

Vote FOR 1

Put Utah Kids 1st

Newsletter

How Utah's Parent Choice Scholarship Program Works:

Eligible Children

- All children currently enrolled in public school
- All children in low-income families
- All children newly entering Kindergarten
- All children new to Utah

Scholarship Amounts

The scholarship amount is based on household size and income

Sample of Scholarship Amounts for a Family of 5

Based on 2006-07 Reduced Lunch (RL) Income Guidelines

Household income	Maximum per child Scholarship
\$43,290	\$3,000
\$54,113	\$2,750
\$64,935	\$2,500
\$75,758	\$2,250
\$86,580	\$2,000
\$97,403	\$1,750
\$108,225	\$1,000
\$119,048 and up	\$500

To see the scholarship amount for your family, visit http://choiceineducation.org/elections_bills_2007HB148summary_voucher_amounts_table.php

- Disclose the credentials of their teachers and the school's accreditation status to parents.
- Go through an independent financial audit to determine that the school is financially stable and that scholarship funds are tracked separately from other tuition and tied to the scholarship student.
- Schools that operate in a residence, have fewer than 40 students, are a residential treatment facility licensed by the state, or encourage illegal conduct are not eligible to participate in the scholarship program.

Financial Benefits to Public Education

1. Scholarship is funded from the General Fund not the Education Fund or Uniform School Fund.
2. The public school that loses the scholarship student will keep the student funding for five years. That's right, schools are funded for students that are no longer attending, which is then used to increase funding for the students that remain.



Accountability Provisions

Participating private schools must:

- Give a nationally norm-referenced test (like the SAT or IOWA Basic Skills Test) to every student every year. (Public schools do this only in third, fifth, and eighth grades.) Report individual results to parents and school-wide results to the public.
- Employ teachers with a bachelor's or higher degree, or who have special skills or experience in the subject they are teaching and who complete a criminal background check.

- **Vote FOR** giving Utah families a **CHOICE**
- **Vote FOR** options to meet the needs of **EVERY CHILD**
- **Vote FOR INCREASED FUNDING** and **SMALLER CLASSES** in public schools
- **Vote FOR REFERENDUM 1**

Myths & Facts

In February, Governor Huntsman and the State Legislature created the Parents Choice in Education Act. This program provides scholarships that allow parents to choose the school that is best for their children. Since then, there has been a lot of misinformation about this program from organizations that want to take that choice away from Utah families.

Scholarship programs like this exist in many states across the country, and they have led to academic improvement for students who use them, and for students who choose to stay in public schools.¹ Let's look at the facts. The facts prove it: Referendum 1 is good for families and good for public education.

Myth:

Private Schools have no accountability

Facts:

Referendum 1 provides better accountability for both private and public schools by holding schools accountable directly to parents instead of bureaucrats.

The idea that parents are not smart enough to make good decisions about the education of their own children is simply not true. Parents in Utah care about their kids and are capable of choosing good schools with good teachers that meet the needs of their own children.

Real accountability comes when parents have real choices and are armed with facts and information. So, Referendum 1 requires participating private schools to:⁷

- ▶ Give a nationally recognized test every year and share the results with parents (public schools are required to do this only in third, fifth, and eighth grades)
- ▶ Go through an independent financial review to verify that they are financially stable and that they track scholarship funds separately from other tuition
- ▶ Hire teachers with bachelor's or higher degrees, or other special skills in the subject they teach and publish those qualifications to parents

- ▶ Publicly disclose all the services they offer as well as their accreditation

Then, parents have the control. They get to choose the school that best meets their child's needs.

Referendum 1 also increases the accountability between parents and local public schools. Local principals and administrators will answer to parents, instead of just bureaucrats. Wisconsin's scholarship program led to increased local control and parental involvement. Local principals now control 95 percent of their budget at the school level,⁸ so they can respond to the needs of local families. That's the accountability that bureaucrats try to avoid, but that parents deserve.

Myth:

Public schools will be hurt

Facts:

Referendum 1 helps public schools in three ways:

- 1. Increase per student funding in public schools.** This school year, taxpayers will spend more than \$7,500³ per student in public schools. The average voucher amount is under \$2,000⁶. So, when a student leaves with a voucher, at least \$5,500 stays in the local school increasing per pupil funding and lowering class size. That savings means more than \$1 billion for public school students over 13 years⁵.
- 2. Ease the burden of the coming enrollment crisis.** More than 150,000⁴ new children will enter the public school system in the next 10 years. Classrooms are already bursting at the seams with the largest class sizes in the country. Referendum 1 shifts some of that growth to private schools, where space already exists⁵, at a much lower cost to taxpayers. That leaves more money available for public schools, and will help them better handle thousands of new students.
- 3. Reduce class size and increase teacher pay.** Because public schools will have fewer students, with more money per student, schools will be able to reduce class size. A recent study also found that programs like Referendum 1 lead to better pay and higher job satisfaction for teachers.¹¹

