The Future of School Choice

Education Commission of the States
National Forum on Education Policy

July 2019
Families Value Different Things

- Better Teachers
- Responsive Staff
- Learning Environment
- Personalization
- Engaged Parents
- Sense of Community
- Small Classes
- Student Safety
- Opportunities to be Involved
- College Prep
- Individual Attention
- Respect for Parents
- Extracurricular
- Religious Education

- Quality Education
- Tutorial Services
- Peer Influences
- Less Gang Activity
- Test Scores
- Student Discipline
- Less School Day Wasted
- Responsive Staff
- Individual Attention
- Religious Education
What is Education Choice?

Every child deserves access to a quality education that provides the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to prepare them for a successful career and fulfilling life.

Education choice empowers families to select the **best educational fit**.
Of all K-12 students in America, approximately 50.7 million are enrolled in public schools, 4.9 million in private schools, and about 1.8 million students are homeschooled.
School choice is now mainstream in Florida. Of Florida’s 3.4 million PreK-12 students, 47% attended a school of their choice during the 2017-18 school year.

Charter schools are **publicly-funded, independently-operated schools**. They operated under a performance contract with an authorizer (e.g. a district, the state, or other entity) and receive more autonomy in exchange for greater accountability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Charter Schools</th>
<th>Traditional Public Schools</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✔️ Tuition-free</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔️ Open to all students</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔️ Publicly funded</td>
<td>✔️</td>
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<tr>
<td>✔️ Non-sectarian</td>
<td>✔️</td>
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<tr>
<td>✔️ Accountable to state standards</td>
<td>✔️</td>
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<tr>
<td>✗ Operated by a school district</td>
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The charter construct is simple, yet profoundly different than traditional district schools.

**If a charter school is failing**, close it.

**If it is succeeding**, provide it with the ability to expand to serve more students.
Charter School Growth

Charter Students & Schools
*Source: National Alliance for Public Charter Schools
States with Charter School Laws

45 states + D.C. + Puerto Rico + Guam have Public Charter School Laws
Private Education Choice

- **Vouchers**: State-funded coupons that parents can redeem at private schools for tuition.

- **Tax-Credit Scholarships**: Businesses and individuals make private donations to nonprofit organizations that provide private school scholarships to eligible students. Businesses and individuals receive a state tax credit. Courts have consistently considered these funds as private, not state funds.

- **Education Scholarship Accounts**: A flexible education account for an individual student. Parents can customize and direct funds in an ESA to combinations of approved educational uses. All existing ESA programs are funded like vouchers, but some states are exploring funding ESAs through tax credits.
In the 2017-18 school year, nearly **500,000** students were enrolled in 50+ programs in 25 states + DC + Puerto Rico
States with Private Education Choice Programs

50+ Programs
25+ states