

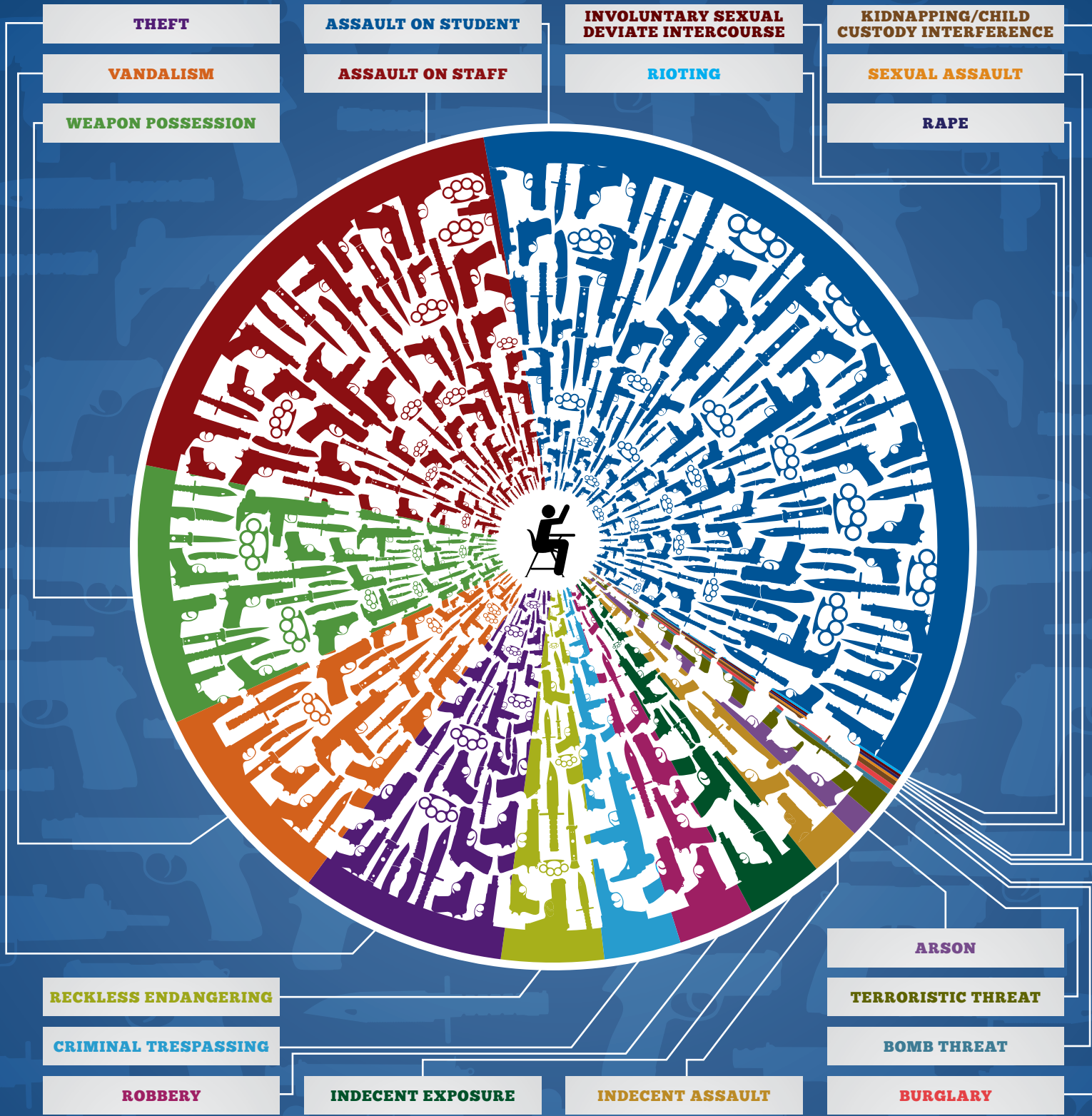


# School Choice Toolkit



# The Problem

# Violent & Failin



Source: Safe Schools Online Reporting, <http://www.safeschools.state.pa.us>. About 140 PA public schools are in the bottom 5 percent of academic performance.

