



Vouchers: The answer is still NO.

- All school privatization schemes — traditional vouchers, educational savings accounts (ESAs), tax credits, and virtual vouchers — hand out tax dollars to a few students with little or no accountability and no evidence they improve educational quality.
- Despite the claims of some voucher advocates, school privatization is not a civil rights issue. To the contrary, vouchers and private schools were used for years to perpetuate segregation. The Texas Constitution makes no provision for private schools but requires the Legislature to maintain a system of free public schools (Article 7, Section 1).
- Private school vouchers strip students of the civil rights and protections that they would have in public schools, including protections against discrimination based on religion, race, color, national origin, sex, and disability.
- The Texas Constitution also prohibits spending tax dollars for religious institutions (Article 1, Section 7), and many private schools in Texas have religious affiliations.
- Vouchers, ESAs or tax credit scholarships would not give many middle class or low income families a “choice” of schools because they would pay for only part of the cost of tuition at the best private schools and would not cover transportation costs. Vouchers would only subsidize tuition payments for wealthier Texans.
- Vouchers, ESAs or tax credit scholarships would take tax dollars from underfunded public schools, where the vast majority will continue to be educated. Texas already spends an estimated \$2,839 less per student than the national average of \$14,254.
- Voucher programs fail to educate all students. Research shows persistent negative effects on both math and reading, and this is especially true for students with special needs.
- Virtual vouchers abuse the value of technology by taking tax dollars from public schools for the benefit of private, for-profit online companies and technology vendors.

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

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