/ipeds_data_files/236_10.pdf; Stephen Q. Cornman, Lei Zhou, Malia Howell, Jeremy Phillips, and Jumaane Young (2020), Revenues and Expenditures for Public Elementary and Secondary Education: FY 18 (NCES 2020-306), retrieved from nces.ed.gov/ipeds/data/ipedsdatatools/ipeds/data/ipeds_data_files/306.pdf; William J. Hussar and Tabitha M. Bailey (2020), *Projections of Education Statistics to 2028* (NCES 2020-024), retrieved from nces.ed.gov/ipeds/data/ipedsdatatools/ipeds/data/ipeds_data_files/024.pdf; page=61

Approximately **608,000** in 2020-21

329,393

248,825

29,475

2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021

TAX-CREDIT SCHOLARSHIP TAX CREDIT AND DEDUCTION

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Education Savings Accounts (ESAs)

ESAs allow parents to withdraw their children from public district or charter schools and receive a deposit of public funds into government-authorized savings accounts with restricted, but multiple, uses. Those funds—often distributed to families via debit card—can cover private school tuition and fees, online learning programs, private tutoring, community college costs, higher education expenses and other approved customized learning services and materials. Some ESAs, but not all, even allow students to use their funds to pay for a combination of public school courses and private services.

5

Programs

29,475

Total Students

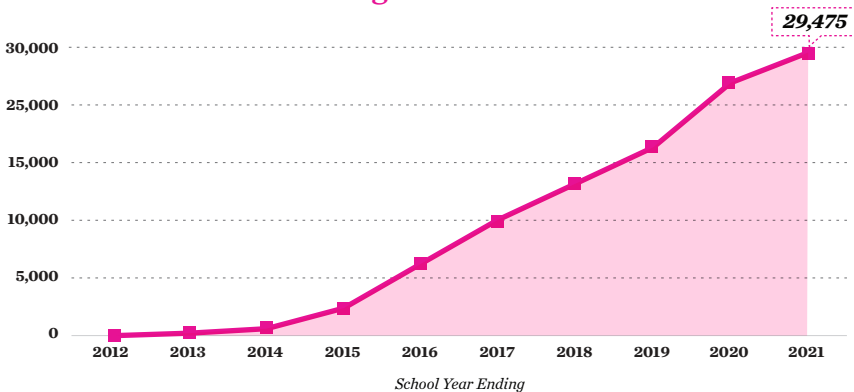
\$10,349

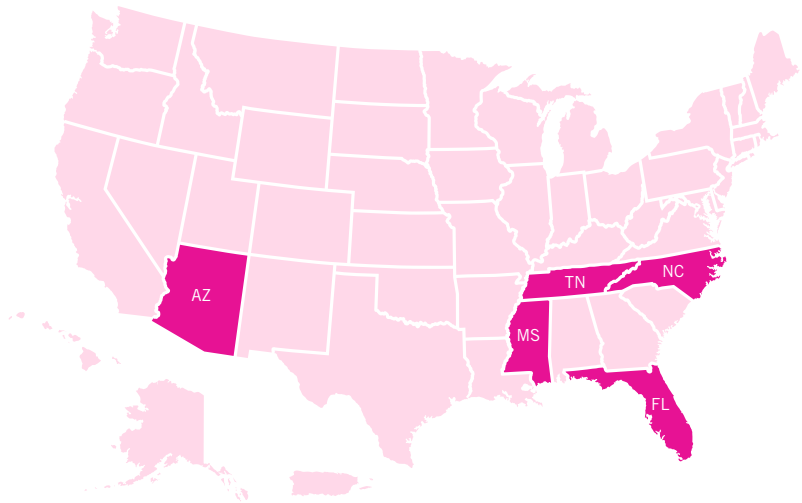
Average Amount

71%

of Public Spending
(National)

Number of Students Using ESAs





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Watch How ESAs Work

Hold your device’s camera over this QR code and click the link that pops up to watch a short video about how this type of program works for state budgets and for families.

Arizona Empowerment Scholarship Accounts

Education Savings Account | Enacted 2011 | Launched 2011

Arizona's Empowerment Scholarship Accounts (ESA) program allows parents to withdraw their children from public, district or charter schools and receive a portion of their public funding deposited into an account with defined, but multiple, uses, including private school tuition, online education, private tutoring or future educational expenses.

INCOME LIMIT None **PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT** Yes

GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT Statewide **ENROLLMENT CAP** None

TESTING MANDATE None **ACCOUNT CAP** 100/90% Charter/District Funding

PARENT REQUIREMENTS pg.145 **GOVERNING STATUTES** Ariz. Rev. Stat. §§ 15-2401 through 2404

Student Funding

Students in households that earn up to 250 percent of poverty (\$65,500 for a family of four in 2020–21) will receive ESAs funded at 100 percent of the base for whichever school type the student previously attended (charter or district). For all other students, ESAs are funded at 90 percent of the same per-student base funding (\$5,394 for students in K–8 and \$5,669 for high school students in 2020–21). ESAs were worth about \$6,148 for students in grades 1–12 who do not have special needs in 2018–19. Students with special needs receive additional funding, and those amounts vary depending on the services the student's disability requires. Because a majority of ESA students have special needs, the average ESA in 2020–21 is projected to be more than \$14,000.

Student Eligibility

Students must have previously attended public school for at least 100 days of the prior fiscal year and met one of the following characteristics: (1) received a scholarship from a school tuition organization (STO) under Lexie's Law, (2) attended a "D" or "F" letter-grade school or school district, (3) been adopted from the state's foster care system, (4) is already an ESA recipient or (5) live on a Native American reservation. Students eligible to attend kindergarten are also eligible provided they meet one of the above criteria. Additionally, children of active-duty military members stationed in Arizona, children whose parents were killed in the line of duty, children of parents who are legally blind, deaf or hard of hearing, and siblings of current or previous ESA recipients are also eligible. Children of active-duty military members or whose parents were killed in the line of duty are not required to attend a public school prior to applying for an ESA. Finally, preschool children with special needs are also eligible and are not required to have attended a public preschool program prior to applying.

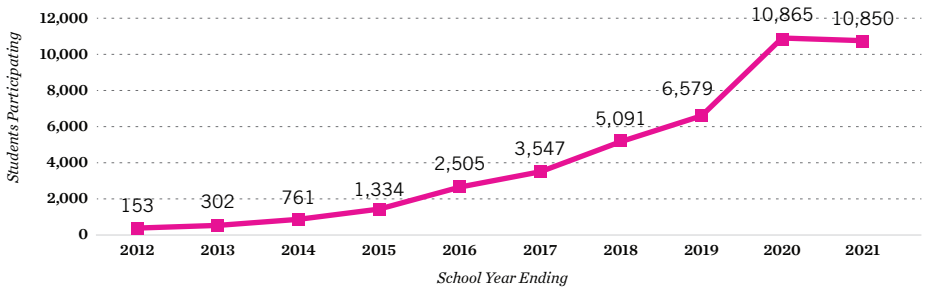
EdChoice Expert Feedback

Arizona's ESA program helps thousands of students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do more to expand educational opportunity.

Several categories of students are eligible to receive an ESA, including students with special needs, foster kids, students assigned to low-performing district schools, Native Americans on reservations, the children of active-duty military personnel, and more. About 22 percent of Arizona students are eligible to receive an ESA, and all Arizona students are eligible to receive a scholarship via the

Program Participation

Enrollment in Arizona’s education savings accounts program eclipsed 10,000 students for the first time in 2019–20.



10,850

Participating Students
(Fall 2020)

23%

of Students Eligible
(Statewide)

134

Participating Schools
(2014–15)

\$6,599

Median ESA Award
(2018–19)

\$13,118

Average Account Value
(2020–21 Projected)

90%

Maximum Account Value as a Percentage of Public School Per-Student Spending
(For Non-Low-Income Students)

144%

Value as a Percentage of Public School Per-Student Spending (Average Including Students with Special Needs)
(Maximum)

EdChoice Expert Feedback (continued)

individual-donor scholarship program. Statewide, recipients participating in one of Arizona’s private educational choice options (including the universal-eligibility Original Individual-Donor Tax-Credit Scholarship Program, the Low-Income Corporate-Donor Tax-Credit Scholarship Program, “Switcher” Tax-Credit Scholarship Program and Lexie’s Law for Disabled and Displaced Students Tax-Credit Scholarship Program) represent about 7 percent of the state’s enrollment. This is the highest EdChoice share in the nation.

ESAs are funded at 90 percent of the state’s per-pupil funding (or 100% for low-income students). Many ESA students receives about \$6,150 annually, but students with special needs get significantly more. Funding amounts vary based on the types of special needs.

In order to expand access to educational choice, Arizona policymakers should expand eligibility for the ESA program to all students and eliminate the “100-day prior public” requirement that arbitrarily inhibits families’ access to educational choice.

Arizona’s ESA program generally avoids unnecessary and counterproductive regulations.

Additional Arizona programs on pages **89, 91, 93, 95**

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/AZ_ESA

Florida Gardiner Scholarship Program

Education Savings Account | Enacted 2014 | Launched 2014

Florida's Gardiner Scholarship Program allows students with special needs an opportunity to receive an education savings account (ESA) funded by the state and administered by an approved scholarship-funding organization. Parents can use the funds to pay for a variety of educational services, including private school tuition, tutoring, online education, home education, curriculum, therapy, postsecondary educational institutions in Florida and other defined educational services.

INCOME LIMIT None

PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT Yes

GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT Statewide

ENROLLMENT CAP Yes

TESTING MANDATE State or National

ACCOUNT CAP 100/90% Charter/District Funding

PARENT REQUIREMENTS pg. 145

GOVERNING STATUTES Fla.Stat. §1002.385

Student Funding

The General Appropriations Act (state budget) provides funding for Florida's Gardiner Scholarship Program and specifies the annual amount. The per-pupil amount varies according to grade, county of residence and public school spending for students with disabilities, with the maximum equating to 90 percent of the cost of the matrix of services a student would receive from a school district. The Florida legislature appropriated \$189.9 million to the ESA program for 2020–21. ESAs are prorated based on the academic quarter in which the student is deemed eligible for the ESA by a scholarship-funding organization.

Student Eligibility

To be awarded an ESA, students must be between the ages of 3 and 22 or be in 12th grade, whichever comes first. Students must have an Individualized Education Plan or have been diagnosed by a physician or psychologist with one of the following: autism spectrum disorder, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, an intellectual disability, muscular dystrophy, Phelan-McDermid syndrome, Prader-Willi syndrome, spina bifida, Williams syndrome, anaphylaxis, dual sensory impairment or rare diseases which affect patient populations of fewer than 200,000 Americans. Students are also eligible if A) they are identified as deaf or visually impaired, B) they have had a traumatic brain injury defined by the state board of education, C) they are hospitalized or homebound with a medically diagnosed physical or psychiatric condition for more than six months or D) they are students aged 3, 4 or 5 who are considered "high-risk" due to developmental delay.

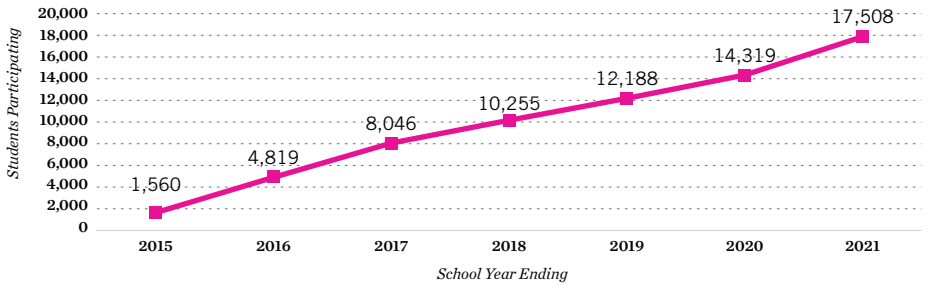
EdChoice Expert Feedback

Florida's education savings account for students with special needs helps more than 10,000 students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do more to expand educational opportunity.

Eligibility for the scholarships is limited to students with certain special needs. About ten percent of Florida students are eligible to receive a scholarship. Statewide, 10 percent of students participate in one of Florida's private educational choice options (including the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program, Family Empowerment Scholarships Program, the Hope Scholarships Program, and the

Program Participation

Enrollment in Florida’s Gardiner Scholarship Program increased 22 percent since the last school year.



17,508

Participating
Students
(Fall 2020)

10%

of Students
Eligible
(Statewide)

1,870

Participating
Schools
(2020–21)

\$10,515

Average Account
Value
(2020–21 Projected)

115%

Value as a Percentage
of Public School
Per-student Spending
(general, not specific
to special needs)

EdChoice Expert Feedback *(continued)*

John M. McKay Scholarships for Students with Disabilities Program). This is the second highest EdChoice share in the nation.

The average ESA size is about \$10,500, which is slightly above the average student expenditure at Florida’s district schools but still only a portion of the average per-pupil funding for students with special needs at district schools. Florida’s ESA program generally avoids unnecessary and counterproductive regulations.

Additional Florida programs on pages **31, 33, 97, 99**

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/FL_ESA

Mississippi Equal Opportunity for Students with Special Needs Program

Education Savings Account | *Enacted 2015* | *Launched 2015*

Mississippi allows students with special needs to receive a portion of their public funding in a government authorized savings account with multiple uses. Participating students must have had an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) within the past three years and not be participating in either of Mississippi's two other school choice programs.

INCOME LIMIT None

PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT Conditional

GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT Statewide

ENROLLMENT CAP 3,000

ACCOUNT CAP \$5,236

TESTING MANDATE None

PARENT REQUIREMENTS pg. 145

GOVERNING STATUTES Miss. Code Ann. §§ 37-181-1 through 21

Student Funding

The award amount is \$5,606 in 2020–21. After a \$2 million increase to program funding in 2019–20, the Mississippi legislature reverted back to previous years' funding level of \$3 million appropriated for 2020–21. Due to this decrease in funding, the annual student award amount decreased considerably from previous years in order to accommodate the previous increase in enrollment. This amount is normally based on the Mississippi Adequate Education Program (MAEP) base student cost, i.e., the funding amount provided by the state to public schools, and is subject to annual increases or decreases by the same proportion as MAEP.

ESA funds may pay for tuition and fees at eligible private schools, textbooks, tutoring, testing fees, licensed therapy services, dual-enrollment courses, consumable school supplies, and essential computer hardware and software.

Student Eligibility

Students must have had an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) within the past three years. While participating in this program, students are not eligible for either a Dyslexia Therapy Scholarship or a Nate Rogers Scholarship. Participating students are automatically approved to participate the following year. Once enrolled in the program, participating parents do not need to reapply for funding if their students remain outside of the public school system.

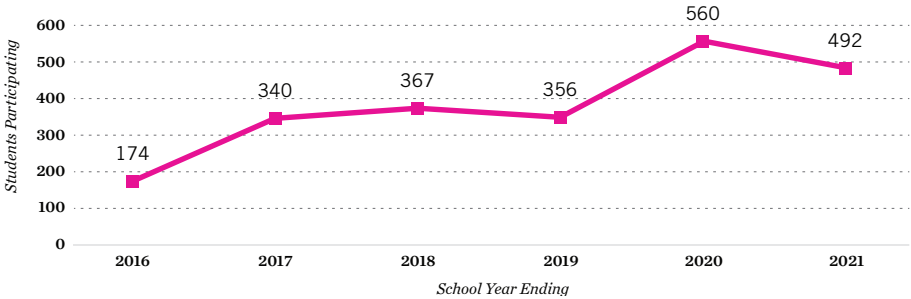
EdChoice Expert Feedback

Mississippi's ESA program for students with special needs helps hundreds of students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do much more to expand educational opportunity.

Eligibility for the scholarships is limited to students in grades K–12 who have had an IEP in the previous 5 years. Only 19 percent of Mississippi students are eligible for a scholarship and only 0.1 percent of students statewide actually use one of Mississippi's three educational choice programs (including the Nate Rogers Scholarship for Students with Disabilities and the Dyslexia Therapy Scholarship Program).

Program Participation

Enrollment in Mississippi's ESA program has grown by 65 percent since the program began in 2016.



492

Participating
Students
(Fall 2020)

12%

of Students
Eligible
(Statewide)

1,141

Participating
Schools
(Fall 2020)

\$5,606

Average Account
Value
(Fall 2020)

66%

Value as a Percentage
of Public School
Per-student Spending

EdChoice Expert Feedback *(continued)*

The ESA value is \$5,606, which is about two-thirds of the average expenditure per student at Mississippi's district schools. Only \$3 million in funding for the ESAs is available annually, which is equivalent to only 0.06 percent of Mississippi's total K-12 revenue.

In order to expand access to educational choice, Mississippi policymakers should expand eligibility to all students.

Mississippi's ESA program has some unnecessary and counterproductive regulations. In 2020, Mississippi lawmakers took a step backward by disallowing the use of ESA funds at out-of-state schools or online schools, needlessly limiting the options available to ESA families. Moreover, unlike the ESA programs in other states, the Mississippi ESA does not allow rollover funds to be saved into a college savings account if they remain unused. Reversing these policies would provide greater freedom and flexibility for families to customize their child's education as well as a greater incentive to utilize their ESA funds efficiently.

Additional Mississippi programs on pages **47, 49**

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/MS_ESA

North Carolina Personal Education Savings Account

Education Savings Account | Enacted 2017 | Launched 2018

North Carolina's Personal Education Savings Account (ESA) program provides families funds to pay for a variety of educational services. This program serves students with special needs and can be used in conjunction with the state's two voucher programs.

INCOME LIMIT None

PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT Conditional

GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT Statewide

ENROLLMENT CAP None

ACCOUNT CAP \$9,000

TESTING MANDATE National

PARENT REQUIREMENTS pg. 145

GOVERNING STATUTES Miss. Code Ann. §§ 37-181-1 through 21

Student Funding

The North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority (NCSEAA) awards certain students with special needs accounts that are loaded quarterly with funds for qualified educational and therapeutic uses, including private school tuition. Students may attend public school part-time while receiving partial ESAs worth \$4,500 if the private school they attend exclusively serves students with special needs. NCSEAA deposits funds in equal amounts once per quarter into the accounts. The maximum value for a full ESA is \$9,000 per student per year.

Funds may not be used for consumable education supplies, such as paper and pens, or tuition and fees at higher education institutions. The North Carolina Assembly appropriated \$3.4 million to the state's ESAs for the 2018–19 school year and is slated to remain at the same level pending legislative action; \$250,000 of that appropriation is allocated for the program's administration.

Student Eligibility

To qualify, students must have an Individualized Education Program and be identified as having special needs under the IDEA definition of a “child with disabilities.” These include autism, an intellectual disability, a hearing or visual impairment, a speech or language impairment, a serious emotional disturbance, an orthopedic impairment, a traumatic brain injury, another health impairment and/or a specific learning disability.

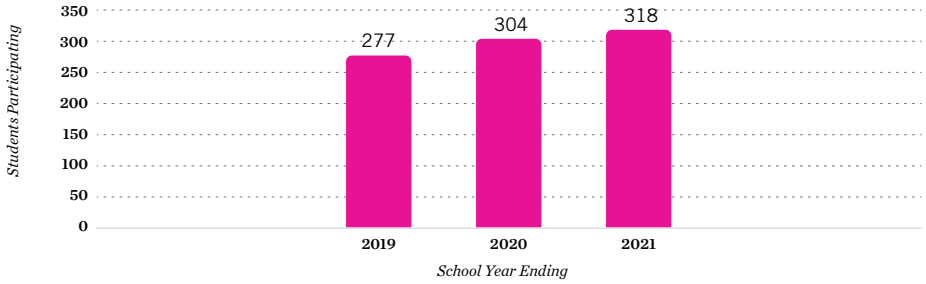
EdChoice Expert Feedback

North Carolina's ESA program for students with special needs helps hundreds of students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do much more to expand educational opportunity.

Eligibility for the ESA is limited to students in grades K–12 who have had an IEP. Only 10 percent of North Carolina's students are eligible for a scholarship and only 0.8 percent of students statewide actually use one of North Carolina's three educational choice programs (including the Opportunity Scholarships and the Special Education Scholarship Grants for Children with Disabilities).

Program Participation

Enrollment in North Carolina’s Personal Education Savings Accounts Program increased slightly in its second and third years.



318
Participating
Students
(Fall 2020)

10%
of Students
Eligible
(Statewide)

84
Participating
Schools
(Fall 2020)

\$8,929
Average Account
Value
(Projected 2020–21)

88%
Average Account
Value as a Percentage
of Public School Per-
student Spending

EdChoice Expert Feedback (continued)

The average ESA value is about \$8,900, which is about 88 percent of the average expenditure per student at North Carolina’s district schools.

In order to expand access to educational choice, North Carolina policymakers should expand eligibility to all students.

North Carolina’s ESA program generally avoids unnecessary and counterproductive regulations.

Additional North Carolina programs on pages **53, 55**

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/NC_ESA

Tennessee Individualized Education Account Program

Education Savings Account | Enacted 2015 | Launched 2017

Tennessee's Individualized Education Account (IEA) Program provides parents funds to pay for a variety of educational services for their children, including private school tuition, tutoring, online education, curriculum, therapy, post-secondary educational institutions in Tennessee and other defined educational services.

INCOME LIMIT None

PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT Conditional

GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT Statewide

ENROLLMENT CAP None

TESTING MANDATE State or National

ACCOUNT CAP 100% State and Local Funding

PARENT REQUIREMENTS pg. 145

GOVERNING STATUTES Tenn. Code Ann. §§ 49-10-1401 through 1406

Student Funding

An IEA is funded at an amount equivalent to 100 percent of the state and local funds reflected in the state funding formula that would have gone to the student had he or she attended a zoned public school, plus special education funds to which the student would otherwise be entitled under the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Families receive IEA funds monthly in an IEA debit card account during the 10 months of the school year. Funds can roll over each quarter, but at least half of the annual award amount must be spent by the end of the school year. Some funds require pre-approval from the state department of education.

Student Eligibility

Students qualify if they are eligible to enroll in kindergarten through 12th grade. They must also have an IEP and have been diagnosed with one of the following: autism, deaf-blindness, a hearing impairment (including deafness), an intellectual disability, an orthopedic impairment, a traumatic brain injury, developmental delay, visual impairment (including blindness) and/or multiple disabilities. Additionally, students must either (1) have been enrolled in a Tennessee public school during the previous full school year, (2) be attending a Tennessee public school for the first time or (3) have received an IEA in the previous school year. After receiving an IEA, students can no longer be enrolled in a public school.

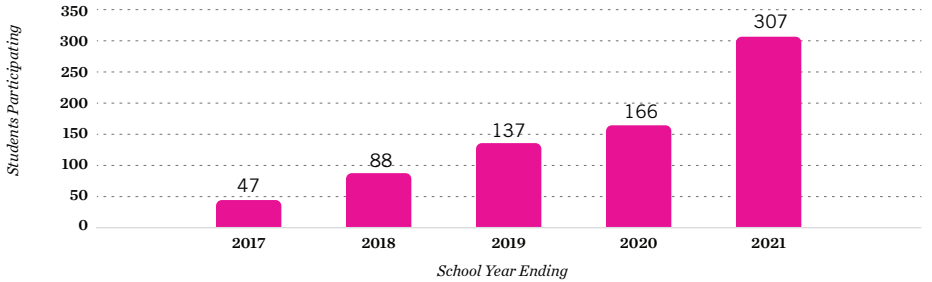
EdChoice Expert Feedback

Tennessee's education savings account for students with special needs helps hundreds of students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do more to expand educational opportunity.

Eligibility for the scholarships is limited to students with certain special needs. About 11 percent of Florida students are eligible to receive a scholarship. Statewide, less than 0.1 percent of students participate in Tennessee's ESA program. (Additionally, Tennessee lawmakers recently passed a new pilot voucher program that is currently under legal challenge.)

Program Participation

Enrollment in Tennessee’s Individualized Education Accounts program increased 85 percent since last year.



307
Participating
Students
(Fall 2020)

2%
of Students
Eligible
(Statewide)

22
Participating
Schools
(Fall 2020)

\$7,068
Average Account
Value
(2020–21 Projected)

65%
Average Base Account Value
as a Percentage of Public
School Per-student Spending

EdChoice Expert Feedback *(continued)*

The average ESA is worth about \$7,000, which is about two-thirds of the average expenditure per student at Tennessee’s district schools.

In order to expand access to educational choice, Tennessee policymakers should dramatically increase funding for the ESAs and expand eligibility to all students (prioritizing ESAs based on need).

Tennessee’s ESA program generally avoids unnecessary and counterproductive regulations.

Additional Tennessee program on page **71**

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/TN_ESA

School Vouchers

Vouchers give parents the freedom to choose a private school for their children, using all or part of the public funding set aside for their children's education. Under such a program, funds typically expended by a school district would be allocated to a participating family in the form of a voucher to pay partial or full tuition for their child's private school, including both religious and non-religious options.

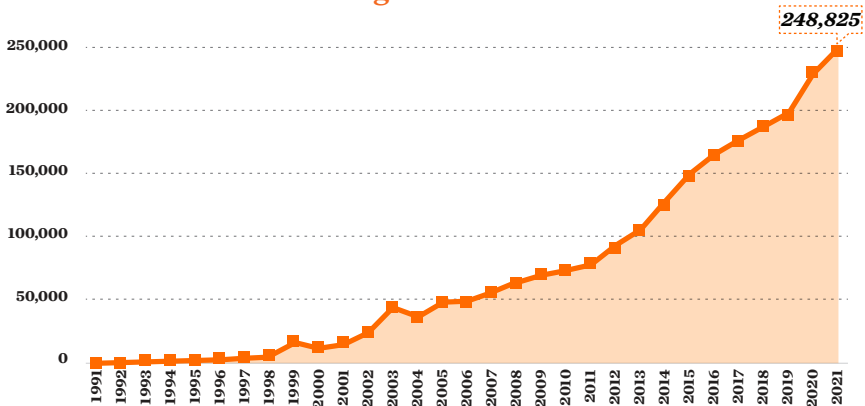
29
Programs

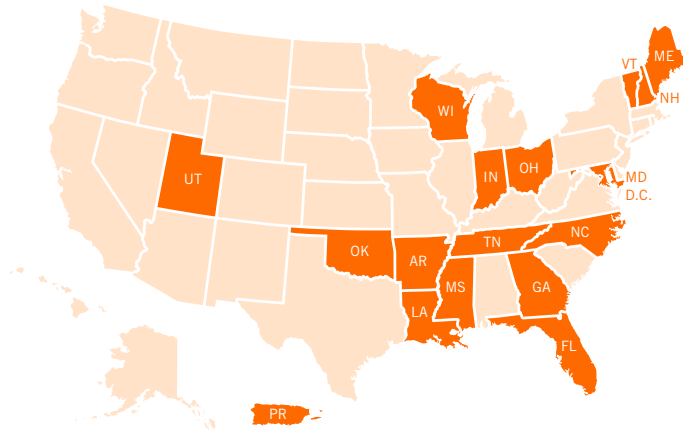
248,825
Total Students

\$6,302
Average Amount

43%
of Public
Spending
(National)

Number of Students Using Vouchers





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Watch How Vouchers Work

Hold your device's camera over this QR code and click the link that pops up to watch a short video about how this type of program works for state budgets and for families.

Arkansas

Succeed Scholarship Program

Voucher | *Enacted 2015* | *Launched 2016*

Arkansas provides private school vouchers to students in foster care or students with disabilities. Students who fall under either category must have previously attended public school, unless they are children of an active-duty military member or receive a waiver from the superintendent of their resident school district.

INCOME LIMIT	None	PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT	Conditional		
GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT	Statewide	ENROLLMENT CAP	Foster care students: 20	VOUCHER CAP	\$7,018
TESTING MANDATES	National	PARENT REQUIREMENTS	pg. 145		
GOVERNING STATUTES	Ark. Code Ann. §§ 6-41-901 through 907				

Student Funding

Each student's voucher is funded at the public school foundation funding amount for the current school year (\$7,018 in 2020–21), up to but not exceeding the amount of tuition and fees at the private school.

Student Eligibility

Students must be accepted to an eligible private school and A) be in group foster care, B) have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), (C) have an individualized service plan in accordance with IDEA, or (D) be diagnosed by a physician as having a disability defined by 20 U.S.C.1401(3)(A). Students that meet the aforementioned requirements must also either A) be dependents of active-duty military members, B) have been enrolled in an Arkansas public school for at least one year or C) receive a waiver from their home district superintendent.

EdChoice Expert Feedback

The Succeed Scholarship Program helps hundreds of Arkansas students with special needs access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do more to expand educational opportunity.

Eligibility for the scholarships is limited to students with special needs and foster students who were enrolled in a public school for at least one year or who were the children of active-duty military personnel or received a waiver from the local superintendent, making it one of the most restrictive educational choice programs in the nation. Only 14 percent of Arkansas students are eligible for a scholarship and fewer than 0.1 percent of students statewide actually use a scholarship.

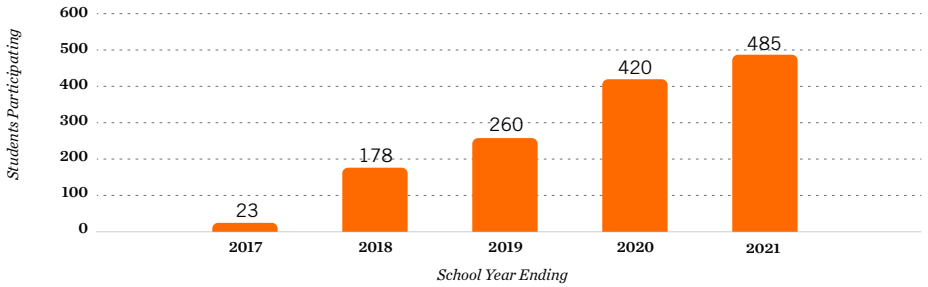
The average scholarship size is about \$6,300, which is about 54 percent of the average expenditure per student at Arkansas district schools, although it is likely significantly less than the average cost per pupil for students with special needs.

In order to expand access to educational choice, Arkansas policymakers should expand eligibility to all students. The program could also be converted into an education savings account to ensure that all students have access to the education that's the right fit for them, whether private school or a customized course of education.

Arkansas' scholarship program generally avoids unnecessary and counterproductive regulations.

Program Participation

Enrollment in Arkansas's Succeed Scholarship program grew by 15 percent in its fifth year of operation.



485

Participating
Students
(2020-21)

13%

of Students
Eligible
(Statewide)

40

Participating
Schools
(2020-21)

\$6,325

Average Voucher
Value
(2019-20)

54%

Value as a
Percentage of
Public School
Per-student
Total Spending

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/AR_voucher

District of Columbia Opportunity Scholarship Program

Voucher | *Enacted 2004* | *Launched 2004*

The District of Columbia's Opportunity Scholarship Program provides vouchers to low-income students, is overseen by the U.S. Department of Education, and is administered by a D.C. nonprofit organization. There are \$20 million in appropriations from Congress annually, which include administrative costs.

INCOME LIMIT 185% x FRL (300% x Poverty to remain eligible year-to-year)

PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT None

GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT District (D.C.)

ENROLLMENT CAP None

VOUCHER CAP \$9,161 (K-8) / \$13,742 (9-12)

TESTING MANDATES State (D.C.)

PARENT REQUIREMENTS pg. 145

GOVERNING STATUTES DC ST § 38-1853

Student Funding

Vouchers are worth up to \$9,161 for K-8 students and \$13,742 for students in grades 9-12 for 2020-21. Those amounts increase annually with the Consumer Price Index. Vouchers first pay for tuition, with any leftover funds available for certain qualified fees that schools may require as well as for summer school. As the result of a 2019 reauthorization bill, Congress currently allocates \$20 million for the voucher program, including administrative fees.

Student Eligibility

Families must be current D.C. residents. Additionally, families must either receive benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or earn no more than 185 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL) when they enter the program (\$48,470 for a family of four in 2020-21). Students may continue to receive vouchers in later years if their household income does not rise above 300 percent of the FPL (\$78,600 for a family of four in 2020-21). Students are given priority if they previously attended public schools identified as one of the lowest-performing under the District of Columbia's accountability system or if they or their siblings already are participating in the program. They may use vouchers only to attend private schools located in D.C.

EdChoice Expert Feedback

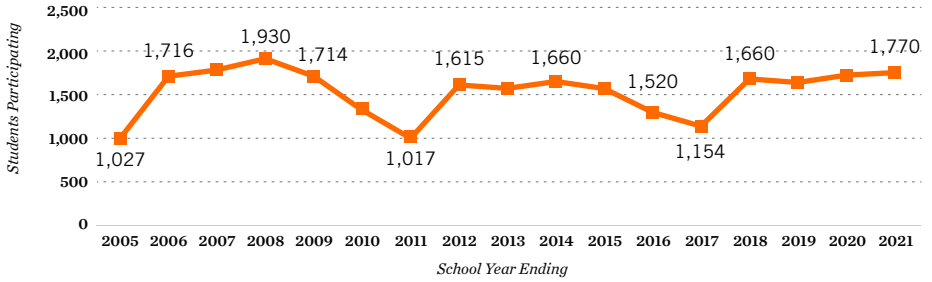
The D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program helps thousands of students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do more to expand educational opportunity.

Eligibility for the scholarships is limited to 185 percent of the federal poverty line initially. Only 29 percent of D.C. students are eligible for a scholarship and only 1.7 percent of students citywide actually use a scholarship.

The average scholarship size is about \$9,500, which is about 46 percent of the average expenditure per student at D.C.'s district schools, though the maximum scholarship size varies by grade level (\$9,022 for K-8 and \$13,534 for high school). Only \$17.5 million in scholarships is currently appropriated annually, which is equivalent to only 1.16% of D.C.'s total K-12 revenue.

Program Participation

Enrollment in the District of Columbia’s voucher program has remained stable since its reauthorization in 2019.



1,770

Participating Students
(Fall 2020)

29%

of Families with Children Eligible
(Districtwide)

42

Participating Schools
(Fall 2020)

\$10,095

Average Voucher Value
(2020–21)

34%

Value as a Percentage of Public School Per-student Spending

EdChoice Expert Feedback (continued)

In order to expand access to educational choice, the U.S. Congress should dramatically increase the D.C. OSP’s funding and expand eligibility to all students (prioritizing scholarships based on need). Congress should also formula fund the D.C. OSP—moving away from a volatile annual appropriations process—in order to put program funding on stable footing year after year. The program could also be converted into an education savings account to ensure that all students have access to the education that’s the right fit for them, whether private school or a customized course of education.

Additionally, D.C.’s scholarship program has several unnecessary and counterproductive regulations, including removal of private school autonomy over admissions and requiring participating students to take the D.C. Public Schools assessment in grades 3 through 8. Congress should restore private schools’ admissions autonomy and allow schools to choose from a menu of nationally norm-referenced tests.

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/DC_voucher

Florida

John M. McKay Scholarships for Students with Disabilities Program

Voucher | Enacted 1999 | Launched 1999

Florida's John M. McKay Scholarships for Students with Disabilities Program allows public school students with disabilities who have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 plans to receive vouchers to attend private schools or other public schools.

INCOME LIMIT None

PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT Yes

GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT Statewide

ENROLLMENT CAP None

VOUCHER CAP Greater of 100% State & Local Expenditure and Tuition

TESTING MANDATES None

PARENT REQUIREMENTS pg. 145

GOVERNING STATUTES Fla. Stat. § 1002.39

Student Funding

Vouchers are worth up to the same amount public schools would have spent on a participating child, though funding may not exceed the private school's tuition and fees. Calculations are based off the services provided by the district under the student's IEP or 504 plan. Parents may supplement vouchers with their own money for tuition.

Student Eligibility

Students with special needs who have IEPs or 504 plans and were enrolled in public school for at least one year are eligible. Students entering kindergarten may also qualify without enrolling in public school if the state's Office of Early Learning reports that they received specialized instructional services in prekindergarten or if they transfer to a private school in a year during which they were previously enrolled in a public kindergarten in October. Students in foster care and dependents of active-duty military who moved to Florida from out-of-state on a military assignment are also exempt from the prior public schooling requirement.

EdChoice Expert Feedback

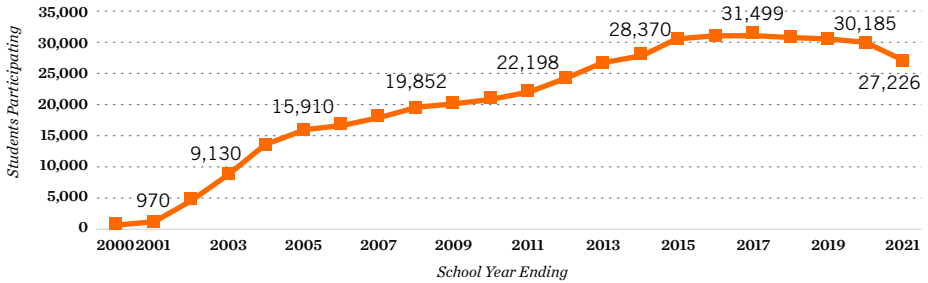
Florida's voucher for students with disabilities helps tens of thousands of students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do more to expand educational opportunity.

Eligibility for the scholarships is limited to students with special needs who have IEPs or 504 plans. About 11 percent of Florida students are eligible to receive a scholarship. Statewide, 4.9 percent of students participate in one of Florida's private educational choice options (including the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program, Family Empowerment Scholarships Program, the Hope Scholarships Program, and the Gardiner Scholarship Program). This is the second highest EdChoice share in the nation.

The average scholarship size is about \$7,900, which is about 71 percent of the average expenditure per student at Florida's district schools.

Program Participation

Enrollment in Florida’s John M. McKay Scholarships for Students with Disabilities Program dipped below 30,000 students for the first time since 2014.



27,226

Participating Students
(Fall 2020)

11%

of Students Eligible
(Districtwide)

1,517

Participating Schools
(Fall 2020)

\$7,754

Average Voucher Value
(2020–21 projected)

71%

Value as a Percentage of Public School Per-student Spending
(non-special needs specific)

EdChoice Expert Feedback (continued)

In order to expand access to educational choice, Florida policymakers have created the publicly funded Gardiner Scholarship Program for students with special needs and the Family Empowerment Scholarships Program to serve students who were on the scholarship waitlist.

Florida’s voucher program generally avoids unnecessary and counterproductive regulations.

Additional Florida programs on pages **17, 33, 97, 99**

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/FL_McKay

Florida Family Empowerment Scholarship Program Program

Voucher | *Enacted 2019* | *Launched 2019*

Florida's Family Empowerment Scholarship Program is the state's first voucher for low- and middle-income students. It is funded via the state's education formula and was enacted and launched in 2019 to provide school choice options to the thousands of students on waitlists for Florida's Tax Credit Scholarship Program.

INCOME LIMIT 300% x Poverty

PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT Yes

GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT Statewide

ENROLLMENT CAP 46,500 (2020–21)

VOUCHER CAP 95% unweighted state funding

TESTING MANDATES National

PARENT REQUIREMENTS pg. 145

GOVERNING STATUTES Fla. Stat. § 1002.394

Student Funding

Family Empowerment Scholarships are funded at 95 percent of Florida's unweighted full-time equivalent amount (\$7,403 in 2020–21) or a private school's tuition and fees, whichever amount is less. Payments are transferred quarterly from the state's general revenue fund for parents to use at participating private schools.

Student Eligibility

Students are initially eligible for Family Empowerment Scholarships if they (a) are directly certified to receive food assistance, TANF benefits or qualify for the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations, (b) are from families whose income does not exceed 300 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL) (\$78,600 for a family of four in 2020–21, or (c) are in foster care.

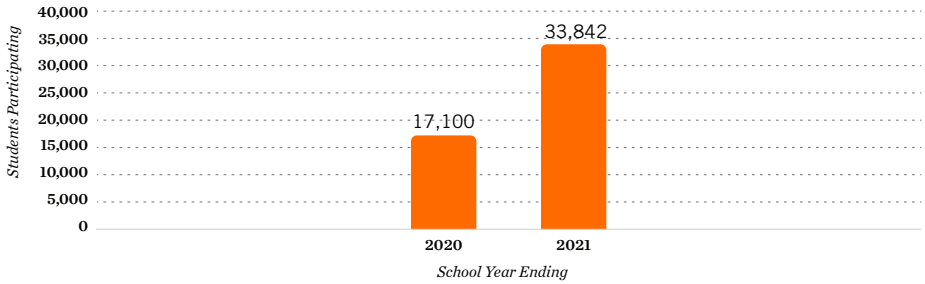
Eligible students must also have been enrolled in a traditional Florida public school during the previous school year. Children whose parent(s) are members of the Armed Forces and who are moving to Florida due to military orders do not need to meet the prior public schooling requirement. Enrollment in a charter school or a state-funded virtual school does not satisfy the prior public schooling requirement.

Priority is given to students whose household income does not exceed 185 percent of FPL (\$48,470 for a family of four in 2020–21). Once a recipient of a Family Empowerment Scholarship, a student remains eligible until graduating from high school or becoming 21 years old, regardless of the family's income level. Siblings of participating students are also eligible for the program for the duration of their K–12 education.

The program is capped at 46,500 students for the 2020–21 school year. It is allowed to grow by 1 percent of the state's total public school enrollment each year (currently about 28,500 students per year.)

Program Participation

Enrollment in Florida’s Family Empowerment Scholarship Program nearly doubled since last year.



33,842

Participating Students
(Fall 2020)

52%

of Families Income-eligible
(Statewide)

1,978

Participating Schools
(2020–21)

\$5,955

Average Voucher Value
(2019–20)

55%

Maximum Value as a Percentage of Public School Per-student Spending

EdChoice Expert Feedback

Florida’s voucher program helps tens of thousands of low-income students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do more to expand educational opportunity.