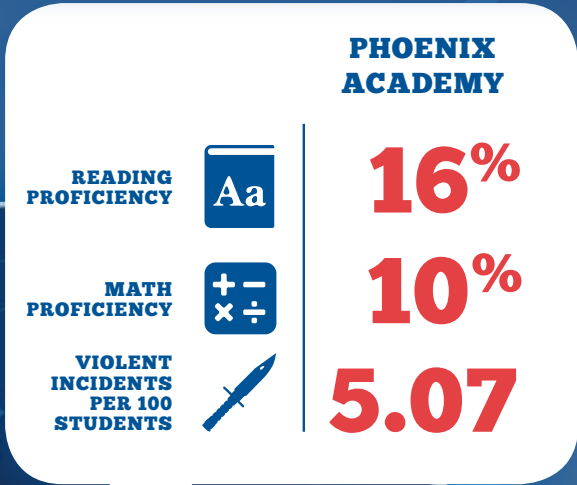
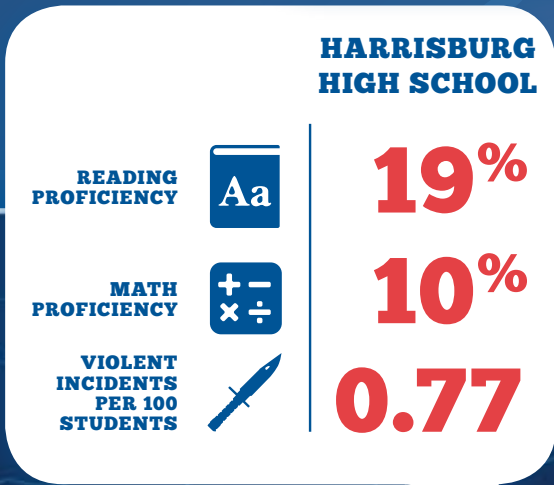
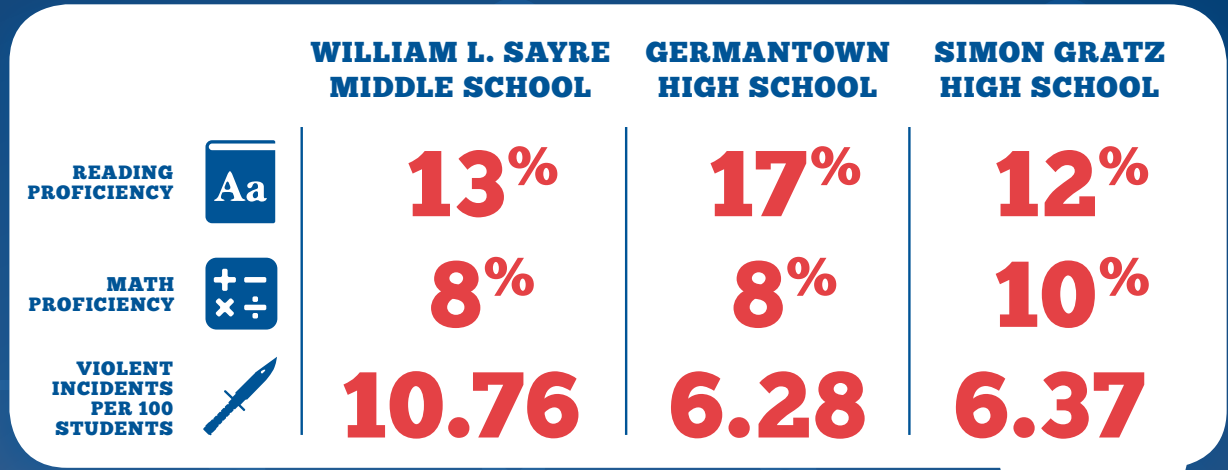
# g Schools.

		<b>ASSAULT ON STUDENT</b> <b>3,681</b> Incidents
<b>ASSAULT ON STAFF</b> <b>1,920</b> Incidents	<b>WEAPON POSSESSION</b> <b>999</b> Incidents	<b>VANDALISM</b> <b>832</b> Incidents
<b>THEFT</b> <b>821</b> Incidents	<b>RECKLESS ENDANGERING</b> <b>375</b> Incidents	<b>CRIMINAL TRESPASSING</b> <b>274</b> Incidents
<b>ROBBERY</b> <b>261</b> Incidents	<b>INDECENT EXPOSURE</b> <b>255</b> Incidents	<b>INDECENT ASSAULT</b> <b>214</b> Incidents
<b>ARSON</b> <b>140</b> Incidents	<b>TERRORISTIC THREAT</b> <b>115</b> Incidents	<b>BOMB THREAT</b> <b>28</b> Incidents
<b>BURGLARY</b> <b>23</b> Incidents	<b>KIDNAPPING/CHILD CUSTODY INTERFERENCE</b> <b>9</b> Incidents	<b>SEXUAL ASSAULT</b> <b>15</b> Incidents
<b>RAPE</b> <b>7</b> Incidents	<b>INVOLUNTARY SEXUAL DEVIATE INTERCOURSE</b> <b>5</b> Incidents	<b>RIOTING</b> <b>3</b> Incidents

## The 140 Most Violent & Failing Schools.

- Children in Pennsylvania's worst-performing schools are frequently subjected to acts of violence.
- Some 80,000 children are at risk in the worst 140+ schools alone.
- Students faced nearly 10,000 acts of violence in 2008-10, including robberies, rapes, riots, bomb threats and assaults.
- That's one violent act **every 17 minutes**.

# Lowest-Achieving Public Schools of 2011.



Harrisburg. ●

Lancaster. ●

Philadelphia. ●

## Snapshot

- The bottom-5 percent of schools: In the 2010-11 school year, only 32 percent of students were proficient in reading and 38 percent proficient in math on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA).
- In the worst 30 schools, only 21 percent of students were proficient in reading, while barely 18 percent were proficient in math.
- Students in Philadelphia's William L. Sayre Middle School scored the lowest, with only 13 percent proficient in reading, and 8 percent proficient in math.

Source: Safe Schools Online Reporting, <http://www.safeschools.state.pa.us>; Pennsylvania Department of Education, "Academic Achievement Report: 2010-2011," [paayp.emetric.net](http://paayp.emetric.net). Calculations are for the 141 out of 143 total schools in bottom 5 percent for which data are available.



## Faces Behind the Statistics:

# The Herberts.



When mother of five Joy Herbert moved to West Philadelphia from the Bronx, N.Y., her son Anthony, a ninth grader, was an engaged 'A' student and far from being in any kind of trouble. But the teenager was shocked at the violence he encountered at West Philadelphia High School: Students fighting; barrels on fire in the hallways; security guards throwing kids into class—and security bars and gates on windows and doors that made school feel like prison.

