

School Vouchers

School vouchers give parents the freedom to use all or part of the tax funding set aside for their children's education to send their children to the public or private school of their choice. Vouchers can take different forms – including universal voucher programs, income-based voucher programs, vouchers for children performing poorly in public school or who are attending failing public schools, or special needs vouchers.

Tax-credit Scholarship Programs

Tax-credit scholarships allow businesses or individuals to invest in the education of children in their communities by giving them a tax credit from state taxes for donating to non-profit organizations. The organizations use that money to fund private school scholarships for students. In some programs, students must meet certain income criteria to be eligible for scholarships. Scholarship Granting Organizations (SGOs) are non-profits that can be started by anyone. Participating private schools are required to meet standards for safety, fiscal soundness, and non-discrimination.

Personal Tax Credits and Deductions

Through personal tax credits and deductions, parents are given a tax credit or tax deduction from state income taxes for approved educational expenses. This usually includes private school tuition as well as books, supplies, computers, tutors, and transportation. Even when tuition is not eligible for the credit or deduction, these programs still make school choice easier for parents because they relieve the burden of non-tuition expenses at private schools. Some programs restrict the income level of eligible recipients or the amount they can claim.

Open Enrollment

Open Enrollment improves student achievement and enhances parental choice in education by providing additional options to students to enroll in public schools without regard to their parents' residence. Open Enrollment provides students in the traditional public school system the choice to enroll in a school in any district provided without regard to the pupil's school of residence. Open Enrollment laws vary by state with some states having more restrictive policies and others more liberal.

Homeschooling

Parents who choose homeschooling educate their children outside of public or private schools, typically within their own homes. This method of education is becoming more and more common in the United States. Many states require standardized test scores, curriculum approval, and regular professional evaluation of students.

Charter Schools

Charter schools combine the accountability and oversight of traditional public schools with the flexibility of private schools. Charters are tuition-free independent public schools that are freed from many state and local rules and regulations in exchange for increased financial and academic accountability. Parental involvement is strongly encouraged. Charters are open to all children – students are selected at random. They are accountable for results-based student achievement.

Magnet Schools

Magnet Schools are free public elementary and secondary public schools of choice that are operated by school districts or a consortium of districts. Magnet schools have a focused theme and aligned curriculum to themes like Science, Technology and Engineering (STEM), Fine and Performing Arts, International Baccalaureate and International Studies, MicroSociety, Career Tech, and many others. They use the state, district, or Common Core standards in all subject areas, however, they are taught within the overall theme of the school.

Virtual Schools and Online Schooling

Virtual schools are institutions that teach students entirely or primarily through online curriculum. They provide flexibility and allow for highly individualized, personalized instruction. In some states, virtual schools must have a brick-and-mortar location where children go to receive online instruction. In other states, online instruction can be done from home.

Blended Learning

A blended learning approach combines face-to-face classroom teaching with web-based online learning.