Eligibility for the vouchers is limited to 300 percent of the federal poverty line, with preference given to lower-income families. About 52 percent of Florida students are eligible to receive a voucher. Statewide, 4.9 percent of students participate in one of Florida’s private educational choice options (including the Florida Tax-Credit Scholarship Program, the Hope Scholarships Program, John M. McKay Scholarships for Students with Disabilities Program, and the Gardiner Scholarship Program). This is the second highest EdChoice share in the nation.

The average scholarship size is about \$5,955, which is about 55 percent of the average total expenditure per student at Florida’s district schools. The program is capped at 46,500 vouchers in 2020-21 but the number of available vouchers increases each year by 1 percent of the total public school enrollment (about 28,000 students).

Florida’s voucher program generally avoids unnecessary and counterproductive regulations.

Additional Florida programs on pages **17, 31, 97, 99**

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/FL_voucher

Georgia Special Needs Scholarship Program

Voucher | *Enacted 2007* | *Launched 2007*

The Georgia Special Needs Scholarship Program allows students with a district-recognized disability whose parents are not satisfied with their assigned public school to receive a voucher to attend private school.

INCOME LIMIT None

PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT Yes

GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT Statewide

ENROLLMENT CAP None

VOUCHER CAP Conditional

TESTING MANDATES Pre- and Post-Assessments

PARENT REQUIREMENTS pg. 145

GOVERNING STATUTES Maine Rev. Stat. 20-A §§ 2951-55 and 5203-06

Student Funding

Vouchers are worth up to the cost of the educational program a student would have received in public school, as calculated by the services the student received in the local school district as well as existing state funding formulas. The voucher may not exceed the private school's tuition and fees.

Student Eligibility

To qualify, a student must have been enrolled in a Georgia public school for the entire previous school year. Preschool programs do not count toward this eligibility factor. The student must also have received special education services under an Individualized Education Plan at any point in that year, and those services must be reflected in the student's local district's October or May student count. The student's parent or guardian must live in Georgia currently and have been a resident for at least one year.

EdChoice Expert Feedback

Georgia's voucher for students with disabilities helps thousands of students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do more to expand educational opportunity.

Eligibility for the scholarships is limited to students with special needs who have IEPs. About 10 percent of Georgia students are eligible to receive a scholarship. Statewide, 1 percent of students participate in one of Georgia's private educational choice options (including the Qualified Education Expense Tax Credit).

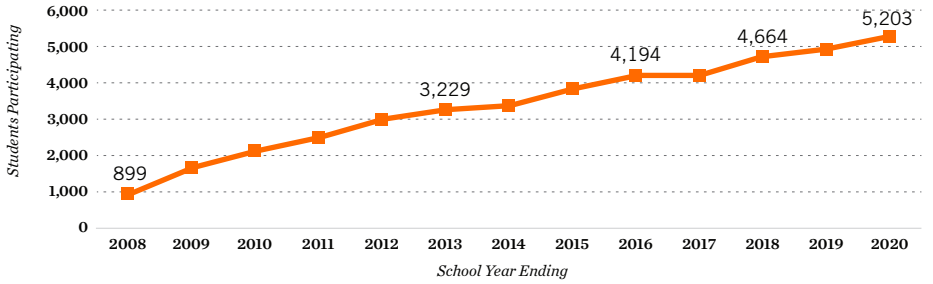
The average scholarship size is about \$6,800, which is about 57 percent of the average expenditure per student at Georgia's district schools.

In order to expand access to educational choice, Georgia policymakers should convert the vouchers into education savings accounts and expand them to serve all students.

Georgia's voucher program generally avoids unnecessary and counterproductive regulations.

Program Participation

Participation in Georgia’s voucher program for students with special needs has grown each year since its inception.



5,203

Participating Students (2019-20)

10%

of Students Eligible (Statewide)

254

Participating Schools (2019-20)

\$6,838

Average Voucher Value (2019-20)

57%

Value as a Percentage of Public School Per-student Spending

Additional Georgia program on page **101**

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/GA_voucher

Indiana Choice Scholarship Program

Voucher | Enacted 2011 | Launched 2011

Indiana's Choice Scholarship Program allows students in low- and middle-income families to receive vouchers to attend private school.

INCOME LIMIT 150% x FRL

PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT Conditional

GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT Statewide

ENROLLMENT CAP None

VOUCHER CAP 50% or 90% of State Expenditure

TESTING MANDATES State

PARENT REQUIREMENTS pg. 145

GOVERNING STATUTES Ind. Code §§ 20-51-1 through 12

Student Funding

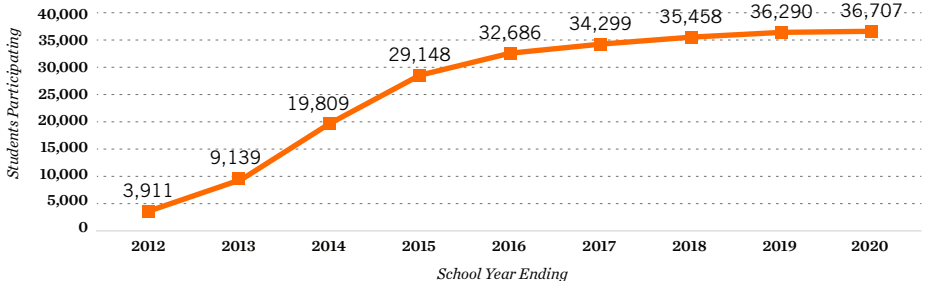
Students from families that qualified for the federal free and reduced-price lunch (FRL) program (\$48,470 for a family of four in 2020–21) can receive a voucher worth up to 90 percent of the state per-student spending amount for the sending school district. Students from families earning between 100–125 percent of FRL (\$60,588 for a family of four in 2020–21) may receive vouchers worth up to 70 percent of this amount. Students from families that earn between 125–150 percent of FRL (\$72,705 for a family of four in 2020–21) can receive a voucher worth up to 50 percent of the state funding allocation for the sending district. Families can supplement vouchers with additional funds. Students eligible to receive district-allocated special education funds are now eligible to use those funds for special education services at a voucher-accepting school.

Student Eligibility

Children must be between ages 5 and 22 to receive a Choice Scholarship. In addition to this age requirement, there are eight additional eligibility pathways which, if any one is met, qualifies a student for a voucher. These are: (1) students who have received a Choice Scholarship the previous year and are from families that earn up to (but not exceeding) 200 percent of FRL (\$96,940 for a family of four in 2020–21), (2) students who are prior Choice Scholarship recipients from families that earn up to (but not exceeding) 150 percent of FRL (\$72,705 for a family of four in 2019–20) and (a) received the voucher two or more years prior to applying or (b) received the voucher in the immediately preceding school year but exited the program prior to the end of the school year, (3) students who previously received a School Scholarship Tax Credit award and are from families that earn up to 150 percent of FRL, (4) students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and are from families that earn up to 200 percent of FRL, (5) students who attended or would attend a public school designated F and who are from families that earn up to (but not exceeding) 150 percent of FRL, (6) students who attended a public school (including a charter school) for the preceding two semesters and who are from families that earn up to 150 percent of FRL, (7) students or siblings of students who previously received a voucher or a tax-credit scholarship and who are from families that earn up to 150 percent of FRL, and (8) students who used an Early Education Grant to attend prekindergarten at an eligible Choice Scholarship school in which they intend to enroll for kindergarten and are from families that earn up to (but not exceeding) 69 percent of FRL (\$33,444 in 2020–21).

Program Participation

Participation in Indiana’s voucher program has grown each year since its inception.



36,707

Participating Students (2019–20)

44%

of Families Income-eligible (Statewide)

326

Participating Schools (2019–20)

\$4,707

Average Voucher Value (2019–20)

47%

Value as a Percentage of Public School Per-student Spending

EdChoice Expert Feedback

Indiana’s voucher program for students helps tens of thousands of disadvantaged students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do much more to expand educational opportunity.

Eligibility for the vouchers is limited to a variety of low-income and disadvantaged students. About 47 percent of Indiana’s students are eligible for a scholarship. Only 3.9 percent of students statewide actually participate in one of Indiana’s private educational choice options (including the School Scholarship Tax Credit).

The average voucher value is about \$4,707, which is about 44 percent of the average expenditure per student at Indiana’s district schools.

In order to expand access to educational choice, Indiana policymakers should expand eligibility to all students. The program could also be converted into an education savings account to ensure that all students have access to the education that’s the right fit for them, whether private school or a customized course of education.

Indiana’s voucher program imposes some unnecessary and counterproductive regulations. For example, the program requires voucher students to take the state’s standardized test. Instead of mandating a single test, policymakers should allow parents and schools to choose from a variety of nationally norm-referenced tests.

Additional Indiana programs on pages **105, 135**

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/IN_voucher

Louisiana Scholarship Program

Voucher | *Enacted 2008* | *Launched 2008*

Louisiana's statewide voucher program is available to low-income students attending low-performing public schools. It launched first in New Orleans before expanding statewide in 2012.

INCOME LIMIT 250% x Poverty

PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT Conditional

GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT Statewide

ENROLLMENT CAP None

VOUCHER CAP 100% of State Allocation

TESTING MANDATES State

PARENT REQUIREMENTS pg. 145

GOVERNING STATUTES La. Rev. Stat. §§ 17:4011 through 4025

Student Funding

The voucher is equal to the lesser of the total state allocation per student in the student's home school district or the tuition charged by the private school. Schools that accept students using the voucher may not charge those students more than non-voucher students. Students requiring special educational services are eligible for additional voucher funds equal to the federal special education funding in their home districts.

Student Eligibility

Students are eligible if their family income is no more than 250 percent of the federal poverty line (\$65,500 for a family of four in 2020–21) and they either (1) attended a public school designated as C, D or F in the previous year, (2) are entering kindergarten or (3) were enrolled at a public school in the Recovery School District. If more students apply than the program's capacity and funding allow, participation is determined by random lottery. If a particular private school is oversubscribed under the program, the state department of education must conduct a randomized lottery to award seats in that school. In that lottery, students from public schools rated D or F receive priority over students from public schools rated C. Schools in operation for fewer than two years may not have more than 20 percent of their enrollment consist of scholarship students.

EdChoice Expert Feedback

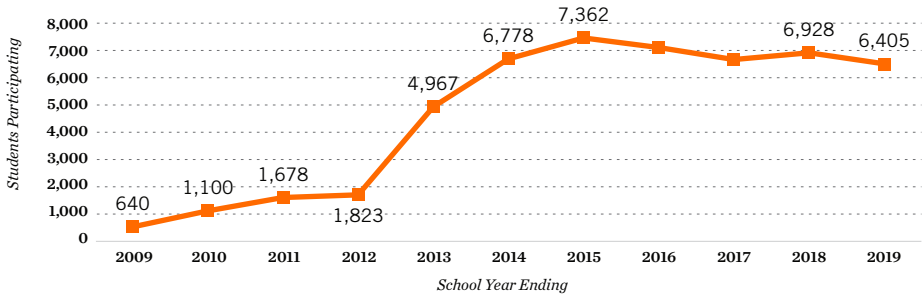
Louisiana's voucher for low-income students helps thousands of students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do more to expand educational opportunity.

Eligibility for the scholarships is limited to students from families earning up to 250 percent of the federal poverty level (\$64,375 for a family of four in 2019–20) in areas that have low-performing district schools. About 33 percent of Louisiana students are eligible to receive a scholarship, but only 1.0 percent of students participate in one of Louisiana's private educational choice options (including the Tuition Donation Credit Program and the School Choice Program for Certain Students with Exceptionalities).

The average scholarship size is about \$6,400, which is about 50 percent of the average expenditure per student at Louisiana's district schools.

Program Participation

Enrollment in Louisiana’s statewide voucher program has dropped by 8 percent since a 2015 high.



6,405

Participating
Students
(2019–20)

33%

of Students
Eligible
(Statewide)

131

Participating
Schools
(2019–20)

\$6,325

Average Voucher
Value
(2019–20)

50%

Value as a
Percentage of
Public School
Per-student
Spending

EdChoice Expert Feedback (continued)

In order to expand access to educational choice, Louisiana policymakers should increase the voucher amounts to be comparable with the per-pupil spending at district schools and expand eligibility to all students. At the very least, eligibility should not be tied to the performance of district schools on standardized tests. The program could also be converted into an education savings account to ensure that all students have access to the education that’s the right fit for them, whether private school or a customized course of education.

Louisiana’s voucher program has some unnecessary and counterproductive regulations. For example, the program requires voucher students in certain grades to take the state’s standardized test. Instead of mandating a single test, policymakers should allow parents and schools to choose from a variety of nationally norm-referenced tests. Policymakers should also amend the program so that it no longer interferes with schools’ admissions standards.

Additional Louisiana programs on pages **41, 111, 135**

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/LA_voucher

Louisiana

School Choice Program for Certain Students with Exceptionalities

Voucher | **Enacted 2010** | **Launched 2011**

Louisiana allows students with certain exceptionalities who live in eligible parishes to attend schools of their parents' choosing that provide educational services specifically addressing their needs. Eligible students are defined generally as those with special needs who have Individualized Education Plans but who are not in accelerated or gifted-and-talented programs.

INCOME LIMIT None

PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT None

GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT Parish (population > 190,000)

ENROLLMENT CAP None

VOUCHER CAP Conditional

TESTING MANDATES None

PARENT REQUIREMENTS pg. 145

GOVERNING STATUTES La. Rev. Stat. § 17:4031

Student Funding

The educational certificate (voucher) is worth a maximum of 50 percent of the state per-student expenditure within the recipient's district (this averages to about \$2,500 in 2020–21) or the cost of private school tuition, whichever is less. Families are responsible for any additional tuition charged by the school.

Student Eligibility

Students qualify if they have one of six categories of learning exceptionalities, have an Individualized Education Plan or services plan in accordance with Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations, reside in a parish with more than 190,000 residents, and are eligible to attend a public school and are not deemed gifted or talented.

EdChoice Expert Feedback

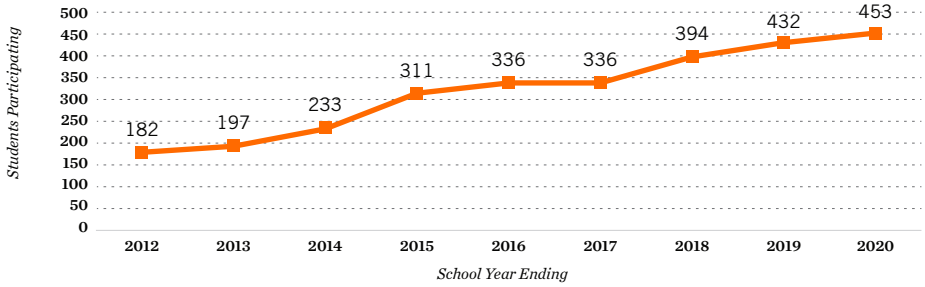
Louisiana's voucher for students with special needs helps hundreds of students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do more to expand educational opportunity.

Eligibility for the scholarships is limited to students with certain special needs who live in parishes with up to 190,000 residents. About 6 percent of students in these parishes are eligible to receive a scholarship, but only 1.0 percent of students participate in one of Louisiana's private educational choice options (including the Tuition Donation Credit Program and the Louisiana Scholarship Program).

The average scholarship size is about \$2,500 which is only about 20 percent of the average expenditure per student at Louisiana's district schools.

Program Participation

Enrollment in Louisiana’s special needs voucher program has grown 35 percent since 2016-17.



453

Participating Students (2019–20)

6%

of Students Eligible in the Applicable Parishes

24

Participating Schools (2019–20)

\$2,491

Average Voucher Value (2018-19)

20%

Value as a Percentage of Public School Per-student Spending

EdChoice Expert Feedback *(continued)*

In order to expand access to educational choice, Louisiana policymakers should increase the voucher amounts to be comparable with the per-pupil spending at district schools and expand eligibility to all students. The program could also be converted into an education savings account to ensure that all students have access to the education that’s the right fit for them, whether private school or a customized course of education.

Louisiana’s voucher program for students with special needs generally avoids unnecessary and counterproductive regulations.

Additional Louisiana programs on pages **39, 111, 135**

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/LA_voucher2

Maine

Town Tuitioning Program

Voucher | *Launched 1873*

Many small towns in Maine do not operate high schools, and some do not have elementary schools. Students in those towns are eligible for vouchers to attend public schools in other towns or non-religious private schools, even outside the state. The sending towns pay tuition directly to the receiving schools. Although most towns allow parents to choose which schools will receive their students, some towns send all their students to one school.

INCOME LIMIT None

PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT None

GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT District (w/out elementary or high school)

ENROLLMENT CAP None

VOUCHER CAP \$9,526 (K-8) / \$11,948 (9-12)

TESTING MANDATES Conditional – State

PARENT REQUIREMENTS pg. 145

GOVERNING STATUTES Maine Rev. Stat. 20-A §§ 2951-55 and 5203-06

Student Funding

Sending towns pay tuition directly to the receiving schools. Public schools in Maine have a tuition rate that sending towns must pay when their students are tuitioned at public schools. For private schools, the tuition rate for elementary students may not exceed the average per-pupil cost on a statewide basis. For secondary pupils, the tuition rate is Maine's average per-pupil cost for secondary education in the previous year, plus an additional payment intended to cover depreciation of private schools' buildings. Parents may supplement that voucher with their own money. Voucher values vary from county to county based on current per-student funding levels. Sending towns have the option of adding on to the voucher up to an amount worth as much as 115 percent of the per-student funding in total, but may not reduce the voucher below the state's tuition rates.

Student Eligibility

Students must live in Maine and reside in an identified sending town that does not have a public school at their grade level. Although most towns allow parents to choose which schools will receive their students, some towns send all their students to one school.

EdChoice Expert Feedback

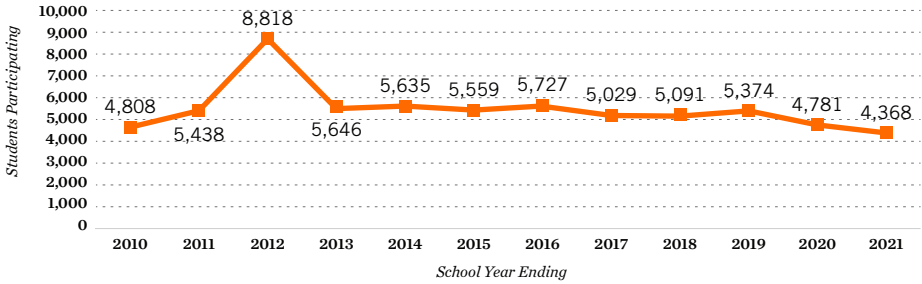
Maine's town tuitioning program helps thousands of students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do more to expand educational opportunity.

Eligibility is limited to students living in towns that do not operate public schools for student's grade level, making it one of the most restrictive educational choice programs in the nation. Only 3 percent of Maine students are eligible to participate, the same percentage of students statewide actually do so. The maximum voucher size is about \$9,500 for K-8 and \$11,900 for high school, which is 73 percent of per-student spending at Maine's district schools, though the amounts vary by county.

In order to expand access to educational choice, Maine policymakers should expand eligibility to all students. The program could also be converted into an education savings account to ensure that all students have access to the education that's the right fit for them, whether private school or a customized course of education.

Program Participation

Participation in Maine’s Town Tuitioning Program decreased 19 percent since 2018–19.



4,368
Participating
Students
(2020-21)

2%
of Students
Eligible
(Statewide)

32
Participating
Schools
(2020-21)

\$9,526
(K–8) Maximum
Voucher Value
(2019–20)

\$11,948
(9–12) Maximum
Voucher Value
(2019–20)

77%
Maximum
Value as a
Percentage of
Public School
Per-student
Spending

EdChoice Expert Feedback (continued)

Additionally, although Maine’s town tuitioning program mostly avoids unnecessary and counterproductive regulations, the program prohibits families from choosing to attend religious schools. This discriminatory policy violates the First Amendment and is currently the subject of litigation.

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/ME_voucher

Maryland

Broadening Options and Opportunities for Students Today (BOOST) Program

Voucher | **Enacted 2016** | **Launched 2016**

Maryland's Broadening Options and Opportunities for Students Today (BOOST) Program was enacted in 2016 and began providing vouchers in 2016–17. This school choice program, the state's first, provides vouchers to low-income students to attend private schools.

INCOME LIMIT	100% x FRL	PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT	None
GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT	Statewide	ENROLLMENT CAP	None
VOUCHER CAP	100% of Statewide Average Local Expenditure	TESTING MANDATES	State
PARENT REQUIREMENTS	pg. 145	GOVERNING STATUTES	Senate Bill 190 § R00A03.05

Student Funding

Each student's voucher is funded at the statewide average of the per-pupil expenditures by all local education agencies for the current school year, up to but not exceeding the amount of tuition at the private school. The program's advisory board takes into account a student's special needs when determining scholarship amounts and may fund these students with higher vouchers than the per-pupil average.

The Maryland legislature established the program as a budget item, and it is funded by appropriation. It appropriated \$7.37 million from the general fund to fund vouchers for students as well as awarded rollover funds for the 2020–21 school year. Of the appropriation, \$0.7 million is set aside for providing higher vouchers to students with special needs.

Student Eligibility

Students are eligible if they live in families with incomes up to, but not exceeding, 100 percent of the federal free and reduced-price lunch program (\$48,470 for a family of four in 2020–21). Renewing students who remain income-eligible are entitled to vouchers as long as funding is available.

EdChoice Expert Feedback

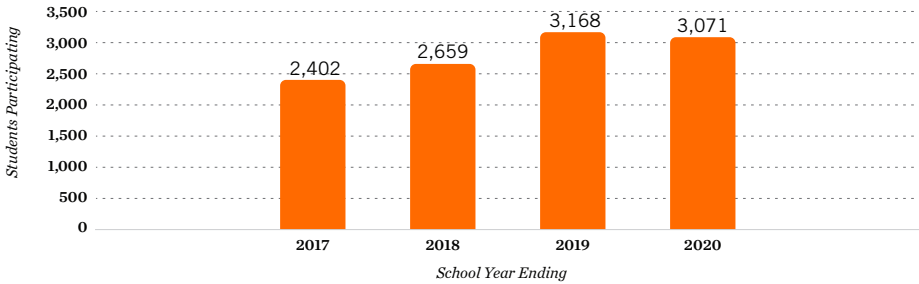
Maryland's Broadening Options and Opportunities for Students Today (BOOST) Program helps thousands of students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do much more to expand educational opportunity.

Eligibility for the scholarships is limited to 185 percent of the federal poverty line. Only 19 percent of Maryland students are eligible for a scholarship and only 0.3 percent of students statewide actually use a scholarship.

The average scholarship size is about \$2,008, which is about 12 percent of the average expenditure per student at Maryland's district schools. The amount of scholarships budgeted for the 2020–21 academic year is only \$7.37 million, which is equivalent to only 0.05 percent of Maryland's total K–12 expenditures.

Program Participation

Enrollment in Maryland’s BOOST program decreased by 3 percent between its third and fourth years.



3,071

Participating Students (Fall 2019)

19%

of Families with Children Income-eligible (Statewide)

163

Participating Schools (2019-20)

\$2,008

Average Voucher Value (2019-20)

12%

Value as a Percentage of Public School Per-student Spending

EdChoice Expert Feedback (continued)

In order to expand access to educational choice, Maryland policymakers should dramatically increase funding for the scholarship and expand eligibility to all students (prioritizing scholarships based on need). Instead of funding the scholarships via an annual line-item appropriation, the scholarships should be formula funded. The program could also be converted into an education savings account to ensure that all students have access to the education that’s the right fit for them, whether private school or a customized course of education.

Additionally, Maryland’s scholarship program has some unnecessary and counterproductive regulations. The program requires the Maryland Department of Education to “compile and certify” a list of applicants and rank them by eligibility before sending to the BOOST advisory board. Though this was likely intended to provide the most aid to the most disadvantaged students, this policy creates unnecessary invasions of privacy and forces a ranking system for students already eligible for the program. Schools participating in this program also must adhere to Maryland’s Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended and Title 20 Subtitle 6 of the State Governor Article, which requires private schools eligible for vouchers to not discriminate in student admissions, retention, expulsion or otherwise based on race, color, national origin, sexual orientation or gender identity or expression. Although the program includes a protection for religious liberty (“Nothing herein shall require any school or institution to adopt any rule, regulation, or policy that conflicts with its religious or moral teachings”), the state government expelled one private religious school from participating in the program due to its stated beliefs about marriage and sexuality, even though the school fully complied with the state’s nondiscrimination policy concerning admissions. The case is currently being litigated.

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/MD_voucher

Mississippi Dyslexia Therapy Scholarship for Students with Dyslexia Program

Voucher | Enacted 2012 | Launched 2012

Mississippi allows children with dyslexia to receive vouchers to attend accredited special purpose private schools that provide dyslexia therapy.

INCOME LIMIT None

PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT Conditional

GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT Statewide

ENROLLMENT CAP None

VOUCHER CAP \$5,829

TESTING MANDATES None

PARENT REQUIREMENTS pg. 145

GOVERNING STATUTES Miss. Code Ann. §§ 37-173-1 through 29

Student Funding

The maximum voucher amount is equal to the Mississippi Adequate Education Program base student cost, i.e., the per-student funding amount provided by the state to public schools. That amount is \$5,829 in 2020–21.

Student Eligibility

Students must be in first through 12th grade and have been screened properly and diagnosed with dyslexia by a licensed psychometrist, psychologist or speech language pathologist. Students are eligible if they attend a public school or if they attend a state-approved private school that “emphasizes instruction in dyslexia intervention.” The voucher is not available to fund homeschooling, virtual schools or students in juvenile detention schools.

EdChoice Expert Feedback

Wisconsin’s statewide voucher for low-income students helps thousands of students access schools Mississippi’s voucher program for students with dyslexia helps hundreds of students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do much more to expand educational opportunity.

Eligibility for the vouchers is limited to students who have been diagnosed with dyslexia, making it one of the most restrictive educational choice programs in the nation. Only 3 percent of Mississippi students are eligible for a scholarship and only 0.1 percent of students statewide actually use one of Mississippi’s three educational choice programs (including the Equal Opportunity for Students with Special Needs Program and the Nate Rogers Scholarship for Students with Disabilities).

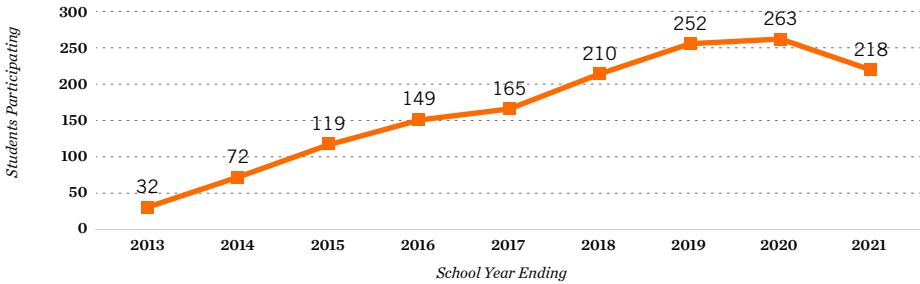
The average voucher size is about \$5,200, which is about three-fifths of the average expenditure per student at Mississippi’s district schools.

In order to expand access to educational choice, Mississippi policymakers should expand eligibility to all students.

Mississippi’s voucher program generally avoids unnecessary and counterproductive regulations.

Program Participation

Enrollment in Mississippi's voucher program for students with dyslexia decreased 17 percent since last year.



218
Participating
Students
(Fall 2020)

23%
of Students
Eligible
(Statewide)

6
Participating
Schools
(Fall 2020)

\$5,236
Average Voucher
Value
(2020-21)

61%
Value as a
Percentage of
Public School
Per-student
Spending

Additional Mississippi programs on pages **19, 49**

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/MS_dyslexia

Mississippi

Nate Rogers Scholarship for Students with Disabilities Program

Voucher | Enacted 2013 | Launched 2013

Mississippi allows children with speech-language impairments to receive vouchers to attend private schools. Participating accredited private schools must be able to provide speech-language therapy.

INCOME LIMIT None **PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT** Conditional

GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT Statewide **ENROLLMENT CAP** None **VOUCHER CAP** \$5,829

TESTING MANDATES None **PARENT REQUIREMENTS** pg. 145

GOVERNING STATUTES Miss. Code Ann. §§ 37-175-1 through 29

Student Funding

The maximum voucher amount is equal to the Mississippi Adequate Education Program base student cost, i.e., the funding amount provided by the state to public schools. That amount is \$5,829 in 2020–21.

Student Eligibility

Students must be in grades K–6 and have been screened properly and diagnosed with speech-language impairment. Students are eligible if, during the previous school year, they attended a public or state accredited special-purpose school that “emphasizes instruction in speech-language therapy and intervention.” The voucher is not available to fund homeschooling, virtual schools or students in juvenile detention centers.

EdChoice Expert Feedback

Mississippi’s voucher program for students with special needs helps only a handful of students access schools that are the right fit for them. Mississippi policymakers could do much more to expand educational opportunity.

Eligibility for the vouchers is limited to students in grades K–12 who have been diagnosed with a speech-language impairment, making it one of the most restrictive educational choice programs in the nation. Only 2 percent of Mississippi students are eligible for a scholarship and only 0.1 percent of students statewide actually use one of Mississippi’s three educational choice programs (including the Equal Opportunity for Students with Special Needs Program and the Dyslexia Therapy Scholarship Program).

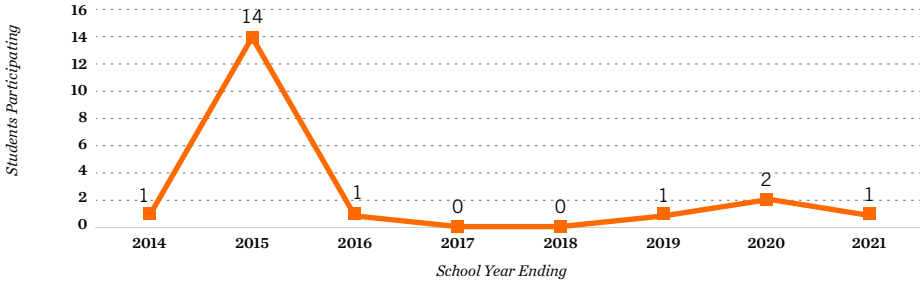
The average voucher size is about \$3,408, which is about 35 percent of the average expenditure per student at Mississippi’s district schools.

In order to expand access to educational choice, Mississippi policymakers should expand eligibility to all students.

Mississippi’s voucher program generally avoids unnecessary and counterproductive regulations.

Program Participation

Enrollment in Mississippi’s voucher program for students with speech-language impairments has been volatile, perhaps due to students opting into the state’s special needs ESA program.



1
Participating Student
(Fall 2020)

2%
of Students Eligible
(Statewide)

1
Participating School
(Fall 2020)

\$3,408
Average Voucher Value
(2020–21)

35%
Value as a Percentage of Public School Per-student Spending

Additional Mississippi programs on pages **19, 47**

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/MS_NateRogers

New Hampshire Town Tuitioning Program

Voucher | **Enacted 2017** | **Launched 2017**

New Hampshire's Town Tuitioning Program, re-enacted and launched in 2017 to include private schools, allows towns without district schools at a student's grade level to use public dollars for students to attend any public or approved independent (private), non-religious school in or outside of New Hampshire. The "tuitioning" district pays the tuition directly to the "receiving" schools.

INCOME LIMIT None

PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT None

GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT District (w/out elementary or high school)

ENROLLMENT CAP None

VOUCHER CAP 100% of Statewide Average Local Expenditure

TESTING MANDATES National

PARENT REQUIREMENTS pg. 145

GOVERNING STATUTES N.H. Rev. Stat. Ann. §§ 193:3-4

Student Funding

When students are tuitioned at public schools, the sending town pays the receiving school district or private school an amount equal to the receiving school's expenses of operation, as estimated by the state board of education the preceding year. That figure is calculated separately for elementary, junior high and high schools. Operation costs do not include the transportation of "tuitioning" students.

Student Eligibility

Students must live in New Hampshire and reside in an identified tuition town. A "tuition town" lacks a district school that offers the grade levels students need.

EdChoice Expert Feedback

New Hampshire's town tuitioning program helps students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do more to expand educational opportunity.

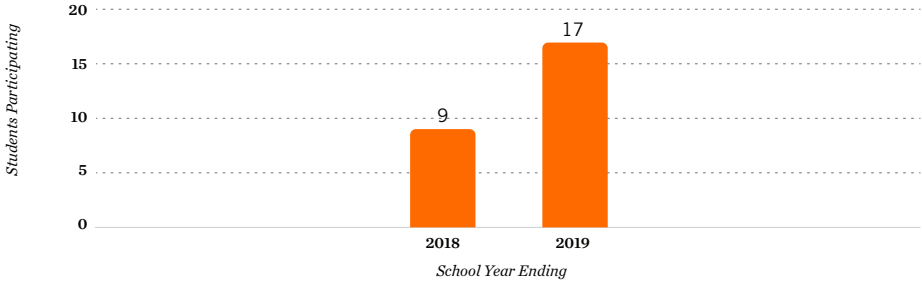
Eligibility is limited to students living in towns that do not operate public schools for student's grade level, making it one of the most restrictive educational choice programs in the nation. Fewer than 1 percent of New Hampshire students are eligible to participate and only a handful of students statewide actually do so. The maximum voucher size is about \$14,000, which is about 88 percent of per-student spending at New Hampshire's district schools.

In order to expand access to educational choice, New Hampshire policymakers should expand eligibility to all students.

Additionally, although New Hampshire's town tuitioning program mostly avoids unnecessary and counterproductive regulations, the program prohibits families from choosing to attend religious schools. This discriminatory policy violates the First Amendment and a similar policy in Maine is currently the subject of litigation.

Program Participation

Enrollment in New Hampshire’s Town Tuitioning Program nearly doubled from 2017–18 to 2018–19.



17
Participating
Students
(2018–19)

<1%
of Students
Eligible
(Statewide)

6
Participating
Schools
(2019–20)

\$14,000
Maximum Voucher
Value
(2017–18)

88%
Maximum Value as a
Percentage of Public
School Per-student
Spending



Additional New Hampshire program on page **117**

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/NH_voucher

North Carolina Special Education Scholarship Grants for Children with Disabilities

Voucher | *Enacted 2013* | *Launched 2014*

North Carolina allows students with special needs to receive vouchers to attend private schools of their parents' choosing.

INCOME LIMIT None

PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT Conditional

GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT Statewide

ENROLLMENT CAP None

VOUCHER CAP \$4,000 per semester

TESTING MANDATES National

PARENT REQUIREMENTS pg. 145

GOVERNING STATUTES N.C. Rev. Stat. §§ 15C-112.5-9

Student Funding

Vouchers are worth up to \$4,000 per semester (\$8,000 per school year) and may be used for private school tuition and special education services, including services provided to homeschooled students. A total of \$13.1 million was available for vouchers in 2018–19, and that amount was set to remain available for 2019–20, pending legislative action. Any leftover funds will carry over to the next fiscal year.

Student Eligibility

To qualify, students must require an Individualized Education Plan and receive special education services on a daily basis. Additionally, students must have either (1) been enrolled in a North Carolina public school during the previous spring, (2) received special education services as a preschooler during the previous semester, (3) received a voucher under this program during the previous semester, (4) be eligible for enrollment in kindergarten or first grade or (5) be a dependent of an active-duty member of the military.

EdChoice Expert Feedback

North Carolina's voucher program for students with special needs helps thousands of students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do much more to expand educational opportunity.

Eligibility for the vouchers is limited to students in grades K–12 who have had an IEP. Only 10 percent of North Carolina's students are eligible for a scholarship and only 0.8 percent of students statewide actually use one of North Carolina's three educational choice programs (including the Opportunity Scholarships and Personal Education Savings Accounts).

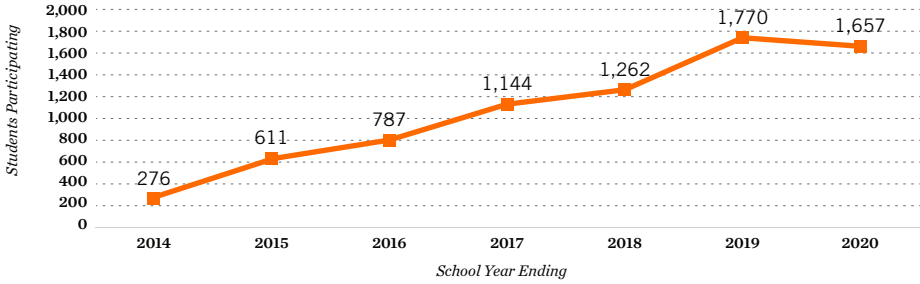
The average voucher value is about \$6,362, which is about 63 percent of the average expenditure per student at North Carolina's district schools.

In order to expand access to educational choice, North Carolina policymakers should expand eligibility to all students.

North Carolina's voucher program generally avoids unnecessary and counterproductive regulations.

Program Participation

Enrollment in North Carolina’s voucher program for students with disabilities decreased by 0.6 percent since last year.



1,657
Participating
Students
(2019–20)

10%
of Students
Eligible
(Statewide)

233
Participating
Schools
(2019–20)

\$6,362
Average Voucher
Value
(2019–20)

63%
Value as a
Percentage of
Public School
Per-student
Spending

Additional North Carolina programs on pages **21, 55**

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/NC_voucher1

North Carolina Opportunity Scholarships

Voucher | *Enacted 2013* | *Launched 2014*

North Carolina awards vouchers statewide to students whose families meet certain income requirements.

INCOME LIMIT 133% x FRL

PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT Conditional

GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT Statewide

ENROLLMENT CAP None

VOUCHER CAP \$4,200

TESTING MANDATES National

PARENT REQUIREMENTS pg. 145

GOVERNING STATUTES N.C. Rev. Stat. §§ 115C-562.1 through 562.8

Student Funding

The maximum voucher amount allowed is \$4,200, not to exceed the private school's actual tuition and fees. This maximum amount is reserved for students from families earning at or below the federal free and reduced-price lunch (FRL) program (\$48,470 in 2020–21). Families earning above this threshold up to 133 percent of FRL (\$64,465 for a family of four in 2020–21) may qualify for vouchers worth up to 90 percent of tuition. The vouchers may be used for tuition, transportation, equipment or any other items required by qualifying private schools. Total funding increased to \$74.8 million for 2020–21.

Student Eligibility

Students are eligible to receive vouchers if their household income does not exceed 133 percent of FRL (\$64,465 for a family of four in 2020–21). Students must also have attended a public school during the previous semester. Kindergartners, first graders, foster children, dependents of full-time active military members and children that have been adopted in the past year qualify for vouchers without having to attend a public school.

EdChoice Expert Feedback

North Carolina's voucher program for students helps more than 10,000 students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do much more to expand educational opportunity.

Eligibility for the voucher is limited to 246 percent of the federal poverty line (133% of the income limits for the federal free-and-reduced lunch program). Only 42 percent of North Carolina's students are eligible for a scholarship and only 0.8 percent of students statewide actually use one of North Carolina's three educational choice programs (including the Special Education Scholarship Grants for Children with Disabilities and Personal Education Savings Accounts).

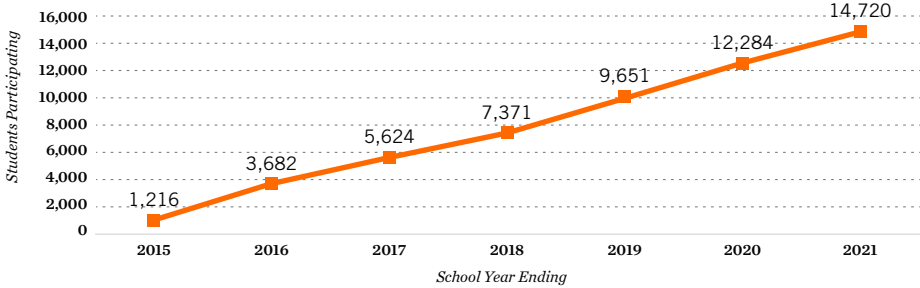
The average voucher value is about \$4,000, which is about 40 percent of the average expenditure per student at North Carolina's district schools.

In order to expand access to educational choice, North Carolina policymakers should expand eligibility to all students.

North Carolina's voucher program generally avoids unnecessary and counterproductive regulations.

Program Participation

Enrollment in North Carolina's Opportunity Scholarship Program has grown by 13 percent since last year.



14,720

Participating Students
(Fall 2020)

44%

Families with Children
Income-eligible
(Statewide)

476

Participating Schools
(Fall 2020)

\$4,062

Average Voucher Value
(Projected 2020-21)

40%

Value as a Percentage of
Public School Per-student
Spending

Additional North Carolina programs on pages **21, 53**

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/NC_voucher2

Ohio

Cleveland Scholarship Program

Voucher | Enacted 1995 | Launched 1996 | Declared Constitutional by U.S. Supreme Court 2002

Parents in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District can receive vouchers to send their children to private schools or public schools bordering the school district. All families are eligible, although low-income families are prioritized for both private school admissions as well as funding.

INCOME LIMIT None

PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT None

GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT District (Cleveland)

ENROLLMENT CAP None

VOUCHER CAP \$4,650 (K-8) /\$6,000 (9-12)

TESTING MANDATES State

PARENT REQUIREMENTS pg. 145

GOVERNING STATUTES Ohio Rev. Code §§ 3313.974 through 979

Student Funding

The maximum voucher value is \$4,650 for students in grades K-8 and \$6,000 for high school students. Schools must accept vouchers from K-8 recipients with a household income no greater than twice the federal poverty level as full tuition payment. Parents whose household income is more than the 200 percent threshold or whose student is in high school may pay the remaining tuition or provide in-kind services of the remaining tuition. Ohio's state budget includes \$23.5 million in deductions from the Cleveland Metropolitan School District for the program in 2020-21.