The school changed principals four times in just one year, and saw 11 arrests in just one day. When Anthony was mugged twice and had his property stolen, he dropped out.

"Walking through the hallways for the first time, I really felt sorry for myself because man, I got stuck in this hell-hole," he said.

According to Pa. Department of Education statistics, 77 percent of Anthony's former schoolmates graduate from West Philadelphia High—one of the worst academically performing schools in the state, where only 14 percent of its 11th-graders are able to do math at grade level, and 16 percent are proficient in reading. In other words, fewer than two out of 10 have basic math and reading skills.

That fact that Joy Herbert's son and many other students are trapped in a failing, violent school such as West Philadelphia High—only because of the digits in their ZIP code—has left the mother praying for a legislative solution.

Herbert admits that despite the daunting statistics, parents need to be involved. Sadly, she found that no matter how much she did, the school was still not held accountable and never improved.

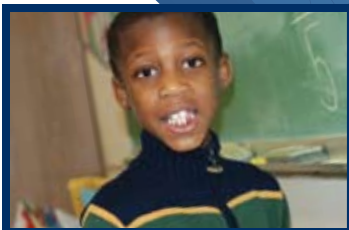
"The illusion of voice is there, but it's not real," said Herbert, who spent countless hours actively engaged as a vice-chairman of the West Philadelphia School Advisory Council. "I found that out painfully over the last year as I volunteered my time and energy and yet my son is still a drop out."

No school official ever contacted the family over Anthony's decision to drop out.

"These children we are pushing aside right now are going to be the ones you ask in 50 years to find your medication when you can't, and they aren't going to be able to read to find it," said a teary-eyed Herbert, the pain of the reality written across her face. "Without a school choice voucher program, my family and other families in this area have no hope."

The Solution

# School Choice Saves.



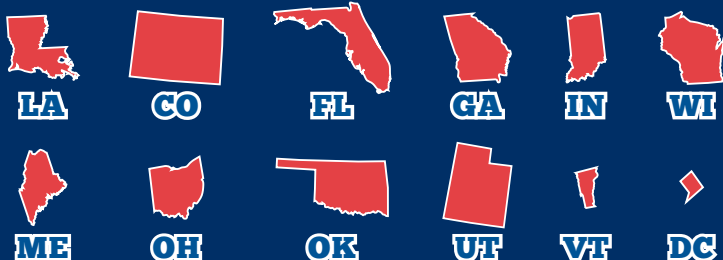
# THE DEFINITION

**SCHOOL CHOICE: An education policy that allows families to choose the best and safest school for their children, whether that is public, charter, cyber, homeschool or private, regardless of the family's residence or location.**

**Opportunity scholarships (also known as vouchers) and scholarships awarded through business tax credits give families and their children an immediate escape from violent, underperforming public schools.**

- Opportunity scholarships make education tax dollars portable. They would allow families to take a portion of the tax dollars already devoted to a child's public education and use them at a school of the family's choice—and not just consign funding to the local public school the family is assigned to by ZIP code.

- Twelve states have voucher programs, which include special needs scholarships. In 2012, Louisiana's legislature passed one of the country's broadest voucher programs, in which 380,000 students are eligible for opportunity scholarships.



**Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) Program.**

- Pennsylvania's EITC program was approved in 2001, and allowing businesses to receive tax credits for donating to non-profit organizations that award scholarships to children to attend private schools.
  - o The state gives each donating business a tax credit of 75 percent of their donation amount (or 90 percent if they pledge the donation for two consecutive years) against what they owe in state taxes.
- More than 40,000 students are in the program, with the average scholarship amount at \$1,100, and most participating families had incomes below \$29,000.
- **The program desperately needs expanding** Tax credits are currently capped at \$75 million a year, limiting the scope of the program. But the waiting lists for scholarships are long: For example, the Children's Scholarship Fund Philadelphia had 95,000 applications for 7,700 scholarships awarded over the last decade.

# School Choice A Case Study.

## Logos Academy, York: A Diamond in the Rough Part of Town

### The Context

#### FAILING

- Six of York City School District's 10 public schools fall in the bottom-10 percent of academic performance in Pennsylvania.
- Student reading proficiency is 45 percent, and math proficiency is 51 percent.
- Among William Penn High School 11th Graders:
  - o Only 1 out of 3 students can read at grade level.
  - o Three out of 4 students cannot do math at grade level.

#### VIOLENT

These six schools saw 384 violent incidents in 2010-11:

- 26 sexual assaults
- 223 assaults on students
- 58 assaults on staff
- 48 thefts
- 24 weapons possessions

#### THE LIFESAVER

Logos Academy opened in 1998 with a vision of providing a safe, sound education for children in one of York's roughest neighborhoods—and located itself in the inner city. Some highlights:

- With more than 200 students in K-9, about three-quarters of the school's students are low-income.
- Logos receives \$700,000 a year through Pennsylvania's EITC program, allowing families who could not otherwise afford a better education an alternative to York's violent, failing public schools.
- For 10 straight years, Logos students have performed above the national average in math and reading on the Stanford Achievement Test.



