



Enough is Enough - School Vouchers

While the idea of providing families with financial assistance to help cover the cost of private or religious schooling may seem appealing, the reality is that vouchers divert precious public funds away from public schools, which serve the vast majority of students. This in turn undermines the public education system and exacerbates existing inequalities.

Voucher programs are often promoted as a way to give parents more control over their children's education. However, the reality is that vouchers benefit only a small fraction of students, while leaving behind those who are most in need. Public schools are required to serve all students, including those with disabilities and English language learners, whereas private schools have no such obligation. This means that voucher programs disproportionately benefit more affluent families, leaving behind low-income families who rely on public schools. The current bill in the K12 Education Budget Committee allows vouchers to be given out with absolutely no educational accountability.

Furthermore, there is no evidence to suggest that students who use vouchers perform better academically than those who attend public schools. In fact, some studies have shown that voucher recipients perform worse on standardized tests and are less likely to graduate from high school or go on to attend college.

We have quality private schools in Kansas, and they have a role in educating some children. Private schools play by a different set of rules because they are privately funded. What KPI and the extreme right thinkers fail to understand about public schools is they are required to take every student who lives within the school district boundary; the high achieving or special needs student, the boy or girl with a difficult home life, the non-English speaking student who hasn't been in school for three years, and the list goes on and on. Each of these students require qualified staff members using multiple resources with professional experiences. The greater the difference, the higher the need for additional staff and increased resources.

So, every time KPI convinces the legislature to add a new report, or change the data schools collect, it adds to the difficulty of the job of an educator. Resources once used on

students, now must turn to completing reports, monitoring paperwork, and defending themselves from unwarranted attacks from the outside. Our schools are not perfect. They continue to grow and evolve to meet the growing needs of all kids. Creating a private system with public tax dollars, with no oversight, no expectations, and a different set of rules isn't going to help the system, it will only harm the entire Kansas Educational System, which includes private schools. The data is clear, depending on the state, students who transfer from a public school to a private school are back to the public system in less than two years.

In conclusion, school vouchers are a misguided policy that would harm the public education system, exacerbate existing inequalities and raise serious constitutional and ethical questions. I strongly urge you to consider the negative consequences of voucher programs and to reject this proposal.

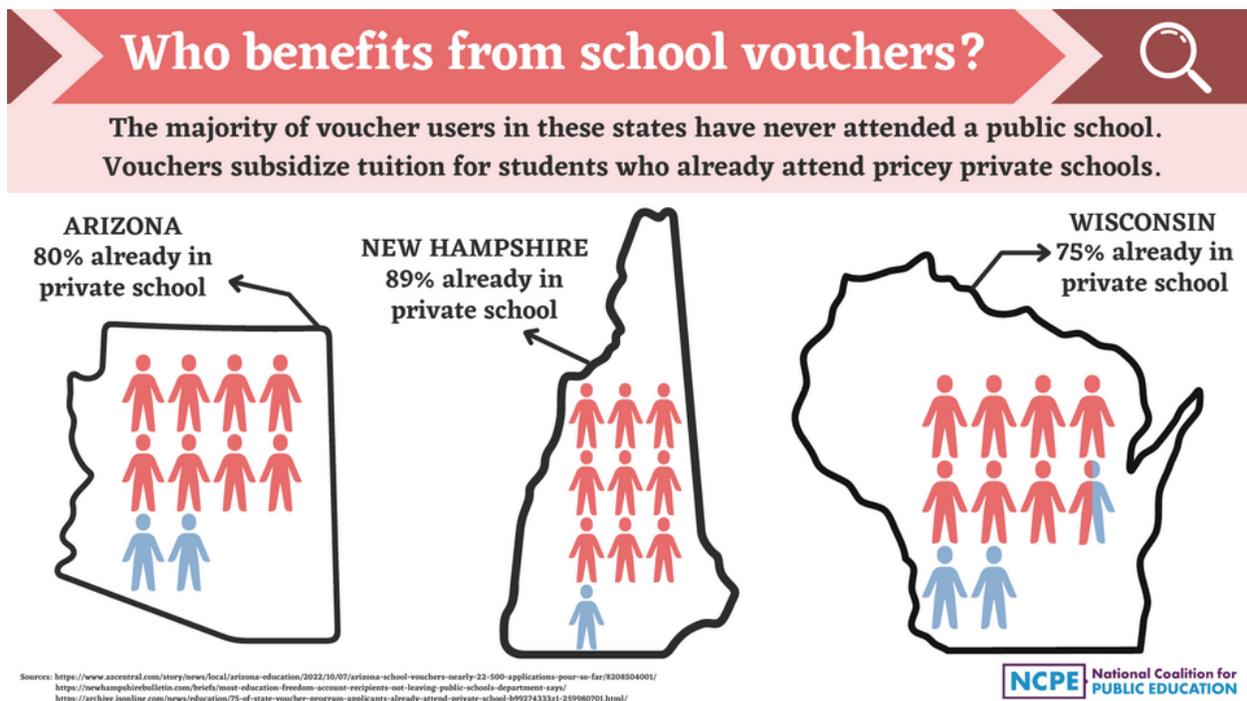
A few quick studies:

Jonathan N. Mills & Patrick J. Wolf, Univ. of Ark., [The Effects of the Louisiana Scholarship Program on Student Achievement After Four Years](#), EDRE Working Paper No. 2019-10 (Apr. 2019).

Megan Austin et al., [Voucher Pathways and Student Achievement in Indiana's Choice Scholarship Program](#), Russell Sage Foundation J. of the Social Sciences (2019).

David Figlio & Krzysztof Karbownik, Fordham Inst., [Evaluation of Ohio's EdChoice Scholarship Program: Selection, Competition, & Performance Effects](#) (July 2016).

Dave Wells, [\\$10,700 Per Student: The Estimated Cost of Arizona's Private School Subsidy Programs](#), Grand Canyon Inst. (2018).



Sources: Forquer; Ethan DeWitt, [Most Education Freedom Account Recipients Not Leaving Public Schools](#),
[Department Says](#), N.H. Bulletin (Mar. 28, 2022); Edgar Mendez, [75% of State Voucher Program Applicants Already Attend Private Schools](#),