



AMENDMENT 2:

School Choice FAQ

What will I see on the ballot?

Amendment 2

To give parents choices in educational opportunities for their children, are you in favor of enabling the General Assembly to provide financial support for the education costs of students in kindergarten through 12th grade who are outside the system of common (public) schools by amending the Constitution of Kentucky as stated.

IT IS PROPOSED THAT A NEW SECTION BE ADDED TO THE CONSTITUTION OF KENTUCKY TO READ AS FOLLOWS:

The General Assembly may provide financial support for the education of students outside the system of common schools. The General Assembly may exercise this authority by law, Sections 59, 60, 171, 183, 184, 186, and 189 of this Constitution notwithstanding.

What does Amendment 2 do?

- It allows the legislature to create new programs to support K-12 education in addition to the traditional public school system. No specific program is created.
- It retains the constitutional commitment to the public school system.

What are the goals of programs that could be enacted?

- To allow parents more educational options for their children.
 - ✓ to find the best school environment for the child
 - ✓ to provide options to parents regardless of income or zip code
 - ✓ to empower parents and give them educational freedom
- To improve the academic performance of all students, regardless of the school they attend.
- Provide more options for teachers to find the best teaching environment for them.

Do school choice programs take money away from traditional public schools?

The Kentucky Constitution remains unchanged concerning the commitment to public schools. Second, if parents send their child to an independent or public charter school, only a portion of the funding follows the child to the new school. This leaves the previous school with more funding per student.

What have other states done?

Thirty-three states plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico have programs that allow some school funds to follow the child to the school of their family's choice. These options can include tax credit scholarships, education savings accounts, and vouchers.

Forty-five states plus the District of Columbia have charter schools, K-12 public schools that are granted "charters" to serve students with innovative and flexible approaches.

Why do we need alternatives to the traditional public schooling system?

Though public schools serve some students well, the evidence shows that a disturbingly high number of public school students fail to acquire basic reading and math skills needed for future success.

For 2023 Kentucky testing, fewer than half of all students attained proficiency in 4th and 8th grade reading and math. It is even fewer for low-income and minority children.

The "Nation's Report Card" testing shows a worsening trend of education scores, as does ACT testing.

Shouldn't we just increase public school funding?

In 2023, the total funding for Kentucky's public schools was \$20,136 per student. After adjusting for inflation, total funding for K-12 in 1990 was about \$8,000 per pupil; it is now over double its 1990 value and has increased nearly every year except those years just following the Great Recession.

How effective are school choice programs?

Charter school students have proven to consistently outpace their traditional public school peers, especially among minority students.

Most studies indicate that school choice programs have a positive effect on students' academic performance, persistence to graduation and enrollment in higher education.



Who benefits from school choice programs?

Charter schools have a larger share of Black and Hispanic students, and a lower share of white students, than traditional public schools. Moreover, many charter schools target low-income, minority communities.

Most school choice programs limit eligibility to lower-income families and to children with special needs or learning disabilities. Even expanded-eligibility programs serve mostly low- and middle-income families.

How will teachers fare with the availability of school choice?

School choice and charter schools provide teachers with wider opportunities for employment among schools that offer a greater variety of teaching environments and educational philosophies. Also, increased school choice raises the demand for teachers' services. Studies indicate that this increased demand pushes up the pay for teachers generally in public, private, and charter schools.

Will charter schools and private schools adequately serve disabled students?

Charter schools and private schools are geared to serve varying populations of disabled and non-disabled students, and some specialize in disabled students. Most school choice programs have funding specifically for disabled students. Thus, for parents who find the public school inadequate to serve their child, more options will be available.

Will school choice programs enable racial discrimination or segregation by private schools?

Federal and state laws already prohibit discrimination. Furthermore, claiming that private school operators are racist, when many of them seek out underserved populations, is inflammatory. Moreover, recent evidence indicates that school choice improves racial integration.

What effect does school choice have on students who remain in public schools?

Data shows that test scores of public school students improved more for schools that faced increased competition through school choice.

Are school choice and charter schools viable options in rural areas?

Many rural areas already have private schools. The Brookings Institution found that 69% of rural families in the U.S. live within 10 miles of a private school. Many rural schools are small and can be sustained by a small population. Moreover, when school choice, including charter schools, are allowed in Kentucky, funds will become available to support more schooling options in both rural and urban areas.

Is school choice a "giveaway" to private schools, allowing "using public money for private schools?"

School choice program funds for private tuition are in exchange for an effective education. The provision of a good education is the main point of government/taxpayer funding of education. This is what "public money" is intended for. It's not for propping up any particular school or system.

Is it true that poorer educational outcomes of lower income children can only be solved by dealing with the underlying socioeconomic conditions?

There is no doubt that their socioeconomic environments affect children's educational performance. Nevertheless, many charter and private schools have figured out how to successfully engage with students and parents to overcome those challenges.

Also, the fact that charter school waiting lists are very long in many poorer areas indicates that many low-income parents inherently recognize the value of a better education.



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MISSION

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