# Success:



**ANDREA CARABELLO,  
PARENT**

*When Andrea's 9th-grade daughter was in second grade, her husband was sentenced to 5-10 years in prison. Having served his sentence, he now tells Logos students how important their education is.*

"Logos support was tremendous. It really showed me that they were beyond the education class setting. There were many times where I couldn't afford school supplies for my children because I had to maintain a roof over their head, clothes on their back and food in their mouth. And you know what, Logos came through: school supplies, book bags, pencils, markers, erasers...that was something that I never expected."



**ERIC MENZER,  
PRESIDENT OF THE  
YORK REVOLUTION**

"(Logos founder Traci Foster) always had a vision of creating a diverse place that would bring people together from all walks of life, all income levels. I happen to think that's the future of urban public education—is finding ways to address the concentrated poverty we find in our city school system... In places like York, that have 90 percent poverty rates in our school district, there is no magic solution that one ideology or one political view is going to make work for everybody. I'm in favor of school choice in the sense of small "s" and "c" school choice...a choice that allows kids' lives to be improved, that allows different kind of solutions to be applied to different kind of problems, that allows us to work at a small scale because that's really what's important."



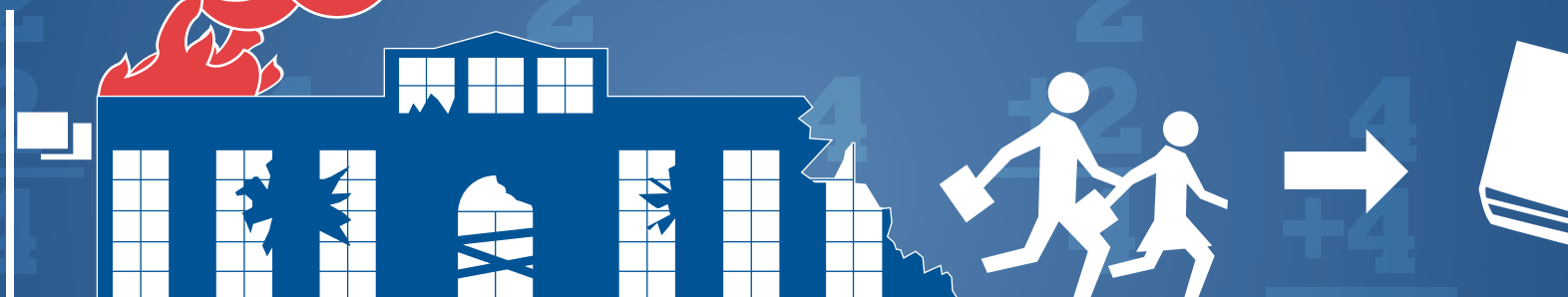
**CARLOS KELLY,  
PASTOR OF IGLESIA CRISTIANA  
DE YORK E.C. AND PARENT**

"My oldest daughter—she graduated from Logos in the first graduation class. When she went to HACC—community college—her score was 4.0. That is the maximum. And when my daughter got into Logos, she didn't speak English. We came to the States (from the Dominican Republic) in June 2000, and she went to school in August 2000—and you see results. We are a faith-based institution...but we're looking for results. It's not just preaching and being nice: We go for the results."

# Opportunity

**ONE PUBLIC  
SCHOOL STUDENT  
\$14,000**

**OPPORTUNITY  
SCHOLARSHIP  
\$7,000**



- Average public school spending of \$14,000/student.
- Students assigned to public school by ZIP code.

- Average Scholarship of \$7,000
- Only the state share of student
- Local property taxes remain w

## **PENNSYLVANIANS SUPPORT SCHOOL CHOICE: 2011 MUHLENBERG/MORNING CALL POLL**

- 54 percent support giving opportunity scholarships, or school vouchers, to low-income families.
- 61 percent support families being able to use the vouchers at both public and private schools.
- 54 percent support the use of vouchers at a school funded by a religious organization.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Muhlenberg College/Morning Call, "Annual Pennsylvania Quality of Life Survey," conducted April 2011, <http://www.scribd.com/doc/50539414/Muhlenberg-TMC-Pa-Quality-of-Life-Survey-April-2011>.

# Scholarships.

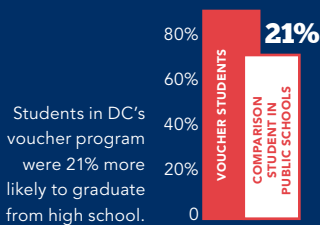
**OPPORTUNITY  
SCHOLARSHIP  
\$1000**

**SCHOOL  
CHOICE**

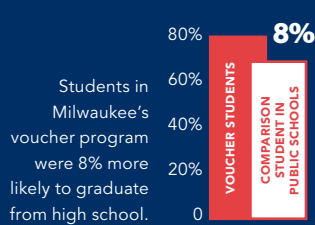


... for students in failing schools.  
... spending follows the child.  
... with public school district.

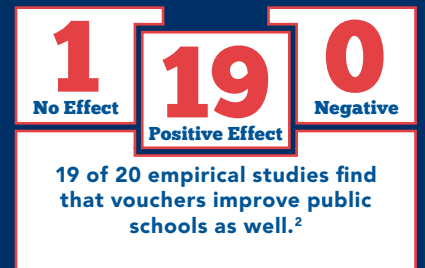
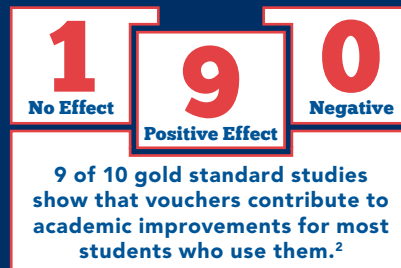
- Parents & child choose the school (public or private).
- Frees kids trapped in violent and failing schools.
- Reduces classroom overcrowding.
- Raises public school per student spending.



