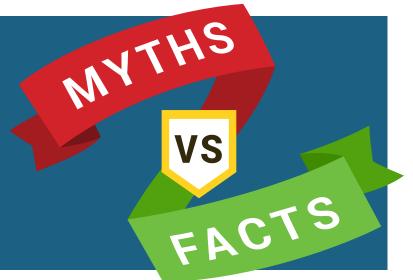


#### **Parental Choice**

TPSA supports public policy that provides Texas families meaningful educational options and more economic accessibility to such educational options through programs such as, but not limited to, the following:

- Tax Credit Scholarships
- Educational Savings Accounts
- Individual or Corporate Tax Credits or Deductions



# **MYTH:** "School Choice" will divert money away from the public schools to private schools.

**FACT:** In states with the oldest and largest educational choice policies, the inflation- adjusted per-pupil funding has increased, and the average performance of district schools is as good or better than when the choice policies were first enacted.

**FACT:** Most students will continue to benefit from a public-school education, because the many advantages offered by public schools, such as sports and other extra-curricular activities, are attractive to families. This is not a zero-sum game where private schools win, and public schools lose. It is a win-win for communities when all kids can flourish in the educational setting best suited for them.

**FACT:** School choice programs may slightly add to the fluctuation of student enrollment, but an overwhelming number of American families are still choosing schools based on ZIP Code.

#### **MYTH:** "School Choice" gives taxpayer money to wealthy families who send their children to private schools.

**FACT:** We support prioritizing the poor and vulnerable in any parental choice program. The bills we will be supporting are only for students not currently enrolled in private schools.

**FACT:** The wealthy currently benefit from school choice because they have the means to pay for private school or the means to move to live in the best public-school districts. They do not need these programs. The economically disadvantaged do.

#### **MYTH:** "School Choice" funnels taxpayer dollars to private schools without transparency, accountability, or oversight.

FACT: We only support parental choice policies that limit private school participation to accredited schools.

**FACT:** The private school accreditation process covers curriculum standards and fiscal oversight in a very responsible way. Accreditation requires that the curricula used in private schools be at least as rigorous as that used in public school, but there is flexibility in that choice.

# MYTH: "School Choice" programs are just the beginning of getting vouchers passed; the programs will expand to take more and more public-school funding.

**FACT:** These programs will only expand if they are successful, and families demand more access. This means students are being well-served by having increased choice.

**FACT:** 33 states have some form of educational choice. No state has ever repealed a program once they are established, because they are so effective and popular.

#### MYTH: "School Choice" violates the separation of church and state.

**FACT:** The constitutionality of school choice programs has been proven many times, most recently in the Carson v. Makin case.

**FACT:** When all parents can send their children to the school of their choice, this is not an endorsement of religion but the free exercise of a parent to choose their school.

**FACT:** In the most recent ruling, Carson v. Makin, Maine's "nonsectarian" requirement for otherwise generally available tuition assistance payments to parents who live in school districts that do not operate a secondary school of their own was found to violate the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment.

# MYTH: In a "voucher system," schools will be able to pick their students, and the poor will remain left behind, if not pushed further back.

**FACT:** Florida has the nation's largest "school choice" program which enrolls largely low-income students from low-income schools. The average household income is \$43,123 and 65% of program participants are Black and Hispanic. 43% of the children are from single parent households.

**FACT:** According to a study by the Urban Institute, 57% of Florida Tax Credit (FTC) scholarship students enrolled in college, compared with 51% of non-FTC students.

**FACT:** FTC students had higher college-going rates in all sectors: two-year, four-year public, and four-year private colleges. Additionally, FTC participants were more likely to attend college full time.

FACT: Average household income of recipients of the Illinois tax credit scholarship is \$43,357.

#### MYTH: "School Choice" will hurt rural schools the most.

**FACT:** Rural schools are not beset by the problems in large, urban districts. They are smaller, safer, and more community-centered, the very reasons urban parents choose non-public options.

**FACT:** Non-public options are less available in rural areas. The likelihood of a rural school experiencing a mass exodus is remote. Families in another ISD choosing a non-public option will have no impact on the perstudent funding in rural areas.

