

UEA Issue Brief

Education Vouchers and Voucher-like Schemes



UEA believes Utah must equip every school with the resources to deliver quality education that prepares each child for a successful future. **UEA opposes school vouchers, tax credits, “backpack” funding, education savings accounts and “scholarship” programs** that funnel money intended for public education to personal student accounts or privately-run entities.

- A well-resourced public education system should benefit all students, no matter their background or zip code. Utah struggles to fund the education options we already have and must **not shift more funds to private providers**.
- Utahns value taxpayer accountability. Vouchers divert funds away from public schools to **private providers with little or no taxpayer accountability**. Additional voucher-like schemes will require increased government bureaucracy and administrative oversight when auditing, tracking and accounting for existing taxpayer funded options is already fraught with difficulty.
- Vouchers subsidize private school for affluent families along the Wasatch Front, **at the expense of rural students and families** unable to cover the difference in private school tuition.
- We value **options that are open to all students**. Private schools can deny a student admission for any reason and require parents to waive their federal IDEA (special education law) rights.
- Utah currently provides a **robust range of taxpayer-funded K-12 education alternatives**,¹ including:
 - Traditional neighborhood public schools with generous open enrollment policies;
 - Public charter schools;
 - Public online schools;
 - Dual enrollment (Public and private/home school); and
 - Special needs private school scholarships and 529 plan tax credits.
- Studies show providing parents with additional school options **does not increase student achievement**.^{2,3,4}
- Data show **parents are overwhelmingly satisfied** with their neighborhood school.^{5,6}

¹ [“A summary of Utah’s education choice options”](#), Sutherland Institute (Sept. 16, 2021)

² Jeffery R. Dean and Patrick J. Wolf, “Milwaukee Longitudinal School Choice Evaluation: Annual School Testing Summary Report 2008-2009”, (Fayetteville, AR: April 2010), p. 14.

³ [“Evaluation of the Cleveland Scholarship and Tutoring Program”](#), Center for Evaluation & Education Policy, p. 19 (Feb. 9, 2006)

⁴ [“Evaluation of the DC Opportunity Scholarship Program, Final Report”](#) U.S. Department of Education (June 2010).

⁵ [2020 PDK Poll](#), Langer Research Associates (2020)

⁶ [“Civics Education in Utah”](#), Quantitative Data, Sutherland Institute (2021)