**WASHINGTON DC<sup>3</sup>**



**MILWAUKEE<sup>3</sup>**



<sup>2</sup> Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, "2012 ABCs of School Choice: Rising Tide," <http://www.edchoice.org/CMSModules/EdChoice/FileLibrary/785/ABCs-of-School-Choice---2012.pdf>.  
<sup>3</sup> Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, "Charting School Choice," The School Choice Advocate, December 2011, <http://www.edchoice.org/CMSModules/EdChoice/FileLibrary/766/The-School-Choice-Advocate--December-2011----Charting-School-Choice.pdf>



Source: Includes all state funding for nonpublic schools plus tax credits for EITC scholarships as a cost. \*\* Homeschooling enrollment estimate based on 2007-08 PDE data. Sources: PA Department of Education, Summaries of Annual Financial Report Data; Public School Enrollment Reports, [http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/data\\_and\\_statistics/7202](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/data_and_statistics/7202)



# School Choice Saves Taxpayers Money.

**TOTALING: \$4,299,929,628**

- Having multiple educational options in Pennsylvania already saves taxpayers \$4.3 billion a year.
- Even having alternative public school options cost less and create more efficient spending in the traditional public school system.
- Average cost to educate in different types of public schools (2009-10):
  - o Traditional district school: \$14,300
  - o Brick-and-mortar charter school: \$11,869
  - o Cyber charter schools: \$10,935
- Catholic school cost: \$3,500 for elementary, \$6,500 for high school.
- School choice saves on welfare and corrections costs for high school dropouts.
- High school dropouts:
  - o Are more likely to go to prison. A PA prison inmate costs \$38,000 a year.<sup>4</sup>
  - o Cost our economy. In 2010, 34,000 students did not graduate high school, which translates into lost lifetime earnings of nearly \$9 billion.
  - o Are more likely to be on Medicaid and other welfare programs. PA could save more than \$500 million in healthcare costs over the lifetime of each class of dropouts.
- Colleges foot the cost of remediation: \$125 million a year.<sup>5</sup>
- The cost of failure is huge, and a national problem: A study commissioned by the Obama administration in 2012 found that a youth who neither graduates nor joins the workforce costs taxpayers more than \$250,000 over the course of his lifetime.<sup>6</sup> If only 1 percent of the students currently trapped in Pennsylvania's most violent, failing schools avoid that fate after receiving an opportunity scholarship, taxpayers would save \$200 million.
- A March 2012 Council on Foreign Relations Report identified poor-quality education as a national security threat.
  - o On the 2009 Program for International Student Assessment test, or PISA—used to compare performance across the world—American students ranked 14th in reading, 25th in math and 17th in science among industrialized nations.
  - o The report notes that despite spending more on K-12 education than several other industrialized nations, U.S. students are ill-equipped to compete with their global peers, and many are unemployable and unqualified to join the military.<sup>7</sup>

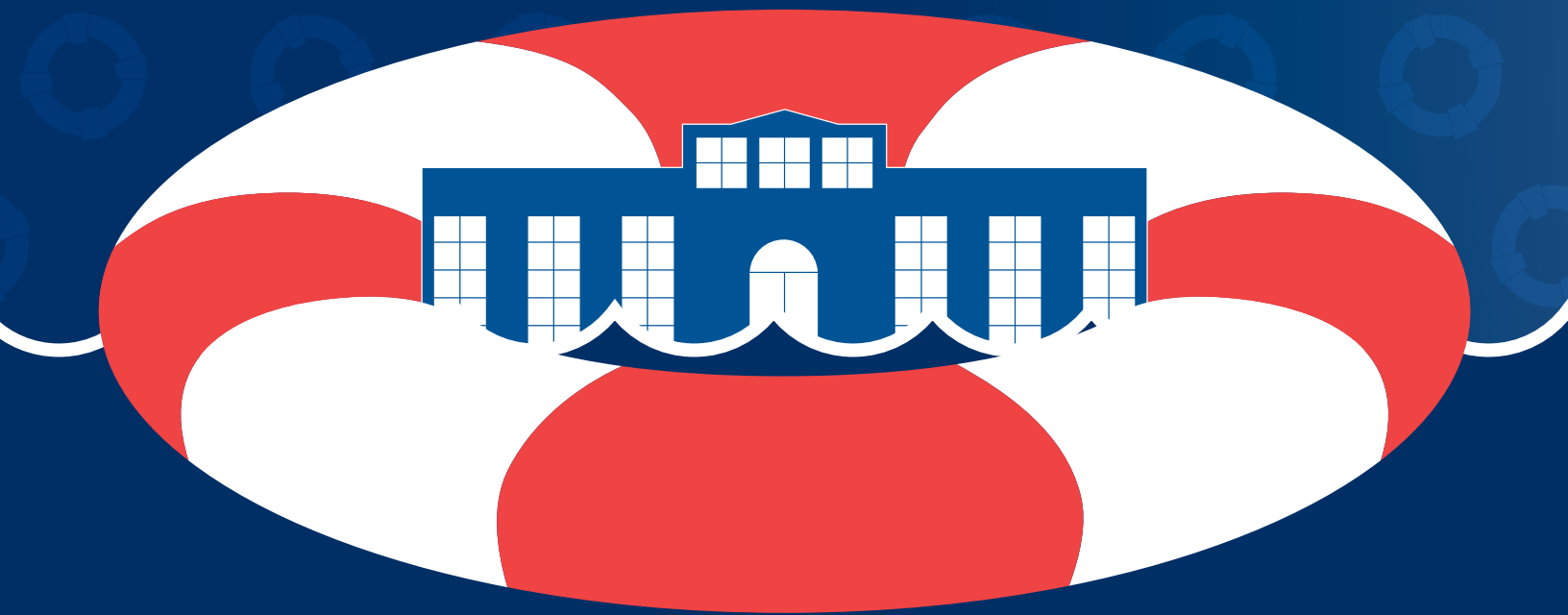
4 Pennsylvania Office of the Budget, Governor's Executive Budget, [www.budget.state.pa.us](http://www.budget.state.pa.us)

