

Helping Parents Help Their Kids In School

(NAPS)—Here's news about education many parents may be glad to learn: More than 1.5 million students are heading back to school this fall with the help of a private educational choice program, a number that would have been almost unimaginable 30 years ago.

The Problem

For years, polling has shown a gap between where parents say they would like their students to learn and where children actually go to school. About 80% of students attend their zip-code assigned school, yet only 35% of parents say this would be their preference if given a choice. Instead, 64% of parents say they would opt for a private school, home education, charter school, or public school in a different area.

An Answer

Fortunately for those parents, while they've been busy helping kids with homework, driving to sports practices, and managing the everyday demands of raising kids, lawmakers across the country have been working to give them exactly what they want.

Today, nearly 50% of K–12 students are eligible for one of the country's 75 school choice programs across 34 states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico. Nearly 20 of those programs were created since the pandemic disrupted education. Through education savings accounts, vouchers and tax-credit scholarships, families can get financial support for options beyond their assigned public school, including private school tuition, tutoring, special-needs services and other educational expenses.

More Good News

Another opportunity is coming in 2027. A new federal tax credit will help generate donations to scholarship-granting organizations that provide scholarships families can use for tuition, tutoring, special-needs services, and other education expenses. More than 83% of students meet the income eligibility requirement, and 30 states have already opted to participate.

The response from families suggests those new options are filling a real demand. Alabama's choice program grew nearly 50% in its second year to over 34,000 students. Idaho's new Parental Choice Tax Credit drew 7,055 applications covering 12,561 students. And with over 100,000 participants, the new education savings account program in Texas is poised to be the nation's largest day-one choice program.



The school your children returned to this fall doesn't have to be the school they return to next fall—it can be a much better fit for them.

Understanding School Choice

Growth this fast can understandably raise questions. When states make significant changes to something as important as education, especially when public dollars are involved, parents and policymakers should ask whether those policies are working and what they mean for students.

Fortunately, school choice isn't nearly as new as the recent wave of legislation might suggest, and researchers have studied the effect of these programs and their effects for decades.

EdChoice has reviewed the approximately 200 empirical studies examining school choice's effect on such important outcomes as academic achievement, educational attainment, parent satisfaction, fiscal effects, school safety, and more, and 83% of these studies detected positive effects.

Families benefit from having more options because children aren't interchangeable. One may thrive in a large neighborhood school while another needs smaller classes, a different academic approach, specialized services, or a safer environment. Families with financial means have always had more freedom to respond—to move to another neighborhood, pay tuition, or purchase additional help. School choice extends that freedom to families regardless of their ZIP code or income.

For many families, a new school year brings excitement and a fresh start. For others, it may bring renewed concerns about academics, safety or whether a school is simply the right fit.

What Parents Can Do

If that's your family, now is the time to learn what options are available. Some school choice programs accept applications during the school year, while others will open enrollment in the coming months for 2027–2028.

Learn More

To see what this can mean for your kids, visit at edchoice.org.