



# **SD PUBLIC SCHOOLS COALITION**

## **THE TRUTH ABOUT VOUCHERS**

The South Dakota Public Schools Coalition is committed to ensuring that all students have access to a high-quality, equitable education. As conversations about school vouchers continue, it is crucial to understand their potential impact on public education. Vouchers redirect critical funding from public schools, lack public accountability, and raise concerns about equity, student achievement, and support for students with special needs. This overview highlights key facts about vouchers and their implications for South Dakota's students, families, and communities. Supporting strong public schools ensures every child has the opportunity to succeed, regardless of background or circumstance.

### **FUNDING AT RISK: HOW VOUCHERS UNDERMINE PUBLIC EDUCATION**

*Vouchers divert funding away from public schools as all proposed funding comes from the same state budget. Strong communities are rooted in strong public schools that serve all students.*

### **PUBLIC FUNDS, PRIVATE USE: THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP IN VOUCHER PROGRAMS**

*Private schools and/or students instructed through alternative instruction "home-school" receiving voucher funds have no public accountability compared to public schools. This accountability includes both fiscal and academic public reporting and accountability boards.*

### **EDUCATIONAL INEQUITY: HOW VOUCHER PROGRAMS CAN WIDEN THE OPPORTUNITY GAP**

*Voucher programs (savings accounts) are not available to all students, potentially leaving behind students from disadvantaged backgrounds in underfunded public schools.*

### **FALLING SHORT: THE MIXED RESULTS OF VOUCHERS ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**

*Research shows mixed results on the impact of vouchers on student academic performance, with many studies finding no significant improvement or even a decline in achievement for voucher recipients. (Economic Policy Institute Research, Louisiana, Indiana, Ohio as an example)*

### **LEFT BEHIND: VOUCHER PROGRAMS AND THE CHALLENGES FACING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

*Private schools may not be adequately equipped to support students with disabilities, or refuse to accept them, leaving them with limited options if they choose to use a voucher.*

### **BLURRED LINES: VOUCHER PROGRAMS AND THE SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE**

*Voucher programs such as the South Dakota Tax Credit program divert funds away from public schools while providing scholarship dollars to religious schools, raising concerns about separation of church and state. (Vouchers typically lead to increased tuition at private schools)*