5 Alliance for Excellent Education, "Pennsylvania High Schools," October 2010, <http://www.all4ed.org/files/Pennsylvania.pdf>.

6 Clive L. Belfield et al, "The Economic Value of Opportunity Youth," The Corporation for National and Community Service and the White House Council for Community Solutions," January 2012, <http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED528650.pdf>.

7 Council on Foreign Relations, "U.S. Education Reform and National Security: Overview," March 2012. <http://www.cfr.org/united-states/us-education-reform-national-security/p27618>.

# School Choice Public Education



## **VOUCHERS WORK.**

Nine of 10 “gold standard” studies of voucher programs in Milwaukee, Wis.; Dayton, Ohio; Washington, D.C.; and Charlotte, N.C. show improved academic results for all or some voucher recipients.<sup>8</sup> Students in the Washington, D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program posted graduation rates that were 18 percent above their public school peers. Students also gained 3.1 months of additional learning in reading.

Students who participated in the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program for four years showed significantly higher learning gains than their peers in conventional public schools: 11 percentage points in math, and 6 percentage points in reading. They also graduated at a rate 18 percent higher than students in conventional public schools.

<sup>8</sup> Greg Forster, “A Win-Win Solution: The Empirical Evidence on How Vouchers Affect Public Schools,” Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, March 2011, <http://www.edchoice.org/CMSModules/EdChoice/FileLibrary/656/A-Win-Win-Solution---The-Empirical-Evidence-on-School-Vouchers.pdf>.

# Saves on.



## **LOW-INCOME STUDENTS PERFORM WELL IN VOUCHER PROGRAMS.**

For example, those participating in a Florida corporate voucher program keep pace with—and in many cases outpace—all students nationwide (not just low-income children). Their scholarships cost one-third of the per-student expenditures in conventional schools.<sup>9</sup>

## **PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS IMPROVE, TOO.**

In 19 out of 20 academically rigorous studies, vouchers had a positive impact on public school districts. There has never been a single study demonstrating that scholarships have a negative impact on district school performance or their ability to raise funds.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> The Center for Education Reform, "Fact-Checking School Choice Research: The Data That Most Education Researchers Would Rather Ignore," October 2010, [http://www.edreform.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/No\\_More\\_Waiting\\_School\\_Choice.pdf](http://www.edreform.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/No_More_Waiting_School_Choice.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> Greg Forster, "A Win-Win Solution: The Empirical Evidence on How Vouchers Affect Public Schools," Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, March 2011, <http://www.edchoice.org/CMSModules/EdChoice/FileLibrary/656/A-Win-Win-Solution---The-Empirical-Evidence-on-School-Vouchers.pdf>; Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, "2012 ABCs of School Choice: Rising Tide," <http://www.edchoice.org/CMSModules/EdChoice/FileLibrary/785/ABCs-of-School-Choice---2012.pdf>.

# Objections to School Choice.

## Answering Frequent Questions and Myths

### **MY SCHOOL DISTRICT IS DOING JUST FINE— I DON'T NEED SCHOOL CHOICE.**

Good schools are a cornerstone in our communities, and they will not suffer from expanded educational options for students in violent, failing schools. In fact, even constituents from areas with great public schools will benefit from school choice—holding schools more accountable with their tax dollars. Allowing families multiple educational options all across Pennsylvania—whether traditional public, public charter or cyber charter, private or home-school—creates healthy competition that forces school districts to spend wiser and work to attract students with a high-quality education. It also empowers parents to find the best educational model for their individual children.

### **IF SCHOLARSHIPS ONLY GO TO STUDENTS IN VIOLENT, FAILING SCHOOLS, FAMILIES IN MY AREA DON'T BENEFIT.**

Even a limited opportunity scholarship program benefits all Pennsylvanians. Why? Because the costs of education failure are so great (see School Choice Saves Money). High school dropouts cost taxpayers across the state billions

in welfare and corrections costs. The average voucher amount of \$7,000 is a bargain compared to housing a prison inmate at \$38,000 a year or a lifetime in the welfare system.

### **SCHOOL CHOICE WILL HURT THE KIDS LEFT BEHIND.**

No study of fiscal or academic impact of school choice has shown harms to public schools or their remaining students. In fact, school choice has been shown to benefit public school students.<sup>11</sup> Because opportunity scholarships make portable only a fraction of district per-student funding, school districts will have more money per student for those remaining and more than sufficient funds to cover fixed costs.

