



87th Legislative Session

# Texas PTA Legislative Priority

## KEEP PUBLIC DOLLARS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Oppose legislation that authorizes state funds be used to pay for private school tuition and related costs.

### Vouchers

- **Do not ensure accountability.**
  - Vouchers send public dollars to private schools that are not accountable to the public for producing results.
- **Are a step backward in serving students with disabilities**
  - Over the past 30 years, federal and state laws have evolved to ensure students with disabilities receive a free, appropriate public education. Private schools are not required to provide special education services mandated by federal and state laws.
- **Violate separation of church and state.**
  - The U.S. Constitution prohibits any government “establishment of religion.” Tax dollars directed toward private schools of religious origin violates this principle.
  - The U.S. Constitution ensures “free exercise of religion”; no government has proper authority to dictate a religious community’s expression of faith. Regulation and oversight always accompany allocation of public tax dollars, thus violating freedom of religion.
- **Provide choice for some, not all.**
  - Private schools have a profit motive to admit students with the fewest educational challenges.
  - Vouchers disproportionately benefit students living in urban areas due to limited access to private schools in rural Texas.
  - Vouchers do not address many needs of low-income, at-risk students such as transportation, free and reduced-priced lunches, textbooks and other instructional materials, assessment of special needs, access to additional remediation programs, and full cost of tuition.
- **Drain critical funding.**
  - Vouchers drain additional resources from the public school system.
  - Public funds should remain in the public school system that serves the vast majority of Texas students.

### Types of Vouchers

#### Education Savings Account Programs (ESA) Programs

- A form of voucher program that allows eligible parents to use a portion of funds the state expends for their child’s public school education to fund private school tuition, distance education, and homeschooling materials and curriculum. The remainder of the funds, generally around 30%, are kept by the public school the student previously attended.

#### Tax Credit Scholarship Programs

- Corporations can earn tax credits by donating money to a scholarship program that uses the dollars to pay for private school tuition for students.

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