Student Eligibility

Children in grades K-12 who reside in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District are eligible. Priority is given to families with incomes less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level (\$52,400 for a family of four in 2020-21). Children from families with incomes above 200 percent of poverty are eligible to receive vouchers if approved by the Ohio Superintendent of Public Instruction. Participating private schools must prioritize renewing scholarship recipients, siblings of enrolled students, and low-income students in admitting scholarship students; otherwise, participating private schools must accept voucher students on a random basis as space allows.

EdChoice Expert Feedback

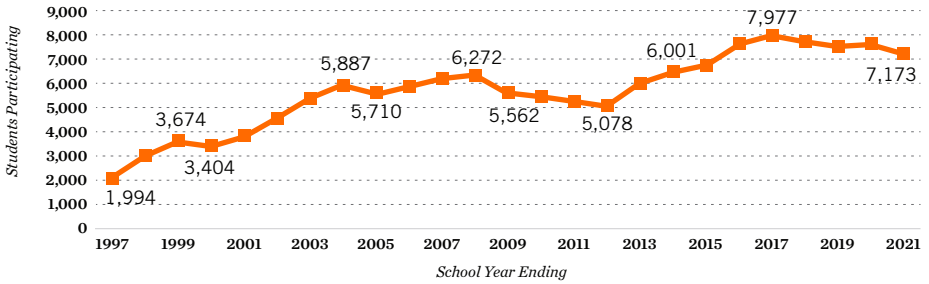
Ohio's Cleveland Scholarship Program helps thousands of students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do much more to expand educational opportunity.

All K-12 students who reside in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District are eligible, but only 2.5 percent of students statewide actually use one of Ohio's five educational choice programs (including the Autism Scholarship Program, the Educational Choice Scholarship Program, the Jon Peterson Special Needs Scholarship Program and the Income-Based Scholarship Program).

The average voucher value is about \$4,900, which is about 34 percent of the average expenditure per student at Ohio's district schools.

Program Participation

The number of Cleveland students using vouchers has decreased 10 percent since its peak in 2016–17.



7,173
Participating
Students
(2020–21)

100%
of Students
Eligible
(Districtwide)

41
Participating
Schools
(Fall 2020)

\$5,025
Average Voucher
Value
(2019–20)

34%
Value as a
Percentage of
Public School
Per-student
Spending

EdChoice Expert Feedback (continued)

In order to expand access to educational choice, Ohio policymakers should expand eligibility to all students statewide and fund the vouchers on par with the per-pupil funding at district schools. The program could also be converted into an education savings account to ensure that all students have access to the education that’s the right fit for them, whether private school or a customized course of education.

Ohio’s voucher program generally avoids unnecessary and counterproductive regulations. Participants are required to take a nationally norm-referenced assessment.

Additional Ohio programs on pages **59, 61, 63, 65**

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/OH_Cleveland

Ohio

Autism Scholarship Program

Voucher | *Enacted 2003* | *Launched 2004*

Ohio students on the autism spectrum may receive vouchers for education services from a private provider, including tuition at a private school. After participating students receive education services, their parents endorse state checks for payment of special education services.

INCOME LIMIT	None	PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT	None	GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT	Statewide
ENROLLMENT CAP	None	VOUCHER CAP	\$27,000	TESTING MANDATES	None
PARENT REQUIREMENTS	pg. 145	GOVERNING STATUTES	Ohio Rev. Code §§ 3310.41 through 43		

Student Funding

The state will compensate a student's parents or custodian for education services up to \$27,000 per year. A child must be in the program for a full academic year to claim this amount. If transportation is listed on the IEP as a related service, the parent may obtain transportation from a registered private provider that is approved by the state to provide such transportation and claim it for reimbursement through the Autism Scholarship program. Parents are responsible for covering any costs in addition to the maximum amount allowed per year.

Student Eligibility

Students must be ages 3 to 21, diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder, registered in a public school special education system and have a current IEP. Students may use the voucher whether or not they were enrolled previously in public schools, though students not previously enrolled in public schools must formally transfer into the public system for IEP purposes. (They do not need to leave their private schools.)

EdChoice Expert Feedback

Ohio's Autism Scholarship Program helps thousands of students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do much more to expand educational opportunity.

Eligibility for the vouchers is limited to students ages 3 to 21 who have an IEP and have been diagnosed with autism. Only 1 percent of Ohio's students are eligible for a scholarship and only 2.5 percent of students statewide actually use one of Ohio's five educational choice programs (including the Cleveland Scholarship Program, the Educational Choice Scholarship Program, the Jon Peterson Special Needs Scholarship Program and the Income-Based Scholarship Program).

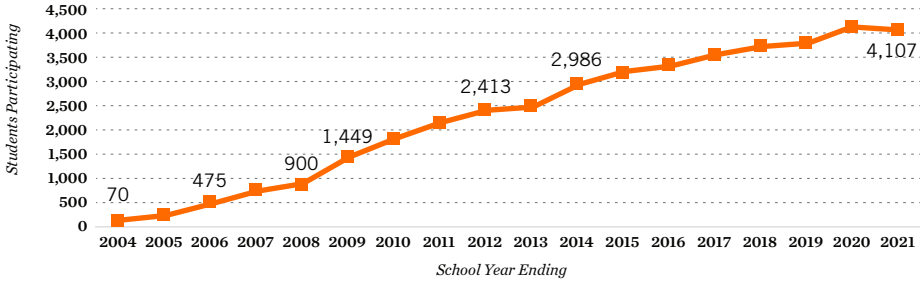
The average voucher value is about \$23,000 and may be worth up to \$27,000 annually.

In order to expand access to educational choice, Ohio policymakers should expand eligibility to all students statewide. The program could also be converted into an education savings account to ensure that all students have access to the education that's the right fit for them, whether private school or a customized course of education.

Ohio's voucher program generally avoids unnecessary and counterproductive regulations.

Program Participation

Participation in Ohio's Autism Scholarship Program has exceeded 4,000 students for the second straight year.



4,107

Participating Students
(Spring 2021)

1%

of Students Eligible
(Statewide)

268

Participating Service Providers
(Fall 2020)

\$23,844

Average Voucher Value
(2020-21)

162%

Value as a Percentage of Public School Per-student Spending

Additional Ohio programs on pages **57, 61, 63, 65**

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/OH_Autism

Ohio Educational Choice Scholarship Program

Voucher | **Enacted 2005** | **Launched 2006**

Ohio students who attend chronically low-performing public schools are eligible for Educational Choice vouchers to attend private schools. The program's combined cap with the Income-Based Scholarship on available vouchers is 60,000, which increases by 5 percent if 90 percent of that cap is met.

INCOME LIMIT None

PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT Conditional

GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT Statewide

ENROLLMENT CAP 60,000 (escalator)

VOUCHER CAP \$4,650 (K-8) / \$6,000 (9-12)

TESTING MANDATES None

PARENT REQUIREMENTS pg. 145

GOVERNING STATUTES Ohio Rev. Code §§ 3310.01 through 17

Student Funding

Vouchers are worth up to \$4,650 in grades K-8 and \$6,000 in grades 9-12, not to exceed the private school's actual tuition. Participating schools may charge remaining tuition or require in-kind services for the portion of tuition not covered by the voucher for students whose household incomes exceed 200 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL), but must accept the voucher as payment in full for students at or below 200 percent FPL.

This program and the Income-Based Scholarship program currently have a combined enrollment cap of 60,000 students. If 90 percent of the cap is reached in any year, it will increase by 5 percent in the subsequent year.

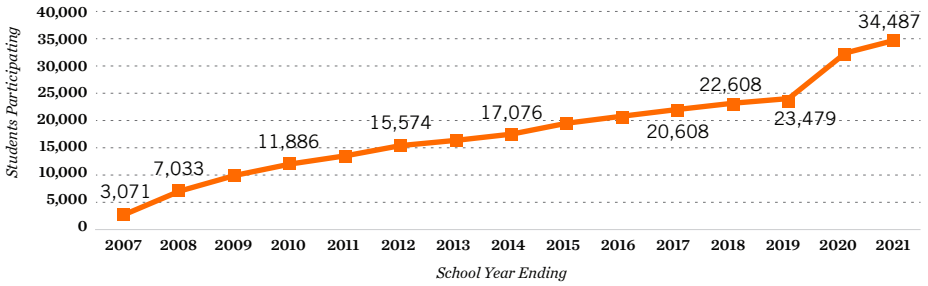
Student Eligibility

Students are eligible for the program if the student's resident district is not a school district in which the pilot project scholarship program is operating (Cleveland) and the student satisfies one of the following conditions: The student attends a local public school that has received a grade D or F by the state's performance index score; the student is assigned to a charter school but would otherwise be assigned to a "low-performing" public school; the student attends a local public school that was ranked in the lowest 10 percent of public schools in two of the three most recent rankings and the public school was not declared to be excellent or effective in the most recent rating system; the student is enrolled in a private school and is entering high school but would otherwise attend a D- or F-rated public school; or the student is enrolling in grades K-12 for the first time and would be assigned to a qualifying school as long as they are at least 5 years old by Jan. 1 of the school year.

Vouchers are prioritized for prior recipients and students whose family income is less than 200 percent FPL. Siblings of EdChoice scholarship recipients are automatically eligible for vouchers.

Program Participation

Ohio’s Educational Choice Scholarship program has grown every year since its inception.



34,487

Participating Students (2020–21)

29%

of Students Eligible (Statewide)

390

Participating Schools (2020–21)

\$4,925

Average Voucher Value (2019–20)

34%

Value as a Percentage of Public School Per-student Spending

EdChoice Expert Feedback

Ohio’s Educational Choice Scholarship Program helps tens of thousands of students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do much more to expand educational opportunity.

Eligibility for the vouchers is initially limited to students who attend low-performing schools. Only 29 percent of Ohio’s students are eligible for a scholarship and only 2.5 percent of students statewide actually use one of Ohio’s five educational choice programs (including the Cleveland Scholarship Program, the Autism Scholarship Program, the Income-Based Scholarship Program and the Jon Peterson Special Needs Scholarship Program).

The average voucher value is about \$4,750, which is about 34 percent of the average expenditure per student at Ohio’s district schools, and the cap on voucher values is 4,650 in grades K–8 and \$6,000 in grades 9–12. Between this program and the Income-Based Scholarship Program, only 60,000 vouchers are available annually, but there is an escalator.

In order to expand access to educational choice, Ohio policymakers should expand eligibility to all students statewide. The program could also be converted into an education savings account to ensure that all students have access to the education that’s the right fit for them, whether private school or a customized course of education.

Ohio’s voucher program generally avoids unnecessary and counterproductive regulations.

Additional Ohio programs on pages **57, 59, 63, 65**

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/Oh_EdChoice

Ohio

Jon Peterson Special Needs Scholarship Program

Voucher | **Enacted 2011** | **Launched 2012**

Ohio parents of children with special needs enrolled in public schools may receive vouchers to pay for private school tuition and additional services covered by their Individualized Education Plans from private therapists and other service providers. The number of vouchers available is capped at 5 percent of students with special needs statewide.

INCOME LIMIT None

PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT Yes

GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT Statewide

ENROLLMENT CAP 5% of Students w/ Special Needs

VOUCHER CAP \$27,000

TESTING MANDATES None

PARENT REQUIREMENTS pg. 145

GOVERNING STATUTES Ohio Rev. Code §§ 3310.51 through 64

Student Funding

Vouchers are worth the lesser of fees and tuition charged by the alternative public or private school, the amount of state aid otherwise provided to the public school district, or a maximum scholarship amount ranging from \$7,598 to \$27,000 depending on a student's special needs category in 2020–21. The amount is reduced proportionately if the child is not enrolled in the alternative or private school for the entire school year.

The state sets maximum funding amounts for different types of special needs. Parents of students with a category 1 disability (speech and language only) may use the voucher only to pay for services included in their child's IEP and cannot use the voucher to pay for tuition at a private school.

Student Eligibility

Children with special needs must be between ages 5 and 21 and have at least an initial Individualized Education Plan (IEP) from their public school district. The state will not award vouchers if the IEP is still in development or is in litigation. Parents' applications must certify that they have received the methods of instruction to be used with the child and qualifications of the teachers and instructors who will provide services from the alternative or private school. The number of vouchers available is capped at 5 percent of the students with special needs statewide. Eligible students may apply year-round depending on whether funding is available.

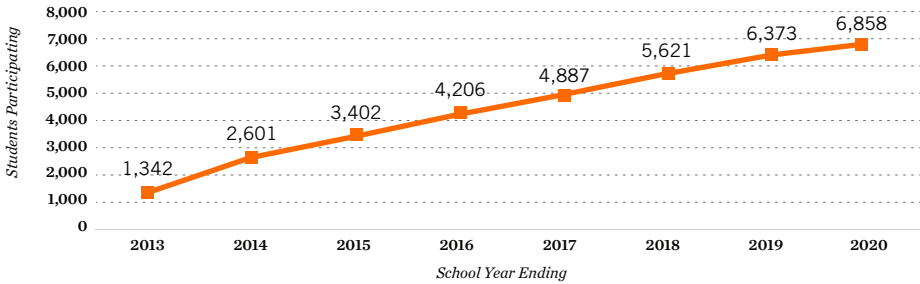
EdChoice Expert Feedback

Ohio's Jon Peterson Special Needs Scholarship Program helps thousands of students with special needs access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do much more to expand educational opportunity.

Eligibility for the vouchers is limited to students with an IEP between the ages of 5 and 21. Only 12 percent of Ohio's students are eligible for a scholarship and only 2.5 percent of students statewide actually use one of Ohio's five educational choice programs (including the Cleveland Scholarship Program, the Autism Scholarship Program, the Educational Choice Scholarship Program and the Income-Based Scholarship Program). The program is capped at 5 percent of students with special needs statewide.

Program Participation

Participation in Ohio’s Jon Peterson Special Needs Scholarship Program increased 8 percent from 2018-19 to 2019-20.



<p>6,858 Participating Students (2019–20)</p>	<p>12% of Students Eligible (Statewide)</p>	<p>446 Participating Service Providers (Fall 2020)</p>	<p>\$10,499 Average Voucher Value (2019–20)</p>	<p>72% Value as a Percentage of Public School Per-student Spending</p>
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EdChoice Expert Feedback (continued)

The average voucher value is about \$9,900, which is about 72 percent of the average expenditure per student at Ohio’s district schools.

In order to expand access to educational choice, Ohio policymakers should expand eligibility to all students statewide and remove the cap on participation. The program could also be converted into an education savings account to ensure that all students have access to the education that’s the right fit for them, whether private school or a customized course of education.

Ohio’s voucher program generally avoids unnecessary and counterproductive regulations.

Additional Ohio programs on pages **57, 59, 61, 65**
 For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/Oh_JonPeterson

Ohio

Income-Based Scholarship Program

Voucher | **Enacted 2013** | **Launched 2013**

Income-qualified Ohio students are eligible for vouchers to attend private schools, provided they are not otherwise eligible for a voucher in Ohio. All income-qualified K–12 students became eligible starting in the 2020–21 school year.

INCOME LIMIT	200% x Poverty (up to 400% for renewals)	PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT	None
GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT	Statewide	ENROLLMENT CAP	60,000 (escalator)
VOUCHER CAP	\$4,650 (K–8) / \$6,000 (9–12)	TESTING MANDATES	National
PARENT REQUIREMENTS	pg. 145	GOVERNING STATUTES	Ohio Rev. Code § 3310.032

Student Funding

Vouchers are worth up to \$4,650 for students in K–8 and \$6,000 for high school students, not to exceed the private school’s actual tuition and fees. Families may receive 75 percent (\$3,487 K–8, \$4,500 9–12) and 50 percent (\$2,325 K–8, \$3,000 9–12) vouchers if they are renewing their child’s Income-Based Scholarship and earn up to 300 percent and 400 percent, respectively, of the federal poverty level.

This program and the Educational Choice Scholarship program currently have a combined enrollment cap of 60,000 students. If 90 percent of the cap is reached in any year, it will increase by 5 percent in the subsequent year.

Student Eligibility

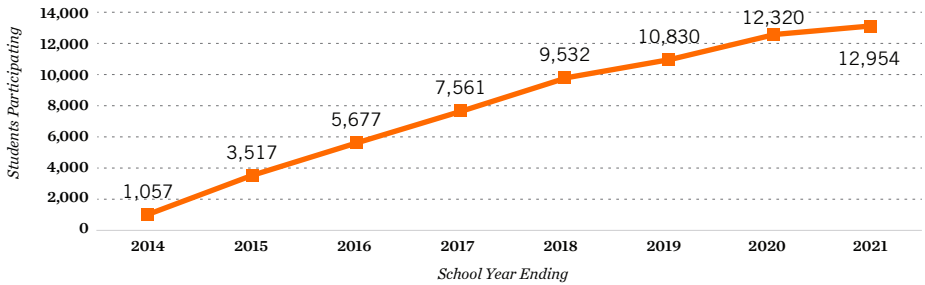
For the 2020–21 school year, students are eligible if they are from families with income no more than 200 percent of the federal poverty level (\$52,=400 for a family of four in 2020–21). Those at or below this income level are eligible for maximum vouchers when they first apply and renew their vouchers. All income-qualified K–12 students became eligible starting in the 2020–21 school year. Only students from low-income families who do not qualify for the Educational Choice Scholarship Program are eligible.

Those who renew their Income-Based Scholarship may earn between 200 percent and 300 percent of the federal poverty level (\$78,600 for a family of four in 2020–21) to receive a 75 percent voucher. Those who renew their scholarship may earn between 300 percent and 400 percent of the federal poverty level (\$104,800 for a family of four in 2020–21) to receive a 50 percent voucher.

If there are more applications than available vouchers, priority will be given first to students who received vouchers in the previous year, second to students from families with incomes at or below 100 percent of the federal poverty level (\$26,200 for a family of four in 2020–21) and third to students from families with incomes between 100 and 200 percent of the federal poverty level. Once they receive a voucher, a student is eligible in future years, unless their family income exceeds 400 percent of the federal poverty level.

Program Participation

Participation in Ohio's Income-Based Scholarship Program has grown every year since it started in 2013.



12,954

Participating
Students
(Spring 2021)

33%

of Families
with Children
Income-eligible
(Statewide)

446

Participating
Schools
(Spring 2021)

\$4,158

Average Voucher
Value
(2019–20)

28%

Value as a
Percentage of
Public School
Per-student
Spending

EdChoice Expert Feedback

Ohio's Income-Based Scholarship Program helps thousands of students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do much more to expand educational opportunity.

Eligibility for the vouchers is initially limited to 200 percent of the federal poverty line. Only 33 percent of Ohio's students are eligible for a scholarship and only 2.5 percent of students statewide actually use one of Ohio's five educational choice programs (including the Cleveland Scholarship Program, the Autism Scholarship Program, the Educational Choice Scholarship Program and the Jon Peterson Special Needs Scholarship Program).

The average voucher value is about \$4,150, which is about 28 percent of the average expenditure per student at Ohio's district schools, but the cap on voucher values is somewhat higher (\$4,650 in grades K–8 and \$6,000 in grades 9–12). Between this program and the Income-Based Scholarship Program, only 60,000 vouchers are available annually, but there is an escalator.

In order to expand access to educational choice, Ohio policymakers should expand eligibility to all students statewide. The program could also be converted into an education savings account to ensure that all students have access to the education that's the right fit for them, whether private school or a customized course of education.

Ohio's voucher program generally avoids unnecessary and counterproductive regulations.

Additional Ohio programs on pages **57, 59, 61, 63**

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/OH_Income

Oklahoma

Lindsey Nicole Henry Scholarships for Students with Disabilities

Voucher | Enacted 2010 | Launched 2010

Oklahoma students with an Individualized Education Plan or Individualized Service Plan, as well as those in foster care and/or those adopted out of state custody may be eligible to receive a voucher to attend private school.

INCOME LIMIT None

PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT Conditional

GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT Statewide

ENROLLMENT CAP None

VOUCHER CAP Lessor of State & local funds or tuition

TESTING MANDATES None

PARENT REQUIREMENTS pg. 145

GOVERNING STATUTES Okla. Stat. tit. 70 § 13-101.2

Student Funding

The voucher is worth the amount of state and local dollars spending on the child in his or her public school or the chosen private school's tuition and fees, whichever is less. Foster care students and other students in state placements receive scholarships worth the per-pupil state aid plus any applicable weights (such as those for gifted students or English-language learners).

Vouchers may be used for a private school's tuition, various fees and special education programs and therapies offered by the private school to students with disabilities. The child's resident school district can keep up to 2.5 percent of the funds for administrative purposes, and the state department of education may retain an equivalent amount for the same purposes.

Student Eligibility

Any student with an active Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Individualized Service Plan (ISP) and who either spent the prior year attending an Oklahoma public school or is the child of an active-duty member of the armed forces who has been stationed in Oklahoma is eligible. Students in out-of-home placement or who were adopted out of state custody are also eligible for scholarships and are exempt from the prior public schooling requirement, as are students who were previously provided services under an Individual Family Service Plan through the SoonerStart program and, during transition, were evaluated and determined to be eligible for school district services. After receiving a voucher, the child will continue to qualify for the scholarship through high school graduation or if the student returns to a public school.

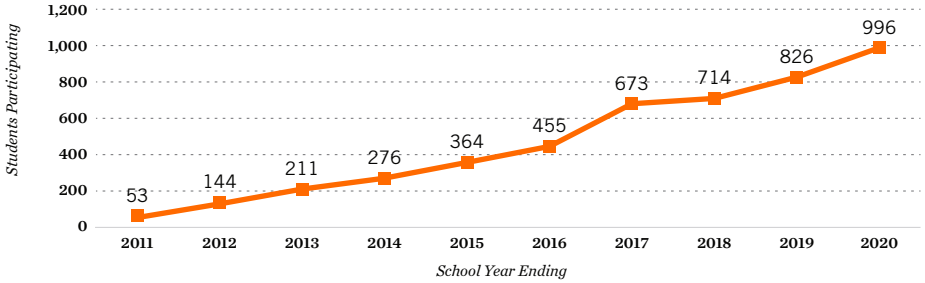
EdChoice Expert Feedback

Oklahoma's voucher for students with disabilities helps thousands of students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do more to expand educational opportunity.

Eligibility for the scholarships is limited to students with certain special needs who have an IEP. About 15 percent of Oklahoma students are eligible to receive a scholarship. Statewide, only 0.5 percent of students participate in one of Oklahoma's private educational choice options (including the Equal Opportunity Education Scholarships).

Program Participation

Participation in Oklahoma’s voucher program has grown each year since it launched.



996
Participating
Students
(2019–20)

15%
of Students
Eligible
(Statewide)

62
Participating
Schools
(2019–20)

\$7,056
Average Voucher
Value
(2019–20)

82%
Value as a
Percentage of
Public School
Per-student
Spending

EdChoice Expert Feedback (continued)

The average scholarship size is about \$7,000, which is about 82 percent of the average expenditure per student at Oklahoma’s district schools.

In order to expand access to educational choice, Oklahoma policymakers should increase funding for the scholarships and expand eligibility to all students (prioritizing scholarships based on need). The program could also be converted into an education savings account to ensure that all students have access to the education that’s the right fit for them, whether private school or a customized course of education.

Oklahoma’s voucher program generally avoids unnecessary and counterproductive regulations.

Additional Oklahoma program on page **119**

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/OK_LindseyNicole

Puerto Rico

Free School Selection Program

Voucher | **Enacted 2018** | **Launched 2019**

Students living in Puerto Rico who have been enrolled in public or charter schools for at least two consecutive years qualify for school vouchers that may be used at private and public schools. Gifted students may also use vouchers to supplement their learning at institutions of higher education.

INCOME LIMIT None

PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT Yes

GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT Territory-wide

ENROLLMENT CAP 3% of student population

VOUCHER CAP 70% of per-pupil funding

TESTING MANDATES None

PARENT REQUIREMENTS pg. 145

GOVERNING STATUTES 18 L.P.R.A. § 911–913

Student Funding

The maximum amount for private school vouchers is set at 70 percent of the island’s baseline per-pupil funding amount. Puerto Rico Department of Education has the ability to set specific funding amounts depending on a student’s status. No more than 3 percent of the program’s funding may be used for administrative purposes.

Student Eligibility

Students in grades 2–12 who have been enrolled in a public district or charter school for at least two years and are enrolled in a public school the semester immediately before applying are eligible for vouchers. The department of education prioritizes vouchers for low-income families (defined as qualifying for the federal free and reduced-price lunch program, or earning \$48,470 for a family of four in 2020–21), students with severe disabilities, gifted students, students who have been adopted or are in shelters or foster homes, and victims of bullying or sexual harassment. When determining students to accept, the department of education uses a lottery weighted by these priorities.

The program’s total enrollment is capped at 1 percent of Puerto Rico’s total student population in 2020–21, which is about 3,000 students. The secretary of education has the discretion to lower the rate prior to a given school year, though.

EdChoice Expert Feedback

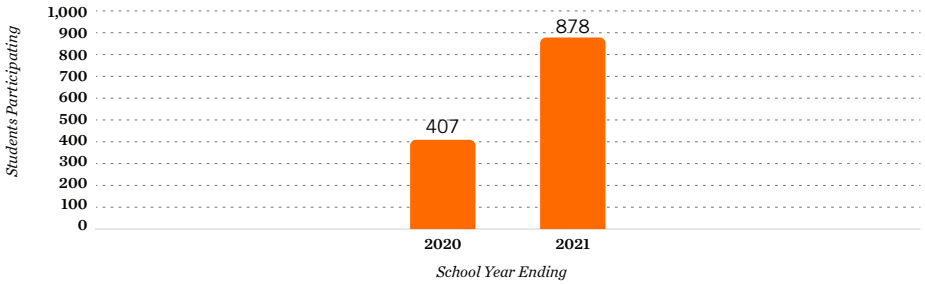
Puerto Rico’s Free School Selection voucher program helps hundreds of students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do more to expand educational opportunity.

Eligibility for the scholarships is limited to students in grades 2–12 who have attended a public school for at least two years and who are from families earning up to 185 percent of the federal poverty line. Although one of the more restrictive eligibility requirements, due to the island’s high rate of poverty, about 56 percent of Puerto Rico students are eligible for a scholarship. However, the total number of scholarships available is capped at 1 percent of the island’s total K–12 student population.

The average scholarship size is about \$2,300, which is only about 37 percent of the average expenditure per student at Puerto Rico’s public schools.

Program Participation

Participation in Puerto Rico’s Free School Selection Program doubled in its second year.



878
Participating
Students
(Spring 2021)

65
Participating
Schools
(2019–20)

56%
of Students
Eligible
(Territory-wide)

\$2,275
Average Voucher
Value
(2020–21 Projected)

37%
Average Voucher
Value as a
Percentage of
Territory’s Public
School Per-student
Spending

EdChoice Expert Feedback (continued)

In order to expand access to educational choice, Puerto Rico policymakers should dramatically increase the available vouchers and expand eligibility to all students (prioritizing scholarships based on need). They should also eliminate the requirement that students first attend a district or charter school to be eligible, or at least reduce the two-year minimum to one year. Students should not have to spend longer than necessary in an environment that is not working before gaining access to a voucher to attend a school that is a better fit. The program could also be converted into an education savings account to ensure that all students have access to the education that’s the right fit for them, whether private school or a customized course of education.

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/PRvoucher

Tennessee Education Savings Account Pilot Program

Voucher | Enacted 2019 | Launching 2021

Tennessee passed a voucher program for low-income students in the Shelby County (Memphis) and Metro Nashville Public Schools systems. Originally scheduled to launch by the 2021–22 school year, the program is currently inoperable pending litigation.

INCOME LIMIT	200% x Free Lunch	PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT	Yes		
GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT	Memphis and Nashville	ENROLLMENT CAP	5,000 (escalator)		
VOUCHER CAP	\$7,300	TESTING MANDATES	State	PARENT REQUIREMENTS	pg. 145
GOVERNING STATUTES	Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-2601–2612				

Student Funding

The voucher amount is equal to the state and local Basic Education Program (BEP) per-pupil amount of a student’s home district or the statewide average BEP (about \$7,300 in 2020–21), whichever amount is less. Families may pay for tuition and educational services in excess of the maximum voucher amount.

Funds are deposited into families’ Education Savings Accounts at least four times per school year to help parents pay for private school tuition and fees. Funds may also be used for textbooks, state-approved tutoring and therapy services, transportation to educational institutions or services, computer hardware and software, school uniforms, summer education programs and higher education expenses.

Student Eligibility

Students must be eligible to enroll in either the Shelby County (Memphis) or Metro Nashville school districts. In addition, students must have attended a Tennessee public school during the prior school year or be newly eligible to attend a Tennessee public school and come from households earning less than 200 percent of the federal free lunch program (\$68,120 for a family of four in 2020–21).

Participating students must be enrolled in a state-approved private school in order to continue receiving Education Savings Account funds. If students move into a different school district while receiving a voucher, they are no longer eligible. Absent this stipulation and annual income verification, returning students are guaranteed vouchers.

For the first year, there is a 5,000-student enrollment cap. If there are more applications than 75 percent of that figure, the cap is allowed to grow by 2,500 students a year until reaching 15,000 students. If there are more applications than vouchers available, the state will conduct a lottery that prioritizes (1) siblings of voucher recipients, (2) students zoned to a priority school as designated by the Tennessee Department of Education, and (3) students directly certified to receive benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Program Participation

Pending litigation, this program is not slated to start until the 2021–22 school year, at which time we could have preliminary participation data.

1st Tennessee's First School Voucher Program	2nd Tennessee's Second Private School Choice Program	69% of Families in Nashville and Shelby County (Memphis) Income Eligible	\$7,300 Maximum Voucher Value (2020–21)	83% Maximum Value as a Percentage of Public School Per-student Spending
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EdChoice Expert Feedback

Although billed as an Education Savings Account, unlike ESA programs in other states, students participating in Tennessee's pilot voucher for low-income students in Memphis and Nashville must be enrolled in a private school. Policymakers could do more to expand educational opportunity.

Eligibility for the scholarships is limited to students in Memphis and Nashville from households earning less than 200 percent of the federal free lunch program (\$68,120 for a family of four in 2020–21). About 69 percent of students in Memphis and Nashville are eligible to receive a scholarship. Statewide, only 0.2 percent of students participate in this program. The voucher program is currently on hold pending a lawsuit. Statewide, less than 0.1 percent of students participate in Tennessee's Individualized Education Account program.

The maximum scholarship size is projected to be about \$7,300, which is about 83 percent of the average expenditure per student at Tennessee's district schools. Enrollment is capped at 5,000 students, which is less than 3 percent of the K–12 student population in Memphis and Nashville.

In order to expand access to educational choice, Tennessee policymakers should dramatically increase funding for the scholarships and expand eligibility to all students (prioritizing scholarships based on need).

Tennessee's voucher program imposes some unnecessary and counterproductive regulations. For example, the program requires voucher students to take the state's standardized test. Instead of mandating a single test, policymakers should allow parents and schools to choose from a variety of nationally norm-referenced tests.

Additional Tennessee program on page **23**
For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/TN_Voucher

Utah

Carson Smith Special Needs Scholarship Program

Voucher | Enacted 2005 | Launched 2005

Most Utah students who have disabilities are eligible to receive vouchers to attend private school. However, participation is limited by the amount of money appropriated to the \$7 million program fund.

INCOME LIMIT None

PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT None

GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT Statewide

ENROLLMENT CAP None

VOUCHER CAP Conditional

TESTING MANDATES Annual Assessment of Student's Progress

PARENT REQUIREMENTS pg. 145

GOVERNING STATUTES Utah Code §§ 53F-4-301 through 307

Student Funding

Vouchers are based on the state's weighted pupil unit, an element of its school financing formula. Students who receive three or more hours of special education services per day get vouchers worth 2.5 times the weighted pupil unit, whereas students receiving fewer than three hours per day get vouchers worth 1.5 times the weighted pupil unit. In 2020–21, those values amount to \$9,362.50 and \$5,617.50, respectively. The voucher may not exceed the private school's actual tuition and fees.

Student Eligibility

Public school students between ages 3 and 21 identified as disabled under federal disability rights law are eligible to receive vouchers, as well as students with special needs in private schools that served students with disabilities prior to participating in the program. Participation is limited by the amount of money appropriated each year to the fund (\$7 million in 2020–21), with applications subject to random lottery.

EdChoice Expert Feedback

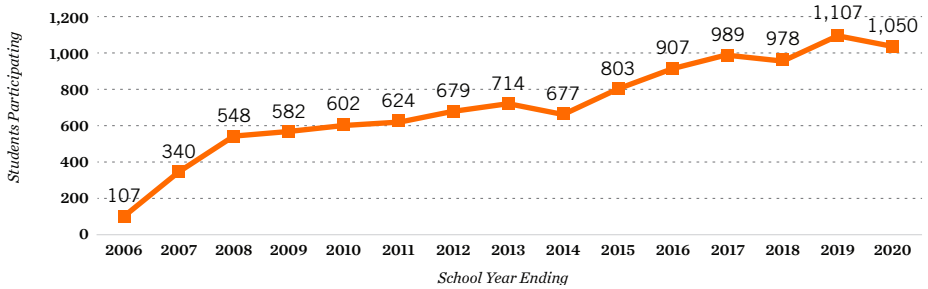
Utah's voucher for students with disabilities helps tens of thousands of students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do more to expand educational opportunity.

Eligibility for the scholarships is limited to students with certain special needs. About 10 percent of Utah students are eligible to receive a scholarship. Statewide, only 0.2 percent of students participate in this program. In 2020, Utah policymakers also enacted a tax-credit scholarship for students with special needs.

The average scholarship size is about \$5,600, which is about 60 percent of the average expenditure per student at Utah's district schools. Only \$7 million in funding is available, which is equivalent to only 0.11 percent of Utah's total K–12 revenue.

Program Participation

Enrollment in Utah's Carson Smith Special Needs Scholarship Program has increased 68 percent over the last decade.



1,050
Students
Participating
(2019–20)

10%
of Students
Eligible
(Statewide)

105
Schools
Participating
(2019–20)

\$5,632
Average Voucher
Value
(Projected 2019–20)

60%
Value as a
Percentage of
Public School
Per-student
Spending

EdChoice Expert Feedback (continued)

In order to expand access to educational choice, Utah policymakers should dramatically increase funding for the scholarships and expand eligibility to all students (prioritizing scholarships based on need). The program could also be converted into an education savings account to ensure that all students have access to the education that's the right fit for them, whether private school or a customized course of education.

Utah's voucher program generally avoids unnecessary and counterproductive regulations.

Additional Utah program on page **131**

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/UT_CarsonSmith

Vermont

Town Tuitioning Program

Voucher | **Launched 1869**

Many towns in Vermont, particularly in rural areas, do not operate public high schools and/or elementary schools. Students in those towns may use public dollars to attend any public or approved independent (private), non-religious school in or outside of Vermont. The “tuitioning” towns pay tuition directly to the “receiving” schools.

INCOME LIMIT	None	PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT	None
GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT	District (w/out elementary or high school)	ENROLLMENT CAP	None
VOUCHER CAP	\$14,859 (K-6) / \$16,233 (7-12)	TESTING MANDATES	None
PARENT REQUIREMENTS	pg. 145	GOVERNING STATUTES	16 V.S.A. §§ 821-36

Student Funding

When students are tuitioned at public schools, the sending town pays the receiving school district an amount equal to the receiving district’s average per-pupil costs, as calculated by the Vermont Agency of Education. When students are tuitioned at private schools, the voucher is worth up to the average announced tuition for Vermont public schools, calculated each year by the state, or the private school’s tuition (whichever is less). That figure is calculated separately for grades K-6 and 7-12. For 2020-21, tuition amounts equal \$14,859 for grades K-6 and \$16,233 for grades 7-12.

Student Eligibility

Students must live in Vermont and reside in identified tuitioning town (i.e. towns that do not operate a public school at a given grade level range). Although most tuitioning towns allow parents to choose which schools will receive their students, some towns send all their students to one school.

EdChoice Expert Feedback

Vermont’s town tuitioning program helps thousands of students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do more to expand educational opportunity.

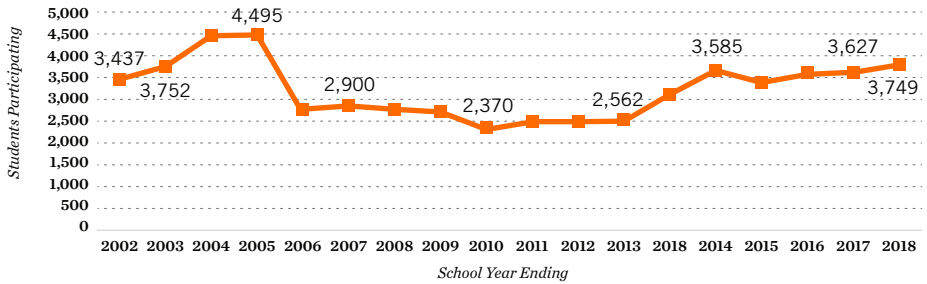
Eligibility is limited to students living in towns that do not operate public schools for student’s grade level, making it one of the most restrictive educational choice programs in the nation. Only 4 percent of Vermont students are eligible to participate and 3.7 percent of students statewide actually do so.

The average voucher size is about \$15,500, which is about 73 percent of per-student spending at Vermont’s district schools, though the cap of the voucher size is somewhat higher (\$14,859 for grades K-6 and \$16,233 for grades 7-12).

In order to expand access to educational choice, Vermont policymakers should expand eligibility to all students. Additionally, although Vermont’s town tuitioning program mostly avoids unnecessary and counterproductive regulations, the program prohibits families from choosing to attend religious schools. This discriminatory policy violates the First Amendment and a similar policy in Maine is currently the subject of litigation.

Program Participation

Participation in Vermont's Town Tuitioning Program has grown every year since 2014–15.



3,749

FTE Students
Participating
(2017–18)

4%

of Students
Eligible
(Statewide)

140

Schools
Participating
(2017–18)

\$15,546

Average Voucher
Value
(Projected 2020–21)

73%

Value as a
Percentage of
Public School
Per-student
Spending

EdChoice Expert Feedback *(continued)*

Moreover, Act 46, which created a mechanism for school districts to consolidate, is having a negative effect on town tuitioning. When a tuitioning town consolidates with other towns, the right to continue tuitioning students to private schools is forfeited. Act 46 is subject to an active and ongoing debate in the state. Vermont students would be best served by preserving and expanding town tuitioning, a method of funding education that has been successful for more than 100 years.

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/VT_voucher

Wisconsin Milwaukee Parental Choice Program

Voucher | *Enacted 1990* | *Launched 1990*

Milwaukee families that earn up to 300 percent of the federal poverty guidelines qualify to receive vouchers. Once a student receives a voucher, that student is able to keep it, regardless of his or her family's future income. Voucher students are allowed to attend any in-state private school participating in the program.

INCOME LIMIT 300% x Poverty

PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT None

GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT District (Milwaukee)

ENROLLMENT CAP None

VOUCHER CAP \$8,300 (K-8) / \$8,946 (9-12)

TESTING MANDATES State

PARENT REQUIREMENTS pg. 145

GOVERNING STATUTES Wis. Stat. §§ 119.23 and 235

Student Funding

In 2020–21, the maximum voucher amounts are \$8,300 for grades K–8 and \$8,946 for grades 9–12. Each school year, maximum voucher payments increase by a dollar amount equal to the dollar-amount increase in general school aid to Wisconsin public schools. Parents of students in grades 9–12 that have an income greater than 220 percent of the federal poverty level (\$57,640 for a family of four in 2020–21) may be charged additional tuition exceeding the voucher amount.

Student Eligibility

Students who live in Milwaukee and whose family income does not exceed 300 percent of the federal poverty level (\$78,600 for a family of four in 2020–21) are eligible. Moreover, a family's income limit increases by \$7,000 if the student's parents/legal guardians are married. Students who are continuing the program from previous years and those who were on a school's waiting list in the prior year because the school did not have space available do not need to demonstrate income eligibility. Once a student receives a voucher, that student is able to keep it, regardless of his or her family's future income.

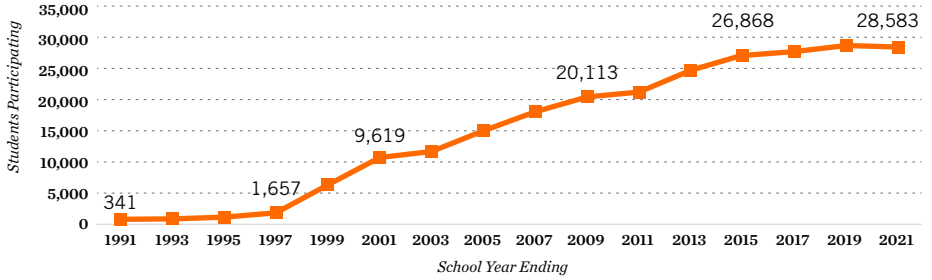
EdChoice Expert Feedback

Wisconsin's voucher for low-income students in Milwaukee helps tens of thousands of students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do more to expand educational opportunity.

Eligibility for the scholarships is limited to students from families in Milwaukee earning up to 300 percent of the federal poverty level (\$77,250 for a family of four in 2019–20). About 71 percent of Milwaukee students are income-eligible to receive a scholarship. Statewide, 4.3 percent of students participate in one of Wisconsin's private educational choice options (including the Racine Parental Choice Program, the Statewide Parental Choice Program the Special Needs Scholarship Program and the K–12 Private School Tuition Deduction). This is the third highest EdChoice share in the nation.

Program Participation

Enrollment in the District of Columbia’s voucher program has remained stable since its reauthorization in 2019.