### **PUBLIC SCHOOLS ARE ALREADY FACING CUTS—WE CAN'T AFFORD SCHOOL CHOICE NOW.**

With many school districts facing tight budgets, we can't afford *not* to have school choice. Private, charter, cyber and home school options are less expensive than traditional public schools and currently save Pennsylvania



11 Greg Forster, "A Win-Win Solution: The Empirical Evidence on How Vouchers Affect Public Schools," Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, March 2011, <http://www.edchoice.org/CMSModules/EdChoice/FileLibrary/656/A-Win-Win-Solution---The-Empirical-Evidence-on-School-Vouchers.pdf>.



taxpayers \$4.3 billion a year in education costs. Educational choice prompts schools to use public education dollars more effectively, ensuring our children receive a quality education with fewer tax dollars.

### **PRIVATE SCHOOLS DON'T HAVE THE ACCOUNTABILITY OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS.**

Many people, particularly policymakers, confuse rules and regulations with accountability. While it is true that public schools must adhere to many laws, this fact has failed to make schools more accountable for academic outcomes. Simply forcing students to take state tests does not create accountability. As long as children are unable to escape a school that is failing to meet their needs, real accountability will never exist in the public school system. Giving parents choices in how and where their children are educated creates a competitive education marketplace and a level of true accountability that no law will ever generate.

### **PRIVATE SCHOOLS DON'T HAVE TO SERVE ALL STUDENTS.**

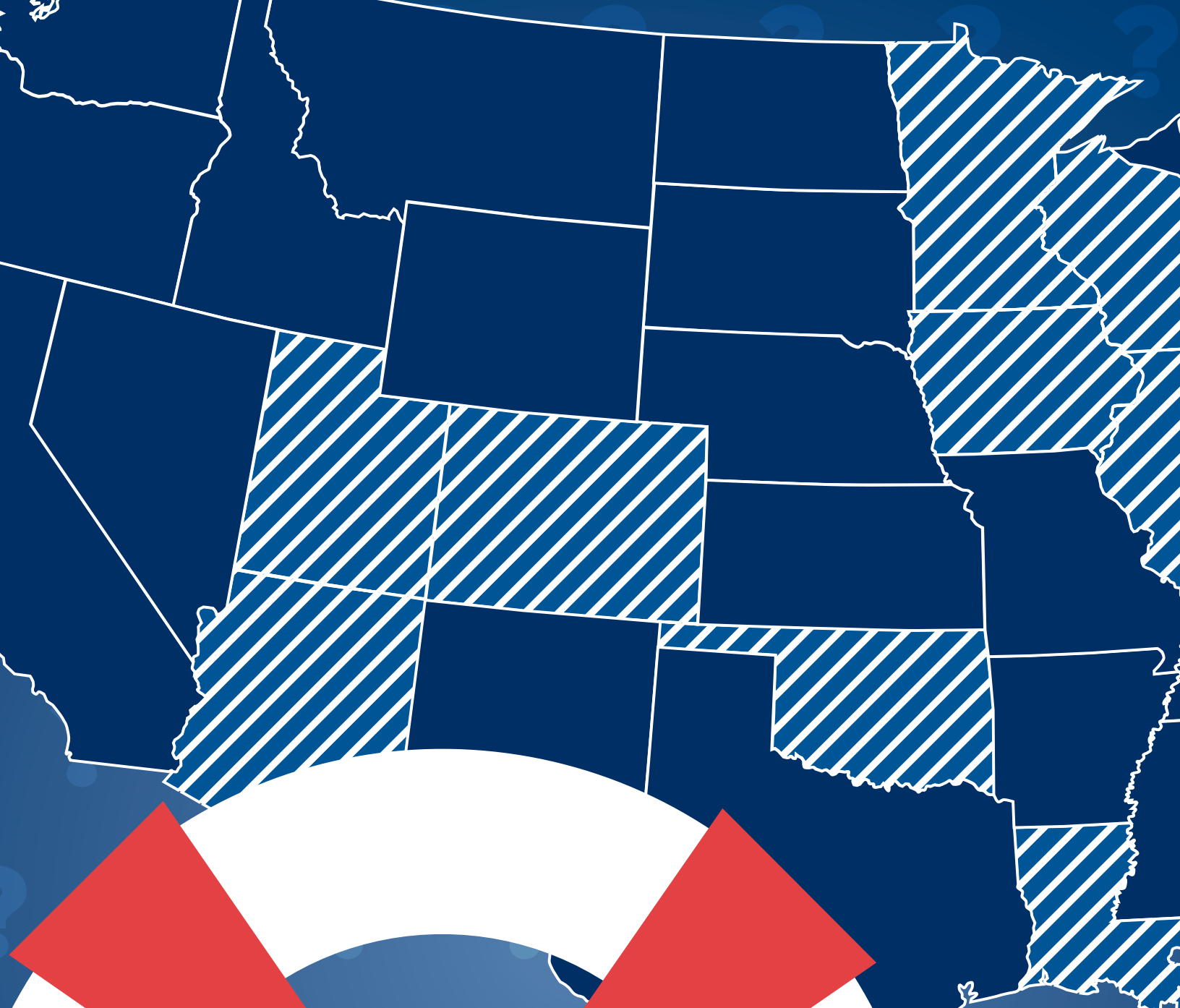
Neither do public schools. Although a few private schools are exclusive, the same can be said of public schools that enroll students only from wealthy neighborhoods and reject students from other neighborhoods on the “wrong side” of a district boundary. Some public schools—partic-

ularly magnet schools—routinely screen students based on academic ability.

