

# Fact Sheet: Vouchers Are Not the Solution for Educational Improvement

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- **Voucher programs hurt student outcomes**

- Evaluations in Louisiana,<sup>1</sup> DC,<sup>2</sup> Indiana,<sup>3</sup> and Ohio<sup>4</sup> found negative impacts on student achievement. For instance, Louisiana's program lowered math scores by 0.4 standard deviations<sup>5</sup>—more than COVID.<sup>6</sup>

- **Vouchers take money out of families' pockets**

- Vouchers rarely cover full private school costs, creating barriers for lower-income families. In Arizona, the average voucher (\$6,000-\$9,000)<sup>7</sup> is not enough to cover average private school costs (\$10,196).<sup>8</sup>
- Private schools often raise tuition — in some cases by as much as 25%<sup>9</sup> — following the expansion of voucher programs. The average family cannot afford to pay for these additional costs.

- **Vouchers pay tuition for wealthy families with public funds**

- Most vouchers go to students already in private schools, taking public funds that could support public schools to subsidize existing private school students.
  - In Arkansas, 95% of students using vouchers did not come from public schools.<sup>10</sup>
  - In Arizona, 71% of students using Education Savings Accounts (ESAs) in 2023 were already enrolled in private or homeschool.<sup>11</sup>

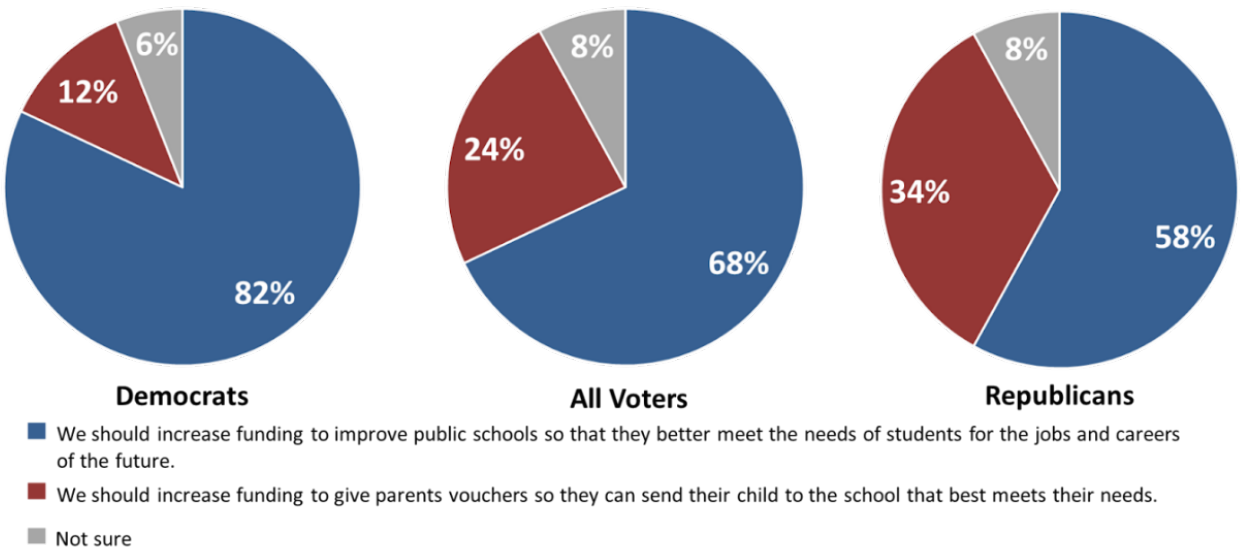
- School voucher programs disproportionately benefit the most advantaged students, who are overwhelmingly white and wealthy.<sup>12</sup>
  - Arizona’s wealthiest families use ESAs at five times the rate of the state’s poorest families.<sup>13</sup>
- **Rural schools are disproportionately harmed by voucher programs**
  - Vouchers don’t serve rural communities; instead, they drain much-needed funds without expanding educational options for students.
  - Rural students often don’t have private schools nearby, so voucher programs are hard, if not impossible, for them to use.<sup>14</sup>
    - Just 34% of rural students have any private schools within 5 miles, compared to 92% of urban students.<sup>15</sup>
    - In Tennessee, 42% of rural school districts have no private schools at all.<sup>16</sup>
  - Rural districts rely more heavily on state funding, so when vouchers siphon away state education funding, rural schools face greater negative impacts.<sup>17</sup>
  - Similarly, rural states rely more on Title I funds than others. And in some, including Kentucky, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and West Virginia, rural districts received more Title I funding than other districts. Any efforts to change Title I to allow funds to be used for private schools could disproportionately impact rural communities.
- **Vouchers erode student civil rights protections**
  - Many states require parents to waive their rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act — like the right to an individualized education program (IEP); a free appropriate public education (FAPE); and education in the least restrictive environment (LRE) — when accepting vouchers.<sup>18</sup>
  - There are no guardrails to prevent private schools from using selective admissions policies and discriminatory practices that exclude LGBTQ+ students, students with different religious beliefs, and students of color:<sup>19</sup> vouchers don’t provide students with school choice, they provide schools with taxpayer-funded student choice.
    - An investigation in Wisconsin revealed that 15% of schools accepting vouchers had policies that appeared to discriminate against students with disabilities.<sup>20</sup>
    - A federal evaluation of DC’s voucher program found the main reason cited for not using vouchers was not being able to find a school that would provide needed accommodations.<sup>21</sup>

- **Voters from All Parties Want More Federal Spending on Public Schools, Not Less**

- Voters in All4Ed’s OpinionatED 2024 election exit poll<sup>22</sup> prefer increasing federal funding for public schools over private school vouchers. This includes 68% of all voters and majorities of Republicans (58%) and Trump voters (55%).
- Vouchers are not a priority for voters: fewer than half say vouchers as important. Meanwhile, at least 75% of voters believe it’s important to ensure schools are safe and welcoming for all students and provide students with career-connected learning opportunities like internships and apprenticeships.

**When asked to choose, majorities of Democratic and Republican voters prefer increasing funding for public schools over vouchers.**

Which approach do you favor more?



## Endnotes

1. [https://www.nola.com/news/education/louisiana-school-vouchers-academic-results-la-gator/article\\_06eaec14-e8a2-11ef-82b9-d75d434eaa34.html](https://www.nola.com/news/education/louisiana-school-vouchers-academic-results-la-gator/article_06eaec14-e8a2-11ef-82b9-d75d434eaa34.html)
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15. [https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/es\\_20170330\\_chingos\\_evidence\\_speaks.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/es_20170330_chingos_evidence_speaks.pdf)
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22. <https://all4ed.org/publication/voters-views-on-education-in-2024/>