

What proponents say voucher expansion will do.

Levels the playing field by providing children in need with alternative options if their public school does not fit their needs.

Provide universal school choice and increase equity of opportunity.

Improve academic outcomes for students receiving vouchers.

Increasing taxpayer dollars going to private schools will not negatively impact students attending public schools.

What voucher expansion will actually do.

Children could receive a voucher having never attended public school. Kids from low-income households and students with disabilities already qualify for private school vouchers in NC. This bill would remove income requirements for families to receive vouchers, allowing taxpayer money to subsidize private school tuition for wealthier families who can afford to pay, including those who are already in private schools.

While any NC child could receive a private school voucher, the voucher does not guarantee access to the school of their choice. At many private schools, tuition costs are much higher than the amount the voucher provides. In many cases, families without financial means will be unable to pay the additional fees to gain access to the more elite private schools. Private schools are also not required to provide transportation or school meals, which means that many children whose families cannot provide these things will be excluded.

Unlike public schools, private schools choose which students to admit, and can deny entry or discriminate against students based on a number of factors such as religion, sexual orientation, and gender identity. Title IX prohibits discrimination based on sex, but exemptions exist for nonpublic religious and single-gender schools. And the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which guarantees certain services and entitlements for students with disabilities attending public schools, would not apply for students whose parents enroll them in a private school.

Overall, research findings on the impact of vouchers are mixed and there is no conclusive evidence that vouchers improve student achievement. Several recent studies have found that vouchers result in lower student achievement, especially in math. It is impossible to meaningfully evaluate North Carolina's Opportunity Scholarship Program because students receiving vouchers are not required to take the same exams as students in public schools and other private schools.

Research has shown an association between increased funding for vouchers and decreased effort to fund public schools. North Carolina is not meeting its constitutional obligation to provide a sound basic education to all children, and the state already ranks lowest in the country in school funding effort relative to our state's wealth overall. A dramatic increase in state funding for private schools will mean that North Carolina taxpayers will be responsible for funding two, instead of one system of schools, which is likely to mean even fewer resources and opportunities will be available to students in public schools.