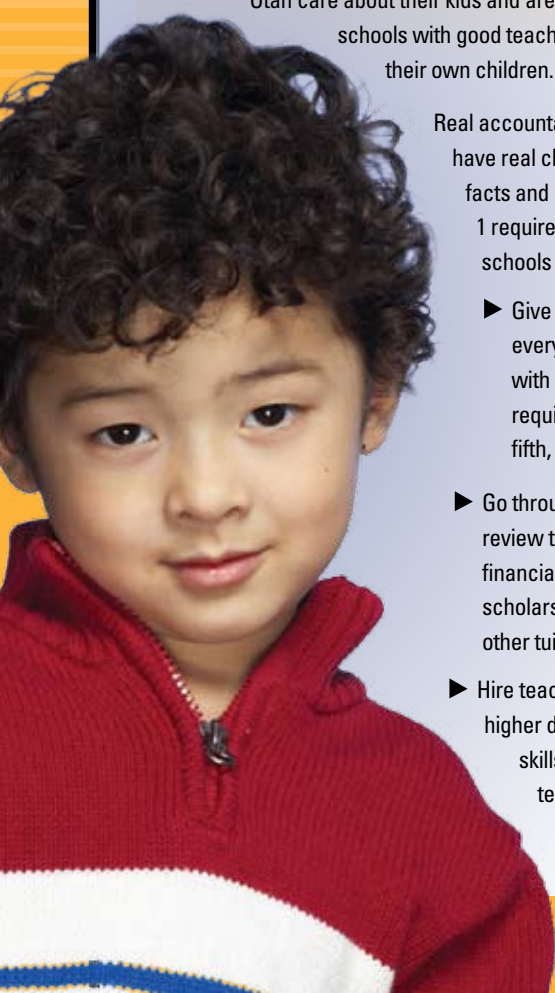
Myth:

It's just a subsidy for the rich

Facts:

Referendum 1 is targeted to benefit low- and middle-income families.

Wealthy families already have school choice. They can afford to send their kids to private schools without a scholarship, or to buy homes in neighborhoods with the best schools. Referendum 1 levels the playing field, giving all families the same choices and opportunities that kids from wealthier families already have.



Did You Know?

Parental choice scholarships make those opportunities a reality for all families. Private schools in Utah are a lot less expensive than most people think. A study from Utah State University in 2004 found that average K-8 tuition in Utah private schools was less than \$4,000.⁵ Some private schools have tuition less than \$3,000.

And students who choose their local public school benefit too. When students transfer from public schools, class sizes are naturally reduced. And since public schools keep funding for those students locally,² the students who remain get increased funding. **Referendum 1 is a benefit to all students in Utah.**

Myth:

Schools will be more segregated

Facts:

Referendum 1 actually leads to less segregation in Utah schools.

Public schools are already segregated, largely by income. According to the Civil Rights Project, Utah's public schools are among the most racially segregated in the country.⁹

- ▶ Schools in south Provo, downtown Ogden, or on the west side of Salt Lake City have students that are almost entirely poor and minority.
- ▶ Schools in Alpine, Holladay and Bountiful's hills are almost entirely wealthy and white.

That's because students are assigned to schools based only on where they live rather than how schools perform or what children need. Where families live is primarily based on income. But when families choose schools, instead of having bureaucrats draw arbitrary boundaries, schools become less segregated.

Just earlier this year, statistics proved that students who use scholarships attended schools that were more diverse, not less.¹⁰

Wealthy families already have such choices. Governor Huntsman signed this scholarship program to level the playing field and provide those choices to all families.

Sources

1. Robinson, Gerard, Marquette University. See http://www.itlmuonline.com/_incoming/ITLSCSurvey2005.pdf
2. Parents Choice in Education Act. See <http://le.utah.gov/~code/TITLE53A/htm/53A02055.htm>
3. Data from Annual Financial Reports for Utah School Districts. Compiled by Utah Taxpayers' Association. See <http://utahtaxpayer.blogspot.com/2007/08/7500-per-utah-k-12-student-in-fy2008.html>
4. Utah State Office of Education Projections. See http://www.schools.utah.gov/finance/other/AnnualReport06ar/Statistics/STUDENTS/State_Enrollment_Projections.xls
5. Utah State University in "Estimating Demand and Supply Response to Tuition Tax Credits for Private School Tuition in Utah" final report to the Utah State Legislature. See <http://friedmanfoundation.org/friedman/downloadFile.do?id=22>
6. Legislative Fiscal Analyst
7. Parent Choice in Education Act. See <http://le.utah.gov/~code/TITLE53A/htm/53A02053.htm>
8. American Education Reform Council in "Milwaukee's Public Schools in an Era of Choice," October 2003. See <http://www.cse.org/reports/031007choice.pdf>
9. See p. 22 http://www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/deseg/Racial_Transformation.pdf
10. National Center for Policy Analysis. See http://www.ncpa.org/sub/dpd/index.php?Article_ID=14814
11. "Empowering Teachers with Choice: How a Diversified Education System Benefits Teachers, Students and America (2007)" <http://www.votefor1.org/research.asp>

What does an education cost?

