Vouchers & Similar Schemes: Not the Way to Ensure that Every Student Succeeds

Vouchers and similar schemes undermine the public schools that educate 9 out of every 10 students. Moreover, there is no valid evidence that vouchers improve the performance of either the students receiving them or those left behind in public schools.

WHAT’S IN A NAME?
- Whether they’re called vouchers, education savings accounts (ESAs), or tuition tax credits (TTCs), the impact is the same: robbing public schools of funding and resources that may already fall far short of what is needed.
- Vouchers divert funding and resources from public schools to private, often religious, schools ill-equipped to provide the same comprehensive services and support as public schools.
- Numerous studies have found that many students receiving vouchers fare worse academically than students in traditional public schools.

PUBLIC VS. PRIVATE SCHOOLS
- The overwhelming majority of America’s students—9 out of 10—attend public schools.
- Private schools can deprive students of religious freedom, civil rights and protections, fail to provide adequate support for those with disabilities, and are not accountable to the public.
- Students with special needs who use vouchers lose many rights granted by the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and may not have the protection of an individualized education plan.
- Taxpayer dollars should go to public schools open to all students, not private schools that can pick and choose their students based on economic status, academic achievement, or even gender.
- America cannot afford to fund two education systems—one private and one public—on the taxpayer’s dime.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS
- The Trump/DeVos administration pushes for vouchers wherever it can; NEA and our partners continue to fight back.
- This year, we fought efforts to provide vouchers that would reduce funding for the public schools serving the vast majority of military-connected students.
- We are fighting for fundamental civil rights protections in the now-discredited District of Columbia voucher program, the only federally funded voucher program, and pushing back on proposals to increase spending on the program.
- We successfully defeated a proposal that would have expanded 529 plans to cover private K-12 expenses like academic tutoring, books, and supplies, and homeschooling expenses broadly defined.