School Choice for Some???

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Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)
Agenda

• Types of Private School Vouchers
• Vouchers in the States
• Vouchers – Administration and U.S. Congress
• Reasons to Oppose Vouchers
• CEC’s Position on Choice
• Support Public Education
Types of Vouchers

Traditional Vouchers
- All Students
- Targeted
  - Military
  - Disabilities
  - Poverty
  - Poor Performing Schools
- Foster Child

Backdoor Vouchers
- Tuition Tax Credits
- Education Savings Accounts

Portability
- A Step Towards Vouchers
- Title I funds “follow the student”
Traditional Voucher

Taxpayer

Government

Private School

Student
Education Savings Account

Taxpayer

Government

Savings Account for Family

Private School
Tuition Tax Credits

Business or Individual

Scholarship Org.

Donation

Voucher

Student

Government

Private School

Voucher

Tax Credit
Title I Portability

Title I Dollars

Federal Government → States → School Districts → Public Schools

Portability

Federal Government → States → Follows the Child to School
Title I Portability
The Money “Follows the Child”
Original attempts allowed money to flow to private schools as well.

Once the funding formula is broken, easier to turn it into a voucher.
Vouchers in the States

46 programs in 25 states

21 Voucher
(10 – focus on students with disabilities)

21 TTC
(2 – focus on students with disabilities)

6 ESA
(4 – focus on students with disabilities)

Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Montana, New Hampshire, Nevada, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia, and Wisconsin. Programs have also been enacted in Washington, D.C. and Douglas County, Colorado.
Actions the Administration & Congress Could Take

- Tax reform – Tuition Tax Credits
- Appropriations – Grants to Study & Expand
- ESSA Implementation
- Stand-Alone Legislation
Congress - Stand Alone Bills

**H.R. 610, Choice in Education Act** – King (R-IA).
- Creates vouchers using federal funds

**S. 235, CHOICE Act** – Scott (R-SC).
- Expands schools choice for students with disabilities and children from military families.
- Expands existing District of Columbia voucher program.
- CHOICE Act introduced in House – Rokita (R-IN)

**S. 148, Education Opportunities Act** – Rubio (R-FL).
- Federal tax credit for private school scholarships.
- Educational Opportunities Act introduced in House – Rokita (R-IN).

**ALL ARE NON-STARTERS IN THE CONGRESS!!!**
S. 1294, Native American Education Opportunity Act – McCain (R-AZ).

- Education savings accounts for Native American tribes.

H.R. 1462, Ending Common Core and Expanding School Choice Act – Biggs (R-AZ).

- Portability – Title I funds – follows student in public or private school.


- Use Coverdell savings accounts for home – schooling activities.

ALL ARE NON-STARTERS IN THE CONGRESS!!!
PROPOSAL: Mr. Trump’s first budget will immediately add an additional federal investment of $20 billion towards school choice. This will be done by reprioritizing existing federal dollars. Specifically, Mr. Trump’s plan will use $20 billion of existing federal dollars to establish a block grant for the 11 million school age kids living in poverty. Individual states will be given the option as to how these funds will be used.
Trump & DeVos Education Budget

$250 million to expand and study private school vouchers

$1 billion to encourage districts to adopt Title I portability

Cuts current public school programs to pay for it
Getting vouchers through Congress might be a very tough sell.

- Democrats don’t like vouchers.
- Republicans don’t like federal programs.
- Nobody thinks the Congress has the votes to do a federal school choice law.

Expanding school choice is a nonstarter with House and Senate appropriators!

- Recently lawmakers in both chambers have failed to fund either of the school choice proposal in the President’s FY 2018 budget (with the exception of a small increase for charter schools – language in bill states Secretary must get OK from Congress to create a school choice initiative with the funds).
• Congress not supportive of White House backed first-of-its-kind federal tax credit scholarship program.
  • Contentious provision that could complicate already fraught politics of passage.
  • Fiscal hawks are worried it will add to the final cost of a tax bill.
  • School choice will complicate the overarching goal of tax overhaul – streamlining and simplifying the tax code.
Recent White House on Vouchers?

• Looking less likely the White House will push to include a federal tax credit scholarship program in the sweeping tax overhaul package.

• White House spokesman recently said the president is still “committed to pursuing a robust school choice proposal.”

• Another vehicle to pass – budget reconciliation?? – not likely!
Recent White House on Vouchers?

- Rumors – President’s FY 2019 Budget
  - Possible leaked memo (accuracy???) from White House’s Domestic Policy Council to the Office of Management and Budget
    1. $1 billion to create an education savings account for military families living on bases.
    2. State option funding stream – enhance and supplement existing school choice programs or create a new program.
U.S. Secretary of Education on Choice and Public Education

• Secretary DeVos championing school choice for more than a decade through advocacy organizations like the American Federation for Children.