28,583

Participating Students
(Fall 2020)

71%

of Families with Children
Income-eligible
(Districtwide)

131

Participating Schools
(Fall 2020)

\$8,423

Average Voucher Value
(Fall 2020)

57%

Value as a Percentage of Public School Per-student Spending

EdChoice Expert Feedback (continued)

The average scholarship size is about \$7,900, which is about 57 percent of the average expenditure per student at Wisconsin’s district schools.

In order to expand access to educational choice, Wisconsin policymakers should increase the voucher amounts to be comparable with the per-pupil spending at district schools and expand eligibility to all students. The program could also be converted into an education savings account to ensure that all students have access to the education that’s the right fit for them, whether private school or a customized course of education.

The Milwaukee voucher program has some unnecessary and counterproductive regulations. For example, the program requires voucher students in certain grades to take the state’s standardized test. Instead of mandating a single test, policymakers should allow parents and schools to choose from a variety of nationally norm-referenced tests. Policymakers should also amend the program so that it no longer interferes with schools’ admissions standards.

Additional Wisconsin programs on pages **79, 81, 83, 135**

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/WI_Milwaukee

Wisconsin Parental Private School Choice Program (Racine)

Voucher | Enacted 2011 | Launched 2011

Wisconsin's Parental Private School Choice Program (Racine) is open to any income-qualified child who attended Racine Unified Public Schools in the prior year or any current or entering private school student in kindergarten (including 4- and 5-year-old students) or first grade. Ninth-graders entering private school are also eligible.

INCOME LIMIT	300% x Poverty	PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT	Conditional
GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT	District (Racine)	ENROLLMENT CAP	None
VOUCHER CAP	\$8,300 (K-8) / \$8,946 (9-12)	TESTING MANDATES	State
PARENT REQUIREMENTS	pg. 145	GOVERNING STATUTES	Wis. Stat. § 118.60

Student Funding

In 2020–21, the maximum voucher amount is \$8,300 for grades K–8 and \$8,946 for grades 9–12. Each school year, maximum voucher payments increase by the dollar amount equal to the dollar amount increase in general school aid to Wisconsin public schools. Parents of students in grades 9–12 that have an income greater than 220 percent of the federal poverty level (\$57,640 for a family of four in 2020–21) may be charged additional tuition exceeding the voucher amount.

Student Eligibility

Students from families with household incomes up to 300 percent of the federal poverty level (\$78,600 for a family of four in 2020–21) are eligible for vouchers. Moreover, a family's income limit eligibility increases by \$7,000 if the student's parents or legal guardians are married. Students who are continuing the program from previous years and those who were on a school's waiting list in the prior year because the school did not have space available do not need to demonstrate income eligibility. Students must have been either (1) enrolled in a public school or home school in the previous year, (2) not enrolled in school in the previous year, (3) enrolled in a private school under the voucher program in the previous year or (4) be entering kindergarten, first grade or ninth grade. If an applying student has a sibling already in the private school the applicant wishes to attend, he or she will receive preference in the event of an enrollment lottery.

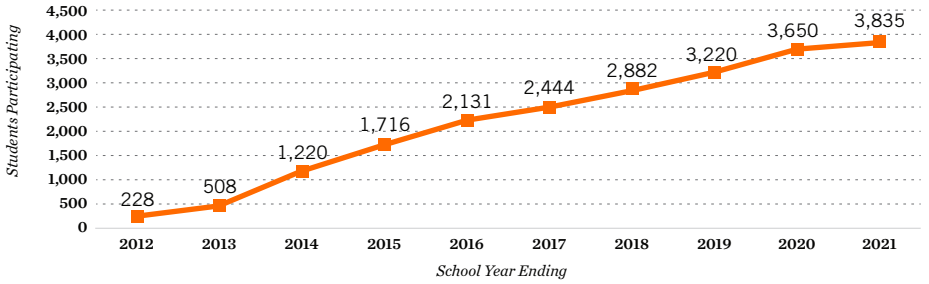
EdChoice Expert Feedback

Wisconsin's voucher for low-income students in Racine helps thousands of students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do more to expand educational opportunity.

Eligibility for the scholarships is limited to students from families in Milwaukee earning up to 300 percent of the federal poverty level (\$77,250 for a family of four in 2019–20). About 54 percent of Racine students are income-eligible to receive a scholarship. Statewide, 4.3 percent of students participate in one of Wisconsin's private educational choice options (including the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, the Statewide Parental Choice Program the Special Needs Scholarship Program and the K–12 Private School Tuition Deduction). This is the third highest EdChoice share in the nation.

Program Participation

Enrollment in Racine’s Parental Private School Choice Program increased by 5 percent since last year.



3,835
Participating
Students
(Fall 2020)

54%
of Families
with Children
Income-eligible
(Districtwide)

25
Participating
Schools
(Fall 2020)

\$8,448
Average Voucher
Value
(Fall 2020)

57%
Value as a
Percentage of
Public School
Per-student
Spending

EdChoice Expert Feedback (continued)

The average scholarship size is about \$8,448, which is about 57 percent of the average expenditure per student at Wisconsin’s district schools.

In order to expand access to educational choice, Wisconsin policymakers should increase the voucher amounts to be comparable with the per-pupil spending at district schools and expand eligibility to all students. The program could also be converted into an education savings account to ensure that all students have access to the education that’s the right fit for them, whether private school or a customized course of education.

The Racine voucher program has some unnecessary and counterproductive regulations. For example, the program requires voucher students in certain grades to take the state’s standardized test. Instead of mandating a single test, policymakers should allow parents and schools to choose from a variety of nationally norm-referenced tests. Policymakers should also amend the program so that it no longer interferes with schools’ admissions standards.

Additional Wisconsin programs on pages **77, 81, 83, 135**

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/WI_Racine

Wisconsin Parental Choice Program (Statewide)

Voucher | *Enacted 2013* | *Launched 2013*

Wisconsin's statewide Parental Choice Program is open to any income-qualified child who resides outside of the attendance zones for Milwaukee Public Schools and the Racine Unified School District.

INCOME LIMIT 220% x FRL

PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT Conditional

GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT Statewide (except for Milwaukee and Racine)

ENROLLMENT CAP Conditional

VOUCHER CAP \$8,300 (K-8) / \$8,946 (9-12)

TESTING MANDATES State

PARENT REQUIREMENTS pg. 145

GOVERNING STATUTES Wis. Stat. § 118.60

Student Funding

In 2020–21, the maximum voucher amount is \$8,300 for grades K–8 and \$8,946 for grades 9–12. Each school year, maximum voucher payments increase by the dollar amount increase equal to the dollar amount increase in general school aid to Wisconsin public schools.

Student Eligibility

Wisconsin families with income no more than 220 percent of the federal poverty level (\$57,640 for a family of four in 2020–21) and who do not reside in the Milwaukee Public Schools or the Racine Unified school districts are eligible. Moreover, a family's income limit increases by \$7,000 if the student's parents or legal guardians are married. Each district currently has an enrollment cap of 5 percent of its public school district enrollment able to participate in the program. This cap will increase by 1 percentage point each year until the enrollment limit reaches 10 percent, then there will no longer be a cap. Students previously on a voucher wait list because of this cap will be eligible after it is expanded.

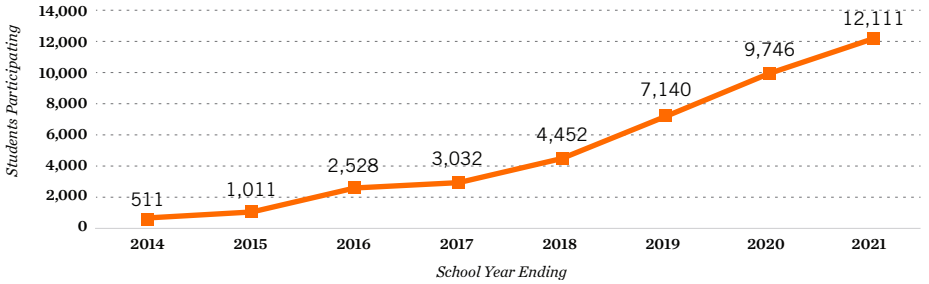
EdChoice Expert Feedback

Wisconsin's statewide voucher for low-income students helps thousands of students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do more to expand educational opportunity.

Eligibility for the scholarships is limited to students from families statewide (outside Milwaukee or Racine) earning up to 220 percent of the federal poverty level (\$56,650 for a family of four in 2019–20). About 26 percent of Wisconsin students are eligible to receive a scholarship. Statewide, 4.3 percent of students participate in one of Wisconsin's private educational choice options (including the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, the Racine Parental Choice Program, the Special Needs Scholarship Program and the K–12 Private School Tuition Deduction). This is the third highest EdChoice share in the nation.

Program Participation

Enrollment in Racine’s Parental Private School Choice Program increased by 5 percent since last year.



12,111
Participating
Students
(Fall 2020)

27%
of Families
with Children
Income-eligible
(Outside of
Milwaukee or
Racine)

280
Participating
Schools
(Fall 2020)

\$8,450
Average Voucher
Value
(Fall 2020)

57%
Value as a
Percentage of
Public School
Per-student
Spending

EdChoice Expert Feedback (continued)

The average scholarship size is about \$7,900, which is about 69 percent of the average expenditure per student at Wisconsin’s district schools.

In order to expand access to educational choice, Wisconsin policymakers should increase the voucher amounts to be comparable with the per-pupil spending at district schools and expand eligibility to all students. The program could also be converted into an education savings account to ensure that all students have access to the education that’s the right fit for them, whether private school or a customized course of education.

Wisconsin’s statewide voucher program has some unnecessary and counterproductive regulations. For example, the program requires voucher students in certain grades to take the state’s standardized test. Instead of mandating a single test, policymakers should allow parents and schools to choose from a variety of nationally norm-referenced tests. Policymakers should also amend the program so that it no longer interferes with schools’ admissions standards.

Additional Wisconsin programs on pages **77, 79, 83, 135**

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/WI_Statewide

Wisconsin Special Needs Scholarship Program

Voucher | *Enacted 2015* | *Launched 2016*

Wisconsin began providing vouchers designated specifically for students with disabilities to attend private school in the 2016–17 school year.

INCOME LIMIT	None	PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT	Yes	GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT	Statewide
ENROLLMENT CAP	None	VOUCHER CAP	\$12,977	TESTING MANDATES	State Civics Exam
PARENT REQUIREMENTS	pg. 145	GOVERNING STATUTES	Wis. Stat. §115.7915		

Student Funding

For 2020–21, the maximum voucher amount is \$12,977. Annually, voucher payments increase by the dollar amount equal to the dollar amount increase in general school aid to Wisconsin public schools.

Student Eligibility

Participating students must have an active Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Students may continue participating in the program as long as they have an IEP and attend an eligible school until they turn 21 or graduate high school, whichever comes first.

EdChoice Expert Feedback

Wisconsin’s voucher for students with disabilities helps thousands of students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do more to expand educational opportunity.

Eligibility for the scholarships is limited to students with special needs who have IEPs. About 13 percent of Wisconsin students are eligible to receive a scholarship. Statewide, 4.3 percent of students participate in one of Wisconsin’s private educational choice options (including the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, the Racine Parental Choice Program, the Statewide Parental Choice Program and the K–12 Private School Tuition Deduction). This is the third highest EdChoice share in the nation.

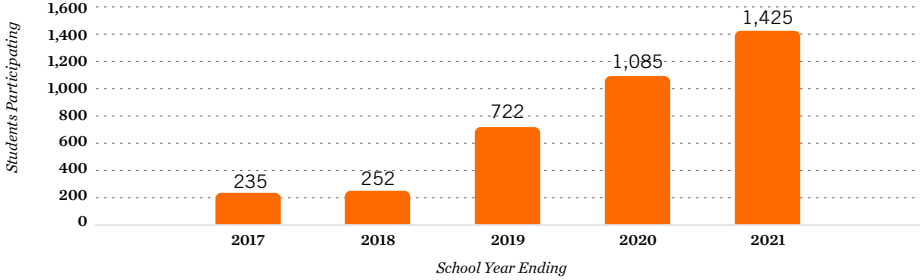
The average scholarship size is about \$12,049, which is 82 percent of the average expenditure per student at Wisconsin’s district schools.

In order to expand access to educational choice, Wisconsin policymakers should dramatically expand eligibility to all students. The program could also be converted into an education savings account to ensure that all students have access to the education that’s the right fit for them, whether private school or a customized course of education.

Wisconsin’s voucher program for students with special needs has some unnecessary and counterproductive regulations. For example, the program requires voucher students in certain grades to take the state’s standardized test. Instead of mandating a single test, policymakers should allow parents and schools to choose from a variety of nationally norm-referenced tests.

Program Participation

Enrollment in Wisconsin's voucher program for students with special needs grew by 31 percent between its fourth and fifth year.



1,425
Participating
Students
(Fall 2020)

124
Participating
Schools
(Fall 2020)

13%
of Students
Eligible
(Statewide)

\$12,049
Average Voucher
Value
(2019-20)

82%
Value as a
Percentage of
Public School
Per-student
Spending

Additional Wisconsin programs on pages **77, 79, 81, 135**

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/WL-voucher

Tax-Credit Scholarships

Tax-credit scholarships allow taxpayers to receive full or partial tax credits when they donate to nonprofits that provide private school scholarships. Eligible taxpayers can include both individuals and businesses. In some states, scholarship-giving nonprofits also provide innovation grants to public schools and/or transportation assistance to students who choose alternative public schools.

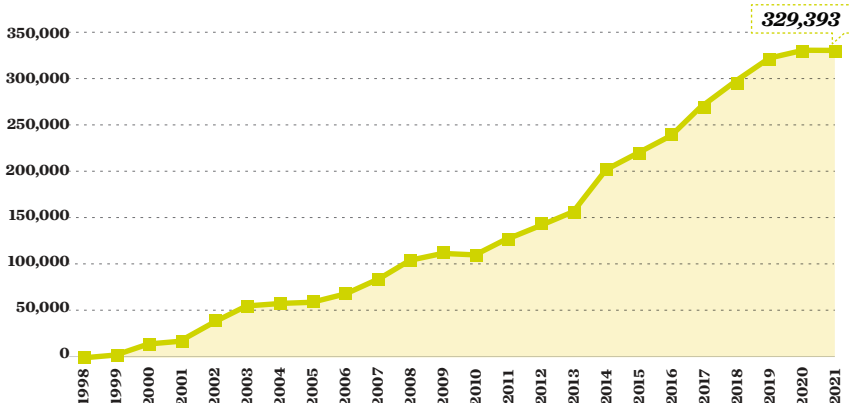
24
Programs

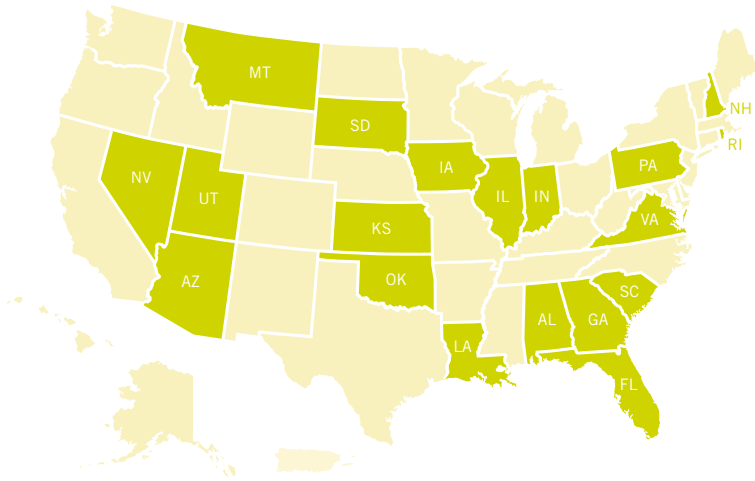
329,393
Total Students/
Scholarships

\$3,588
Average
Amount

25%
of Public
Spending
(National)

Number of Students Using Tax-Credit Scholarships





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TCS



Watch How Tax-Credit Scholarships Work

Hold your device’s camera over this QR code and click the link that pops up to watch a short video about how this type of program works for state budgets and for families.

Alabama Education Scholarship Program

Tax-Credit Scholarship | *Enacted 2013* | *Launched 2013*

Alabama's Education Scholarship Program was enacted and launched in 2013. The program, a tax-credit scholarship, allows taxpayers who donate to nonprofit scholarship-granting organizations to receive dollar-for-dollar tax credits for their contributions.

INCOME LIMIT	100% x FRL	PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT	Conditional		
GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT	Statewide	SCHOLARSHIP CAP	\$6,000 (K-5) / \$8,000 (6-8) / \$10,000 (9-12)		
TESTING MANDATES	State or National	CREDIT VALUE	100%	ENROLLMENT CAP	None
PER DONOR CREDIT CAP	50% liability up to \$50,000 (individual) / 50% liability (business)				
BUDGET CAP	\$30 Million	PARENT REQUIREMENTS	pg. 147	SGO REQUIREMENTS	pg. 153
GOVERNING STATUTES	Ala. Code §§ 16-6D 1 through 9 and 40-2A-7(a)(5)				

Student Funding

Scholarship amounts are determined by SGOs. Scholarships are capped at the lesser of the private school tuition and fees or \$6,000 in grades K-5, \$8,000 in grades 5-8 and \$10,000 in grades 9-12.

Student Eligibility

Children are eligible to receive scholarships if their families qualify for the federal free and reduced-price lunch (FRL) program (\$48,470 for a family of four in 2020-21). Also, qualifying students must be younger than 19 years of age. Once a student receives a scholarship, the family's income may not exceed 275 percent of the federal poverty level (\$72,050 for a family of four in 2020-21). Public and private school students assigned to failing schools receive first priority for scholarships. Alabama defines a public school as failing if it meets one or more of the following requirements: 1) The school is designated as a failing school by the state Superintendent of Education, or 2) the school does not exclusively serve a special population of students and is listed in the lowest 6 percent of public K-12 schools on the state standardized assessment in reading and math. If an SGO has scholarship funds unaccounted for on July 31 of each year, scholarships may be made available to eligible students in public school, regardless of whether or not their assigned public school is considered failing. No more than a quarter of first-time recipients may have already been enrolled in a private school the previous year.

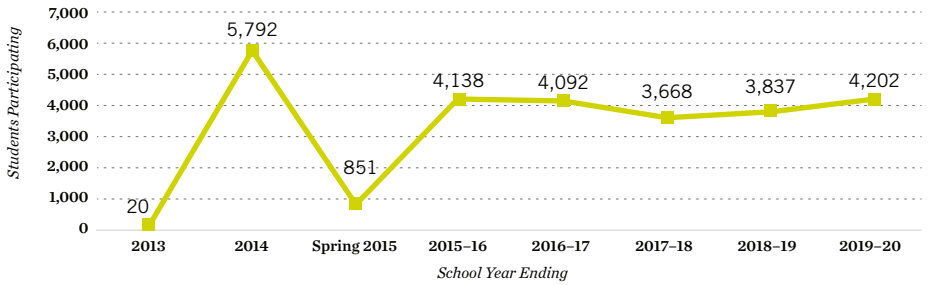
EdChoice Expert Feedback

Alabama's tax-credit scholarship program helps thousands of students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do more to expand educational opportunity.

Eligibility for the scholarships is limited to 185 percent of the federal poverty line. Only 34 percent of Alabama students are eligible for a scholarship and only 0.5 percent of students statewide actually use a scholarship. The average scholarship size is about \$6,800, which is about three-fourths of the average expenditure per student at Alabama's district schools, but the cap on scholarship values is somewhat higher (\$6,000 in grades K-5, \$8,000 in grades 5-8 and \$10,000 in grades 9-12). Tax credits are worth 100 percent of the value of the contributions to scholarship organizations, but only \$30 million in tax credits are available annually, which is equivalent to only 0.37 percent of Alabama's total K-12 revenue.

Program Participation

Enrollment for Alabama’s Education Scholarship Program has decreased by 3 percent since 2015–16.



4,202

Scholarships
Awarded
(2019–20)

34%

of Families
with Children
Income-
eligible
(Statewide)

7

Scholarship
Organizations
Awarding
Scholarships
(Fall 2020)

154

Schools
Participating
(2019–20)

\$6,813

Average
Scholarship
Value
(2020–21 projected)

74%

Value as a
Percentage of
Public School
Per-student
Total Spending

EdChoice Expert Feedback (continued)

In order to expand access to educational choice, Alabama policymakers should dramatically increase the available tax credits and expand eligibility to all students (prioritizing scholarships based on need). The program could also be converted into an education savings account to ensure that all students have access to the education that’s the right fit for them, whether private school or a customized course of education.

Additionally, Alabama’s scholarship program has some unnecessary and counterproductive regulations. The program was amended in 2015 to prohibit SGOs from accepting donations intended for a specific school—for example, a school of a particular faith or particular learning style. The exclusion of mission-based scholarship organizations is an error that Alabama should reverse. Additionally, the program has a bifurcated process for distributing scholarships based on the performance of a student’s assigned district school that can be difficult for families, scholarship organizations, and schools to navigate. The state should consider dropping the “failing” school provision altogether to bring clarity to the application process.

Additional Alabama program on page **135**

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/AL_scholarship

Arizona

Original Individual Income Tax Credit Scholarship Program

Tax-Credit Scholarship | **Enacted 1997** | **Launched 1997**

The Arizona legislature passed this program in 1997, and it launched in the same year. This tax-credit scholarship program allows taxpayers to receive tax credits for their donations to nonprofit organizations that provide school scholarships to K–12 students. Students are able to receive more than one scholarship from STOs in a given year.

INCOME LIMIT	None	PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT	None		
GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT	Statewide	ENROLLMENT CAP	None	SCHOLARSHIP CAP	None
TESTING MANDATES	None	CREDIT VALUE	100%		
PER DONOR CREDIT CAP	\$593 (individual) / \$1,186 (married)		BUDGET CAP	None	
PARENT REQUIREMENTS	pg. 147	SGO REQUIREMENTS	pg. 153		
GOVERNING STATUTES	Ariz. Rev. Stat. §§ 43-1089; 43-1601 through 1605				

Student Funding

School tuition organizations (STOs) determine scholarship amounts. In tax year 2020, individual taxpayers that contribute to STOs may claim a dollar-for-dollar credit of up to \$593, and married couples filing jointly may claim up to \$1,186. The amount an individual can claim for a credit increases each year by the amount of the Consumer Price Index.

Student Eligibility

Students must be in grades K–12 or be a preschool enrollee identified by the school district as having a disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. STOs must consider financial need when awarding scholarships and cannot make decisions based solely on donor recommendations. Individual taxpayers may not make STO contributions earmarked for their own dependents, nor may donors make agreements among one another to “trade” donations for their respective dependents.

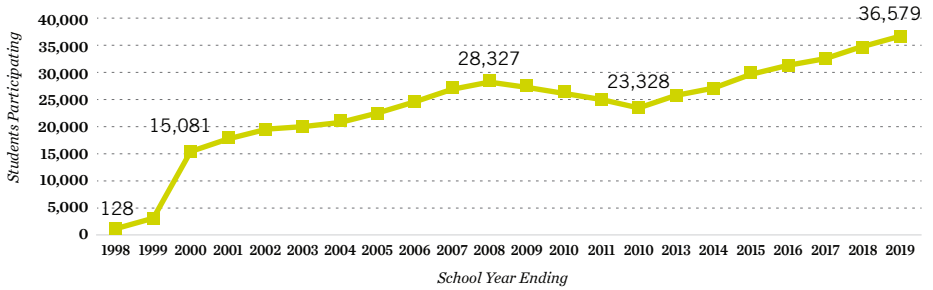
EdChoice Expert Feedback

Arizona’s original individual-donor tax-credit scholarship program—the first in the nation—helps tens of thousands of students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do more to expand educational opportunity.

All students are eligible to receive a tax-credit scholarship, making this among the most expansive educational choice programs in the nation. Statewide, 6.7 percent of students participate in one of Arizona’s private educational choice options (including the Low-Income Corporate-Donor Tax-Credit Scholarship Program, the “Switcher” Tax-Credit Scholarship Program, Lexie’s Law for Disabled and Displaced Students Tax-Credit Scholarship Program and the Empowerment Scholarship Account Program). This is the highest EdChoice share in the nation.

Program Participation

The number of scholarships awarded through Arizona’s Original Individual Income Tax Credit Scholarship Program increased 53.5 percent since 2011–12.



36,579
Scholarships
Awarded
(2018–19)

100%
of Families
with Children
Eligible
(Statewide)

345
Participating
Schools
(2018–19)

55
Scholarship
Organizations
Awarding
Scholarships
(2018–19)

\$1,739
Average
Scholarship
Value
(2018–19)

17%
Value (Average
Scholarship) as
a Percentage of
Public School
Per-student
Spending

EdChoice Expert Feedback (continued)

The average scholarship size is only about \$1,740, which is only about 17 percent of the average expenditure per student at Arizona’s district schools, but there is no cap on scholarship values and students may receive multiple scholarships. Students with special needs, students in foster care, students from low-income families, and those who have switched from the public school system can also receive scholarships via the other tax-credit scholarship programs. Tax credits are worth 100 percent of the value of the contributions to scholarship organizations, but donors can only claim up to \$593 in tax credits annually (or up to \$1,186 for married couples filing jointly).

In order to expand access to educational choice, Arizona policymakers should increase the amount of tax credits that individual donors can receive.

Arizona’s scholarship program generally avoids unnecessary and counterproductive regulations.

Additional Arizona programs on pages **15, 91, 93, 95**

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/AZ_scholarship1

TCS

Arizona

Low-Income Corporate Income Tax Credit Scholarship Program

Tax-Credit Scholarship | *Enacted 2006* | *Launched 2006*

Arizona's Low-Income Corporate Income Tax Credit Scholarship Program allows corporate taxpayers to receive tax credits for their donations to nonprofit organizations that provide school scholarships to K-12 students from low-income families. Students are able to receive more than one scholarship from STOs in a given year.

INCOME LIMIT 185% x FRL

PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT Yes

GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT Statewide

ENROLLMENT CAP None

SCHOLARSHIP CAP \$5,600 (K-8) / \$6,900

TESTING MANDATES None

CREDIT VALUE 100%

PER DONOR CREDIT CAP None

BUDGET CAP 123.0 million (escalator)

PARENT REQUIREMENTS pg. 147

SGO REQUIREMENTS pg. 153

GOVERNING STATUTES Ariz. Rev. Stat. §§ 43-1183; 43-1501 through 1507; and 20-224.06

Student Funding

Each school tuition organization (STO) determines the amount of scholarships it distributes. Scholarships are capped at \$5,600 in grades K-8 and \$6,900 in grades 9-12 for 2020-21. Those amounts increase annually by \$100. Corporate taxpayers that contribute to STOs may claim a tax credit equal to the full amount of their contribution. The program is limited to a total of \$123 million in available tax credits in 2020-21, a figure that will rise by a decreasing rate until 2022-23.

Student Eligibility

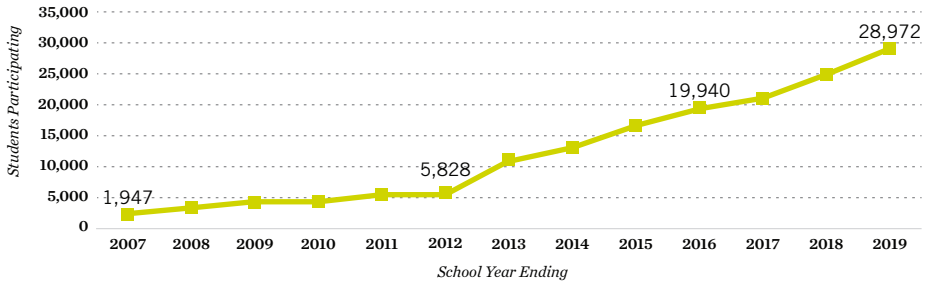
All students who receive scholarships under this program must come from families whose household incomes are equal to or below 185 percent of the federal free and reduced-price lunch program guidelines (\$96,940 for a family of four in 2020-21). Additionally, students must either be (1) enrolled in private school kindergarten, (2) enrolled in a private preschool program for students with disabilities, (3) a public school enrollee for at least 90 days in the previous year or one full semester of the current school year, (4) a dependent of an active-duty member of the military stationed in Arizona or (5) a prior scholarship recipient under this program or the individual tax-credit scholarship program.

EdChoice Expert Feedback

Arizona's low-income corporate-donor tax-credit scholarship program helps tens of thousands of students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do more to expand educational opportunity.

Program Participation

The number of scholarships awarded through Arizona’s Low-Income Corporate Income Tax Credit Scholarship Program increased 38 percent from 2016–17 to 2018–19.



28,972

Scholarships
Awarded
(2018–19)

56%

of Families
with Children
Income-
Eligible
(Statewide)

279

Participating
Schools
(2018–19)

47

Scholarship
Organizations
Awarding
Scholarships
(2018–19)

\$2,354

Average
Scholarship
Value
(2018–19)

24%

Value as a
Percentage of
Public School
Per-student
Spending

EdChoice Expert Feedback (continued)

Eligibility for the scholarships is limited to 185 percent of the federal poverty line. About 56 percent of Arizona students are eligible to receive a scholarship via this program, and all students are eligible to receive a scholarship via the individual-donor scholarship program. Statewide, 6.7 percent of students participate in one of Arizona’s private educational choice options (including the universal-eligibility Original Individual-Donor Tax-Credit Scholarship Program, the “Switcher” Tax-Credit Scholarship Program, Lexie’s Law for Disabled and Displaced Students Tax-Credit Scholarship Program and the Empowerment Scholarship Account Program). This is the highest EdChoice share in the nation.

The average scholarship size is only about \$2,300, which is only about 24 percent of the average expenditure per student at Arizona’s district schools, but there is no cap on scholarship values and students may receive more than one scholarship. Students with special needs, students in foster care, and those who have switched from the public school system can also receive scholarships via the other tax-credit scholarship programs, in addition to the original scholarship program that is available to all students. Tax credits are worth 100 percent of the value of the contributions to scholarship organizations, but only \$123 million in tax credits are available annually, which is equivalent to only 1.39 percent of Arizona’s total K–12 revenue.

In order to expand access to educational choice, Arizona policymakers should increase the amount of tax credits available and restore the automatic “escalator” that allowed the total tax credit cap to grow over time to meet demand.

Arizona’s scholarship program generally avoids unnecessary and counterproductive regulations.

Additional Arizona programs on pages **15, 89, 93, 95**

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/AZ_scholarship2

Arizona

Lexie’s Law for Disabled and Displaced Students Tax Credit Scholarship Program

Tax-Credit Scholarship | **Enacted 2009** | **Launched 2009**

Arizona allows corporations, including stockholders of S-Corporations, to receive tax credits for donating to school tuition organizations (STOs), nonprofits that provide private school scholarships to children with special needs and students who are currently, or have ever been, part of the Arizona foster care system. Depending on eligibility, students are able to receive more than one scholarship from STOs in a given year.

INCOME LIMIT	None	PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT	None		
GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT	Statewide	ENROLLMENT CAP	None	SCHOLARSHIP CAP	90% State Funding
TESTING MANDATES	None	CREDIT VALUE	100%	PER DONOR CREDIT CAP	None
BUDGET CAP	\$5 million	PARENT REQUIREMENTS	pg. 147	SGO REQUIREMENTS	pg. 153
GOVERNING STATUTES	Ariz. Rev. Stat. §§ 15-891; 43-1184; 43-1501 through 1507; and 20-224.07				

Student Funding

STOs may award scholarships up to the lesser of the private school tuition or 90 percent of the state funding that otherwise would go to that pupil had he or she remained in public school. That amount varies depending on the services the student’s disability requires. The total credits claimed cannot exceed \$5 million in a given year.

Student Eligibility

Students are eligible if they (1) have a Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team (MET) or Individualized Education Plan from an Arizona public school district, (2) have a 504 plan from an Arizona public school district or (3) are now or have ever been in the Arizona foster care system.

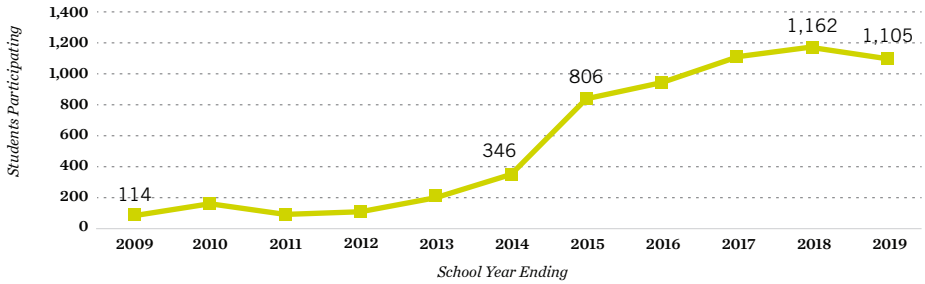
EdChoice Expert Feedback

Arizona’s tax-credit scholarship program for disabled and displaced students helps thousands of students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do more to expand educational opportunity.

Students with special needs and foster kids are eligible to receive a tax-credit scholarship. About 12 percent of Arizona students are eligible to receive a scholarship via this program, and all students are eligible to receive a scholarship via the individual-donor scholarship program. Statewide, 6.7 percent of students participate in one of Arizona’s private educational choice options (including the universal-eligibility Original Individual-Donor Tax-Credit Scholarship Program, the Low-Income Corporate-Donor Tax-Credit Scholarship Program, “Switcher” Tax-Credit Scholarship Program, and the Empowerment Scholarship Account Program). This is the highest EdChoice share in the nation.

Program Participation

The number of scholarships awarded through Arizona’s Law for Disabled and Displaced Students Tax Credit Scholarship Program increased 18 percent from 2015–16 to 2016–17.



1,105
Scholarships
Awarded
(2018–19)

11%
of Students
Eligible
(Statewide)

138
Participating
Schools
(2018–19)

14
Scholarship
Organizations
Awarding
Scholarships
(2018–19)

\$5,304
Average
Scholarship
Value
(2018–19)

53%
Value as a
Percentage of
Public School
Per-student
Spending

EdChoice Expert Feedback *(continued)*

The average scholarship size is about \$5,300, which is about 53 percent of the average expenditure per student at Arizona’s district schools. There is no cap on scholarship values and students may receive more than one scholarship. Students from low-income families and those who have switched from the public school system can also receive scholarships via the other tax-credit scholarship programs in addition to the original scholarship program that is available to all students. Tax credits are worth 100 percent of the value of the contributions to scholarship organizations, but only \$5 million in tax credits are available annually, which is equivalent to only 0.06 percent of Arizona’s total K–12 revenue.

In order to expand access to educational choice, Arizona policymakers should significantly increase the amount of available tax credits.

Arizona’s scholarship program generally avoids unnecessary and counterproductive regulations.

Additional Arizona programs on pages **15, 89, 91, 95**

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/AZ_Lexie

Arizona “Switcher” Individual Income Tax Credit Scholarship Program

Tax-Credit Scholarship | *Enacted 2012* | *Launched 2012*

Arizona’s “switcher” tax-credit scholarship program supplements its Original Individual Income Tax Credit Scholarship Program. The switcher program provides a credit on individual income taxes for donations to school tuition organizations (STOs), nonprofits that provide private school scholarships. Students may receive more than one scholarship from STOs.

INCOME LIMIT	None	PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT	Yes		
GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT	Statewide	ENROLLMENT CAP	None	SCHOLARSHIP CAP	None
TESTING MANDATES	None	CREDIT VALUE	100%		
PER DONOR CREDIT CAP	\$590 (individual) / \$1,179 (married)		BUDGET CAP	None	
PARENT REQUIREMENTS	pg. 147	SGO REQUIREMENTS	pg. 153		
GOVERNING STATUTES	Ariz. Rev. Stat. §§ 43-1089.03; 43-1601 through 1605				

More Credit Details

In tax year 2020, individual taxpayers that contributed to STOs under this switcher may claim a dollar-for-dollar credit of up to \$590, and married couples filing jointly may claim up to \$1,179. However, taxpayers must first donate the maximum credit amount for the Original Individual Income Tax Credit (\$593 individual \$1,186 joint in tax year 2020) before they may claim the switcher credit.

Student Funding

STOs determine scholarship amounts. These amounts may vary depending on the STO to which a student applies for a scholarship. Students may receive more than one scholarship from STOs.

Student Eligibility

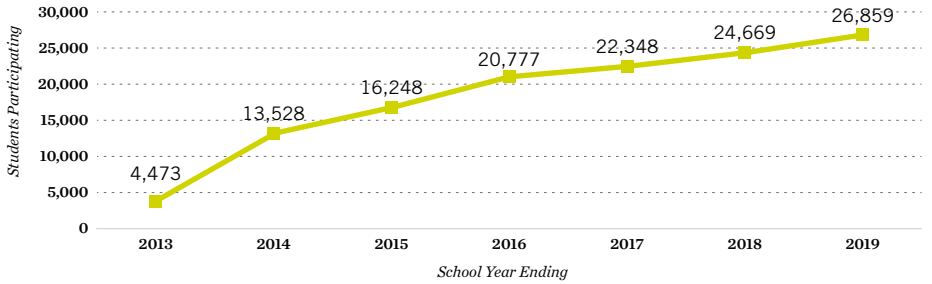
Students must be in grades K–12 and have previously attended a public school for at least a full semester or 90 days or be a preschool enrollee identified by the school district as having a disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Additionally, students who are in kindergarten, children of active military members stationed in Arizona and previous recipients of a Low-Income Corporate Income Tax Credit Scholarship or “Switcher” Individual Income Tax Credit Scholarship who have remained in private school are eligible. Although students are not means-tested for eligibility, STOs must consider financial need when awarding scholarships and cannot make decisions based solely on donor recommendations. Individual taxpayers may not make STO contributions earmarked for their own dependents, nor may donors make agreements among one another to “trade” donations for their respective dependents.

EdChoice Expert Feedback

Arizona’s individual-donor tax-credit scholarship program for “switchers” helps tens of thousands of students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do more to expand educational opportunity.

Program Participation

The number of scholarships awarded through Arizona’s “Switcher” Individual Income Tax Credit Scholarship Program nearly doubled from 2013–14 to 2018–19.



26,859
Scholarships
Awarded
(2018–19)

93%
of Students
Eligible
(Statewide)

55
Scholarship
Organizations
Awarding
Scholarships
(2018–19)

340
Participating
Schools
(2018–19)

\$1,396
Average
Scholarship
Value
(2018–19)

14%
Value as a
Percentage of
Public School
Per-student
Spending

EdChoice Expert Feedback (continued)

Eligibility for the scholarships is limited to students who have switched out of a public school or who are entering kindergarten (or preschool for students with special needs). About 93 percent of Arizona students are eligible to receive a scholarship via this program, and all students are eligible to receive a scholarship via the individual-donor scholarship program. Statewide, 6.7 percent of students participate in one of Arizona’s private educational choice options (including the universal-eligibility Original Individual-Donor Tax-Credit Scholarship Program, the Low-Income Corporate-Donor Tax-Credit Scholarship Program, Lexie’s Law for Disabled and Displaced Students Tax-Credit Scholarship Program and the Empowerment Scholarship Account Program). This is the highest EdChoice share in the nation.

The average scholarship size is only about \$1,400, which is only about 14 percent of the average expenditure per student at Arizona’s district schools, but there is no cap on scholarship values and scholarships can be combined. Students with special needs, students in foster care, and students from low-income families can also receive scholarships via the other tax-credit scholarship programs, in addition to the original scholarship program that is available to all students. Tax credits are worth 100 percent of the value of the contributions to scholarship organizations, but donors can only claim up to \$590 in tax credits annually (or up to \$1,179 for married couples filing jointly) after first donating the maximum credit amount for the Original Individual Income Tax Credit (\$593 individual, \$1,186 joint in tax year 2020.)

In order to expand access to educational choice, Arizona policymakers should increase the amount of tax credits that individual donors can receive.

Arizona’s scholarship program generally avoids unnecessary and counterproductive regulations.

Additional Arizona programs on pages **15, 89, 91, 93**

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/AZ_Switcher

Florida

Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program

Tax-Credit Scholarship | *Enacted 2001* | *Launched 2001*

Florida provides a tax credit on corporate income taxes and insurance premium taxes for donations to scholarship-funding organizations (SFOs), nonprofits that provide scholarships to low- and middle-income students and children in foster care and offer funds for transportation to public schools outside a child's district. Businesses get a dollar-for-dollar tax credit for SFO contributions, with total credits capped at \$873.6 million in 2020–21.

INCOME LIMIT	260% x Poverty	PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT	None		
GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT	Statewide	ENROLLMENT CAP	None	SCHOLARSHIP CAP	\$9,197
TESTING MANDATES	State or National	CREDIT VALUE	100%	PER DONOR CREDIT CAP	Yes
BUDGET CAP	\$873.6 million (escalator)	PARENT REQUIREMENTS	pg. 147		
SGO REQUIREMENTS	pg. 153	GOVERNING STATUTES	Fla. Stat. §§ 1002.395 and 1002.421		

Student Funding

Scholarships can be worth up to 96 percent of the state's unweighted Fulltime Equivalency (FTE) funding, though they may not exceed private school tuition and fees. This maximum scholarship amount is \$9,197 in 2020–21, but most students receive awards averaging between \$6,775 to \$7,250, depending on grade level. Transportation grants for students attending out-of-district public schools are worth up to \$750.

