



## 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

MYTHS

VS

FACTS

**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 per-student funding in rural areas.