

## **Frequently Asked Questions About School Choice in Texas**

### **Would school choice make school boards more accountable to parents?**

**Yes.** Once parents are empowered to vote with their feet, school boards will become much more interested in addressing parental concerns.

### **Should public funds be used to pay for private schools?**

**Actually,** those tax dollars belong to the taxpayers and are held in trust for the benefit of school children. Every child should have the right to learn where they learn best, whether that be a public or private setting.

### **Would school choice destroy public education?**

**Absolutely not.** Some form of school choice has been tried now in more than thirty states and studies show that parental satisfaction is improved, student achievement is enhanced, and conditions are improved in public schools.<sup>1</sup>

### **Does the public support school choice?**

**Yes.** Overwhelmingly. A 2021 Texas poll found that 72% of registered voters support “the concept of school choice if it gives parents the right to use the tax dollars designated for their child’s education to send their child to the public school or private school which best serves their needs.” Only 20% opposed the idea.

### **Will school choice just drain money from public education?**

**No.** Most choice programs allocate less per pupil than what the public school receives, and even if a program allocated all of the maintenance and operation funding, the school district would still keep 100% of facilities funding. When students leave a district for whatever reason the district loses some income, but also no longer has to bear the cost of educating the student. And all enterprises have strategies for managing fixed costs. In fact, per-pupil spending in public school has gone up in most cities and states with private school choice programs.<sup>2</sup>

### **Would school choice just allow some to profit from education?**

**No.** Students would profit with greater choice. Just as under the current system those who provide services will be paid for those services. However, the administrative and overhead costs for private schools are considerably lower than those same costs in public schools.

### **How would a child's electing to attend a private school impact my ISD?**

The financial impact to any ISD would be exactly the same as if that child moved out of the district. Plus, the ISD would still keep 100% of its facilities funding.

### **Is school choice just another plan to destroy public education?**

**No.** Good public schools have nothing to fear from school choice. Happy kids will remain in public schools. But, why trap underserved and dissatisfied students in bad schools?

## Should private schools take the state tests?

**No.** Accredited private schools already administer nationally normed tests. Parents should be able to select the school they are convinced best meets the needs of their child.

## Will school choice lead to greater regulation of private schools?

**No.** Not if choice laws are well drafted. States already regulate private schools. The appropriate response to this legitimate concern is to create choice programs that ensure private schools retain their authority over curriculum, textbook selection, admissions, retention, disciplinary policies, personnel policies, and all other educational policy.

Religious schools automatically have even more protection. The Lemon Test (US Supreme Court, *Lemon v. Kurtzman*), part of establishment clause jurisprudence, prohibits excessive entanglement between government and religious schools. This principle prohibits excessive and intrusive regulation of religious private schools.

## Is school choice constitutional in Texas?

**Yes.** In *Edgewood IV* the Texas Supreme Court held that the issue was a question for the Legislature rather than the courts.<sup>3</sup> “As long as the Legislature establishes a suitable regime that provides for a general diffusion of knowledge, the Legislature may decide whether the regime should be administered by a state agency, by the districts themselves, or by any other means.” (emphasis added)

## Would school choice just make the system inequitable?

**No, just the opposite.** The money is held in trust for the children, not the districts.<sup>4</sup> Universal choice would provide for the ultimate equity – equity for students, not just equity for schools. The program would provide better results for students and would be totally consistent with the system put into place following the adoption of the *1876 Constitution*.<sup>5</sup>

Information provide by: Liberty for the Kids, [www.libertyforthekids.com](http://www.libertyforthekids.com)



P.O. Box 692207, Houston, TX 77269 \* 832-688-9166

[www.uspastorcouncil.org](http://www.uspastorcouncil.org)