Student Eligibility

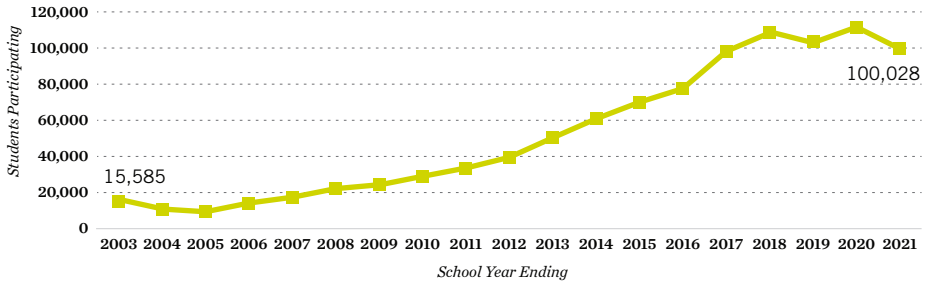
Students in households earning up to 260 percent of the federal poverty level (\$68,120 for a family of four in 2020–21) are eligible for scholarships. Students who qualify under 200 percent of poverty (\$52,400 for a family of four) are eligible for full scholarships worth up to \$9,197. Partial scholarships are available with scholarship values reduced by 12 percent to 50 percent if the student comes from a household with an income between 200 percent and 260 percent of the federal poverty level. First priority is given to renewal students and to new students eligible for the federal free and reduced-price lunch program (\$48,470 for a family of four in 2020–21). Eligibility recently opened to siblings of current scholarship recipients—as long as they live in the same household—and the income limit for previous scholarship recipients was removed. Additionally, students placed in foster care or out-of-home care, as well as dependents of active-duty military, are now able to apply for a scholarship at any time.

EdChoice Expert Feedback

Florida's tax-credit scholarship program—the largest choice program in the nation—helps more than a hundred thousand low-income students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do more to expand educational opportunity.

Program Participation

Enrollment in the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program has seen enrollment of more than 100,000 students for the past four years.



100,028

Participating Students
(Fall 2020)

46%

of Families with Children
Income-eligible
(Statewide)

2

Scholarship Organizations
(2020-21)

1,900

Participating Schools
(2020-21)

\$6,346

Average Scholarship Value
(Projected 2020-21)

58%

Value as a Percentage of Public School Per-student Spending

EdChoice Expert Feedback *(continued)*

Eligibility for the scholarships is limited to 260 percent of the federal poverty line, with preference given to lower-income families. About 46 percent of Florida families have at least one student eligible to receive a scholarship. Statewide, 4.9 percent of students participate in one of Florida’s private educational choice options (including the Family Empowerment Scholarships Program, the Hope Scholarships Program, John M. McKay Scholarships for Students with Disabilities Program and the Gardiner Scholarship Program). This is the second highest EdChoice share in the nation.

The average scholarship size is about \$6,300, which is about 58 percent of the average expenditure per student at Florida’s district schools. Tax credits are worth 100 percent of the value of the contributions to scholarship organizations. There is \$873.6 million in tax credits available annually, which is equivalent to 2.9 percent of Florida’s total K-12 revenue. The tax credit cap automatically increases by 25 percent each year if at least 90 percent of the cap was reached in the previous year.

In order to expand access to educational choice, Florida policymakers have created the publicly funded Family Empowerment Scholarships Program to serve students who were on the scholarship waitlist.

Florida’s scholarship program generally avoids unnecessary and counterproductive regulations.

Additional Florida programs on pages **17, 31, 33, 99**

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/FL_scholarship

Florida Hope Scholarship Program

Tax-Credit Scholarship | *Enacted 2018* | *Launched 2018*

Purchasers of motor vehicles in Florida may donate their sales tax to scholarship-funding organizations (SFOs), nonprofits that provide private school scholarships to victims of bullying and violence in public schools as well as fund transportation scholarships to be used to attend other public schools.

INCOME LIMIT None

PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT Yes

GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT Statewide

ENROLLMENT CAP None

SCHOLARSHIP CAP \$7,169

TESTING MANDATES National

CREDIT VALUE 100%

PER DONOR CREDIT CAP \$105

BUDGET CAP None

PARENT REQUIREMENTS pg. 147

SGO REQUIREMENTS pg. 153

GOVERNING STATUTES Fla. Stat. § 1002.40

Student Funding

Purchasers of motor vehicles in Florida may direct up to \$105 per vehicle purchased to Hope Scholarships, not to exceed the total state sales tax of the purchase. Taxes applied to leases or rentals are not eligible for Hope Scholarship contributions, nor are those paid for heavy trucks, trailers, tractor trailers and motorcycles.

Scholarship-funding organizations must fund cap scholarships using a rate (between 85 and 96 percent) of Florida's unweighted full-time equivalent amount. These maximum scholarship amounts range between \$6,673 and \$7,169 depending on a student's school district and grade level in 2020–21. Students who use the program to transfer to an out-of-district public school are eligible for transportation reimbursement up to \$750. SFOs will award scholarships on a first-come, first-served basis, with priority granted to renewing students.

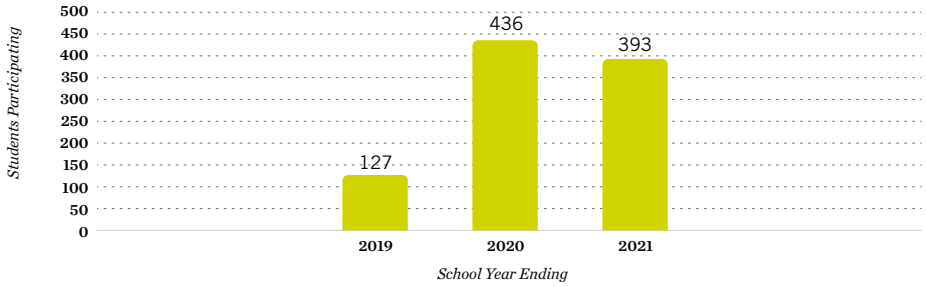
Student Eligibility

Students in grades K–12 who are victims of bullying or violence in public district schools are eligible for Hope Scholarships. Public school officials must notify parents of bullying victims about their Hope Scholarship eligibility after the parent reports a qualifying incident to school officials. Qualifying incidents include battery, harassment, bullying, kidnapping, physical attack, robbery, sexual assault, threat and intimidation, assault and fighting in school.

Qualifying incidents may occur within a school building, on school property, at any school-related or school-sponsored program or activity, while riding the bus or while waiting at a bus stop. Students attending public charter schools are not eligible. Students must be Florida residents. Students who receive other scholarships from a Florida SFO are not eligible for Hope Scholarships.

Program Participation

Enrollment in Florida’s Hope Scholarship Program dropped slightly after quickly growing in its second year.



393
Participating
Students
(Fall 2020)

85%
of Students
Eligible
(Statewide)

1
Scholarship
Organization
(2020–21)

\$7,169
Participating
Schools
(2018–19)

66%
Maximum Value as a
Percentage of State’s
Public School Per-
student Spending

EdChoice Expert Feedback

Florida’s Hope Scholarship Program helps hundreds of students who had been the victims of bullying or abuse access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do more to expand educational opportunity. This is the first educational choice program specifically for bullied students. Students are eligible for the scholarships if they had been bullied or physically attacked in a public school. Statewide, 4.9 percent of students participate in one of Florida’s private educational choice options (including the Florida Tax-Credit Scholarship Program, the Family Empowerment Scholarships Program, John M. McKay Scholarships for Students with Disabilities Program and the Gardiner Scholarship Program). This is the second highest EdChoice share in the nation.

The maximum scholarship size is about \$7,100, which is about 79 percent of the average expenditure per student at Florida’s district schools. Tax credits are worth 100 percent of the value of the contributions to scholarship organizations, but credits are only against the vehicle sales tax and are capped at \$105.

In order to expand access to educational choice, Florida policymakers have created the publicly funded Family Empowerment Scholarships Program to serve students who were on the scholarship waitlist.

Florida’s scholarship program generally avoids unnecessary and counterproductive regulations.

Additional Florida programs on pages **17, 31, 33, 97**

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/HopeScholarships

TCS

Georgia Qualified Education Expense Tax Credit

Tax-Credit Scholarship | *Enacted 2008* | *Launched 2008*

Georgia provides dollar-for-dollar tax credits for individual and corporate donations to student scholarship organizations (SSOs), nonprofits that provide private school scholarships.

INCOME LIMIT	None	PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT	Yes		
GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT	Statewide	ENROLLMENT CAP	None	SCHOLARSHIP CAP	\$10,957(2020)
TESTING MANDATES	None	CREDIT VALUE	100%		
PER DONOR CREDIT CAP	\$1,000 (individuals) / \$2,500 (married) / 75% liability (business)				
BUDGET CAP	\$100 Million	PARENT REQUIREMENTS	pg. 147	SGO REQUIREMENTS	pg. 153
GOVERNING STATUTES	O.C.G.A. §§ 20-2A-1 through 7 and 48-7-29.16				

More Credit Details

Individuals may claim up to \$1,000, and married couples filing jointly may claim up to \$2,500 (married couples filing separately may claim up to \$1,250 each). An individual who is a member of an LLC, a shareholder of an S-Corporation or a partner in a partnership may claim up to \$10,000 of their tax actually paid as a member, shareholder or partner. Corporate taxpayers may claim up to 75 percent of their total tax liability. The program is capped at \$100 million in tax credits per year.

Student Funding

Scholarship amounts are determined by SSOs, capped only by the average state and local expenditures per child for public elementary and secondary education in the entire state. For 2020, scholarships were capped at \$10,957.

Student Eligibility

All Georgia public school students are eligible if they attended a public school for at least six weeks immediately prior to receiving a scholarship, as are students who are enrolling in prekindergarten, kindergarten or first grade. Eligibility continues until a student graduates high school, reaches age 20 or returns to public school. SSOs may set their own additional eligibility guidelines.

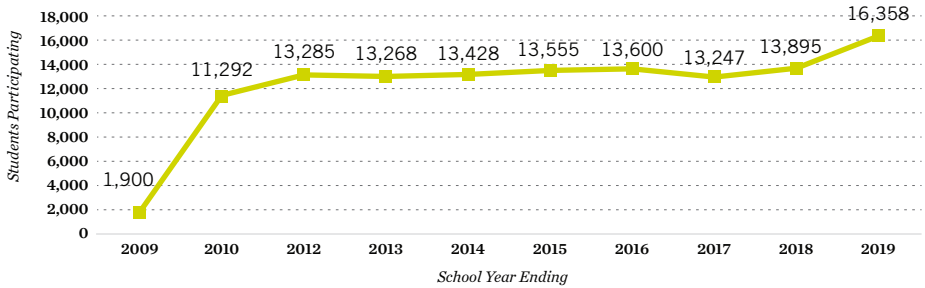
EdChoice Expert Feedback

Georgia's tax-credit scholarship program helps more than 16,000 students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do more to expand educational opportunity.

All students are eligible to receive a tax-credit scholarship, making this among the most expansive educational choice programs in the nation. Statewide, 1 percent of students participate in one of Georgia's private educational choice options (including the Special Needs Scholarship Program).

Program Participation

Participation in Georgia’s tax-credit scholarship program increased by 18 percent from since 2018.



16,358

Scholarships
Awarded
(2019)

89%

of Students
Eligible
(Statewide)

22

Scholarship
Organizations
Awarding
Scholarships
(2019)

\$4,560

Average Scholarship
Value
(2019)

38%

Value as a
Percentage of
Public School
Per-student
Spending

EdChoice Expert Feedback (continued)

The average scholarship size is about \$4,500, which is less than half of the average expenditure per student at Georgia’s district schools, but the cap on scholarship values is somewhat higher (about \$11,000). Tax credits are worth 100 percent of the value of the contributions to scholarship organizations, but only \$100 million in tax credits are available annually, which is equivalent to only 0.47 percent of Georgia’s total K–12 revenue.

In order to expand access to educational choice, Georgia policymakers should dramatically increase the amount of available tax credits so that every Georgia child is able to receive a scholarship. The program could also be converted into an education savings account to ensure that all students have access to the education that’s the right fit for them, whether private school or a customized course of education.

Georgia’s voucher program generally avoids unnecessary and counterproductive regulations.

Additional Georgia program on page **35**

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/GA_scholarship

TCS

Illinois

Invest in Kids Program

Tax-Credit Scholarship | **Enacted 2017** | **Launched 2017**

Illinois's Invest in Kids Program gives 75 percent tax credits to individuals and businesses for their donations to scholarship-granting organizations (SGOs), nonprofits that provide school scholarships to low- and middle-income students.

INCOME LIMIT	300% x Poverty (400% for renewals)	PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT	No		
GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT	Statewide	ENROLLMENT CAP	None	SCHOLARSHIP CAP	\$14,492
TESTING MANDATES	State	CREDIT VALUE	75%	PER DONOR CREDIT CAP	\$1 million
BUDGET CAP	\$75 million	PARENT REQUIREMENTS	pg. 147	SGO REQUIREMENTS	pg. 153
GOVERNING STATUTES	35 ILCS 40/1-65 and 35 ILCS 5/224				

Student Funding

Each SGO determines the amount of the scholarships it distributes, but the baseline scholarship amount cannot exceed the lesser of the state's average operational expense per pupil (OEPP; \$14,492 in 2018–19) and the necessary costs and fees for attendance at the qualified school. Exceptions include:

- Students identified as gifted and talented children may receive a scholarship worth up to 110 percent of the state's average OEPP.
- Students who are English Language Learners may receive a scholarship worth up to 120 percent of the state's average OEPP.
- Students who are eligible to receive services under IDEA may receive a scholarship worth up to 200 percent of the state's average OEPP.

Additionally, maximum scholarship values are segmented by income level unless students meet one of the above exceptions:

- Students whose household income is less than 185 percent of the poverty level (\$48,470 for a family of four in 2020–21) may receive a scholarship worth up to 100 percent of the state's average OEPP.
- Students whose household income is between 185 percent and 250 percent of the poverty level (\$65,500 for a family of four in 2020–21) may receive, on average, a scholarship worth up to 75 percent of the state's average OEPP.
- Students whose household income is 250 percent or more of the federal poverty level may receive, on average, a scholarship worth up to 50 percent of the state's average OEPP.

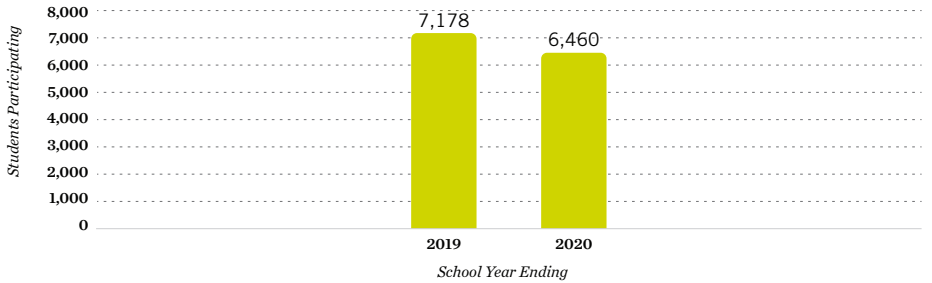
SGOs are required to grant priority to the following students who applied by April 1 of the preceding school year: (1) eligible students who previously received a tax-credit scholarship, (2) students from households whose prior year's income does not exceed 185 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL; \$48,470 for a family of four in 2020–21), (3) students who reside in districts that have a school with at least one subgroup whose average student performance is at or below the state average for the lowest 10 percent of student performance in that subgroup or with a school with an average graduation rate of less than 60 percent and (4) siblings of current scholarship recipients. All other eligible students are eligible to receive scholarships beginning April 1 of the same year.

Student Eligibility

Students are eligible to receive scholarships if their family income does not exceed 300 percent of the federal poverty level (\$78,600 for a family of four in 2020–21). Once a student has received a scholarship, families may earn up to 400 percent of the FPL (\$104,800 for a family of four in 2020–21) for the duration of the scholarship or scholarship renewal while retaining eligibility.

Program Participation

Enrollment in Illinois’s Invest in Kids Tax-Credit Scholarship Program decreased 10 percent in its second year.



6,460

Students Participating (2019-20)

41%

of Families with Children Income-eligible (Statewide)

7

Organizations Awarding Scholarships (2019-20)

\$7,132

Average Scholarship Value (2019-20)

40%

Average Value as a Percentage of State’s Public School Per-student Spending

EdChoice Expert Feedback

Illinois’ tax-credit scholarship program helps tens of thousands of low- and middle-income students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do more to expand educational opportunity.

Eligibility for the scholarships is limited to 300 percent of the federal poverty line (\$78,600 for a family of four in 2020–21). About 41 percent of Illinois students are eligible for a scholarship though only 0.3 percent of students statewide actually use a scholarship. (Additionally, Illinois families are eligible for a very modest tax credit for certain education expenses.)

The average scholarship size is about \$14,250, which is only about 81 percent of the average expenditure per student at Illinois’ district schools, though the cap on scholarship values is slightly higher (the state’s operational expense per pupil, which was almost \$15,000 in 2018–19, and up to twice that for students with special needs). Tax credits are worth 75 percent of the value of the contributions to scholarship organizations. Only \$75 million in tax credits are available annually, which is equivalent to just 0.20 percent of Illinois’ total K–12 revenue.

In order to expand access to educational choice, Illinois policymakers should eliminate the sunset provision so the program can continue beyond 2022–23, dramatically increase the available tax credits, increase the credit value to 100 percent, and expand eligibility to all students (prioritizing scholarships based on need). The program could also be converted into an education savings account to ensure that all students have access to the education that’s the right fit for them, whether private school or a customized course of education.

The Illinois Invest in Kids tax-credit scholarship program imposes some unnecessary and counterproductive regulations. For example, the program requires scholarship students to take the state’s standardized test. Instead of mandating a single test, policymakers should allow parents and schools to choose from a variety of nationally norm-referenced tests. Additionally, disbursing credits in a manner that is “geographically proportionate to enrollment in recognized non-public schools in Illinois” does not incentivize the opening of private schools in small town and rural areas that do not already have a significant number of private school students.

Additional Illinois program on page **135**

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/IL_scholarship

Indiana

School Scholarship Tax Credit

Tax-Credit Scholarship | **Enacted 2009** | **Launched 2009**

Indiana's School Scholarship Tax Credit program allows individuals and corporations to claim a 50 percent tax credit for contributions to approved scholarship-granting organizations (SGOs), nonprofits that provide private school scholarships. There is no limit on the dollar amount of the tax credit donors can claim, although the total amount of tax credits awarded statewide is limited to \$16.5 million in 2020–21.

INCOME LIMIT	200% x FRL	PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT	None		
GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT	Statewide	ENROLLMENT CAP	None	SCHOLARSHIP CAP	Full Tuition
TESTING MANDATES	National	CREDIT VALUE	50%	PER DONOR CREDIT CAP	None
BUDGET CAP	\$16.5 million	PARENT REQUIREMENTS	pg. 147	SGO REQUIREMENTS	pg. 153
GOVERNING STATUTES	Ind. Code §§ 6-3.1-30.5 and 20-51-3				

Student Funding

Charitable donations made to scholarship-granting organizations fund the scholarships. Individuals and corporations may receive 50 percent tax credits for their donations to SGOs, and Indiana allocated \$16.5 million for tax credits meant for SGO donations in 2020–21. SGOs determine scholarship amounts.

Student Eligibility

Children are eligible to receive scholarships if their family income does not exceed 200 percent of the guidelines needed to qualify for the free and reduced-price lunch program (\$96,940 for a family of four in 2020–21). Children must be between ages 5 and 22 to participate. Current private school students can qualify.

EdChoice Expert Feedback

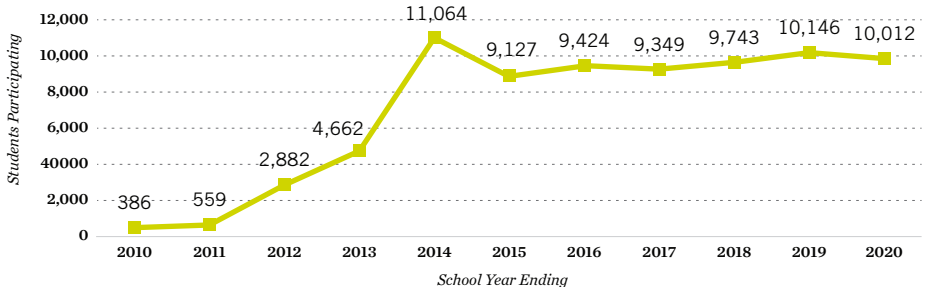
Indiana's tax-credit scholarship program helps more than ten thousand low-income students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do more to expand educational opportunity.

Eligibility for the scholarships is limited to 370 percent of the federal poverty line (about \$96,940 for a family of four in 2020–21). About 60 percent of Indiana students are eligible for a scholarship but only 3.9 percent of students statewide actually use participate in one of Indiana's private educational choice options (including the Choice Scholarship Program).

The average scholarship size is about \$2,279, which is only 20 percent of the average expenditure per student at Indiana's district schools. Tax credits are worth 50 percent of the value of the contributions to scholarship organizations. Only \$16.5 million in tax credits are available annually, which is equivalent to only 0.1 percent of Indiana's total K-12 spending.

Program Participation

For the past few years, participation in Indiana's tax-credit scholarship program has remained fairly steady.



10,012

Scholarships
Awarded
(2019-20)

60%

of Families
with Children
Income-eligible
(Statewide)

5

Scholarship
Organizations
(2019-20)

341

Schools
Participating
(2018-19)

\$2,279

Average
Scholarship
Value
(2019-20)

20%

Value as a
Percentage of
Public School
Per-student
Total Spending

EdChoice Expert Feedback (continued)

In order to expand access to educational choice, Indiana policymakers should dramatically increase the available tax credits and expand eligibility to all students (prioritizing scholarships based on need). The program could also be converted into an education savings account to ensure that all students have access to the education that's the right fit for them, whether private school or a customized course of education.

Indiana's tax-credit scholarship program generally avoids unnecessary and counterproductive regulations.

Additional Indiana programs on pages **37, 135**

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/IN_scholarship

Iowa

School Tuition Organization Tax Credit

Tax-Credit Scholarship | *Enacted 2006* | *Launched 2006*

Iowa provides a credit on individual income taxes for individual and corporate donations to school tuition organizations (STOs), nonprofits that provide private school scholarships.

INCOME LIMIT	400% x Poverty	PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT	None		
GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT	Statewide	ENROLLMENT CAP	None	SCHOLARSHIP CAP	Full Tuition
TESTING MANDATES	None	CREDIT VALUE	65%	PER DONOR CREDIT CAP	None
BUDGET CAP	\$15 million	PARENT REQUIREMENTS	pg. 147	SGO REQUIREMENTS	pg. 153
GOVERNING STATUTES	Iowa Stat. §422.11S				

More Credit Details

The credit is worth 65 percent of the donation's value, which also is limited by a statewide cap. A maximum of \$15 million in tax credits is available in 2021. Each STO may grant tax credits to its donors up to its pro rata credit allotment based on the number of participating students it serves.

Student Funding

STOs determine scholarship amounts, which are capped at a participating student's tuition figure. A total of \$15 million in tax-credit funding for scholarships was available in 2020. In 2022, a recently enacted escalator will allow the tax credit budget cap to grow by 10 percent each year following a tax year in which the amount of tax credits awarded equal or exceed 90 percent of that year's credit cap. These escalator cap increases will remain effective until the credit cap reaches \$20 million.

Student Eligibility

Children are eligible to receive scholarships if their family income does not exceed 400 percent of federal poverty guidelines (\$104,800 for a family of four in 2020–21).

EdChoice Expert Feedback

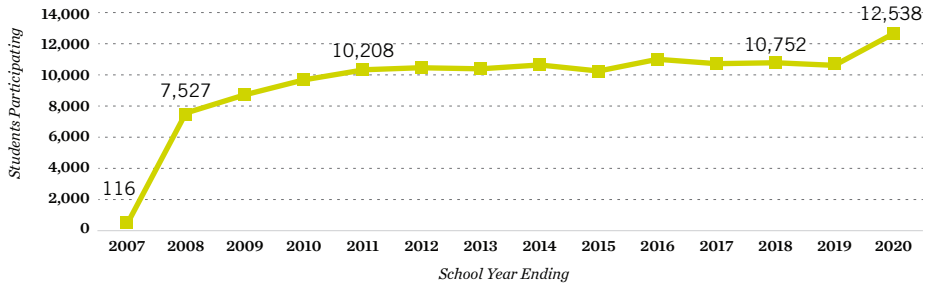
Iowa's tax-credit scholarship program helps more than 10,000 students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do more to expand educational opportunity.

Eligibility for the scholarships is limited to 400 percent of the federal poverty line (\$104,800 for a family of four in 2020–21). About 51 percent of Iowa students are eligible for a scholarship though only 1.9 percent of students statewide actually use a scholarship. (Additionally, Iowa families are eligible for a very modest tax credit for tuition and textbooks.)

The average scholarship size is only about \$1,400, which is only about 10 percent of the average expenditure per student at Iowa's district schools. Tax credits are worth 65 percent of the value of the contributions to scholarship organizations. Only \$15 million in tax credits are available annually, which is equivalent to just 0.21 percent of Iowa's total K–12 revenue.

Program Participation

Participation in Iowa’s tax-credit scholarship program increased by 16 percent from 2018–19 to 2019–20.



12,538

Participating Students
(2019–20)

61%

of Families with Children
Income-eligible
(Statewide)

12

Scholarship Organizations
(2019–20)

143

Participating Schools
(2019–20)

\$1,403

Average Scholarship Value
(2019–20)

10%

Value as a Percentage of Public School Per-student Total Spending

EdChoice Expert Feedback (continued)

In order to expand access to educational choice, Iowa policymakers should dramatically increase the available tax credits, increase the credit value to 100 percent, and expand eligibility to all students (prioritizing scholarships based on need). The program could also be converted into an education savings account to ensure that all students have access to the education that’s the right fit for them, whether private school or a customized course of education.

Iowa’s scholarship program avoids unnecessary and counterproductive regulations.

Additional Iowa program on page **135**

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/IA_scholarship

Kansas

Tax Credit for Low Income Students Scholarship Program

Tax-Credit Scholarship | *Enacted 2014* | *Launched 2014*

Kansas's Tax Credit for Low Income Students Scholarship Program allows individuals and corporations to claim a 70 percent tax credit for contributions to approved scholarship-granting organizations (SGOs), nonprofits that provide private school scholarships to students from state-designated "low-performing" public schools. The limit on the dollar amount of the contributions a taxpayer is eligible to claim tax credits against is \$500,000 per year, and the total amount of tax credits awarded annually statewide is limited to \$10 million.

INCOME LIMIT	130% x Poverty	PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT	Yes		
GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT	"Lowest Performing" Schools Statewide	ENROLLMENT CAP	None		
SCHOLARSHIP CAP	\$8,000	TESTING MANDATES	None	CREDIT VALUE	70%
PER DONOR CREDIT CAP	\$500,000	BUDGET CAP	\$10 million	PARENT REQUIREMENTS	pg. 147
SGO REQUIREMENTS	pg. 153	GOVERNING STATUTES	K.S.A. §§ 72-4531 through 4537		

Student Funding

Each SGO determines the amount of the scholarships it distributes, but no scholarship amount can exceed the cost of tuition, fees, expenses and transportation by a qualified school. The maximum scholarship amount is \$8,000.

Student Eligibility

Children are eligible to receive scholarships if their family income does not exceed 100 percent of the guidelines needed to qualify for the free lunch program (\$34,060 for a family of four in 2020–21). They also must be assigned to one of Kansas's 100 lowest-performing elementary schools as defined by the state's board of education. Children must be between ages 5 and 21 to participate. In addition, children must have been enrolled in any public school the previous school year, unless the child is younger than 6.

EdChoice Expert Feedback

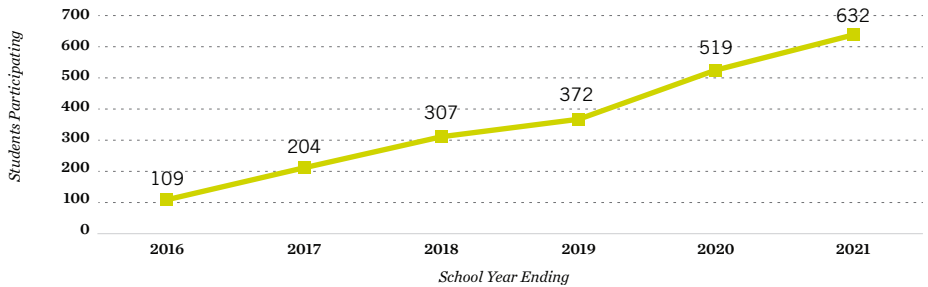
Kansas' tax-credit scholarship program helps hundreds of students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do much more to expand educational opportunity.

Eligibility for the scholarships is limited to students assigned to one of the 100 lowest-performing schools in Kansas who are also from families earning up to 130 percent of the federal poverty line, making it one of the most restrictive educational choice programs in the nation. Only 5 percent of Kansas students are eligible for a scholarship and less than 0.1 percent of students statewide actually use a scholarship.

The average scholarship size is just over \$4,600, which is about 24 percent of the average expenditure per student at Kansas' district schools, but the cap on scholarship values is significantly higher (\$8,000). Tax credits are worth only 70 percent of the value of the contributions to scholarship organizations. Policymakers should consider raising the credit value to make it easier for SGOs to raise money and distribute scholarships. Additionally, only \$10 million in tax credits are available annually, which is equivalent to only 0.15 percent of Kansas' total K–12 revenue.

Program Participation

Enrollment in Kansas’s tax-credit scholarship program grew 35 percent in its fifth year.



632

Participating Students
(2020–21)

5%

of Students Eligible
(Statewide)

7

Participating Scholarship Organizations
(2020–21)

116

Participating Schools
(2020–21)

\$3,157

Average Scholarship Value
(2019–20)

24%

Value as a Percentage of Public School Per-student Spending

EdChoice Expert Feedback *(continued)*

In order to expand access to educational choice, Kansas policymakers should dramatically increase the available tax credits and expand eligibility to all students (prioritizing scholarships based on need). The program could also be converted into an education savings account to ensure that all students have access to the education that’s the right fit for them, whether private school or a customized course of education.

Kansas’ tax-credit scholarship program generally avoids unnecessary and counterproductive regulations.

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/KS_scholarship

Louisiana Tuition Donation Credit Program

Tax-Credit Scholarship | *Enacted 2012* | *Launched 2012*

Louisiana taxpayers can receive dollar-for-dollar tax credits for donations they make to school tuition organizations (STOs), nonprofits that provide private school scholarships. There is no cap on available credits.

INCOME LIMIT	250% x Poverty	PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT	Yes		
GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT	Statewide	ENROLLMENT CAP	None		
SCHOLARSHIP CAP	\$4,436 (K-8) / \$4,991 (9-12)	TESTING MANDATES	State	CREDIT VALUE	100%
PER DONOR CREDIT CAP	None	BUDGET CAP	None	PARENT REQUIREMENTS	pg. 147
SGO REQUIREMENTS	pg. 153	GOVERNING STATUTES	La. Rev. Stat. § 47:6301		

Student Funding

For students in grades K–8, scholarships can be worth up to 80 percent of the state average Minimum Foundation Program (MFP) funding per pupil for the previous year (\$4,4436 in 2020–21). For grades 9–12, scholarships can be worth up to 90 percent of that same figure (\$4,991 in 2020–21).

Student Eligibility

Students must come from families whose household income is less than 250 percent of the federal poverty line (\$65,500 for a family of four in 2020–21). Additionally, they either must be entering kindergarten, have attended a public school in both semesters during the previous school year or have previously received a scholarship. Students who received a voucher under the Louisiana Scholarship Program in the previous school year are also eligible.

EdChoice Expert Feedback

Louisiana’s tax-credit scholarship program helps thousands of low-income students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do more to expand educational opportunity.

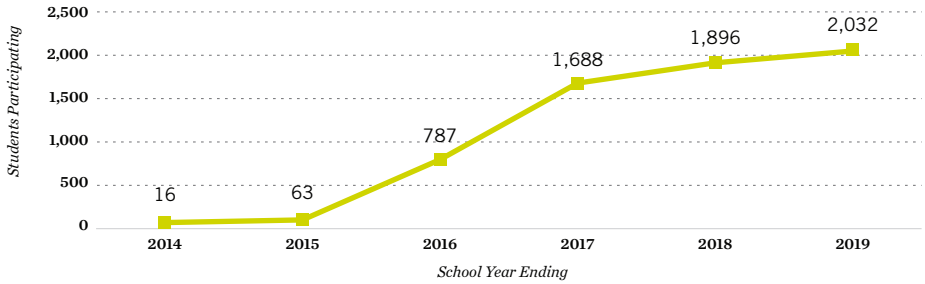
Eligibility for the scholarships is limited to 250 percent of the federal poverty line (\$64,375 for a family of four in 2019–20). About 46 percent of Louisiana students are eligible for a scholarship but only 1.0 percent of students participate in one of Louisiana’s private educational choice options (including the Louisiana Scholarship Program and the School Choice Program for Certain Students with Exceptionalities).

The average scholarship size is about \$3,000, which is only about 24 percent of the average expenditure per student at Louisiana’s district schools.

In order to expand access to educational choice, Louisiana policymakers should increase the voucher amounts to be comparable with the per-pupil spending at district schools and expand eligibility to all students. The program could also be converted into an education savings account to ensure that all students have access to the education that’s the right fit for them, whether private school or a customized course of education.

Program Participation

Enrollment in Louisiana’s tuition credit program increased by 12 percent from 2017–18 to 2018–19.



2,032

Participating Students (2018–19)

46%

of Families with Children Income-eligible (Statewide)

3

Scholarship Organizations (2018–19)

237

Participating Schools (2018–19)

\$4,209

Average Scholarship Value (2019–20)

24%

Value as a Percentage of Public School Per-student Spending

EdChoice Expert Feedback (continued)

Louisiana’s tax-credit scholarship program has some unnecessary and counterproductive regulations. For example, the program requires scholarship students in certain grades to take the state’s standardized test. Instead of mandating a single test, policymakers should allow parents and schools to choose from a variety of nationally norm-referenced tests. Policymakers should also amend the program so that it no longer interferes with schools’ admissions standards.

Additional Louisiana programs on pages **39, 41, 135**

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/LA_scholarship

Montana

Tax Credits for Contributions to Student Scholarship Organizations

Tax-Credit Scholarship | **Enacted 2015** | **Launched 2015**

Montana allows individuals and corporations to claim a tax credit for contributions to approved student scholarship organizations (SSOs), nonprofits that provide scholarships for private school and tutoring. A 2018 state court decision rendered the program inoperable, but the ruling was appealed to the United States Supreme Court, which overturned the state court's ruling in June 2020.

INCOME LIMIT	None	PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT	None	GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT	Statewide
ENROLLMENT CAP	None	SCHOLARSHIP CAP	50% of State Expenditure		
TESTING MANDATES	National	CREDIT VALUE	100%	PER DONOR CREDIT CAP	\$150
BUDGET CAP	\$3 million (escalator)	PARENT REQUIREMENTS	pg. 147	SGO REQUIREMENTS	pg. 153
GOVERNING STATUTES	Mont. Code Ann. §§ 15-30-3101 through 3114				

Student Funding

Scholarship amounts are determined by SSOs. The maximum scholarship is 50 percent of the average per-pupil expenditure for the second most recently completed fiscal year (\$5,514 for 2017–18). Each SSO's average scholarship may not exceed 30 percent of the average per-pupil expenditure for the second most recently completed fiscal year (\$3,308 for 2017–18).

Student Eligibility

All students between the ages of 5 and 18 in Montana are eligible.

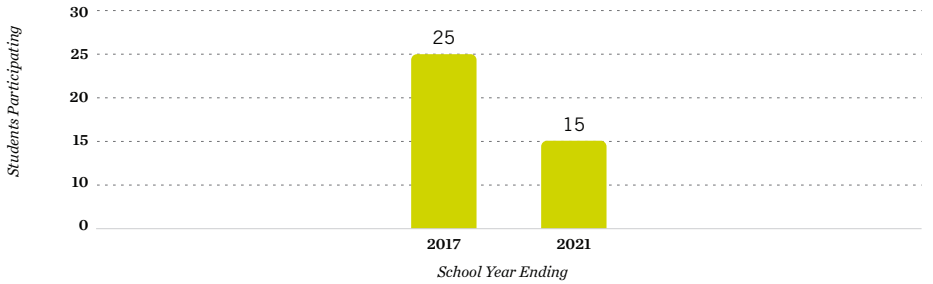
EdChoice Expert Feedback

Montana's tax-credit scholarship program suffers from design flaws that severely limit its ability to empower families to access schools that are the right fit for their children. Only a couple dozen students currently participate. Policymakers could do much more to expand educational opportunity. All Montana students are eligible to participate but fewer than 0.01 percent of students statewide actually use a scholarship.

The average scholarship size is only \$500, which is just 4 percent of the average expenditure per student at Montana's district schools, though the cap on scholarship values is somewhat higher (30 percent of the average per-pupil expenditures at district schools, or about \$3,300). Tax credits are worth 100 percent of the value of the contributions to scholarship organizations, but each donor can only receive up to \$150 in credits, which makes it exceedingly difficult for scholarship organizations to raise funds. It requires dozens of donors just to fund a single scholarship. The rules regarding the amount of funding allowed per scholarship are overly complex as well. State government should allow SSOs to set whatever funding criteria they determine prudent and decide how to best manage their own funds. Moreover, only \$3 million in tax credits are available annually, which is equivalent to only 0.16 percent of Montana's total K–12 revenue.

Program Participation

Enrollment in Montana’s Tax Credits for Contributions to Student Scholarship Organizations Program has remained low following the program’s 2020 Supreme Court reinstatement.



15
Participating
Students
(Fall 2020)

100%
of Students
Eligible
(Statewide)

2
Scholarship
Organizations
(2020–21)

\$500
Average
Scholarship Value
(2016–17)

4%
Average Value
as a Percentage
of Public School
Per-student
Spending

EdChoice Expert Feedback (continued)

In order to expand access to educational choice, Montana policymakers should dramatically increase the available tax credits and eliminate the cap on credits per donor. The program could also be converted into an education savings account to ensure that all students have access to the education that’s the right fit for them, whether private school or a customized course of education.

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/MT_scholarship

TCS

Nevada

Nevada Educational Choice Scholarship Program

Tax-Credit Scholarship | **Enacted 2015** | **Launched 2015**

Nevada allows corporations paying the state's Modified Business Tax to claim a 100 percent tax credit for contributions to approved scholarship-granting organizations (SGOs), nonprofits that provide private school scholarships. Taxpayers may carry forward a tax credit under this program for five years. The total amount of tax credits awarded statewide is limited to \$11.4 million in 2020–21.

INCOME LIMIT 300% x Poverty

PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT None

GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT Statewide

ENROLLMENT CAP None

SCHOLARSHIP CAP \$8,469

TESTING MANDATES National

CREDIT VALUE 100%

PER DONOR CREDIT CAP None

BUDGET CAP \$11.4 million

PARENT REQUIREMENTS pg. 147

SGO REQUIREMENTS pg. 153

GOVERNING STATUTES NRS 388D.250 through 280

Student Funding

Scholarship amounts are determined by SGOs. The maximum scholarship is worth \$8,469 in 2020–21, a limit that increases by the Consumer Price Index increase each year.

Student Eligibility

All students that receive scholarships under this program must come from families whose household incomes are at or below 300 percent of the federal poverty line (\$78,600 for a family of four in 2020–21).

EdChoice Expert Feedback

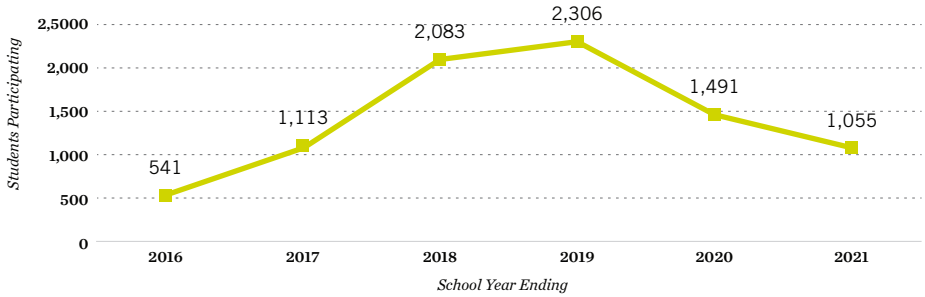
Nevada's tax-credit scholarship program helps thousands of students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do more to expand educational opportunity.

Eligibility for the scholarships is limited to 300 percent of the federal poverty line. Only 503 percent of Nevada students are eligible for a scholarship and less than 0.1 percent of students statewide actually use a scholarship.

The average scholarship size is about \$6,400, which is about 59 percent of the average expenditure per student at Nevada's district schools, though the cap on scholarship values is significantly higher (about \$8,450) and automatically increases with the Consumer Price Index. Tax credits are worth 100 percent of the value of the contributions to scholarship organizations, but only \$11.4 million in tax credits are available annually, which is equivalent to only 0.23 percent of Nevada's K–12 revenue. Nevada deserves credit for having an "escalator" that automatically increases the cap over time, but it has a long way to go before it meets demand.

Program Participation

Enrollment in Nevada’s tax-credit scholarship program decreased 29 percent from its fifth to sixth year.



1,055

Students Participating
(Fall 2020)

50%

of Families with Children
Income-eligible
(Statewide)

59

Participating Scholarship
Organizations
(Fall 2020)

6

Scholarship-granting
Organizations
(Fall 2020)

\$6,474

Average Scholarship Value
(Fall 2020)

59%

Average Value as a Percentage
of Public School Per-student
Spending

EdChoice Expert Feedback (continued)

In order to expand access to educational choice, Nevada policymakers should dramatically increase the available tax credits and expand eligibility to all students (prioritizing scholarships based on need). The program could also be converted into an education savings account to ensure that all students have access to the education that’s the right fit for them, whether private school or a customized course of education.

Nevada’s scholarship program avoids unnecessary and counterproductive regulations.

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/NV_scholarship

New Hampshire Education Tax Credit Program

Tax-Credit Scholarship | **Enacted 2012** | **Launched 2012**

New Hampshire offers tax credits to individuals subject to the state's interest and dividends tax as well as businesses for their donations to nonprofits that provide private school scholarships and home school funding assistance. Available tax credits are capped at \$5.1 million and are worth 85 percent of the donation amount.