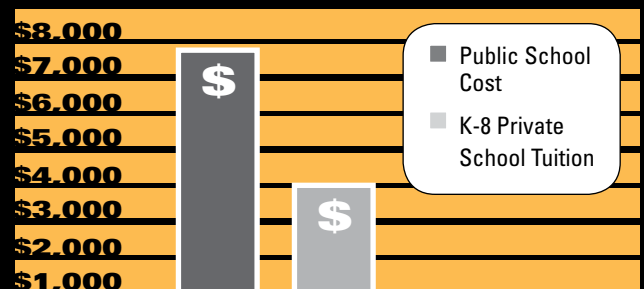
Did you know that taxpayers will spend more than \$7,500³ per student next year in public schools? The average voucher is less than \$2,000⁶. That means that every child that uses a voucher will save the public school system more than \$5,500, which stays in local schools to increase funding for the students who remain there.

Local schools will have more money, and fewer students. Funding per student goes up, while class sizes go down. It is simple mathematics.

Costs are about to skyrocket.

Did you know 150,000⁴ new students are projected to enter the school system in the next decade. That tidal wave of new students will put further strain on an already overtaxed system. Utah's class sizes are already the largest in the country.

Referendum 1 can help ease the burden on public schools by shifting some growth to private schools, where space already exists, at a much lower cost to taxpayers.



What about private schools?

Did you know Private schools in Utah cost a lot less than most people think. In fact, we spend almost double on public schools than the tuition at an average K-8 private school.⁵

That's right. A legislative study proved that average K-8 private school tuition in Utah is about \$4,000⁵ per year. Other studies have confirmed that most private schools are affordable for all Utah families.

For complete info,

visit www.votefor1.org/research.asp

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or call **(801) 532-1448**

Research Proves It

A Snapshot of Scholarship Programs Across the Country

State	Year Began	Students Served
Arizona*	1998	About 23,000
Florida*	1999	About 30,000
Maine	1873	About 6,000
Ohio	1996	About 6,000
Washington, DC	2004	About 2,000
Wisconsin	1990	About 17,000

* Multiple programs exist in these states. Year is the beginning of the first program, while students served include students in all state scholarship programs.

Scholarship programs like Referendum 1 already exist in several states across the country. Leading researchers have studied these programs and found that they improve the quality of education for all children.

Proof of Financial Benefits

Dr. Susan Aud of Johns Hopkins University found that voucher and scholarship programs in Wisconsin, Florida, Maine, Utah, and other states have already saved taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars. In a separate study that was specific to Utah's voucher program, she found that the savings would be hundreds of millions more. A research team from Utah State University found that savings would be more than \$1 billion over 13 years.

Since Utah's Constitution requires that all income tax be spent on public education, all that money will be invested back into Utah schools.

In fact, every time programs like this have been implemented across the country, funding for all students has gone up.

Referendum 1 will increase funding for students in Utah public schools, which can help reduce class size and increase teacher salaries.

Proof of Academic Benefits

Harvard University Professor Caroline Hoxby has studied school choice programs across the country for many years. Her research consistently shows that these programs lead to higher achievement for all students. Further, she found that a greater range of choices led to greater increases in achievement.

She found that students in public schools improved more when they had more options, because the schools improved as they faced competition from private schools. In fact, student improvement in math, science and language was almost double for students in schools where parents had more choice, than where parents had less or no choice.

Referendum 1, which provides choice for every family in Utah, will lead to greater performance for students who use a voucher, and for students who choose their local public school, just as other programs have done across the country.

Proof of Benefits for Teachers

Dr. Vicky Murray of the Pacific Research Institute found that choice programs like Referendum 1 lead to higher pay and more job satisfaction for teachers. They also lead to higher parental involvement, which helps ease the burden that teachers face in the classroom and also improves student performance.

In addition to the research studies cited here, there are dozens more that further prove how programs like Referendum 1 will increase funding for students in public schools, and lead to higher performance for all students. For complete studies, visit www.votefor1.org/research.asp.

Sources

1. Dr. Susan Aud: "Education by the Numbers: The Fiscal Effect of School Choice Programs, 1990-2006 (2007)" and "Utah Public Education Funding: The Fiscal Impact of School Choice (2007)"
2. Dr. Carolyn Hoxby: "School Choice and School Competition: Evidence from the United States (2004)" and "Rising Tide (2001)"
3. Dr. Vicky Murray: "Empowering Teachers with Choice: How a Diversified Education System Benefits Teachers, Students, and America (2007)"
4. Utah State University: "Estimating Demand and Supply Response to Tuition Tax Credits for Private School Tuition in Utah (2004)"

These studies and additional research available at www.votefor1.org/research.asp