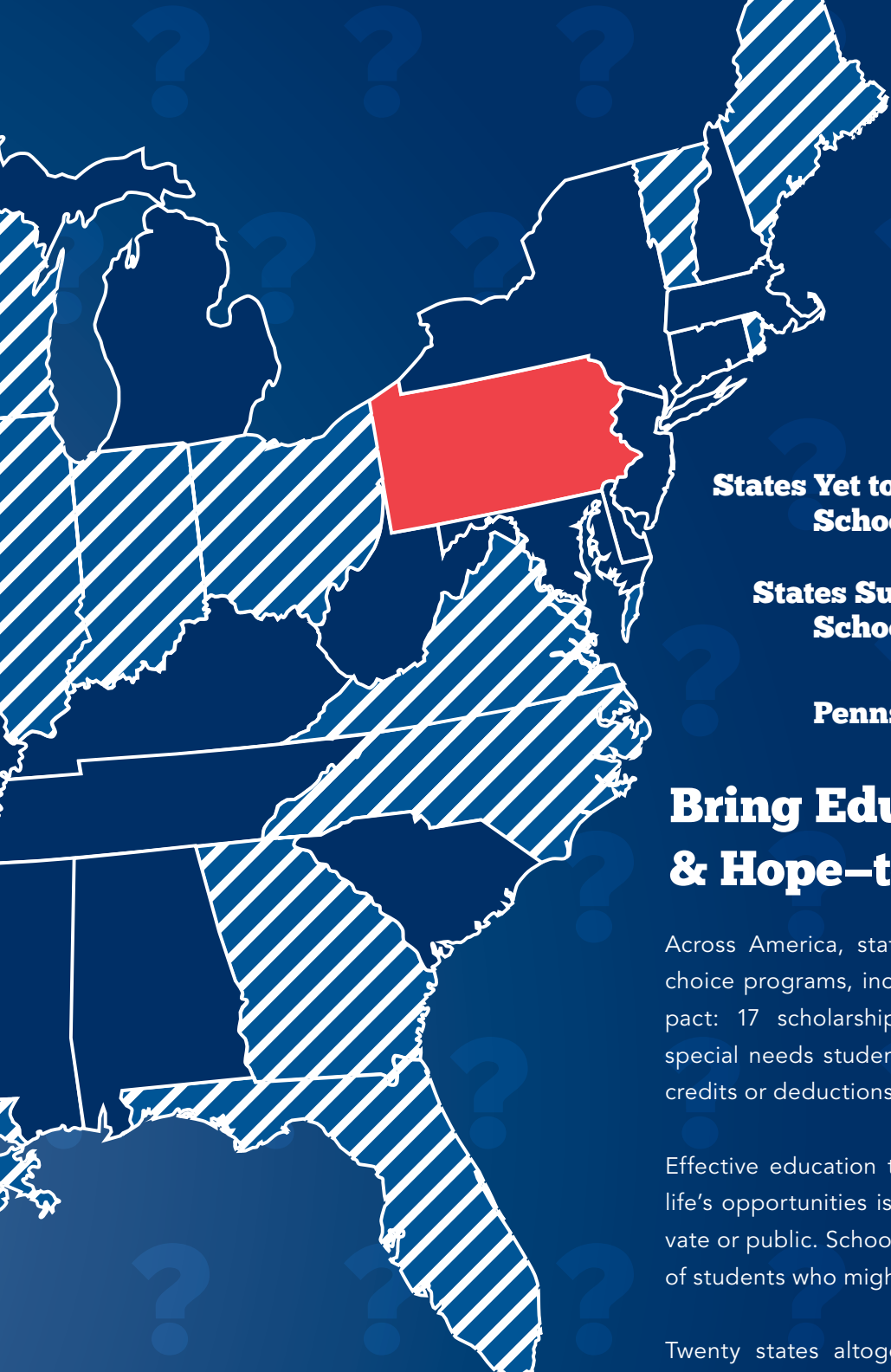
On the other hand, the vast majority of private schools enroll students from all walks of life. Pennsylvania Catholic schools, for example, charge average tuition of \$3,500 for elementary children and \$6,500 for high school students. Many of these schools, particularly those in urban areas, serve predominately low-income students and a large number of non-Catholics.

School choice also provides a wider and richer array of options for children with special needs. Public schools often turn to private schools to serve children with severe disabilities and behavioral problems. There is no reason to believe that private schools would not continue to serve these and other special-needs students in increasing number under a school choice program.





**What  
Now?**



- States Yet to Support School Choice** 
- States Supporting School Choice** 
- Pennsylvania!** 

## Bring Education Reform—& Hope—to Pennsylvania

Across America, states have implemented 35 school choice programs, including those with the biggest impact: 17 scholarship programs (including those for special needs students), and 17 programs offering tax credits or deductions for school choice.

Effective education that equips our children for all of life's opportunities is no pipe dream—whether it's private or public. School choice has given hope to millions of students who might otherwise have no future.

Twenty states altogether, including Washington DC, have already enacted school choice, with 13 states implementing or expanding programs in 2011 alone.

# Will Pennsylvania be next?



Commonwealth  
Foundation  
*for PUBLIC POLICY ALTERNATIVES*