INCOME LIMIT 300% x Poverty

PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT Yes

GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT Statewide

ENROLLMENT CAP None

SCHOLARSHIP CAP \$2,882, on average / \$5,034 (special needs minimum)

TESTING MANDATES None

CREDIT VALUE 85%

PER DONOR CREDIT CAP \$600,000

BUDGET CAP \$5.1 million

PARENT REQUIREMENTS pg. 147

SGO REQUIREMENTS pg. 153

GOVERNING STATUTES N.H. Rev. Stat. §§ 77-G:1 through 10

Student Funding

Individuals subject to New Hampshire's interest and dividends tax and businesses may receive 85 percent tax credits for donations to scholarship organizations (SOs). The average value of all non-homeschooling scholarships an SO awards cannot exceed \$2,882 in 2020–21, except for students with special needs, whose scholarships cannot be less than \$5,043. That amount is adjusted each year to reflect the changes in the Consumer Price Index. Homeschooling students may receive reimbursements for educational expenses.

Student Eligibility

Students must be between ages 5 and 20 and come from households where family income is less than 300 percent of the federal poverty level (\$78,600 for a family of four in 2020–21). In the first two years of the program, scholarship organizations were required to award 70 percent of scholarship funds to students who previously attended a public school ("switchers") or to switchers who already received a scholarship. However, beginning in the third year, the percentage of required switchers reduced by 5 percent each year. In 2020–21, the program will require at least 35 percent of scholarship recipients to be switchers. Additionally, at least 40 percent of the total scholarships SOs award must be given to students who qualify for the federal free and reduced-price lunch program.

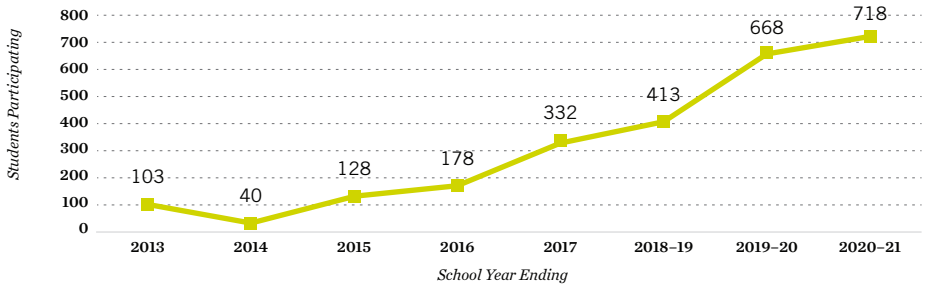
EdChoice Expert Feedback

New Hampshire's tax-credit scholarship program helps hundreds of students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do more to expand educational opportunity.

Eligibility for the scholarships is limited to 300 percent of the federal poverty line. Only 16 percent of New Hampshire students are eligible for a scholarship and only 0.4 percent of students statewide actually use a scholarship or participate in the Granite State's town tuitioning program.

Program Participation

Enrollment in New Hampshire’s tax-credit scholarship program has increased 74 percent since 2018–19.



718

Participating Students (2020-21)

31%

of Families with Children Income-eligible (Statewide)

2

Scholarship Organizations (2020-21)

63

Participating Schools (2020-21)

\$2,882

Average Scholarship Value (2020-21)

16%

Value as a Percentage of Public School Per-student Spending

EdChoice Expert Feedback (continued)

The average scholarship size is about \$2,800, which is about 18 percent of the average expenditure per student at New Hampshire’s district schools, though the cap on scholarship values is somewhat higher. Tax credits are worth 85 percent of the value of the contributions to scholarship organizations. Only \$5.1 million in tax credits are available annually, which is equivalent to only 0.16 percent of New Hampshire’s total K–12 revenue.

New Hampshire’s tax-credit scholarship program deserves credit for being the most expansive in the nation in terms of how parents may use scholarship funds to customize their child’s education. It more closely resembles education savings accounts than other tax-credit scholarship programs. The program also avoids unnecessarily burdensome school regulations.

In order to expand access to educational choice, New Hampshire policymakers should dramatically increase the available tax credits and expand eligibility to all students (prioritizing scholarships based on need). Increasing the credit value to attract more contributions and restoring the “escalator” that allowed the cap to increase over time to meet demand would be a good start.

Additional New Hampshire program on page **51**

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/NH_scholarship

Oklahoma Equal Opportunity Education Scholarships

Tax-Credit Scholarship | *Enacted 2011* | *Launched 2013*

Oklahoma provides tax credits for donations to scholarship-granting organizations (SGOs), nonprofits that coordinate private school scholarships.

INCOME LIMIT 300% x FRL

PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT None

GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT Statewide

ENROLLMENT CAP None

SCHOLARSHIP CAP Conditional

TESTING MANDATES None

CREDIT VALUE 50% / 75%

PER DONOR CREDIT CAP \$1,000 (single) / \$2,000 (married) / \$100,000 (business)

BUDGET CAP \$3.5 million

PARENT REQUIREMENTS pg. 147

SGO REQUIREMENTS pg. 153

GOVERNING STATUTES Okla. Stat. tit. 68 § 2357.206

Student Funding

For students without an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), scholarships may be worth up to \$5,000, or 80 percent of the average per-pupil expenditure in the assigned public school district, whichever is greater. For students with special needs who attended a public school with an IEP, the scholarship is worth up to \$25,000.

Student Eligibility

Students are eligible if they either live in households with incomes up to 300 percent of the free and reduced-price lunch program (\$145,410 for a family of four in 2020–21) or attend or live in the attendance zone of a public school designated by the state as “in need of improvement.” Once a student has received a scholarship, that student and his or her siblings remain eligible until high school graduation or age 21.

EdChoice Expert Feedback

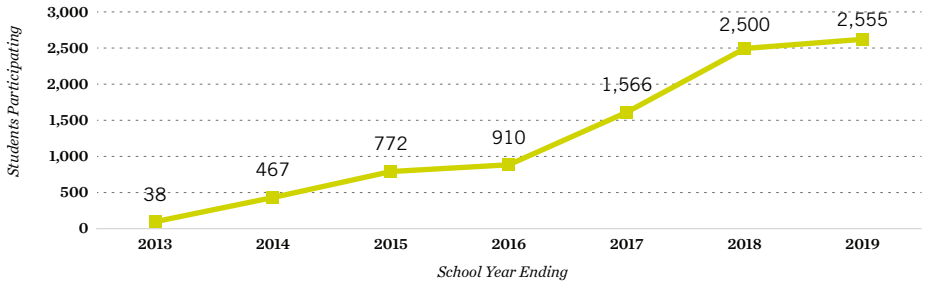
Oklahoma’s tax-credit scholarship program for low- and middle-income students helps thousands of students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do more to expand educational opportunity.

Students are eligible to receive a scholarship if they are from a household earning up to 300 percent of the free and reduced-price lunch program (\$145,410 for a family of four in 2020–21) or attend or live in the attendance zone of a public school designated by the state as “in need of improvement.” About 82 percent of Utah students are eligible to receive a scholarship via this program. Statewide, only 0.5 percent of students participate in one of Oklahoma’s private educational choice options (including the Lindsey Nicole Henry Scholarships for Students with Disabilities).

The maximum scholarship size is about \$2,000, which is only about 22 percent of the average expenditure per student at Oklahoma’s district schools, though the cap on scholarship values is somewhat higher (\$5,000 for most students and \$25,000 for students with special needs). Tax credits are worth 50 percent to 75 percent of the value of the contributions to scholarship organizations, but only \$3.5 million in tax credits are available annually, which is equivalent to only 0.06 percent of Oklahoma’s total K–12 revenue.

Program Participation

Participation in Oklahoma’s tax-credit scholarship program remained steady from 2017–18 to 2018–19.



2,555

Participating Students
(2018-19)

82%

of Families with Children Income-eligible
(Statewide)

6

Scholarship Organizations
(2019-20)

102

Participating Schools
(2018-19)

\$2,017

Average Scholarship Value
(2018-19)

22%

Value as a Percentage of Public School Per-student Spending

EdChoice Expert Feedback *(continued)*

In order to expand access to educational choice, Oklahoma policymakers should significantly increase the amount of available tax credits and expand eligibility to all students. The program could also be converted into an education savings account to ensure that all students have access to the education that’s the right fit for them, whether private school or a customized course of education.

Oklahoma’s scholarship program generally avoids unnecessary and counterproductive regulations.

Additional Oklahoma program on page **67**

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/OK_scholarship

Pennsylvania

Educational Improvement Tax Credit Program

Tax-Credit Scholarship | *Enacted 2001* | *Launched 2001*

Pennsylvania provides tax credits for corporate contributions to the following nonprofit organizations: scholarship organizations (SOs), nonprofits that provide private school scholarships; educational improvement organizations (EIOs), nonprofits that support innovative programs in public schools; and/or prekindergarten scholarship organizations (PKSOs).

INCOME LIMIT	\$92,160 + \$16,222/child	PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT	None		
GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT	Statewide	ENROLLMENT CAP	None	SCHOLARSHIP CAP	Full Tuition
TESTING MANDATES	None	CREDIT VALUE	75% / 90%	PER DONOR CREDIT CAP	\$750,000
BUDGET CAP	\$185 million	PARENT REQUIREMENTS	pg. 147	SGO REQUIREMENTS	pg. 153
GOVERNING STATUTES	24 Pa. Const. Stat. §§ 20-2001-B through 2013-B				

More Credit Details

Tax credits equal to 75 percent of its contribution up to a maximum of \$750,000 per taxable year. Credit values can be increased to 90 percent of the contribution if business agrees to provide same amount for two consecutive tax years. For contributions to Pre-Kindergarten Scholarship Organizations, a business may receive a tax credit equal to 100 percent of the first \$10,000 contributed and up to 90 percent of the remaining amount contributed up to a maximum credit of \$200,000 annually.

Student Funding

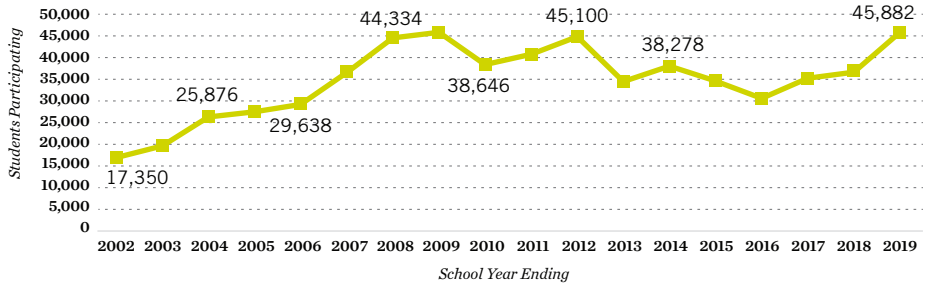
Each approved organization determines scholarship amounts. Tax credits are worth 75 percent of the contribution; however, a 90 percent credit can be claimed if the corporation commits to two consecutive annual contributions (with recent pandemic-related legislation allowing companies more time to donate to benefit from the 90 percent credit as well as carry credits forward two additional years). In either case, the maximum tax credit is \$750,000 per company; however, this cap is lifted from October 1 through November 30 during years where there are unclaimed credits. Credits are awarded to companies on a first-come, first-served basis until the \$185 million cap is reached.

Student Eligibility

Children are eligible for scholarships if their household incomes are less than \$92,160 plus \$16,222 for each child in the family in 2020–21. For example, a family with one child must have an income below \$108,382, whereas a family with three children must have an income below \$140,826. The figures increase in subsequent years to account for inflation. Students with special needs are eligible for scholarships if they come from families who earn 150 percent of the baseline income level (for example, a family with one child may earn up to \$162,573 in 2020–21) or less, and those with the most severe special needs who are enrolled in special education-specific schools are eligible if they come from families who earn 299 percent of the baseline income level (\$324,387 for a one-child family in 2020–21) or less.

Program Participation

The number of scholarships awarded in Pennsylvania's second tax-credit scholarship program has remained relatively steady since 2016–17.



45,882

Scholarships
Awarded
(2018–19)

73%

of Families
with Children
Income-eligible
(Statewide)

258

Scholarship
Organizations
(2017–18)

\$1,990

Average
Scholarship Value
(2018–19)

13%

Value as a
Percentage of Public
School Per-student
Spending

EdChoice Expert Feedback

Pennsylvania's Educational Improvement Tax Credit program helps tens of thousands of students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do more to expand educational opportunity.

Eligibility for the scholarships is limited to students from low- and middle-income families. About 73 percent of Pennsylvania students are eligible for a scholarship but only 3 percent of students statewide actually use a scholarship from one of Pennsylvania's two tax-credit scholarship programs (including the Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit program).

The average scholarship size is about \$2,000, which is only about 13 percent of the average expenditure per student at Pennsylvania's district schools. Tax credits are worth 75 percent to 90 percent of the value of the contributions to scholarship organizations, but only \$135 million in tax credits are available for K–12 scholarships annually, which is equivalent to only 0.42 percent of Pennsylvania's total K–12 revenue.

In order to expand access to educational choice, Pennsylvania policymakers should dramatically increase the available tax credits and expand eligibility to all students (prioritizing scholarships based on need). The program could also be converted into an education savings account to ensure that all students have access to the education that's the right fit for them, whether private school or a customized course of education.

Pennsylvania's scholarship program generally avoids unnecessary and counterproductive regulations.

Additional Pennsylvania program on page **123**

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/PA_scholarship1

Pennsylvania

Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit Program

Tax-Credit Scholarship | *Enacted 2012* | *Launched 2012*

Pennsylvania provides tax credits for corporate contributions to opportunity scholarship organizations (OSOs), nonprofits that provide private school scholarships.

INCOME LIMIT \$92,160 + \$16,222/child

PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT None

GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT Statewide

ENROLLMENT CAP None

SCHOLARSHIP CAP \$8,500 / \$9,500 (zoned school), \$15,000 / \$16,000 (special needs)

TESTING MANDATES None

CREDIT VALUE 75% / 90%

PER DONOR CREDIT CAP \$750,000

BUDGET CAP \$185 million

PARENT REQUIREMENTS pg. 147

SGO REQUIREMENTS pg. 153

GOVERNING STATUTES 24 Pa. Const. Stat. § 20-2009B

More Credit Details

Tax credits equal to 75 percent of its contribution up to a maximum of \$750,000 per taxable year. Credit values can be increased to 90 percent of the contribution if business agrees to provide same amount for two consecutive tax years. Tax credits are available on a first-come, first-served basis. The total funding amount of tax credits is capped at \$55 million. OSOs also are required to give preference to students who received scholarships the previous year, those eligible for free and reduced-price lunch (FRL) and FRL students in certain school districts (a “first class” school district, a district with more than 7,500 students that receives an advance of its basic education subsidy or a school district that has both received an advance of its subsidy and is either in financial distress or is involved in a school finance lawsuit against the state).

Student Funding

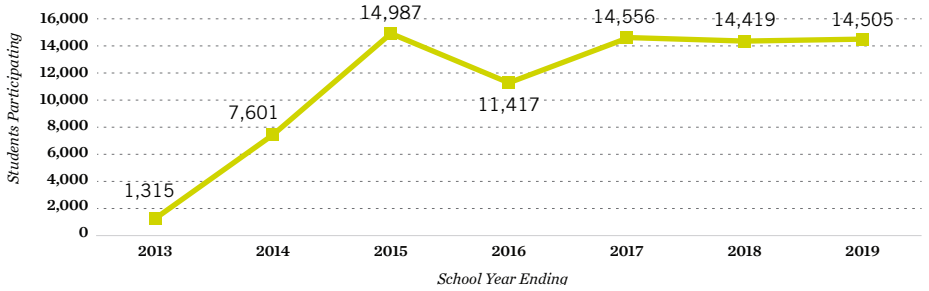
Scholarship organizations determine scholarship amounts, which are capped at the amount of a school’s tuition and fees or \$8,500. Students attending “economically disadvantaged schools”—those where 75 percent or more of their student population are on scholarship—may receive scholarships worth up to \$9,500. Students with special needs may receive up to \$15,000, and special needs students attending economically disadvantaged schools may receive up to \$16,000. Public school boards may set up tuition grant programs that allow students to attend a public or private school. For private schools under such programs, the tuition grant is limited to the state’s per-pupil subsidy amount. Of the \$55 million available for Opportunity Scholarships in 2019–20, at least \$5 million must have been used for students from economically disadvantaged schools.

Student Eligibility

Students must live in a “low-achieving” school zone, with low-achieving defined as the state’s bottom 15 percent of public schools based on standardized test scores. Also, families are eligible only if their household incomes are less than \$92,160 plus \$16,222 for each child in the family in 2020–21, adjusted annually for inflation. Students with special needs are eligible for scholarships if they come from families who earn 150 percent of the baseline income level (for example, a family with one child may earn up to \$162,573 in 2020–21) or less, and those with the most severe special needs are eligible if they come from families who earn 299 percent of the baseline income level (\$324,387 for a one-child family in 2020–21) or less.

Program Participation

Participation in Pennsylvania’s first tax-credit scholarship program increased 22 percent from 2017–18 to 2018–19



14,505

Scholarships
Awarded
(2018–19)

11%

of Students
Eligible
(Statewide)

178

Scholarship
Organizations
(2016–17)

\$2,499

Average
Scholarship Value
(2018–19)

14%

Value as a
Percentage of Public
School Per-student
Spending

EdChoice Expert Feedback

Pennsylvania’s Opportunity Tax-Credit Scholarship program helps tens of thousands of students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do more to expand educational opportunity.

Eligibility for the scholarships is limited to students assigned to “low-achieving” schools (the bottom 15% on state tests). Only 11 percent of Pennsylvania students are eligible for a scholarship and only 3 percent of students statewide actually use a scholarship from one of Pennsylvania’s two tax-credit scholarship programs (including the Educational Improvement Tax Credit program).

The average scholarship size is about \$2,500, which is only about 14 percent of the average expenditure per student at Pennsylvania’s district schools, though the cap on scholarship values is somewhat higher (\$8,500 to \$9,500 for most students or \$15,000 to \$16,000 for students with special needs). Tax credits are worth 75 percent or 90 percent of the value of the contributions to scholarship organizations, but only \$55 million in tax credits are available annually, which is equivalent to only 0.17 percent of Pennsylvania’s total K–12 revenue.

In order to expand access to educational choice, Pennsylvania policymakers should dramatically increase the available tax credits and expand eligibility to all students (prioritizing scholarships based on need). The program could also be converted into an education savings account to ensure that all students have access to the education that’s the right fit for them, whether private school or a customized course of education.

Pennsylvania’s scholarship program generally avoids unnecessary and counterproductive regulations.

Additional Pennsylvania program on page **121**

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/PA_scholarship2

TCS

Rhode Island

Tax Credits for Contributions to Scholarship Organizations

Tax-Credit Scholarship | *Enacted 2006* | *Launched 2006*

Rhode Island provides a credit on corporate income taxes for donations to scholarship-granting organizations (SGOs), nonprofits that provide private school scholarships.

INCOME LIMIT	250% x Poverty	PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT	None		
GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT	Statewide	ENROLLMENT CAP	None	SCHOLARSHIP CAP	None
TESTING MANDATES	None	CREDIT VALUE	75% / 90%	PER DONOR CREDIT CAP	\$100,000
BUDGET CAP	\$1.5 million	PARENT REQUIREMENTS	pg. 147	SGO REQUIREMENTS	pg. 153
GOVERNING STATUTES	44 R.I. Gen. Laws §§ 62-1 through 62-7				

More Credit Details

Tax credits are worth 75 percent of the contribution or 90 percent if donated for two consecutive years and the second year's donation is worth at least 80 percent of the first year's donation. The total amount of tax credits is capped at \$1.5 million. Each corporate donor can receive only \$100,000 in tax credits each year and cannot use surplus donations in one year to generate tax credits in future years.

Student Funding

Scholarships are funded by donations to scholarship-granting organizations. Businesses may receive tax credits for donations to SGOs. Those committing to donate for two consecutive years with the second year's donation equal to or exceeding 80 percent of the first year's donation may receive 90 percent credits. Otherwise, tax credits are worth 75 percent of donations to SGOs. Rhode Island allocates \$1.5 million for tax credits meant for SGO donations. SGOs determine scholarship amounts.

Student Eligibility

Students must have family incomes at or below 250 percent of the poverty level (\$65,500 for a family of four in 2020–21).

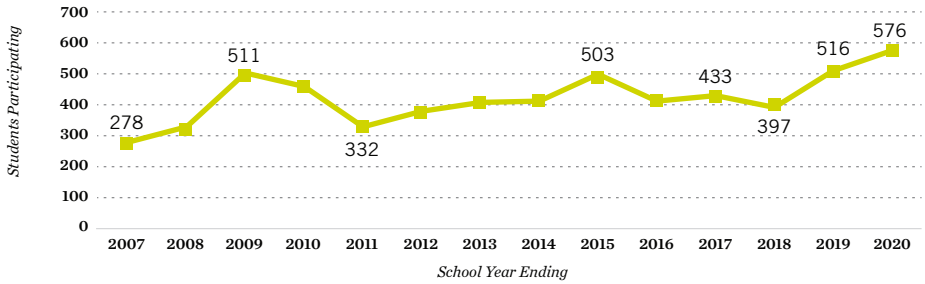
EdChoice Expert Feedback

Rhode Island's tax-credit scholarship program helps hundreds of students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do more to expand educational opportunity.

Eligibility for the scholarships is limited to 250 percent of the federal poverty line. Only 35 percent of Rhode Island students are eligible for a scholarship and only 0.3 percent of students statewide actually use a scholarship.

Program Participation

Participation in Rhode Island's grew 12%, setting a new high in participation.



<p>576 Participating Students (2020)</p>	<p>35% of Families with Children Income-eligible (Statewide)</p>	<p>6 Scholarship Organizations (2020)</p>	<p>48 Participating Schools (2020)</p>	<p>\$2,514 Average Scholarship Value (2020)</p>	<p>14% Value as a Percentage of Public School Per-student Spending</p>
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EdChoice Expert Feedback (continued)

The average scholarship size is about \$2,500, which is only about 14 percent of the average expenditure per student at Rhode Island's district schools. Tax credits are worth 75 percent of the value of the contributions to scholarship organizations (or 90% for two-year contribution commitments), and only \$1.5 million in tax credits are available annually, which is equivalent to only 0.06 percent of Rhode Island's total K-12 revenue.

In order to expand access to educational choice, Rhode Island policymakers should dramatically increase the available tax credits and expand eligibility to all students (prioritizing scholarships based on need). The program could also be converted into an education savings account to ensure that all students have access to the education that's the right fit for them, whether private school or a customized course of education.

Rhode Island's scholarship program generally avoids unnecessary and counterproductive regulations.

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/RL_scholarship

TCS

South Carolina Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children Fund

Tax-Credit Scholarship | *Enacted 2013* | *Launched 2014*

South Carolina allows individuals, partnerships, corporations and similar entities to claim a 100 percent tax credit for contributions to a dedicated fund for scholarships. Individuals, partnerships, corporations and similar entities can claim tax credits up to 60 percent of their tax liability. The total amount of tax credits awarded statewide is limited to \$12 million.

INCOME LIMIT	None	PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT	None		
GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT	Statewide	ENROLLMENT CAP	None	SCHOLARSHIP CAP	\$11,000
TESTING MANDATES	State or National	CREDIT VALUE	100%		
PER DONOR CREDIT CAP	60% liability	BUDGET CAP	\$12 million	PARENT REQUIREMENTS	pg. 147
SGO REQUIREMENTS	pg. 153	GOVERNING STATUTES	S.C. Code Ann. § 12-6-3790		

Student Funding

The maximum scholarship amount a student may receive is \$11,000 or the cost of tuition and qualified expenses, whichever is less. Scholarships may be used for tuition, transportation, textbook expenses or any combination of these at qualifying private schools.

Student Eligibility

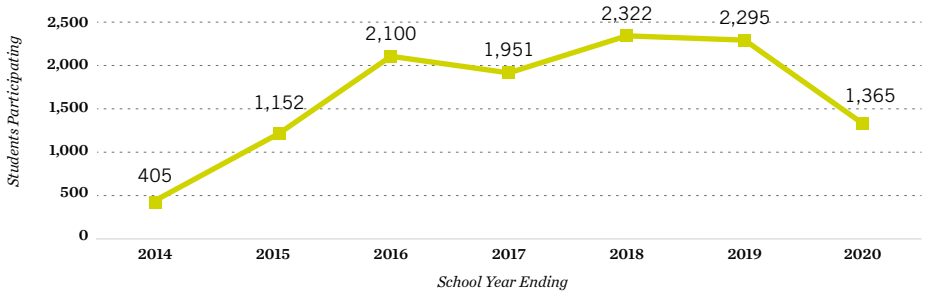
Students are eligible to receive scholarships if they have been designated by the South Carolina Department of Education as meeting the federal definition of a “child with a disability.” Additionally, a student’s parents must believe the assigned public school district does not sufficiently meet the student’s needs. If a licensed speech-language pathologist; psychiatrist or medical; mental health, or other comparable licensed healthcare provider has diagnosed a student with one of the following impairments within the last three years—a neurodevelopmental disorder, a substantial sensory or physical impairment (such as deafness, blindness or orthopedic disability) or some other disability or acute or chronic condition that significantly impedes the student’s ability to learn and succeed in school without specialized instructional and associated supports and services tailored to the child’s unique needs—then that student is eligible for this program. Returning scholarship recipients are prioritized for awards.

EdChoice Expert Feedback

South Carolina’s tax-credit scholarship program for students with special needs helps thousands of students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do more to expand educational opportunity.

Program Participation

Enrollment in South Carolina's tax-credit scholarship program has declined 41% since 2018-19.



1,365

Participating
Students
(2019–20)

11%

of Students
Eligible
(Statewide)

106

Participating
Schools
(2019–20)

\$3,751

Average Scholarship
Value
(2019–20)

29%

Value as a Percentage
of Public School Per-
student Spending

EdChoice Expert Feedback *(continued)*

South Carolina's tax-credit scholarship program for students with special needs helps thousands of students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do more to expand educational opportunity.

Eligibility for the scholarships is limited to students with special needs whose needs cannot be met by the child's assigned school. About 11 percent of South Carolina students are eligible to receive a scholarship via this program. Statewide, only 0.3 percent of students participate in one of South Carolina's private educational choice options (including the Refundable Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children).

The average scholarship size is about \$3,750 which is only about 29 percent of the average expenditure per student at South Carolina's district schools, though the maximum scholarship values are significantly higher (\$11,000). Tax credits are worth 100 percent of the value of the contributions to scholarship organizations, but only \$12 million in tax credits are available annually, which is equivalent to only .12% of South Carolina's total K–12 revenue.

In order to expand access to educational choice, South Carolina policymakers should significantly increase the amount of available tax credits and expand eligibility to all students. The program could also be converted into an education savings account to ensure that all students have access to the education that's the right fit for them, whether private school or a customized course of education. South Carolina's scholarship program generally avoids unnecessary and counterproductive regulations.

Additional South Carolina program on page **135**

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/SC_scholarship

South Dakota Partners in Education Tax Credit Program

Tax-Credit Scholarship | *Enacted 2016* | *Launched 2016*

South Dakota's Partners in Education Tax Credit Program offers tax credits to companies that donate to scholarship-granting organizations (SGOs), nonprofits that provide students private school scholarships.

INCOME LIMIT	150% x FRL	PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT	Conditional		
GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT	Statewide	ENROLLMENT CAP	None	SCHOLARSHIP CAP	82.5% of State Funding
TESTING MANDATES	State or National	CREDIT VALUE	80%		
PER DONOR CREDIT CAP	Tax liability excluding fire premium & workers' compensation				
BUDGET CAP	\$2 million	PARENT REQUIREMENTS	pg. 147	SGO REQUIREMENTS	pg. 153
GOVERNING STATUTES	S.D. Codified Laws §§ 13-65-1 through 12				

More Credit Details

The allowable tax credit is 100 percent of the amount of contributions made. Only companies that are liable to pay the insurance premium and annuity tax may claim the credit, although no credit may be claimed for the portion of the tax that is collected and set aside for workers' compensation coverage or for the tax that is levied on fire insurance premiums. The program is capped at \$2 million.

Student Funding

The average value of all scholarships awarded by an SGO may be worth up to 82.5 percent of the state's share of the per-pupil allocation (\$4,956 in 2020–21), although SGOs otherwise have discretion to determine scholarship amounts based on variables, such as grade level and family income. Scholarships may be used for tuition and fees at qualifying schools.

Student Eligibility

Students are eligible if they live in families with incomes up to, but not exceeding, 150 percent of the federal free and reduced-price lunch (FRL) program (\$72,705 for a family of four in 2020–21) and either (1) attended a public school the preceding semester, (2) is starting at a K–12 school in South Dakota for the first time or (3) is entering kindergarten, first grade or ninth grade. Once a student has received a scholarship, that student remains eligible for three years or, if the student is entering high school, until high school graduation, regardless of income. After the initial period of income eligibility, scholarship students remain eligible if their family income in the prior year does not exceed 200 percent of the FRL program (\$96,940 for a family of four in 2020–21).

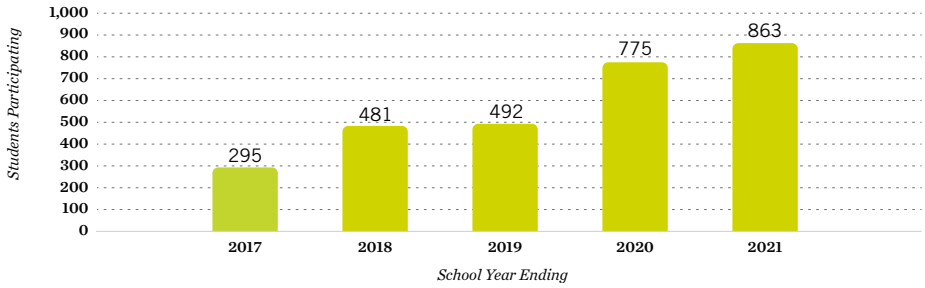
EdChoice Expert Feedback

South Dakota's tax-credit scholarship program helps hundreds of students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do more to expand educational opportunity.

Eligibility for the scholarships is limited to 277.5 percent of the federal poverty line. Only 41 percent of South Dakota students are eligible for a scholarship and only 0.5 percent of students statewide actually use a scholarship.

Program Participation

Enrollment in South Dakota’s Partners in Education Tax Credit Program grew by 11 percent since last year.



863
Participating
Students
(2020–21)

41%
of Families
with Children
Income-eligible
(Statewide)

1
Scholarship
Organization
(2020–21)

44
Participating
Schools
(2020–21)

\$1,927
Average Scholarship
Value
(2020–21)

16%
Value as a
Percentage of
Public School
Per-student
Spending

EdChoice Expert Feedback (continued)

The average scholarship size is about \$1,900, which is only about 16 percent of the average expenditure per student at South Dakota’s district schools, though the cap on scholarship values is somewhat higher (82.5% of the state’s share of the per-pupil allocation, or about \$5,000 in 2020–21). Tax credits are worth 100 percent of the value of the contributions to scholarship organizations, but only \$2 million in tax credits are available annually, which is equivalent to only 0.12 percent of South Dakota’s total K–12 revenue.

In order to expand access to educational choice, South Dakota policymakers should dramatically increase the available tax credits and expand eligibility to all students (prioritizing scholarships based on need). The program could also be converted into an education savings account to ensure that all students have access to the education that’s the right fit for them, whether private school or a customized course of education.

South Dakota’s scholarship program generally avoids unnecessary and counterproductive regulations.

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/SD_scholarship

Utah Special Needs Opportunity Scholarship Program

Tax-Credit Scholarship | *Enacted 2020* | *Launched 2021*

Utah's Special Needs Opportunity Scholarship Program allows individuals to claim a dollar-for-dollar tax credit for contributions to approved scholarship-granting organizations (SGOs), nonprofits that provide scholarships to students with special needs to pay for private school tuition and therapies. There is no limit on the dollar amount of the tax credit donors can claim, although the total amount of tax credits awarded statewide is limited to \$5.9 million in 2020–21.

INCOME LIMIT	None	PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT	No		
GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT	Statewide	ENROLLMENT CAP	None	SCHOLARSHIP CAP	Conditional
TESTING MANDATES	None	CREDIT VALUE	100%	PER DONOR CREDIT CAP	None
BUDGET CAP	\$5.9 million (escalator)	PARENT REQUIREMENTS	pg. 147	SGO REQUIREMENTS	pg. 153
GOVERNING STATUTES	Utah Code §§ 53E-7-402 through 410; 59-7-109.1; 59-7-625; and 59-10-1041				

Student Funding

Scholarships may be used to pay for tuition, fees, textbooks, testing costs, supplemental and online materials at private schools as well as educational therapies from licensed physicians and therapists.

SGOs determine scholarship values, with maximum amounts determined by a student's family income and IEP status. Students in grades 1–12 with IEPs coming from families earning up to 185 percent (\$48,470 for a family of four in 2020–21) of the federal poverty level (FPL) are eligible for scholarships worth up to two-and-a-half times Utah's weighted pupil unit (\$9,362.50 in 2020–21). Students in grades 1–12 with IEPs whose families earn between 185 and 555 percent of FPL (\$145,410 for a family of four in 2020–21) may receive scholarships worth up to twice the weighted pupil unit (\$7,490 in 2020–21). Students in grades 1–12 with IEPs whose family income exceeds 555 percent of FPL are eligible for scholarships up to one-and-a-half times Utah's weighted pupil unit (\$5,617.50 in 2020–21).

Eligible students in grades 1–12 without IEPs and eligible kindergartners with an IEP are eligible for scholarships up to the weighted pupil unit (\$3,745 in 2020–21). Kindergarten students without IEPs may receive scholarships worth up to half of Utah's weighted pupil unit (\$1,827.50 in 2020–21).

Student Eligibility

Students are eligible for scholarships if they have special needs and meet one of the following categories: (a) have a current IEP, (b) if they are a kindergarten student without a current IEP but have an individualized family service plan in accordance with IDEA or (c) have been determined by a multidisciplinary evaluation team to be eligible for services under IDEA. To be eligible, students must not be a public school student or a recipient of the state's Carson Smith Special Needs Scholarship Program.

Program Participation

Because this program just launched, we do not anticipate having any program data until Fall 2021 at the earliest.

10%

of Students
Eligible
(Statewide)

\$9,363

Maximum Scholarship
Value
(2020–21)

99.6%

Maximum Value as a Percentage
of Public School Per-student
Spending

EdChoice Expert Feedback

Utah's tax-credit scholarship program for students with special needs has the potential to help hundreds of students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do more to expand educational opportunity.

Students with special needs and foster kids are eligible to receive a tax-credit scholarship. About 10 percent of Utah students are eligible to receive a scholarship via this program. Statewide, only 0.2 percent of students participate in one of Utah's private educational choice options (including the Carson Smith Special Needs Scholarship Program).

The maximum scholarship size is projected to be about \$9,300, which is just under the average expenditure per student at Utah's district schools. Tax credits are worth 100 percent of the value of the contributions to scholarship organizations, but only \$5.9 million in tax credits are available annually, which is equivalent to only 0.09 percent of Utah's total K–12 expenditures.

In order to expand access to educational choice, Utah policymakers should significantly increase the amount of available tax credits and expand eligibility to all students. The program could also be converted into an education savings account to ensure that all students have access to the education that's the right fit for them, whether private school or a customized course of education.

Utah's scholarship program generally avoids unnecessary and counterproductive regulations.

Additional Utah program on page 73

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/UT_SpecialNeeds

Virginia Education Improvement Scholarships Tax Credits Program

Tax-Credit Scholarship | **Enacted 2012** | **Launched 2013**

Individual and business taxpayers in Virginia can receive tax credits worth 65 percent of their donations to scholarship foundations, nonprofits that provide private school scholarships.

INCOME LIMIT 300% x Poverty (400% for students w/ special needs)

PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT Conditional

GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT Statewide

ENROLLMENT CAP None

SCHOLARSHIP CAP 100% of State Funding

TESTING MANDATES National

CREDIT VALUE 65%

PER DONOR CREDIT CAP \$125,000 (individual) / None (business)

BUDGET CAP \$25 million

PARENT REQUIREMENTS pg. 147

SGO REQUIREMENTS pg. 153

GOVERNING STATUTES Va Code. §§ 58.1-439.25-28

More Credit Details

An individual must donate at least \$500 and may not donate more than \$125,000 per year. There is no limit or minimum on the size of business donations. The number of available tax credits is capped at \$25 million a year. Donors can take the credit against the same year's tax obligation.

Student Funding

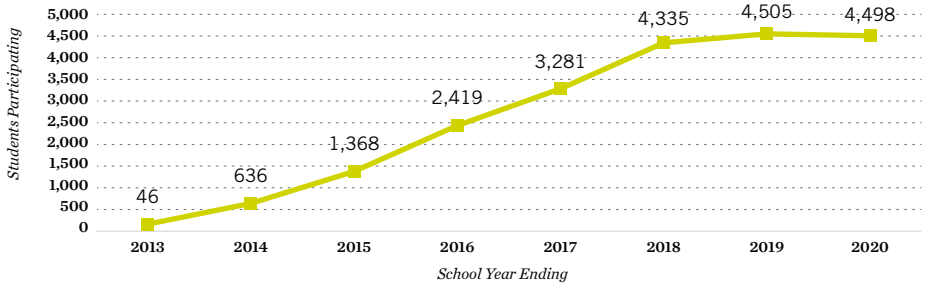
The total scholarship funding for students without special needs cannot exceed the actual education expenses of the student or 100 percent of the per-pupil amount distributed to the local public school by the state, whichever is less. Students may receive more than one scholarship from scholarship foundations. Students with special needs may be funded with scholarships worth up to 300 percent of the commonwealth's per-pupil amount if they attend specially licensed schools specifically for students with special needs. Otherwise, special needs students receive up to 100 percent of the per-pupil amount.

Student Eligibility

Students must come from households where family income is less than 300 percent of the federal poverty line (\$78,600 for a family of four in 2020–21). Students with special needs also are eligible and have an income limitation of 400 percent FPL (\$104,800 for a family of four in 2020–21). Students must either A) be enrollees in kindergarten or first grade, or B) be a public school student the previous school year, a previous scholarship recipient or a new resident of Virginia. Prekindergartners are also eligible if they are deemed an at-risk 4-year-old unable to obtain public early childhood services and meet the income requirements.

Program Participation

Enrollment in Virginia’s Education Improvement Scholarships Tax Credits Program remained essentially unchanged from 2018–19 to 2019–20.



4,498

Participating Students (2019–20)

37%

of Families with Children Income-eligible (Statewide)

35

Scholarship Organization (2019–20)

172

Participating Schools (2019–20)

\$3,065

Average Scholarship Value (2019–20)

26%

Value as a Percentage of Public School Per-student Spending

EdChoice Expert Feedback

Virginia’s tax-credit scholarship program helps thousands of students access schools that are the right fit for them, but policymakers could do more to expand educational opportunity.

Eligibility for the scholarships is limited to students from families earning up to 300 percent of the federal poverty line or students with special needs. Only 37 percent of Virginia students are eligible for a scholarship and only 0.3 percent of students statewide actually use a scholarship.

The average scholarship size is about \$3,100, which is about 26 percent of the average expenditure per student at Virginia’s district schools, though the cap on scholarship values is pegged to the state’s average per-pupil allocation to district schools (or 300% for students with special needs). Tax credits are worth only 65 percent of the value of the contributions to scholarship organizations and only \$25 million in tax credits are available annually, which is equivalent to only 0.15 percent of Virginia’s total K–12 revenue.

In order to expand access to educational choice, Virginia policymakers should dramatically increase the available tax credits, raise the credit value to make it easier for scholarship organizations to raise funds, and expand eligibility to all students (prioritizing scholarships based on need). The program could also be converted into an education savings account to ensure that all students have access to the education that’s the right fit for them, whether private school or a customized course of education.

Virginia’s scholarship program generally avoids unnecessary and counterproductive regulations.

For the latest program information and data updated in real time, visit edchoice.org/VA_scholarship

Individual Tax Credits & Deductions

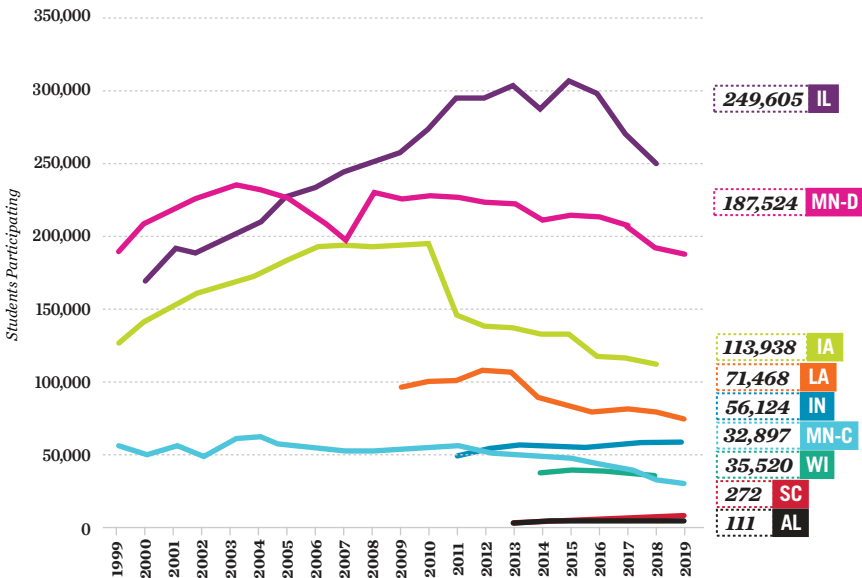
Individual tax credits and deductions allow families to receive state income tax relief for approved educational expenses, which can include private school tuition, books, supplies, computers, tutors and transportation. Tax credits lower the total taxes a person owes; a deduction reduces a person's total taxable income.