• What does the U.S. Secretary of Education say about school choice and public schools?:
  – “Every family should have the ability to choose the learning environment that is right for their child. They shouldn’t have to sue their way to the Supreme Court to get it.”
  – “School choice “can help” advance God’s kingdom.”
  – “Dead-end public education system.”
  – “If we truly seek to be student-centric we must give families increased choice.”
• After nine months in office no specifics about how she and her department will “reinvent” education in the nation.

• Heard from an educator – “Many of us have been rethinking schooling for years and making significant strides in innovative and effective education in learning models that are different from the “old days”.”
Three Ways DeVos Could Push Choice Without Congress

1. Make it a priority for federal grants
   - Draft federal grant priorities released by ED – comments due Nov. 13 – big emphasis on choice included

2. Use her secretarial megaphone – speeches on virtues of choice

3. Open up the Every Student Succeeds Act’s weighted student-funding pilot.
   1. LEAs to combine federal, state, and local dollars into a single funding stream tied to individual students.
Not a Viable Solution for Vast Swaths of America

- Severe limitations of the Administration's one-sized-fits-all vision of expanding private school voucher nationwide:
  - Rural and suburban areas are either sparsely populated or organized in small districts where there are not enough schools for vouchers to be a viable or effective policy solution.
  - Vouchers could dramatically destabilize public school systems and communities.
Not a Viable Solution for Vast Swaths of America

• Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY) used his limited time for questions during DeVos’ confirmation hearing to speak about the special challenges facing rural and frontier schools in Wyoming.

• Dense districts – New York City, 1 million students, 1,500 public schools.

• Sparse Districts – Montana, 150,000 students, 413 districts.
85% of the 11,200 regular school districts fall into two categories of sparse and average districts – vouchers unworkable as a logistical matter.

The President has advocated for a funding distribution that would favor states that have private school choice.

States that do not allow private school vouchers, could lose funding as formulas shift funding toward states that do.
### Reasons to Oppose Voucher Schemes

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Vouchers Violate the Principle of Religious Freedom

The vast majority of vouchers go to religious schools

The government should not fund religious education

Taxpayers should not be forced to fund religious education with which it disagrees
Don’t Improve Student Achievements

**Louisiana:**
“Students using an LSP scholarship performed significantly **worse** in math after using their scholarship to attend private schools.”

**Ohio:**
“Students who use vouchers to attend private schools have fared **worse** academically compared to their closely matched peers attending public schools.”

**Indiana:**
“Voucher students who transfer to private schools experienced **significant losses** in achievement.”

**District of Columbia:**
“The OSP had a statistically significant negative impact on the mathematics achievement of students offered or using a scholarship.”
Vouchers Don’t Improve Public Schools

- Vouchers aren’t school reform
- They take money away from solving real problems
- They only go to a few students
Vouchers Drain Funds from Public Schools

- Same overhead and administrative costs but less money
- Milwaukee raised taxes
- Indiana an extra $16 million
Vouchers Drain Funds from Public Schools

- Reduces number of students
- Reduces number of dollars in the community
- Reduces dollars overall
- Places a larger burden on the community
Vouchers Lack Accountability

- No reporting
- No testing
- No accounting for funds
- No teacher standards
- No curriculum standards (creationism, dinosaurs)
Voucher Students Lose Rights

IDEA
Title IX
Due Process
Free Speech
Open Records
Vouchers Don’t Allow Parents to Make Better Decisions

Parents aren’t given full and accurate information

Voucher schools can reject students for many reasons:

- Religion
- Disability
- Money
- Academic Record
- Gender
Vouchers Don’t Help Low Income Students

Vouchers can’t pay full tuition for most private schools

In Cleveland, the biggest obstacle to students was not being able to pay any extra money

Indiana program funded mostly students in private schools already, costing an extra $16 million
What Could Go Wrong?

- Overpayments in Indiana of at least $4 million between 2011 and 2014
- Vouchers Paying for Cars and Television
- Schools Without Working Bathrooms
- Failed Charter Schools Reopening as Private Voucher Schools
- Schools that Don’t Charge Others Tuition
- Schools Primarily Teaching Using DVDs
- Payments of $139 Million in Wisconsin Schools that Don’t Meet State Requirements
- Schools Taking Vouchers for Students with Disabilities with No Special Education Teacher
- Requiring Students to Sign Religious Pledges
- Schools Accepting Vouchers for Kids in Public Schools
CEC’s Position on School Vouchers

- CEC opposes private school vouchers:
  - Contrary to best interests of children and youth and their families, the public school system, local communities and taxpayers
  - Contradict and undermine central purposes of civil rights laws (IDEA)
- CEC opposes private school vouchers for these specific reasons:
  - Absence of necessary accountability
  - No guarantee of FAPE
  - Families opt out of procedural protections
  - Segregation within the private school
  - No guarantee of equal access
  - Promotes re-segregation rather than diversity
  - Use of public education funds for private schools
It is the policy of CEC that the following criteria with respect to children and youth with exceptionalities be adhered to when parents, professionals, school authorities, policymakers, and authorizers consider the development of charter school policy, the content of contracts or agreements establishing individual charter schools, the operation of charter schools, and the renewal of a charter:

Charter Schools must reflect a commitment to free and universal public education, with equality of educational opportunity for all.
### CEC’s Position on Charter Schools

#### Student Access:
- Charter schools must be required to abide by the same nondiscrimination and equal education opportunity laws that apply to other public schools.

