

Vouchers Lack Accountability

Private school vouchers fail to provide accountability to taxpayers. Most voucher programs lack accountability measures, and many also lack proper oversight to ensure they meet even the minimal standards that do exist.

Many voucher schools are permitted to take taxpayer money without implementing any requirements for teacher qualifications, testing, or achievement. Some states do not even require private school teachers to hold bachelor's degrees.¹ In addition, many states do not require accreditation for private schools, thus, taxpayer-funded vouchers are regularly used to pay for tuition at unaccredited schools.

Voucher programs also frequently fail to enforce the minimal standards required by law. For example, US Government Accountability Office reports from both 2007 and 2013 document how the Washington, DC voucher program has repeatedly failed to meet even the most basic, statutorily required accountability standards, such as maintaining certificates of occupancy and adequate financial records.² In 2013, the head of the organization running the DC program even admitted that “quality oversight of the program as sort of a dead zone, a blind spot.”³

There is a long list of taxpayer-funded state voucher programs where funds have been misspent. For example, in Florida, voucher schools took millions in public funds for kids not even attending those schools;⁴ in Wisconsin, the taxpayer-funded voucher program paid \$139 million to schools that failed to meet the state's requirements for operation,⁵ and in Arizona, the state's Auditor General found that parents misused over \$700,000 in ESA funds on items such as beauty supplies and sports apparel with no way for the state to recoup the money.⁶

¹ U.S. Gov't Accountability Office, GAO-16-712, [Private School Choice Programs Are Growing and Can Complicate Providing Certain Federally Funded Services to Eligible Students](#), 27 (2016).

² U.S. Gov't Accountability Office, [District of Columbia Opportunity Scholarship Program: Actions Needed to Address Weaknesses in Administration and Oversight](#), Publication No. GAO-13-805 (Nov. 2013) (2013 GAO Report); U.S. Gov't Accountability Office, [District of Columbia Opportunity Scholarship Program: Additional Policies and Procedures Would Improve Internal Controls and Program Operations](#), Pub. No. 08-9 at 26 (Nov. 2007) (2007 GAO Report).

³ Lyndsey Layton, [D.C. School Voucher Program Lacks Oversight, GAO Says](#), Wash. Post (Nov. 15, 2013).

⁴ Gus Garcia-Roberts, [McKay Scholarship Program Sparks a Cottage Industry of Fraud and Chaos](#), *Miami New Times* (June 23, 2011).

⁵ Molly Beck, [State Paid \\$139 Million to Schools Terminated from Voucher Program Since 2004](#), *Wisc. State J.* (Oct. 12, 2014).

⁶ Yvonne Wingett Sanchez, [Parents Spent \\$700K in School Voucher Money on Beauty Supplies, Apparel; Attempted Cash Withdrawals](#), *The Republic* (Oct. 30, 2018).



The **National Coalition for Public Education** comprises more than 50 education, civic, civil rights, and religious organizations devoted to the support of public schools. Founded in 1978, NCPE opposes the funnelling of public money to private and religious schools through such mechanisms as tuition tax credits and vouchers.