9
Programs

307,059
Total Tax Returns
Claiming Credits

350,636
Total Tax Returns
Claiming Deductions

Number of Individual Tax-Credits & Deductions



AL | Alabama Accountability Act of 2013 Parent-Taxpayer Refundable Credits†

REFUNDABLE	Yes	INCOME LIMIT	None	PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT	Yes
Geographical Limit	Statewide	ENROLLMENT CAP	None	CREDIT VALUE	100%
TAXPAYER CREDIT / DEDUCTION CAP	lessor of tuition or 80% state average				
TESTING MANDATES	State or National				

IL | Tax Credits for Educational Expenses

REFUNDABLE	No	INCOME LIMIT	\$250,000 (single) / \$500,000 (married)		
PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT	None	GEOGRAPHICAL LIMIT	Statewide		
ENROLLMENT CAP	None	CREDIT VALUE	25%	TAXPAYER CREDIT / DEDUCTION CAP	\$750
TESTING MANDATES	None				

IN | Private School/Homeschool Deduction

REFUNDABLE	No	INCOME LIMIT	None	PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT	None
GEOGRAPHICAL LIMIT	Statewide	ENROLLMENT CAP	None	CREDIT VALUE	N/A
TAXPAYER CREDIT / DEDUCTION CAP	\$1,000		TESTING MANDATES	None	

IA | Tuition and Textbook Tax Credit

REFUNDABLE	No	INCOME LIMIT	None	PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT	None
GEOGRAPHICAL LIMIT	Statewide	ENROLLMENT CAP	None	CREDIT VALUE	100%
TAXPAYER CREDIT / DEDUCTION CAP	\$250		TESTING MANDATES	None	

LA | Elementary and Secondary School Tuition Deduction

REFUNDABLE	No	INCOME LIMIT	None	PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT	None
GEOGRAPHICAL LIMIT	Statewide	ENROLLMENT CAP	None	CREDIT VALUE	100%
TAXPAYER CREDIT / DEDUCTION CAP	5000 per student		TESTING MANDATES	None	

MN-D | Education Deduction

REFUNDABLE	No	INCOME LIMIT	None	PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT	None
GEOGRAPHICAL LIMIT	Statewide	ENROLLMENT CAP	None	CREDIT VALUE	N/A
TAXPAYER CREDIT / DEDUCTION CAP	\$1,625 (K-6) / \$2,500 (7-12)		TESTING MANDATES	None	

MN-C | K-12 Education Credit

REFUNDABLE	No	INCOME LIMIT	Conditional	PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT	None
GEOGRAPHICAL LIMIT	Statewide	ENROLLMENT CAP	None	CREDIT VALUE	N/A
TAXPAYER CREDIT / DEDUCTION CAP	\$1,000		TESTING MANDATES	None	

SC | Refundable Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children*

REFUNDABLE	Yes	INCOME LIMIT	None	PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT	None
GEOGRAPHICAL LIMIT	Statewide	ENROLLMENT CAP	None	CREDIT VALUE	100%
TAXPAYER CREDIT / DEDUCTION CAP	\$11,000 per student		TESTING MANDATES	State or National	

WI | K-12 Private School Tuition Deduction

REFUNDABLE	No	INCOME LIMIT	None	PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT	None
GEOGRAPHICAL LIMIT	Statewide	ENROLLMENT CAP	None	CREDIT VALUE	N/A
TAXPAYER CREDIT / DEDUCTION CAP	\$4,000 (K-8) / \$10,000 (9-12)		TESTING MANDATES	None	

* Limited to students with special needs

† Limited to students in low-performing schools

Limited to students previously in foster care

FRL = Federal free and reduced-price lunch program

529

Savings

Accounts

A 529 savings plan is a specialized savings account designed to help families save money to pay for future educational expenses. 529 plans are sponsored by states, state agencies or educational institutions and are authorized by Section 529 of the Internal Revenue Code.

Anyone can open a 529 account with anyone you can be own beneficiary as a beneficiary. Most commonly, parents or other relatives start a 529 plan with a child as the beneficiary. This means the money is to be used for the child's education, but the parent or other account custodian actually controls the funds.

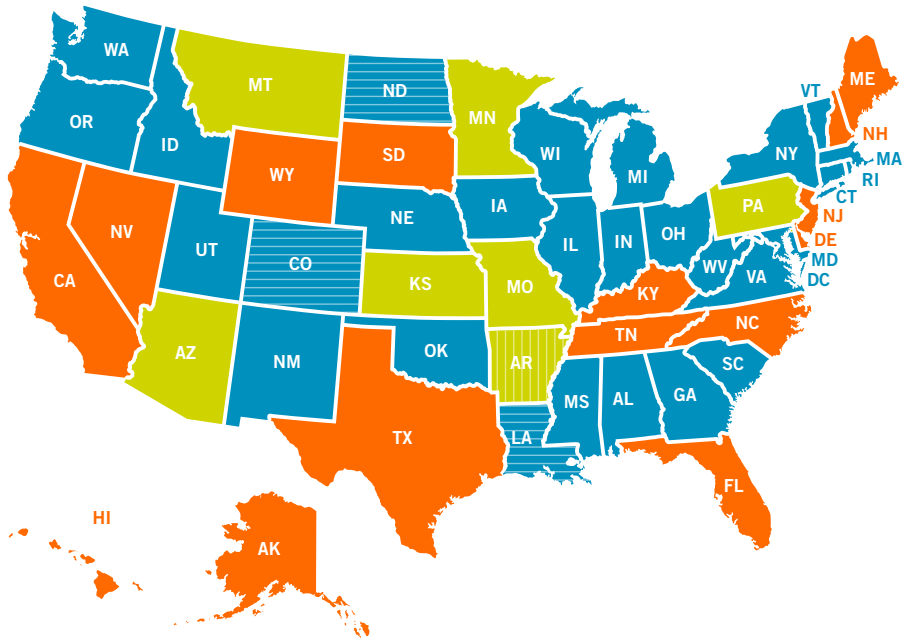
Historically, 529 plans operated as college savings accounts, only allowing funds to be used for postsecondary educational expenses. The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, passed in 2017, expanded the allowable uses of these accounts to include up to \$10,000 in annual private K–12 tuition expenses. That's why we are including them in this year's ABCs of School Choice.

One of the benefits of 529 plans is the tax-free earnings that grow over a period of time. The longer your money is invested, the more time it has to grow and the greater your tax benefits. You will lose some of these potential benefits if you withdraw money from a 529 plan account within a short period of time after it is contributed.

The special tax benefits offered under a 529 plan vary depending on the state and the 529 plan. In addition, state and federal laws that affect 529 plans could change. You should make sure you understand the tax implications of investing in a 529 plan and consider whether to consult a tax adviser before doing so.

The expansion of 529 accounts to include K–12 educational expenses could be helpful for some parents who want to send their children to private elementary or secondary schools, but it's important to note that these plans are only available to those with money to invest—they are not a substantive school choice program where public funds set aside for a child follow that child to the educational setting that works best for him or her.

That being said, these savings accounts do provide options to those families who are able to contribute, which is why we have included them in the same fashion as individual tax credits and deductions.



- No benefit for any state's 529 plan
- Benefit for any state's 529 plan
- Benefit for the in-state 529 plan only
- Matching program also available
- Matching program is not available to new applicants

Source: Capital Groups, 529 State Tax Interactive Map [Web page], accessed January 19, 2021, retrieved from <https://www.capitalgroup.com/advisor/products/college-america-529/interactive-tax-map.htm>

For more information about 529 plans please visit, visit edchoice.org/529

Education Savings Accounts

Rules & Regulations

STATE	PROGRAM NAME	INCOME LIMIT	PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT	GEOGRAPHICAL LIMIT	ENROLLMENT CAP	ACCOUNT CAP	TESTING MANDATES
AZ	Empowerment Scholarship Accounts*†‡§#**	None	Yes	Statewide	None	100/90% Charter/District Funding	None
FL	Gardiner Scholarship Program*	None	None	Statewide	None	90% State and Local Funding	State or National
MS	Equal Opportunity for Students with Special Needs Program*	None	Conditional	Statewide	3,000	\$5,236	None
NC	Personal Education Savings Account*	None	Conditional	Statewide	None	\$9,000	National
NV	Education Savings Accounts	None	Yes	Statewide	None	90% or 100% State Funding	State or National
TN	Individualized Education Account Program*	None	Conditional	Statewide	None	100% State and Local Funding	State or National

* Limited to students with special needs

‡ Priority given to families up to 200% x Poverty

Limited to students previously in foster care

** Or limited to children of military members killed in the line of duty, siblings of current or previous ESA recipients, students eligible to enroll in a program for preschool children with disabilities and students living on Native American reservations

† Limited to students in low-performing schools

§ Limited to children of active military members stationed in the state

FRL = Federal free and reduced-price lunch program

School Vouchers

Rules & Regulations

STATE	VOUCHERS	ENROLLMENT CAP	GEOGRAPHICAL LIMIT	INCOME LIMIT	VOUCHER CAP	TESTING MANDATES	PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT
AR	Succeed Scholarship Program for Students with Disabilities*§	Foster care students: 20	Statewide	None	\$7,018	National	Conditional
DC	Opportunity Scholarship Program	None	District (D.C.)	185% x FRL (300% x Poverty to remain eligible year-to-year)	\$9,161 (K–8) / \$13,742 (9–12)	State (D.C.)	None
FL	John M. McKay Scholarships for Students with Disabilities Program*	None	Statewide	None	Greater of 100% State & Local Expenditure and Tuition	None	Yes
FL	Family Empowerment Scholarship Program	46,500 (2020–21)	Statewide	300% x Poverty	95% unweighted state funding	National	Yes
GA	Georgia Special Needs Scholarship Program*	None	Statewide	None	Conditional	Pre- and Post-Assessments	Yes
IN	Choice Scholarship Program	None	Statewide	150% x FRL	50% or 90% of State Expenditure	State	Conditional
LA	Louisiana Scholarship Program†	None	Statewide	250% x Poverty	100% of State Allocation	State	Conditional
LA	School Choice Program for Certain Students with Exceptionalities*	None	Parish (population > 190,000)	None	Conditional	None	None
ME	Town Tuitioning Program	None	District (w/out elementary or high school)	None	\$9,526 (K–8) / \$11,948 (9–12)	Conditional – State	None
MD	Broadening Options and Opportunities for Students Today (BOOST) Program	None	Statewide	100% x FRL	100% of Statewide Average Local Expenditure	State	None
MS	Mississippi Dyslexia Therapy Scholarship for Students with Dyslexia Program*	None	Statewide	None	\$5,829	None	Conditional
MS	Nate Rogers Scholarship for Students with Disabilities Program*	None	Statewide	None	\$5,829	None	Conditional
NH	Town Tuitioning Program	None	District (w/out elementary or high school)	None	100% of Statewide Average Local Expenditure	National	None
NC	Special Education Scholarship Grants for Children with Disabilities*	None	Statewide	None	\$4,000 per semester	National	Conditional
NC	Opportunity Scholarships	None	Statewide	133% x FRL	\$4,200	National	Conditional
OH	Cleveland Scholarship Program	None	District (Cleveland)	None‡	\$4,650 (K–8) / \$6,000 (9–12)	State	None
OH	Autism Scholarship Program*	None	Statewide	None	\$27,000	None	None
OH	Educational Choice Scholarship Program†	60,000 (escalator)	Statewide	None	\$4,650 (K–8) / \$6,000 (9–12)	National	Conditional
OH	Jon Peterson Special Needs Scholarship Program*	5% of Students w/ Special Needs	Statewide	None	\$27,000	None	Yes
OH	Income-Based Scholarship Program	60,000 (escalator)	Statewide	200% x Poverty (up to 400% for renewals)	\$4,650 (K–8) / \$6,000 (9–12)	National	None
OK	Lindsey Nicole Henry Scholarships for Students with Disabilities*	None	Statewide	None	Lessor of State & local funds or tuition	None	Conditional
PR	Free School Selection Program	3% of student population	Territory-wide	None	70% of per-pupil funding	None	Yes
TN	Tennessee Education Savings Account Pilot Program	5,000 (escalator)	Memphis and Nashville	200% x Free Lunch	\$7,300	State	Yes
UT	Carson Smith Special Needs Scholarship Program*	None	Statewide	None	Conditional	Annual Assessment of Student's Progress	None
VT	Town Tuitioning Program	None	District (w/out elementary or high school)	None	\$14,859 (K–6) / \$16,233 (7–12)	None	None
WI	Milwaukee Parental Choice Program	None	District (Milwaukee)	300% x Poverty	\$8,300 (K–8) / \$8,946 (9–12)	State	None
WI	Parental Private School Choice Program (Racine)	None	District (Racine)	300% x Poverty	\$8,300 (K–8) / \$8,946 (9–12)	State	Conditional
WI	Parental Choice Program (Statewide)	Conditional	Statewide (except for Milwaukee and Racine)	220% x FRL	\$8,300 (K–8) / \$8,946 (9–12)	State	Conditional
WI	Special Needs Scholarship Program*	None	Statewide	None	\$12,977	State Civics Exam	Yes

* Limited to students with special needs

‡ Priority given to families up to 200% x Poverty

Limited to students previously in foster care

† Limited to students in low-performing schools

§ Limited to children of active military members stationed in the state

FRL = Federal free and reduced-price lunch program

** Or limited to children of military members killed in the line of duty, siblings of current or previous ESA recipients, students eligible to enroll in a program for preschool children with disabilities and students living on Native American reservations

Tax-Credit Scholarships

Rules & Regulations

STATE	TAX-CREDIT SCHOLARSHIPS	PRIOR YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENT	GEOGRAPHIC LIMIT	TESTING MANDATES	CREDIT VALUE	SCHOLARSHIP CAP	PER DONOR CREDIT CAP	BUDGET CAP	INCOME LIMIT
AL	Education Scholarship Program	Conditional	Statewide	State or National	100%	\$6,000 (K-5)/\$8,000 (6-8)/\$10,000 (9-12)	50% liability up to \$50,000 (individual) / 50% liability (business)	\$30 million	100% x FRL
AZ	Original Individual Income Tax Credit Scholarships	None	Statewide	None	100%	None	\$593 (individual) / \$1,186 (married)	None	None
AZ	Low-Income Corporate Income Tax Credit Scholarships	Yes	Statewide	None	100%	\$5,600 (K-8) / \$6,900 (9-12)	None	123.0 million (escalator)	185% x FRL
AZ	Lexie's Law**	None	Statewide	None	100%	90% State Funding	None	\$5 million	None
AZ	"Switcher" Individual Income Tax Credit Scholarships	Yes	Statewide	None	100%	None	\$590 (individual) / \$1,179 (married)	None	None
FL	Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program	None	Statewide	State or National	100%	\$9,197	Yes	\$873.6 million (escalator)	260% x Poverty
FL	Florida Hope Scholarship Program ϕ	Yes	Statewide	National	100%	\$7,169	\$105	None	None
GA	Qualified Education Expense Tax Credit	Yes	Statewide	None	100%	\$10,957	\$1,000 (individuals) / \$2,500 (married) / 75% liability (business)	\$100 million	None
IL	Invest in Kids Program	No	Statewide	State	75%	\$14,492	\$1 million	\$75 million	300% x Poverty (400% for renewals)
IN	School Scholarship Tax Credit	None	Statewide	National	50%	Full Tuition	None	\$16.5 million	200% x FRL
IA	School Tuition Organization Tax Credit	None	Statewide	None	65%	Full Tuition	None	\$15 million	400% x Poverty
KS	Tax Credit for Low Income Students Scholarship Program \ddagger	Yes	"Lowest Performing" Schools Statewide	None	70%	\$8,000	\$500,000	\$10 million	130% x Poverty
LA	Tuition Donation Credit Program	Yes	Statewide	State	100%	\$4,436 (K-8) / \$4,991 (9-12)	None	None	250% x Poverty
MT	Tax Credits for Contributions to Student Scholarship Organizations	None	Statewide	National	100%	50% of State Expenditure	\$150	\$3 million (escalator)	None
NV	Educational Choice Scholarship Program	None	Statewide	National	100%	\$8,469	None	\$11.4 million	300% x Poverty
NH	Education Tax Credit Program	Yes	Statewide	None	85%	\$2,882, on average / \$5,034 (special needs minimum)	\$600,000	\$5.1 million	300% x Poverty
OK	Oklahoma Equal Opportunity Education Scholarships	None	Statewide	None	50% / 75%	Conditional	\$1,000 (single) / \$2,000 (married) / \$100,000 (business)	\$3.5 million	300% x FRL
PA	Educational Improvement Tax Credit Program	None	Statewide	None	75% / 90%	Full Tuition	\$750,000	\$185 million	\$92,160 + \$16,222/child
PA	Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit Program \ddagger	None	Statewide	None	75% / 90%	\$8,500 / \$9,500 (zoned school), \$15,000 / \$16,000 (special needs)	\$750,000	\$55 million	\$92,160 + \$16,222/child
RI	Tax Credits for Contributions to Scholarship Organizations	None	Statewide	None	75% / 90%	None	\$100,000	\$1.5 million	250% x Poverty
SC	Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children*	None	Statewide	State or National	100%	\$11,000	60% liability	\$12 million	None
SD	Partners in Education Tax Credit Program	Conditional	Statewide	State or National	80%	82.5% of State Funding	Tax liability excluding fire premium & workers' compensation	\$2 million	150% x FRL
UT	Special Needs Opportunity Scholarship Program*	No	Statewide	None	100%	Conditional	None	\$5.9 million (escalator)	None
VA	Educational Opportunity Scholarships Tax Credits Program	Conditional	Statewide	National	65%	100% of State Funding	\$125,000 (individual) / None (business)	\$25 million	300% x Poverty (400% for students w/ special needs)

* Limited to students with special needs

\ddagger Priority given to families up to 200% x Poverty

Limited to students previously in foster care

** Or limited to children of military members killed in the line of duty, siblings of current or previous ESA recipients, students eligible to enroll in a program for preschool children with disabilities and students living on Native American reservations

\dagger Limited to students in low-performing schools

\S Limited to children of active military members stationed in the state

ϕ Limited to victims of bullying attending public schools

FRL = Federal free and reduced-price lunch program

Parents & Families Requirements

STATE	PROGRAM TYPE	PROGRAM NAME	DISTRICT ENROLLMENT PROHIBITED?	SUPPLEMENT SCHOLARSHIPS W/ PARENT FUNDS	EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS	USE OF FUNDS	MISC.
AZ	ESA	Empowerment Scholarship Accounts*†\$#**	Y	Y	Reading, Grammar, Math, Social Studies, & Science	Basic education subjects and otherwise specified by law	
FL	ESA	Gardiner Scholarship Program*	Y	Y	Ensure students take standardized assessments	Prohibited: other beneficiaries, billing others for same services	
MS	ESA	Equal Opportunity for Students with Special Needs Program*	Y	Y	Sign agreement for "appropriate" educational program	Prohibited: homeschooling costs	
NC	ESA	Personal Education Savings Account*	Y	Y	ELA, Math, Social Studies, & Science	Prohibited: consumable education supplies	
TN	ESA	Individualized Education Account Program*	Y	Y	ELA, Math, Social Studies, & Science; standardized assessments	Allowed for transportation	Maintain receipts and submit quarterly expense reports
AR	V	Succeed Scholarship Program for Students with Disabilities*§	Y	Y	Comply with school's parental involvement requirements	Tuition & fees	
DC	V	Opportunity Scholarship Program	Y	Y	N/A	Tuition, fees, uniforms, & books	
FL	V	John M. McKay Scholarships for Students with Disabilities Program*	n	n	N/A	Tuition & fees	Parents receive annual progress reports from private school
FL	V	Family Empowerment Scholarship Program	Y	Y	Review of private school's academic programs	Tuition & fees	Parents receive annual progress reports from private school
GA	V	Georgia Special Needs Scholarship Program*	conditional	conditional	N/A	Tuition & fees	
IN	V	Choice Scholarship Program	Y	Y	N/A	Tuition & fees	Reapplication needed for transfers
LA	V	Louisiana Scholarship Program†	Y	Y	N/A	Tuition & fees	
LA	V	School Choice Program for Certain Students with Exceptionalities*	Y	Y	N/A	Tuition & fees	
ME	V	Town Tuitioning Program	n	n	N/A	Tuition & fees	
MD	V	Broadening Options and Opportunities for Students Today (BOOST) Program	Y	Y	N/A	Tuition & fees	
MS	V	Mississippi Dyslexia Therapy Scholarship for Students with Dyslexia Program*	Y	Y	Have proper dyslexia screening conducted	Tuition, fees, & therapies	
MS	V	Nate Rogers Scholarship for Students with Disabilities Program*	Y	Y	Have proper speech language screening conducted	Tuition, fees, & therapies	Parents receive annual progress reports from private school
NH	V	Town Tuitioning Program	n	n	N/A	No transportation funding	
NC	V	Special Education Scholarship Grants for Children with Disabilities*	Y	Y	N/A	Tuition & homeschooling services	
NC	V	Opportunity Scholarships	Y	Y	N/A	Tuition, transportation, & expenses	
OH	V	Cleveland Scholarship Program	conditional	conditional	N/A	Tuition, fees, & therapies	
OH	V	Autism Scholarship Program*	conditional	conditional	Request modification for services outside IEP	Transportation funding requires approval	
OH	V	Educational Choice Scholarship Program†	conditional	conditional	N/A	Tuition & fees	
OH	V	Jon Peterson Special Needs Scholarship Program*	n	n	Ensure child's needs are met with providers	Tuition, therapists, and other providers	Parents receive a profile of the provider's special education program
OH	V	Income-Based Scholarship Program	conditional	conditional	N/A	Tuition & fees	
OK	V	Lindsey Nicole Henry Scholarships for Students with Disabilities*	conditional	conditional	Comply with school's parental involvement requirements	Tuition & fees	
PR	V	Free School Selection Program	n	n	Required check-ins with school	Tuition, fees, testing, & college courses	
TN	V	Tennessee Education Savings Account Pilot Program	Y	Y	N/A	Tuition, fees, books, tutoring, & college courses	
UT	V	Carson Smith Special Needs Scholarship Program*	Y	Y	N/A	Tuition & fees	Parents receive disclosures from providers regarding services, costs, & teacher credentials
VT	V	Town Tuitioning Program	n	n	N/A	Tuition & fees	
WI	V	Milwaukee Parental Choice Program	conditional	conditional	N/A	Tuition, fees, & transportation	
WI	V	Parental Private School Choice Program (Racine)	conditional	conditional	N/A	Tuition, fees, & transportation	
WI	V	Parental Choice Program (Statewide)	conditional	conditional	N/A	Tuition, fees, & transportation	
WI	V	Special Needs Scholarship Program*	conditional	conditional	Reevaluate child with district when appropriate	Daycare expenses prohibited	

* Limited to students with special needs

† Priority given to families up to 200% x Poverty

Limited to students previously in foster care

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† Limited to students in low-performing schools

§ Limited to children of active military members stationed in the state

FRL = Federal free and reduced-price lunch program

Parents & Families

Requirements (continued)

STATE	PROGRAM TYPE	PROGRAM NAME	DISTRICT ENROLLMENT PROHIBITED?	SUPPLEMENT SCHOLARSHIPS W/ PARENT FUNDS	EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS	USE OF FUNDS	MISC.
AL	TCS	Education Scholarship Program	conditional	conditional	N/A	Tuition & fees	
AZ	TCS	Original Individual Income Tax Credit Scholarships	N/A	N/A	N/A	Tuition & fees	May not earmark or trade STO contributions for dependents
AZ	TCS	Low-Income Corporate Income Tax Credit Scholarships	N/A	N/A	N/A	Tuition & fees	
AZ	TCS	Lexie's Law*#	N/A	N/A	N/A	Tuition, fees, & therapies	
AZ	TCS	"Switcher" Individual Income Tax Credit Scholarships	conditional	conditional	N/A	Tuition & fees	May not earmark or trade STO contributions for dependents
FL	TCS	Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program	n	n	Ensure student takes norm-referenced test	Tuition, fees, & transportation to district school	
FL	TCS	Florida Hope Scholarship Program ϕ	n	n	N/A	Tuition, fees, & transportation to district school	Confirm continuation in program to SFO
GA	TCS	Qualified Education Expense Tax Credit	N/A	N/A	N/A	Tuition & fees	
IL	TCS	Invest in Kids Program	Y	Y	N/A	Tuition & fees	
IN	TCS	School Scholarship Tax Credit	N/A	N/A	N/A	Tuition & fees	
IA	TCS	School Tuition Organization Tax Credit	N/A	N/A	N/A	Tuition & fees	
KS	TCS	Tax Credit for Low Income Students Scholarship Program \ddagger	conditional	conditional	N/A	Tuition & fees	
LA	TCS	Tuition Donation Credit Program	Y	Y	N/A	Tuition & fees	
MT	TCS	Tax Credits for Contributions to Student Scholarship Organizations	N/A	N/A	N/A	Tuition & fees	
NV	TCS	Educational Choice Scholarship Program	n	n	N/A	Tuition & fees	
NH	TCS	Education Tax Credit Program	n	n	Progress reporting if homeschooling	Private tutoring, homeschooling & higher ed. permitted	
OK	TCS	Oklahoma Equal Opportunity Education Scholarships	conditional	conditional	N/A	Tuition & fees	
PA	TCS	Educational Improvement Tax Credit Program	n	n	N/A	Tuition, fees, & after-school programming	
PA	TCS	Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit Program \ddagger	n	n	N/A	Tuition & fees	
RI	TCS	Tax Credits for Contributions to Scholarship Organizations	N/A	N/A	N/A	Tuition & fees	
SC	TCS	Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children*	N/A	N/A	Academic program must align with diagnoses	Tuition, transportation, & textbooks	
SD	TCS	Partners in Education Tax Credit Program	Y	Y	N/A	Tuition & fees	
UT	TCS	Special Needs Opportunity Scholarship Program*	conditional	conditional	N/A	Tuition, testing, textbooks, & therapies	
VA	TCS	Educational Opportunity Scholarships Tax Credits Program	conditional	conditional	N/A	Tuition & fees	
AL	C/D	Alabama Accountability Act of 2013 Parent-Taxpayer Refundable Tax Credits \ddagger	conditional	conditional	N/A	Tuition & fees	Provide certification child was assigned to a failing school
IL	C/D	Tax Credits for Educational Expenses	n	n	N/A	Tuition, books, lab & activity fees	
IN	C/D	Private School/Homeschool Deduction	conditional	conditional	N/A	Tuition, textbooks, fees, software, tutoring & supplies	must claim unreimbursed expenses
IA	C/D	Tuition and Textbook Tax Credit	n	n	Must enroll in accredited Iowa school	Tuition, books, lab & activity fees	spend at least \$1,000 in education expenses & have state tax liability of at least \$250
LA	C/D	Elementary and Secondary School Tuition Deduction	Y	Y	N/A	Tuition, fees, uniforms, textbooks, curriculum materials & supplies	
MN	C/D	Education Deduction	n	n	N/A	Tuition, tutoring, textbooks, & after-school programs	
MN	C/D	K-12 Education Credit	n	n	N/A	Non-tuition education expenses	may not include self-transportation as expense
SC	C/D	Refundable Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children*	Y	Y	Provide certification that student has special needs	Tuition & fees	
WI	C/D	K-12 Private School Tuition Deduction	Y	Y	N/A	Tuition	

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\ddagger Priority given to families up to 200% x Poverty

Limited to students previously in foster care

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\ddagger Limited to students in low-performing schools

\S Limited to children of active military members stationed in the state

FRL = Federal free and reduced-price lunch program

School Requirements

STATE	PROGRAM TYPE	PROGRAM NAME	ACCREDITATION/APPROVAL	ENROLLMENT	NONDISCRIMINATION	EMPLOYMENT	CALENDAR/CURRICULUM	FINANCIAL	MISC.
AZ	ESA	Empowerment Scholarship Accounts*†‡§**	State, regional, or national	Autonomous	State	Bachelor's degrees for teachers	Complete course of study for content / grade	N/A	
FL	ESA	Gardiner Scholarship Program*	State	Autonomous	Federal	Background checks, bachelor's degrees for teachers or 3 years experience	N/A	Surety bond for schools <3 years old	
MS	ESA	Equal Opportunity for Students with Special Needs Program*	State	Autonomous	Federal	Background checks	Required progress assessments	N/A	Offer national test
NC	ESA	Personal Education Savings Account*	State, regional, or national	Autonomous	Federal	Background checks	English and math achievement reflected in testing	CPA audit when >\$300,000 in scholarships	
TN	ESA	Individualized Education Account Program*	State	Autonomous	Federal	Background checks	Submit calendar to state	Audit upon state request	
AR	V	Succeed Scholarship Program for Students with Disabilities*§	State or regional	Autonomous	Federal	Bachelor's degrees for teachers	N/A	CPA statement of solvency or bond if <1 year	Be accountable to parents for students' educational needs
DC	V	Opportunity Scholarship Program	District	Conditional autonomy	Federal	Bachelor's degrees for teachers	Comply with compulsory attendance laws	Proof of sustainability for schools <5 years old	
FL	V	John M. McKay Scholarships for Students with Disabilities Program*	State	Autonomous	Federal	Background checks, bachelor's degrees for teachers or 3 years experience	170 days of instruction	Surety bond for schools <3 years old	Notify FLDoe when a scholarship student withdraws
FL	V	Family Empowerment Scholarship Program	State	Autonomous	Federal	Background checks, bachelor's degrees for teachers or 3 years experience	N/A	Surety bond for schools <3 years old	Notify FLDoe when a scholarship student withdraws
GA	V	Georgia Special Needs Scholarship Program*	State or regional	Autonomous	State	Background checks	N/A	Demonstrate fiscal soundness	Report academic progress to parents
IN	V	Choice Scholarship Program	State or regional	Lottery for grade-level oversubscription	Federal	Background checks	Subject to state review, provide civic & character education	N/A	
LA	V	Louisiana Scholarship Program†	State	Open admissions, Lottery, independent audit	Federal	Background checks	Curriculum of quality = public schools	Can't charge > voucher amount; independent audit	
LA	V	School Choice Program for Certain Students with Exceptionalities*	State	Exist two years prior to accepting voucher students	Federal	Special Ed. Certified teachers	N/A	>2 years of operation	
ME	V	Town Tuitioning Program	State	N/A	Federal	N/A	Nonsectarian	Independent audit	Comply with student records requests
MD	V	Broadening Options and Opportunities for Students Today (BOOST) Program	State	Have at least 1 grade > kindergarten	State and Federal	Certified teachers	N/A	N/A	Participate in state's textbook and software program
MS	V	Mississippi Dyslexia Therapy Scholarship for Students with Dyslexia Program*	State or regional	Autonomous	Federal	State-licensed Dyslexia therapists, background checks	State approval	State audit	Update parents on students' academic progress
MS	V	Nate Rogers Scholarship for Students with Disabilities Program*	State or regional	Autonomous	Federal	Licensed speech-language pathologists, background checks	State approval	State audit	Update parents on students' academic progress
NH	V	Town Tuitioning Program	Regional	Autonomous	Federal	N/A	N/A	Can't charge more than state tuition amount	Report academic progress to state
NC	V	Special Education Scholarship Grants for Children with Disabilities*	State or regional	Autonomous	Federal	Background checks	English and math achievement reflected in testing	CPA audit when >\$300,000 in scholarships	
NC	V	Opportunity Scholarships	State or regional	Autonomous	Federal	Background checks	English and math achievement reflected in testing	CPA audit when >\$300,000 in scholarships	
OH	V	Cleveland Scholarship Program	State	Lottery	State	State accredited, background checks	N/A	Accept voucher as full tuition for <200% poverty	Update parents on students' academic progress
OH	V	Autism Scholarship Program*	State	Be in operation >1 year	State	Associate degrees for teachers <2 years experience	State approval	Demonstrate fiscal soundness	
OH	V	Educational Choice Scholarship Program†	State	Autonomous	State	State accredited, background checks	N/A	Accept voucher as full tuition for <200% poverty	Report academic progress to district & parents
OH	V	Jon Peterson Special Needs Scholarship Program*	State	Autonomous	State	State accredited	State approval	Submit costs to state	
OH	V	Income-Based Scholarship Program	State	Autonomous	State	State accredited, background checks	N/A	N/A	Submit special education profile to parents
OK	V	Lindsey Nicole Henry Scholarships for Students with Disabilities*	State	Be in operation >1 year	State	Background checks, bachelor's degrees for teachers or 3 years experience	N/A	Demonstrate fiscal soundness	
PR	V	Free School Selection Program	Territory or regional	Autonomous	Federal	Maintain a social worker	Provide PRDoE with proof of academic progress	CPA audit	
TN	V	Tennessee Education Savings Account Pilot Program	State	Autonomous	State and Federal	Background checks	Satisfy compulsory attendance requirements	Audit upon state request	Administer state math and ELA tests
UT	V	Carson Smith Special Needs Scholarship Program*	State	Autonomous	Federal	Background checks, bachelor's degrees for teachers or 3 years experience	Disclose Special Ed. costs to parents	CPA audit	
VT	V	Town Tuitioning Program	State	Autonomous	Federal	Licenses early childhood teachers	Nonsectarian	N/A	
WI	V	Milwaukee Parental Choice Program	State or regional	Lottery	State	Background checks, bachelor's degrees for teachers	State approval	CPA audit	Can't require religious classes
WI	V	Parental Private School Choice Program (Racine)	State or regional	Lottery	State	Background checks, bachelor's degrees for teachers	State approval	CPA audit	Can't require religious classes
WI	V	Parental Choice Program (Statewide)	State or regional	Lottery	State	Background checks, bachelor's degrees for teachers	State approval	CPA audit	Can't require religious classes
WI	V	Special Needs Scholarship Program*	State or regional	Autonomous	State and Federal	Background checks, bachelor's degrees for teachers	State approval	Demonstrate fiscal soundness	Report academic progress to parents

* Limited to students with special needs

‡ Priority given to families up to 200% x Poverty

Limited to students previously in foster care

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† Limited to students in low-performing schools

§ Limited to children of active military members stationed in the state

FRL = Federal free and reduced-price lunch program

School Requirements (continued)

STATE	PROGRAM TYPE	PROGRAM NAME	ACCREDITATION/APPROVAL	ENROLLMENT	NONDISCRIMINATION	EMPLOYMENT	CALENDAR/CURRICULUM	FINANCIAL	MISC.
AL	TCS	Education Scholarship Program	State or regional	Autonomous	Federal	Background checks for teachers	85% daily attendance	Post surety bond	
AZ	TCS	Original Individual Income Tax Credit Scholarships	State or regional	Autonomous	State	Background checks	N/A	N/A	
AZ	TCS	Low-Income Corporate Income Tax Credit Scholarships	State or regional	Autonomous	State	Background checks	N/A	N/A	
AZ	TCS	Lexie's Law*#	State or regional	Autonomous	State	Background checks	N/A	N/A	
AZ	TCS	"Switcher" Individual Income Tax Credit Scholarships	State or regional	Autonomous	State	Background checks	N/A	N/A	
FL	TCS	Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program	State	Autonomous	Federal	Background checks, bachelor's degrees for teachers or 3 years experience	N/A	Surety bond for schools <3 years old	
FL	TCS	Florida Hope Scholarship Program ϕ	State	Autonomous	Federal	Background checks, bachelor's degrees for teachers or 3 years experience	N/A	Surety bond for schools <3 years old	
GA	TCS	Qualified Education Expense Tax Credit	State	Autonomous	State	Background checks for teachers	N/A	Demonstrate fiscal soundness	
IL	TCS	Invest in Kids Program	State	Autonomous	Federal	N/A	N/A	N/A	
IN	TCS	School Scholarship Tax Credit	State or regional	Autonomous	Federal	Background checks	Subject to state review, provide civic & character education	N/A	
IA	TCS	School Tuition Organization Tax Credit	State or regional	Autonomous	Federal	N/A	N/A	N/A	
KS	TCS	Tax Credit for Low Income Students Scholarship Program \dagger	State or regional	Autonomous	Federal	N/A	N/A	No scholarships for SGO relatives	
LA	TCS	Tuition Donation Credit Program	State	Lottery	Federal	Background checks	Curriculum of quality = public schools	Independent audit	
MT	TCS	Tax Credits for Contributions to Student Scholarship Organizations	State or regional	Autonomous	Federal	N/A	N/A	N/A	
NV	TCS	Educational Choice Scholarship Program	State or regional	Autonomous	Federal	N/A	Quarterly attendance reporting	N/A	
NH	TCS	Education Tax Credit Program	State	Autonomous	Federal	Staff non-affiliated with SGO	N/A	N/A	
OK	TCS	Oklahoma Equal Opportunity Education Scholarships	State	Autonomous	State	Background checks, bachelor's degrees for teachers or 3 years experience	N/A	Demonstrate fiscal soundness	Report academic progress to parents
PA	TCS	Educational Improvement Tax Credit Program	State or regional	Autonomous	Federal	N/A	N/A	N/A	
PA	TCS	Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit Program \dagger	State or regional	Autonomous	Federal	N/A	N/A	N/A	
RI	TCS	Tax Credits for Contributions to Scholarship Organizations	State	Autonomous	State	Background checks, bachelor's degrees for teachers or 3 years experience	N/A	N/A	
SC	TCS	Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children*	State	Autonomous	Federal	N/A	N/A	Financial audit	
SD	TCS	Partners in Education Tax Credit Program	State or regional	Autonomous	Federal	N/A	N/A	N/A	
UT	TCS	Special Needs Opportunity Scholarship Program*	State or regional	Autonomous	Federal	Background checks, bachelor's degrees for teachers or 3 years experience	Disclose Special Ed. costs to parents	CPA audit	
VA	TCS	Educational Opportunity Scholarships Tax Credits Program	State or regional	Autonomous	Federal	N/A	N/A	N/A	
WI	C/D	K-12 Private School Tuition Deduction	State or regional	N/A	Federal	N/A	Provide at least 875 hours in core instruction	N/A	

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\dagger Limited to students in low-performing schools

\ddagger Priority given to families up to 200% x Poverty

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Limited to students previously in foster care

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Scholarship-Granting Organizations (SGOs) Requirements

STATE	PROGRAM TYPE	PROGRAM NAME	STATE REPORTING	SCHOLARSHIP TO CONTRIBUTION RATIO	FINANCIAL	AWARD PRIORITY	MISC.
FL	ESA	Gardiner Scholarship Program*	Quarterly reporting	N/A	Financial and participatory auditing	Renewing students and wait-listed	
DC	V	Opportunity Scholarship Program	Annual Reporting	N/A	Financial and participatory auditing	Financial need	
FL	V	John M. McKay Scholarships for Students with Disabilities Program*	Quarterly reporting	N/A	Financial and participatory auditing	N/A	
FL	V	Family Empowerment Scholarship Program	Annual Reporting	N/A	Financial and participatory auditing	Financial need	
AL	TCS	Education Scholarship Program	Contributions & scholarships awarded & funded	95%	CPA audit	Renewal students	
AZ	TCS	Original Individual Income Tax Credit Scholarships	Officials' salaries, contributions & scholarships awarded & funded	90%	CPA audit	Financial need	
AZ	TCS	Low-Income Corporate Income Tax Credit Scholarships	Officials' salaries, contributions & scholarships awarded & funded	90%	CPA audit	Financial need	
AZ	TCS	Lexie's Law**#	Officials' salaries, contributions & scholarships awarded & funded	90%	CPA audit	N/A	
AZ	TCS	"Switcher" Individual Income Tax Credit Scholarships	Officials' salaries, contributions & scholarships awarded & funded	90%	CPA audit	Financial need	
FL	TCS	Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program	Quarterly reporting	97%	Financial and participatory auditing	Low-income	
FL	TCS	Florida Hope Scholarship Program ϕ	Quarterly reporting	97%	Financial and participatory auditing	Renewing students	Can't charge families application fee
GA	TCS	Qualified Education Expense Tax Credit	Contributions & scholarships awarded & funded	90%	CPA audit	Students zoned to low-performing schools	Can't also function as accrediting agency
IL	TCS	Invest in Kids Program	Annual reporting	95%	CPA audit	Renewals, 185% FPL, low-performing districts, siblings	Make reasonable efforts to advertise eligibility
IN	TCS	School Scholarship Tax Credit	Annual reporting	90%	Independent audit	N/A	Background checks on employees & board members
IA	TCS	School Tuition Organization Tax Credit	Contributions, grants awarded, & participating schools	90%	Independent review of financial statements	N/A	
KS	TCS	Tax Credit for Low Income Students Scholarship Program \dagger	Scholarship recipients, contributions, scholarship amounts	90%	CPA audit, surety bond	N/A	Receive written verification from state of student's eligibility
LA	TCS	Tuition Donation Credit Program	Tuition and fees, individual contributions	95%	CPA audit	Renewal students	Background checks on employees & board members
MT	TCS	Tax Credits for Contributions to Student Scholarship Organizations	Donations and expenditures	90%	No comingling of scholarship and administrative funds	N/A	Pay out all donations in three years
NV	TCS	Educational Choice Scholarship Program	Annual reporting	95%	N/A	N/A	Can't own or operate any NV private school
NH	TCS	Education Tax Credit Program	Contributions, admin expenses, carryover funds, parental satisfaction	90%	Independent audit	Switchers, FRL	
OK	TCS	Oklahoma Equal Opportunity Education Scholarships	Contributions and expenditures	90%	N/A	FRL	
PA	TCS	Educational Improvement Tax Credit Program	Contributions, scholarships awarded	80%	CPA audit	Renewing students	
PA	TCS	Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit Program \dagger	Contributions, scholarships awarded, low-income scholarship amounts	80%	CPA audit	Renewing students	
RI	TCS	Tax Credits for Contributions to Scholarship Organizations	Scholarships, recipient ZIP codes	90%	Independent Audit	N/A	
SC	TCS	Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children*	Annual reporting	98%	CPA audit	N/A	
SD	TCS	Partners in Education Tax Credit Program	Contributions, contributing companies, scholarships, FRL students	90%	CPA audit	Renewing students	Verify schools are accredited, background checks on employees & board members
UT	TCS	Special Needs Opportunity Scholarship Program*	Annual reporting	92%	Use all investment interest for scholarships	N/A	
VA	TCS	Educational Opportunity Scholarships Tax Credits Program	Contributions, dates of contributions, scholarships	90%	CPA audit	Renewing students	Comply with 1964 Civil Rights Act

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Legal History

The U.S. Supreme Court has declared vouchers, tax-credit scholarships and individual tax deductions for educational expenses constitutional: *Espinoza v. Montana Dept of Revenue* (2020); *Zelman v. Simmons-Harris* (2002); *Arizona Christian Sch. Tuition Org. v. Winn* (2011); and *Mueller v. Allen* (1983). Those rulings, however, have not deterred legal challenges to school choice brought in state and federal courts.