#### Provision of Free, Appropriate, Public Education Provided in the Least Restrictive Environment:
- As public schools, charter schools must be required to provide a free, appropriate, public education provided in the least restrictive environment to students with disabilities, and to ensure all of the other basic fundamental procedural rights in accordance with applicable laws, such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act in the United States.

#### Financing the Education of Children With Exceptionalities:
- Policies for charter schools and, when appropriate, charter agreements themselves, should explicitly identify responsibility for providing and paying for any special services associated with educating children and youth with exceptionalities in charter schools.

#### Accountability:
- Charter schools must be held accountable by the highest governmental authority and, when appropriate, local school programs, for providing special and gifted education and related services to children with exceptionalities, consistent with the laws applicable to public schools. These accountability measures include participation in assessment and accountability systems and adherence to personnel qualification requirements.
I support parents’ choices on high-quality schools and charter schools, and I think it plays a critical role in education. The goal for me has never been in school choice for its own end. The goal is high-quality public schools for every kid in every neighborhood to receive a great education.
CEC - Charter Schools and Vouchers
Federal Budget

CEC President Mikki Garcia Speaks Out!

- IDEA underfunded since 1975 – currently at 16% of Congressionally promised 40% of excess cost
- Jeopardizes FAPE
- Reduces access to quality PUBLIC schools that provide opportunities for ALL children
- Opposes private school vouchers
- Trump budget neglects an opportunity to answer the calls for greater federal support in key public education programs
- CEC turns to Congress to correct the course!

Tell Congress – Invest in PUBLIC Education! Visit CEC’s Legislative Action Center!
• Do you favor or oppose allowing students and parents to choose a private school to attend at public expense?
  • 52% of Americans opposed
  • 39% of Americans were in favor
• When PDK pollsters followed up with an expanded question, which asked about using public dollars to pay for private schools with religious affiliations?
  • 61% of Americans opposed
The Public Dollars for Public Schools Act

- The Public Dollars for Public Schools Act – Representative Terri Swell (D-AL) – soon to be introduced.
- CEC along with most education and disability organizations support.
- Conversation changer!
- Stopping tuition credits – TO – closing a major tax shelter that allows wealthy individuals to profit from their “charity” to voucher programs.
National School Boards Association (NSBA) recently released – Busting the Myth of One-Size-Fits-ALL Public Education.

- Shows that the broadest range of educational choices for our nation’s students are found inside public schools.
- Economies of scale allow school districts to cater to the needs of many children with diverse needs.
- Choice through a public school building or an educational program within a traditional public school.
Stay Connected: CEC’s Policy Insider Blog

www.policyinsider.org
Sign up for the weekly digest!

Policy on Dual Language Learners in Early Childhood Education

The U.S. Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services have created a joint policy to support Dual Language Learners (DLL). The purpose of this policy statement is to promote the learning of DLLs by providing States with recommendations to optimize early education experiences and promote bilingualism or multilingualism.

Read more here.

Mental Health and Wellness in Head Start

The National Head Start Association (NHSA) has released a brief examining the mental health of Head Start staff, children, and families and lists the three most important factors in developing positive mental health in children as healthy, stable relationships with adults, an environment free of toxins and fear, and good nutrition. Resources and research are included.

Read more here.

Registration for CEC’s Policy Insider

Thank you for joining the Council for Exceptional Children’s Policy Insider. This insider is a comprehensive, weekly email containing the latest policy news concerning students with disabilities, young gifts, and talents and the professionals who work on their behalf. We look forward to keeping you informed. Sincerely, CEC’s Policy and Advocacy Team

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Note: In each email you receive, there will be a link to unsubscribe or change areas of interest. Your privacy is important to us; please read our privacy policy for more information.
TELL YOUR LEGISLATORS WHAT ISSUES ARE IMPORTANT TO YOU!

• Check out our newly designed website featuring CEC’s engagement alerts.
• Take action on the latest legislation concerning children and youth with exceptionalities and the professionals who work on their behalf.
• Lookup your elected officials and candidates by simply typing in your zip code.
• Learn more about special education policy on the “Issues” pages.
• Send a letter to Congress on key policy issues: Register for email alerts!

http://cqrcengage.com/cek/home
Follow us on Twitter and Facebook for up-to-the-minute policy updates!
We need men who can dream of things that never were and ask why not.

President John F. Kennedy
Address to the Irish National Parliament,
June 1963
Let’s Hold Hands and Stick Together!
“A small group of thoughtful people could change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead
CEC lists 7 reasons for opposing the use of public funds to pay for private schools for children with disabilities. Please brainstorm additional reasons for opposition:

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•

Ideas for continued advocacy in opposition at State and Local Levels:

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•
•
Questions?
THANK YOU!

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