ALABAMA

Alabama Accountability Act of 2013 Parent-Taxpayer Refundable Tax Credits and Education Scholarship Program

On April 2014, a U.S. District Judge dismissed a lawsuit brought by the Southern Poverty Law Center challenging the Alabama Accountability Act on grounds the school choice program violated equal protection. *C.M., et al., v. Robert J. Bentley, M.D.; et al.*, 13 F.Supp.3d 1188 (M.D. Ala. 2014)

On March 2, 2015, the Alabama Supreme Court ruled, in an 8-1 decision, that the Alabama Accountability Act enacted in 2013, which includes Alabama's refundable tax credit and tax-credit scholarship program, is constitutional. The high court overturned a May 2014 lower court ruling by the Montgomery County Circuit court which initially struck down the Alabama Accountability Act. *Magee v. Boyd*, 175 So.3d 79 (Ala. 2015)

ARIZONA

Original Individual Income Tax Credit Scholarship Program

On January 26, 1999, the Arizona Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of this tax-credit scholarship program. This decision was appealed to the U. S. Supreme Court, which, in October 1999, declined to review the case. The Arizona Supreme Court ruling was allowed to stand. *Kotterman v. Killian*, 972 P.2d 606 (Ariz. 1999), *cert. denied*, 528 U.S. 921 (1999)

On April 4, 2011, the U.S. Supreme Court, in a landmark decision, upheld Arizona's personal tax-credit scholarships, ruling that taxpayers do not have standing under the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment Establishment Clause to challenge a tax-credit scholarship program. The court rejected opponents' position that personal income is government property, declaring: "Respondents' contrary position assumes that income should be treated as if it were government property even if it has not come into the tax collector's hands. That premise finds no basis in standing jurisprudence. Private bank accounts cannot be equated with the Arizona State Treasury." *Arizona Christian Sch. Tuition Org. v. Winn*, 131 S. Ct. 1436, 179 L. Ed. 2d 523 (2011)

ARIZONA

Low-Income Corporate Income Tax Credit Scholarship Program

On March 12, 2009, the Arizona Court of Appeals upheld Arizona's corporate tax-credit scholarships and the Arizona Supreme Court refused to hear an appeal. *Green v. Garriott*, 212 P.3d 96 (Ariz. App. 2009)

ARIZONA

Empowerment Scholarship Accounts

On March 21, 2014, the Arizona Supreme Court declined to review a Court of Appeals' ruling upholding the state's education savings accounts (ESA). The Arizona Court of Appeals ruled ESAs are neutral toward religion. Although a prior 2009 decision by the Arizona Supreme Court in *Cain v. Horne* 202 P.3d 1178 (Ariz. 2009) (en banc) found vouchers to be unconstitutional in Arizona, the

appellate court distinguished ESAs, said they did not violate the state constitution because funding can be used for a variety of educational resources in addition to private school tuition. *Niehaus v. Huppenthal*, 310 P.3d 983 (Ariz. App. 2013)

FLORIDA

John M. McKay Scholarships for Students with Disabilities Program and Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program

On January 4, 2019, the Florida Supreme Court rejected a claim that the state did not adequately fund education, marking the end of a 10-year litigation effort. The high court also preserved Florida's school choice programs due to plaintiffs' failure to adequately preserve their arguments throughout the litigation. The high court affirmed two lower court rulings (*Citizens for Strong Schools, Inc. v. Florida State Board of Education*, No. CA-4534 (Fla. 2d. Jud. Cir. May 24, 2016; and *Citizens for Strong Schools v. Florida State Board of Education*, No. 1D16-2862 (Fla. Dist. Ct. App. Dec. 13, 2017) holding that plaintiffs had no standing to sue regarding the tax-credit scholarship program, and that Florida's school choice programs did not divert state funding or have any detrimental effect on Florida's system of public schools. Notwithstanding the Florida Supreme Court's prior ruling against vouchers (*Bush v. Holmes*, 886 So. 2d 340 (Fla. 1st DCA 2004), aff'd on other grounds, 919 So. 2d 392 (Fla. 2006)), the Court also held that the McKay voucher program was beneficial and constitutional. *Citizens for Strong Schools v Florida State Board of Education*, case No. SC18-67 (FL. Jan 4, 2019)

FLORIDA

Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program

On January 18, 2017, the Florida Supreme Court declined to accept appeal of *McCall v. Scott*, a case brought by teachers' unions challenging the state's tax-credit scholarship program. By refusing to allow rehearing on the case, the Florida Supreme Court effectively ended this litigation. *McCall v. Scott*, cert. denied 2017 WL 192043, Case No. SC16-1668 (Fla. Jan. 18, 2017)

The Florida Education Association (FEA) and other plaintiffs filed a lawsuit in August of 2014, challenging the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship as a voucher program (in 2006 vouchers ruled unconstitutional by the Florida Supreme Court). In May 2015, the Circuit Court of the Second Judicial Circuit in Leon County dismissed the FEA lawsuit, finding that plaintiffs had no legal standing to sue. Plaintiffs appealed. Prior to the appeal, the Florida Association of School Administrators and Florida School Boards Association withdrew from the case. In August 2016, the First District Court of Appeals affirmed the Circuit Court ruling, holding that plaintiffs suffered no special injury from the tax-credit scholarship program and the state legislature did not exceed its authority under the constitution. *McCall v. Scott*, 199 So.3d 359 (Fla. Dist. Ct. App. 2016). In September of 2016, plaintiffs filed notice to invoke discretionary jurisdiction of the Florida Supreme Court, asking the court to accept their appeal.

FLORIDA

Gardiner Scholarship Program

On December 30, 2014, the Circuit Court, Second Judicial Circuit, Leon County, Florida, dismissed, with prejudice, a case challenging the Gardiner Scholarship. The plaintiff, a high school social studies teacher in the Lee County Public Schools, in July of 2014 alleged the law violated the state constitution's "single subject matter" rule. There was no appeal. *Faasse v. Scott*, No. 2014 CA 1859 (Fla. 2d Cir. Dec. 30, 2014)

Legal History (continued)

GEORGIA

Qualified Education Expense Tax Credit

On June 26, 2017, the Georgia Supreme Court rejected a challenge to Georgia's tax-credit scholarship program and ruled that plaintiffs had no standing to sue. *Georgia Department of Revenue*, 802 S.E.2d 225 (2017)

The original complaint, *Gaddy v. Georgia Department of Revenue*, No. 2014 CV 2445538 (Fulton County Super. Ct. Feb. 5, 2016), brought by four Georgia residents backed by the Southern Education Foundation, alleged that the tax-credit scholarship program violated the state constitution's ban on providing public support to religious institutions, and several other constitutional provisions. The trial court affirmed the program's constitutionality, observing that the tax credit would not "increase their taxes or drain the state treasury" and that "the Program may actually save the State money."

ILLINOIS

Tax Credits for Educational Expenses

On February 8, 2001, the Illinois Supreme Court refused to grant appeals from two lower court decisions upholding constitutionality of the state's two tax credits for education programs. *Toney v. Bower*, 744 N.E.2d 351 (Ill. App. 4th Dist. 2001), appeal denied, 195 N.E.2d 573 (Ill. 2001); *Griffith v. Bower*, 747 N.E.2d 423 (Ill. App. 5th Dist. 2001), appeal denied, 755 N.E.2d 477 (Ill. 2001)

The Illinois Federation of Teachers, Illinois Education Association, and the People for the American Way brought the two lawsuits in state court arguing the program violated the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and religion clauses of the Illinois Constitution. Illinois appellate courts upheld the programs.

INDIANA

Choice Scholarship Program

On March 26, 2013, the Indiana Supreme Court ruled in a landmark 5-0 decision that the Choice Scholarship Program does not violate the state constitution and that constitutional prohibitions against government funding of religious entities does not apply to entities providing primary and secondary education. *Meredith v. Pence*, 984 N.E.2d 1213 (Ind. 2013)

The case began July 1, 2011, when teachers' union officials and others challenged Indiana's voucher program in state court, alleging the Indiana Constitution prohibits funding of religious schools. A Marion County Superior Court denied a motion for preliminary injunction. The trial court granted summary judgment January 13, 2012, in favor of the program. *Meredith v. Daniels*, 49D07-1107-PL-025402 (2012)

The Court held, "First, the voucher program expenditures do not directly benefit religious schools but rather directly benefit lower-income families with school-children by providing an opportunity for such children to attend non-public schools if desired. Second, the prohibition against government expenditures to benefit religious or theological institutions does not apply to institutions and programs providing primary and secondary education."

On March 17, 1992, the U.S. District court for the Southern District of Iowa held that Iowa's newly enacted Tuition and Textbook Tax Credit program was constitutional. *Luthens v. Bair*, 788 F. Supp. 1032 (S.D. Iowa 1992)

Citing a previous ruling of the U.S. Supreme Court, *Mueller v. Allen*, 463 U.S. 388, 103 S. Ct. 3062, 77 L. Ed. 2d 721, 1983 U.S. 96, upholding Minnesota's Education Tax Deduction, the court ruled that Iowa's tax credit for private school educational expenses does not violate the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.

On May 7, 2013, the Louisiana Supreme Court ruled that the state constitution's Minimum Foundation Program cannot be used to pay tuition costs at nonpublic schools. The court declined to rule whether a voucher program funded through other means would be constitutional, which had the effect of leaving the voucher program intact, but unfunded. *Louisiana Federation of Teachers v. State*, 118 So. 3d 1033 (La. 2013)

After the Louisiana Supreme Court struck down the voucher's funding mechanism, in June 2013, Gov. Bobby Jindal and the state legislature passed a budget that would fund, through general appropriations, the nearly 8,000 students approved for vouchers in the 2013–14 school year, and the voucher program continues to be funded.

This case began when teachers' unions and others filed suit to stop Louisiana's New Orleans-focused school voucher program from expanding statewide. In November 2012, Judge Timothy Kelley of the 19th Judicial Circuit, ruled the program's funding method, which used the constitutionally created Minimum Foundation Program, was unconstitutional. *Louisiana Federation of Teachers v. State*, No. 612.733 S. 22, 19th Jud. Dist. Ct, Parish of East Baton Rouge (November 30, 2012). Students remained in the program during appeal to the Louisiana Supreme Court.

On November 11, 2015, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in a 2-1 decision overturned a district court ruling that granted the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) pre-clearance review of the Louisiana Scholarship Program (LSP), arguing that the lower court exceeded its scope of authority. *Brumfield v. La. State Bd. of Educ.*, 806 F.3d 289 (5th Cir. 2015)

The Department of Justice, in September 2014, used a 1975 federal desegregation order, *Brumfield v. Dodd*, 405 F. Supp. 338 (E.D. La. 1975), to prohibit children in affected schools from participating in the voucher program on the purported grounds that they left the schools less integrated. The department was unable to produce evidence to support their claim, and the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals observed, "DOJ's attempt to shoehorn its regulation of the voucher program into an entirely unrelated forty-year-old case represents more than ineffective lawyering." The Court said DOJ attempted "to regulate the program without any legal judgment against the state." The November 2015 ruling by the Fifth Circuit reversed this infringement on the LSP's freedom.

Legal History (continued)

MAINE

Town Tuitioning Program

On June 14, 1993, the Maine Supreme Court upheld the home rule authority of towns over school budgets (impacting town tuitioning), holding that municipalities maintain some authority over education policy. *School Committee of York v. York*, 626 A.2d 935 (Me. 1993)

On June 26, 2019, the U.S. District Court for the District of Maine rejected plaintiff parents' claim that Maine's exclusion of religious schools from their town tuitioning program, a generally available public benefit program, violates the Free Exercise, Establishment, Free Speech, Equal Protection and Due Process Clauses of the First and Fourteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution. *Carson v Hasson, Jr*, Case 1:18-cv-00327-DBH, ORDER (Jun 26, 2019)

This case originated in light of the landmark U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Trinity Lutheran Church of Columbia, Inc. v. Comer*, 137 S. Ct. 2012 (2017). On August 21, 2018, the Institute for Justice and First Liberty Institute filed this litigation on behalf of parents in Maine who continue to seek religious liberty in their choice of education. They appealed the case to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit. After the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Espinoza v. Montana Dept of Revenue* that religious schools cannot be excluded from school choice programs, supplemental evidence was submitted to the First Circuit Court of Appeals asking the Court to honor the ruling of the U.S. Supreme Court. However, the state of Maine objected, and on October 29, 2020, the First Circuit agreed and upheld the lower court ruling. An appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court is planned for early 2021. *Carson v. Makin*, Docket No. 19-1746 (2020)

Although town tuitioning is constitutional in Maine, there have been many challenges regarding the exclusion of religious schools. In 1981, the Maine legislature banned religious schools from participating in the Town Tuitioning Program that was first established in 1873. In 1999, the Maine Supreme Judicial Court upheld the exclusion of religious schools and the U.S. Supreme Court declined to review. *Bagley v. Raymond School Department*, 728 A.2d 127 (Me.), cert. denied, 528 U.S. 947 (1999). Religious school exclusion was also upheld in *Strout v. Commissioner, Maine Department of Education*, 178 F.3d 57 (1st Cir. 1999), and in *Eulitt v. Maine Department of Education*, 386 F.3d 344 (1st Cir. 2004).

After the 2002 U.S. Supreme Court decision upholding the constitutionality of vouchers in Cleveland, the Institute for Justice, representing Maine families, asked a Maine court to overturn the 1981 law, but the exclusion of religious options was upheld. *Anderson v. Town of Durham*, 895 A.2d 944 (Me. 2006), cert. denied, 127 S.Ct. 661, 166 L.Ed.2d 512. Religious exclusion was later upheld in *Joyce v. State*, 951 A.2d 69 (Me. 2008).

MARYLAND

Broadening Options and Opportunities for Students Today (BOOST) Program

On June 24, 2019, Bethel Ministries filed litigation in the U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland Northern Division against the State Superintendent of the Maryland State Department of Education and the BOOST Advisory Board, alleging violation of the U.S. Constitution's Free Exercise, Free Speech and Establishment Clauses of the First Amendment and the Due Process and Equal Protection Clauses of the 14th Amendment for their actions in disqualifying Bethel Christian Academy from Maryland's voucher program and seeking return of over \$100,000 of tuition funding paid to the school by students using BOOST vouchers.

The school was disqualified due to statements in its parent/student handbook regarding marriage and biological sex. Participating schools are prohibited from discriminating in the admissions process against students based on sexual orientation. Although Bethel Christian Academy has not discriminated against any student, the school was nonetheless disqualified. In December 2019, the court ruled that this litigation may proceed. Discovery should conclude in February 2021; pre-trial motions are due in April 2021. Pending, *Bethel Ministries, Inc v. Salmon*, US District Court for the District of Maryland Northern Division, Case 1:19-cv-01853-ELH (2019)

MINNESOTA

Education Deduction

On June 29, 1983, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of Minnesota's tax deduction for education program, a landmark decision. "Where, as here, aid to parochial schools is available only as a result of decisions of individual parents, no "imprimatur of state approval," can be deemed to have been conferred on any particular religion, or on religion generally." *Mueller v. Allen*, 463 U.S. 388, 103 S. Ct. 3062, 77 L. Ed. 2d 721, 1983 U.S. 96

MONTANA

Tax Credits for Contributions to Student Scholarship Organizations

On June 30, 2020, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of Montana parents seeking religious school options for their children, in *Espinoza v. Montana Dept of Revenue*, 591 U.S. ____ (2020). The Court held that, "The application of the no-aid provision discriminated against religious schools and the families whose children attend or hope to attend them in violation of the Free Exercise Clause of the Federal Constitution." Citing the constitutionally protected right of parents to choose a religious school for their children's education, (*Pierce v. Society of Sisters*, 268 U. S. 510 (1925)), the Court said, "the no-aid provision penalizes that decision by cutting families off from otherwise available benefits if they choose a religious private school rather than a secular one, and for no other reason." In school choice programs, no-aid provisions, commonly known as Blaine Amendments in state constitutions, cannot be used to exclude religious schools merely because they are religious.

The case began on December 16, 2015, when plaintiff parents represented by the Institute for Justice filed the initial lawsuit. On May 23, 2017, Montana's Eleventh Judicial District Court granted plaintiff's motion for summary judgment and permanently enjoined the department's rule prohibiting religious schools from participating in Montana's tax-credit scholarship program. *Espinoza v. Department of Revenue*, MT 11th Dist. Ct., No. DV 15-1152A (May 2017).

On December 12, 2018, the Montana Supreme Court ruled that Montana's tax-credit scholarship program is unconstitutional under Art. X, Sec. 6 of their state constitution, which prohibits state aid to sectarian schools. Although the Court found that the Montana Department of Revenue had exceeded its authority in adopting a regulation to exclude religious schools that was in conflict with the statute enacted by the state legislature, the Court reasoned that Montana's constitutional provision restricting state aid to sectarian schools is broader than that of the federal constitution, and therefore, did not consider the U.S. Supreme Court decision upholding the constitutionality of tax-credit scholarship programs in *ACSTOA v. Winn* (see Arizona) or *Trinity Lutheran Church of Columbia, Inc. v. Comer*, 137 S. Ct. 2012 (2017) (holding that religious entities cannot be excluded from a generally available public benefit program simply because they are religious). For the first time since tax-credit scholarships began in 1997, a court held that state tax credits for contributions to tax-credit scholarship programs are indirect payments of tuition to private schools by the state. *Espinoza v. Montana Dept of Revenue*, 2018 MT 306

Legal History (continued)

MONTANA

Tax Credits for Contributions to Student Scholarship Organizations (continued)

On January 30, 2019, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit's December 7, 2018 ruling (dismissing a case originally filed December 28, 2015 against the Montana Department of Revenue by the Pacific Legal Foundation) became effective. The parties, including parents and the Association of Christian Schools International (which included 10 religiously-affiliated member schools in Montana), submitted briefs concerning whether the Tax Injunction Act barred their claims. The case was dismissed. *Armstrong v. Kadas*, No. 16-35422 (2019)

NEVADA

Educational Choice Scholarship

On May 5, 2020, the District Court in Clark County, Nevada, ruled against parents who sought relief from legislation that removed the escalator clause in Nevada's tax-credit scholarship program, thereby reducing the number of scholarships that will be available for students to attend the school of their parents' choice. In *Morency v. State*, District Court, Clark County, Nevada, Case no. A-19-800267-C (2019). Although Nevada's constitution requires a supermajority vote of the legislature to pass bills that increase revenue, and the bill in question was passed with a simple majority, the court held that tax credits that are frozen or repealed do not require a supermajority vote for passage even though the effect would be to raise revenue. This case has been appealed to the Nevada Supreme Court. Pending.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Education Tax Credit Program

On August 28, 2014, the New Hampshire Supreme Court issued a decision upholding the state's tax-credit scholarship program. This case positioned individuals represented by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and Americans United for Separation of Church and State (AU) against the state's new tax-credit scholarship program. In the decision, the court dismissed the lawsuit due to lack of standing by the defendants; the court reasoned they were unable to show harm caused by the program. The justices overturned a previous lower court ruling, which disallowed scholarships to schools that were religiously affiliated. *Duncan v. State*, 102 A.3d 913 (N.H. 2014)

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Town Tuitioning

On September 2, 2020, the Institute for Justice filed litigation in New Hampshire, seeking to have the courts recognize the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Espinoza v. Montana Dept of Revenue* (see Montana), which would allow religious schools to participate in New Hampshire's town tuitioning voucher program. Pending. *Griffin v. New Hampshire Dept of Education*, Merrimack Superior Court at Concord, NH, Docket No. 217-2020-CV-00480.

NORTH CAROLINA

Opportunity Scholarships

On July 23, 2015, the North Carolina Supreme Court upheld all aspects of the state's voucher for children of low-income households, the Opportunity Scholarship Program, as constitutional. The lower court decision in *Hart v State*, No. 13 CVS 16771 (August 28, 2014), was overturned. *Hart v. State*, 774 S.E.2d 281 (N.C. 2015); *Richardson v. State*, 774 S.E.2d 304 (2015)

Although the North Carolina Supreme Court ruled vouchers constitutional several years ago, the N.C. Association of Educators (NCAE) challenged the program as applied on July 27, 2020. The lead plaintiff, who is president of NCAE, alleged the program lacks standards, discriminates based on religion, sexual orientation, gender identity and transgender status, and needs not provide any secular education. Pending. *Kelly v. State*, Wake County Superior Court, Case 20-CVS-8346.

OHIO

Cleveland Scholarship Program

On June 27, 2002, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the Cleveland school voucher program does not violate the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution; that vouchers are constitutional when parents have independent, private choice of schools without favoring or disfavoring religion. By design, the voucher program is “school neutral.” *Zelman v. Simmons-Harris*, 536 U.S. 639 (2002)

The Ohio Supreme Court had previously struck down the Cleveland voucher program, *Simmons-Harris v. Goff*, 711 N.E.2d 203 (Ohio 1999), ruling it was unconstitutional because the legislation adopting the voucher program violated the single subject rule. However, the court also held that the voucher program did not violate the state constitution’s compelled support or education clauses and did not violate the Federal constitution’s Establishment Clause.

OKLAHOMA

Lindsey Nicole Henry Scholarships for Students with Disabilities

On November 20, 2012, the Supreme Court of Oklahoma dismissed on procedural grounds the Jenks Public Schools system’s lawsuit against parents using Lindsey Nicole Henry Scholarships, stating the school districts do not have standing as Oklahoma taxpayers to sue under the state’s constitution and that parents were the wrong parties to sue. *Ind. Sch. Dist. No. 5 of Tulsa Co. v. Spry*, 2012 OK 98, 292 P.3d 19 (2012)

On February 16, 2016, the Oklahoma Supreme Court ruled that the state’s voucher program is constitutional in a 9-0 decision with one concurring opinion. Several factors that were key to the court’s decision included 1) participation in the voucher program is voluntary; 2) a parent’s choice of school is strictly independent; 3) education funding flows from the state to the parent; 4) the program itself is neutral regarding religion; 5) any benefit to a private school is derived from the parent’s choice, not the state; 6) there is no adverse impact on the ability of religious schools to act independently of state control; 7) there is a substantial benefit to the state when a child uses a voucher; it is not a gift. Citing the landmark *Zelman v. Simmons-Harris* case (see Ohio | Cleveland Scholarship Program), the court said, “When the parents and not the government are the ones determining which private school offers the best learning environment for their child, the circuit between government and religion is broken.” *Oliver v. Hofmeister*, 368 P.3d 1270 (Okla. 2016)

This case began in October 2013, when 12 plaintiffs renewed the 2012 legal challenge, this time with proper litigants. In a written opinion, *Oliver v. Barresi*, No. CV-2013-2072 (September 10, 2014), the Oklahoma County District Court ruled the Lindsey Nicole Henry Scholarship for Students with Disabilities program violated Article 2, Section 5—the Oklahoma Constitution’s Blaine amendment—only insofar as the program allows public funds to be used to pay tuition at private, sectarian religious schools; paying tuition at private, non-sectarian religious schools was deemed permissible by this narrow ruling.

Legal History (continued)

PUERTO RICO

Free School Selection Program

On August 9, 2019, the Supreme Court of Puerto Rico ruled that vouchers are constitutional, overturning a lower court decision. *Asociación de Maestros v. Departamento de Educación*, 2018 TSPR 150 (2018), Case Number: CT-2018-6

The Supreme Court's decision overturned the adverse ruling of the lower court, which had relied erroneously on *Asoc. De Maestros v. Sec. de Educación*, 137 D.P.R. 528 (1994), an adverse decision from 1994. The court's 2019 ruling was a 5-3 decision, with one judge recused. The ruling of the court was brief, simply reversing the lower court ruling and dismissing the complaint that was brought by the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) teachers' union—the national and local Puerto Rico chapter—against Puerto Rico's Department of Education. The Justices explained their positions in four concurring opinions and two dissenting opinions. On August 22, the AFT filed a Motion to Reconsider, asking the Puerto Rico Supreme Court to reconsider its ruling; the motion was denied.

TENNESSEE

Education Savings Account Pilot Program

On November 24, the Tennessee Attorney General filed an appeal to the Tennessee Supreme Court, asking the court to consider the adverse decision delivered by the Tennessee Court of Appeals in *The Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County et. al. vs. Tennessee Department of Education et. al.* The State seeks to overturn the Court of Appeals ruling that the Tennessee ESA Pilot program is local in effect, applicable only to Davidson and Shelby Counties in their governmental capacities, and as such, is unconstitutional under the Tennessee Constitution Article XI, Section 9, Home Rule provision, which protects local control over local legislation. The Tennessee Supreme Court has discretion whether to accept the case. If rejected, the adverse of the Court of Appeals will stand. Pending. *The Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County et. al. vs. Tennessee Department of Education et. al.*, Tennessee Court of Appeals, Case number M2020-00683-COA-R9-CV.

This case began on February 6, 2020, when Metro Nashville and Shelby County, Tennessee sued the state, contending that Tennessee's ESA Pilot voucher program violated numerous sections of the Tennessee Constitution. In particular, it was alleged that Tennessee's new voucher violates the state constitution's home rule provision forbidding legislation targeting a specific county because, "it is local in form and effect, not of general application but rather applicable and designed to be applicable to two particular counties..."

On May 4, 2020, the Chancery Court of Davidson County ruled that the Tennessee voucher violated the Home Rule provision of the state constitution. The court also ruled that the program could not continue pending the outcome of litigation. The court reserved other issues raised in the lawsuit, choosing to rule only on the Home Rule claim.

The case was appealed, and on September 29, 2020, the Tennessee Court of Appeals affirmed the ruling of the lower court. The Court of Appeals also denied the state's request to continue the program pending the outcome of litigation.

In a separate case filed on March 2, 2020, the ACLU of Tennessee, Southern Poverty Law Center (Mississippi), and the Education Law Center (New Jersey), sued Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee, also opposing Tennessee's Education Savings Account voucher program. They allege the program violates the following articles of Tennessee's state constitution: 1) Article XI, Section 9, the same "Home Rule"

provision being litigated in *Metro Nashville vs. TN Dept of Education*; 2) Article XI, §12, the “Education Clause” requiring a “system of free public schools,” and Article I, §8 and Article XI, §8 “equal protection” provisions requiring that free public schools offer substantially equal opportunities for adequate education to all students; 3) Article XI, §12 requiring a single system of public schools, 4) Article II, §24, the “Appropriation of Public Moneys” provision requiring an appropriation for the first year of the program. They also allege violation of the BEP statutory school funding formula in that it does not provide for funding any schools other than public schools.

The Chancery Court of Davidson County heard arguments for this case at the same time as arguments were presented in the Metro Nashville case, but the court decided to hold this case and the remaining issues presented until after a higher court has finalized the ruling on whether Tennessee’s voucher violates the Home Rule provision. Pending. *Roxanne McEwen et. al. vs. Bill Lee et. al.*, Chancery Court for Davidson County; Case No. 20-0242-II.

VERMONT

Town Tuitioning Program

On December 21, 2020, Deborah Bucknam of Vermont and Liberty Justice Center filed litigation in Vermont Superior Court, Orleans Division at Newport, Vermont, alleging that Vermont’s town tuitioning program violates the state constitutional requirement that all children be afforded equal educational opportunity. Children in towns without schools may receive tuition to attend secular private schools, but children in other towns may only receive tuition to attend public schools. This unequal treatment on its face creates a discriminatory system based on the fortuity of a child’s residence. Plaintiff parents are asking the court to hold that town tuitioning must allow any child to receive tuition to attend public or private schools, including religious schools; that the constitutionally recognized common benefit of town tuitioning must be available to all children. Pending. *Vitale v. State*, Vermont Superior Court Orleans Division, Docket 215-12-200SCV.

On September 9, 2020, the Institute for Justice filed litigation in Vermont, seeking to have the courts recognize the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Espinoza v. Montana Dept of Revenue* (see Montana), which would allow religious schools to participate in Vermont’s town tuitioning voucher program. Religious schools participated for the first 92 years of the program, but have been shut out for the past 60 years. Pending. *Valente v. French*, U.S. District Court for the District of Vermont, Case 2:20-cv-00135-cr.

On June 11, 1999, the Supreme Court of Vermont barred religious schools from participating in the state’s town tuitioning program, citing a violation of the Vermont state constitution’s compelled support clause. The nation’s first school choice program, enacted in 1869, has mainly been challenged regarding participation by religious schools. It has been an active school choice program for 150 years, albeit without benefit of religious school participation since 1961. *Chittenden Town School Dist. v. Dept. of Education*, 738 A.2d 539 (Vt.), cert. denied, 528 U.S. 1066 (1999)

Vermont’s Supreme Court ruled in 1961 that including religious schools in the Town Tuitioning Program first established in 1869 violated the First Amendment Establishment Clause of the U.S. Constitution. *Swart v. South Burlington Town School District*, 167 A.2d 514 (Vt. 1961). In 1994, the Vermont Supreme Court overturned this decision, but the Vermont Department of Education refused to allow parents to choose religious schools. *Campbell v. Manchester Board of School Directors*, 641 A.2d 352 (Vt. 1994).

Legal History (continued)

WISCONSIN

Milwaukee Parental Choice Program

On June 10, 1998, the Wisconsin Supreme Court held that the Milwaukee voucher program does not violate either the state's Compelled Support Clause or Blaine Amendment. The court also affirmed the conclusions of *Davis v. Grover*, 480 N.W.2d 460 (Wis. 1992), an earlier unsuccessful uniformity challenge to the school choice program. *Jackson v. Benson*, 218 Wis. 2d 835, 578 N.W.2d 602 (1998), cert. denied, 525 U.S. 967 (1998)

On December 23, 2015, the U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division of the Educational Opportunities Section (US DoJ) responded to the ACLU complaint, filed with the U.S. Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division in June 2011, alleging that the Milwaukee voucher program violated federal laws prohibiting discrimination against students with disabilities. The US DoJ issued a letter to Wisconsin's state superintendent of public instruction, informing the superintendent that after a rigorous evaluation, the Department of Justice had determined that no further action was warranted, and their investigation was closed. There were no findings of wrongdoing related to the voucher program.

Footnote

NEVADA

Education Savings Accounts

The courts ruled that Nevada's ESA is constitutional, but it has never been properly funded by the Nevada legislature, leaving thousands of children in despair. Adding insult to injury, in 2019 the Nevada legislature repealed their ESA by inserting ESA repeal language into a tax bill. The tax bill required a two-thirds vote, as specified in the Nevada constitution, but it only received a simple majority vote—yet the legislature enacted it into law. On July 19, 2019, a group of Republican state senators filed litigation against the state of Nevada, alleging that Senate Bills 542 and 551, passed during the 2019 legislative session, required a two-thirds vote.

On October 7, 2020, the First Judicial Court in Carson City, Nevada, ruled in favor of Republican state senators who alleged that the tax bill containing repeal of Nevada's ESA was passed into law contrary to the constitutional requirement of a two-thirds vote. However, the court also ruled that the unconstitutional action applied only to the tax program at issue in the bill; repeal of the ESA did not require a two-thirds vote and as such, was a valid repeal of the program. The case has been appealed to the Nevada Supreme Court. Pending. *Settelmeyer v. State*, First Judicial District Court Nevada In and For Carson City, Case no. 190C00127-1B (2019).

Continue for a more detailed history of litigation involving this important program.

On September 29, 2016, the Nevada Supreme Court ruled that Nevada's ESA is constitutional. The court also ruled the legislation lacked an independent basis for funding, and "is without an appropriation to support its operation." The court affirmed in part and reversed in part the rulings of the lower courts and directed the lower courts to enter a final declaratory judgment and permanent injunction against Section 16 only of the bill creating ESAs, Senate Bill 302. Section 16 contained enabling language for funding, but the court ruled there was no corresponding language in the bill appropriating funds for education, Senate Bill 515. *Schwartz v. Lopez*, 132 Nev. Adv. Opn. No. 73. EN BANC Nos. 69611/70648. *Duncan v. State of Nevada*, Clark County Eighth Judicial District Ct, Case No. A-15-723703-C

This ruling consolidated two cases, which began when the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Nevada filed a lawsuit, *Duncan v. State of Nevada*, on August 27, 2015 on behalf of five citizen plaintiffs alleging the ESA program violates Nevada's constitution by a) allowing funding to potentially be used for a "sectarian purpose," b) creating a "competing system of private schools whose curricular, instruction, and educational standards diverge dramatically from those of public schools," and c) allowing participating private schools to potentially discriminate based on "religion, sexual orientation, and gender identity." Americans United for Separation of Church and State joined the ACLU. The District Court ruled against the plaintiffs, and they appealed to the Nevada Supreme Court.

Additionally, Educate Nevada Now, along with the Education Law Center of New Jersey, on September 9, 2015, filed a lawsuit, *Lopez v. Schwartz*, on behalf of public school children and parents with overlapping but different allegations than the Duncan case. They alleged the program a) would divert funds set aside for public schools to private, often religious, schools, b) would reduce funds deemed necessary to operate Nevada public schools, and c) would create a system of schools not legislatively established and not free and open to all students. In January 2016, the District Court granted plaintiffs' motion for a preliminary injunction against the ESA, halting the program pending a ruling by the Nevada Supreme Court. *Lopez v. Schwartz*, Carson City First Judicial District Court, Case No. 150C002071B.

The Nevada Supreme Court heard oral argument for each case, separately, on July 29, 2016. The court later consolidated its rulings on these cases, issuing one decision on September 29, 2016.

Finally, On December 22, 2015, plaintiffs who filed a case not against but in support of the program, submitted a joint stipulation to stay litigation in the case, effectively suspending the case indefinitely. *Norman v. State*, District Court, Clark County, Case No. A-15-729344-C.

Additional information on educational choice legal developments is available at the following national organizations:

EdChoice Legal Defense and Education Center | edchoice.org.

Alliance Defending Freedom | adfflegal.org/for-attorneys/cases/education-cases

Becket Law | becketlaw.org/area-of-practice/education

Institute for Justice | ij.org/SchoolChoice

Liberty Justice Center | libertyjusticecenter.org/cases

Pacific Legal Foundation | pacificlegal.org/cases-category/equality-under-the-law

Data Sources for Program Profiles

AL: Alabama Department of Revenue; **AZ:** Arizona Department of Revenue; Office of the Arizona State Treasurer; Arizona Department of Education; **AR:** Arkansas Board of Education; The Reform Alliance; **D.C.:** Serving Our Children D.C.; **FL:** Florida Department of Education; Step Up For Students; **GA:** Georgia Department of Education; Georgia Department of Revenue; **IL:** Empower Illinois; Illinois Department of Revenue; **IN:** Public Records Request response from Office of Legal Affairs, Indiana Department of Education; Indiana Department of Revenue; **IA:** Research and Analysis Division, Iowa Department of Revenue; **KS:** Kansas State Department of Education; **LA:** Louisiana Department of Education; Public Information Office, Louisiana Department of Revenue; **ME:** Maine Department of Education; **MD:** Maryland State Department of Education; **MN:** Minnesota Department of Revenue; **MS:** Public Records Request response from Office of Reporting, Mississippi Department of Education; **MT:** Montana Department of Revenue; Big Sky Scholarships; **NV:** Nevada Department of Education; **NH:** New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration; New Hampshire Department of Education; Jody Underwood, Granite Institute; **NC:** North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority; **OH:** Office of Accountability, Ohio Department of Education; **OK:** Catholic Schools Opportunity Scholarship Fund; GO for Catholic Schools; Opportunity Scholarship Fund; Oklahoma Islamic School Foundation; Crossover Preparatory Academy; Open Records Act Request response from Oklahoma State Department of Education; **PA:** Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development; **PR:** Oficina de Libre Selección de Escuelas, Puerto Rico Department of Education; **RI:** Division of Taxation, Rhode Island Department of Revenue; **SC:** Exceptional SC; South Carolina Education Oversight Committee; **SD:** South Dakota Partners in Education; **TN:** Tennessee Department of Education; **UT:** Special Education Services division, Utah State Office of Education; Utah Legislative Auditor General; **VA:** Tax Credit Programs division, Virginia Department of Education; **VT:** Vermont Agency of Education; **WI:** Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction; Wisconsin Department of Revenue

Requirements for the programs were initially adapted from Matt Frendewey, Krista Carney, Whitney Marcavage, Paul Dauphin, Kim Martinez, and Kimberly Sawatka, *School Choice Yearbook 2015–16* (Washington, DC: Alliance for School Choice, 2016), <http://allianceforschoolchoice.org/yearbook>, and have been edited annually following states' legislative sessions and recodification periods by EdChoice.

Methodology & Data Sources for Eligibility

Because many programs have income limits and it is extremely difficult, if not impossible in most states/districts, to find data on student populations broken down by family income bracket—we decided it best to measure eligibility for the applicable programs using families instead of students. Eligibility percentages are based on the eligible population(s) in a program’s stated jurisdiction.

Eligibility based on family income was generally calculated as follows: Determined **average family size** for the pertinent state/district using 2019 American Community Survey (ACS), table DP02 via U.S. Census Bureau. Determined **income limit** based on **average family size** and program income limits using the USDA’s income eligibility guidelines for poverty and the free and reduced-price lunch program posted online via *Federal Register* 85, no. 55 (March 2020), p. 16052. Determined **total families with children eligible** by summing the number of families with children in each qualifying income bracket to determine **income limit** using 2019 ACS 5-year estimates, table B19131 via U.S. Census Bureau. For those income limits that fell within a given income bracket, normal distribution within income brackets was assumed to approximate the percent of families within these brackets who are income-eligible. Divided **total families with children eligible** by **total families with children**, also found on 2019 ACS, table B19131, to find a rough estimate.

Eligibility based on students was generally calculated as follows: Found the number of applicable students in public schools in a state/district using Common Core of Data (CCD), “Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey,” 2018-19 v.1a and “State Nonfiscal Public Elementary/Secondary Education Survey,” 2018-19 v.1a via ELSi *tableGenerator*. Found the number of applicable students in private schools in a state/district using PSS Private School Universe Survey data for the 2017–18 school year. When applicable for programs with special needs pathways, used U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs state child count data. Used 2019 A2Z Homeschooling state estimates to serve as a proxy for the number of homeschool students for who would otherwise be unaccounted in federal data. Summed all three sectors (public, private and homeschool) to get **total students**. Added number of public school students to number of students participating in the program to get **total students eligible**. (Note: This step differed the most among programs, depending on whether or not the program was limited to students with special needs, low-performing schools, in foster care, and/or children of active-duty military members.) Divided **total students eligible** by **total students** to find a rough estimate.

Whenever possible, the abovementioned sources were used. Other sources include:

AL: “Failing Schools Lists” and “Public Data Report: Enrollment by Ethnicity and Gender (School Level)” via alsde.edu; **AZ:** “10/1 Child County by Disability” via AZED.gov; **AR:** Foster care count via Kids Count Data Center **FL:** Children’s Bureau, “FY2005-FY2015 Foster Care: Entries, Exits, and In Care on the Last Day of Each Federal Fiscal Year”; **KS:** “100 lowest-performing” schools lists via ksde.org; **LA:** “School Performance Scores” and “Multi-Stats (Elem-Sec by Site) – Public” via LouisianaBelieves.com; **OH:** “EdChoice Scholarship Program: List of Designated Schools” and “Current Year Data: Fall Enrollment (Headcount)” via education.Ohio.gov; 2019 ACS, tables B05009 and B01001; **OK:** Foster care count via Kids Count Data Center; **PA:** “List of Low Achieving Schools” and “Enrollment Public Schools” via education.pa.gov; **PR:** Consejo de Educación de Puerto Rico

COMMITMENT TO METHODS & TRANSPARENCY

EdChoice is committed to research that adheres to high scientific standards, and matters of methodology and transparency are taken seriously at all levels of our organization. We are dedicated to providing high-quality information in a transparent and efficient manner.

The American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) welcomed EdChoice to its AAPOR Transparency Initiative (TI) in September of 2015. The TI is designed to acknowledge those organizations that pledge to practice transparency in their reporting of survey-based research findings and abide by AAPOR's disclosure standards as stated in the Code of Professional Ethics and Practices.

All individuals have opinions, and many organizations (like our own) have specific missions or philosophical orientations. Scientific methods, if used correctly and followed closely in well-designed studies, should neutralize these opinions and orientations. Research rules and methods minimize bias. We believe rigorous procedural rules of science prevent a researcher's motives, and an organization's particular orientation, from pre-determining results.

If research adheres to proper scientific and methodological standards, its findings can be relied upon no matter who has conducted it. If rules and methods are neither specified nor followed, then the biases of the researcher or an organization may become relevant, because a lack of rigor opens the door for those biases to affect the results.

EdChoice welcomes any and all questions related to methods and findings.

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