



LEGISLATIVE POSITION MEMO

Philadelphia Federation of Teachers
Jerry T. Jordan, President

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AUGUST 30, 2023

TO: Members of the Pennsylvania State Senate

FROM: Jerry T. Jordan, President

RE: Opposition to Voucher Expansion

OPPOSITION: Voucher Expansion

PFT remains steadfastly opposed to ANY legislation that expands vouchers in any form.

- Voucher programs in any form fly in the face of the constitutional and moral obligation to provide a thorough and efficient system of public education to all of our children.
- Instead of looking for ways to truly fund public education so that our students can receive the resources they so richly deserve (and to which they are constitutionally entitled), the legislature is once again considering legislation aimed at privatizing and profiting from public education.
- Vouchers lack accountability, and have long track records of discrimination. This is true across the nation, and it is [certainly true in Pennsylvania](#).

Public funds should go to public schools. Pennsylvania has a long history of disinvestment in its public schools. ***In the wake of the landmark school funding lawsuit telling us what we have known for decades—that the way public education is funded in our Commonwealth is unconstitutional, it is particularly egregious that a bill that would siphon millions of dollars from public schools is even under consideration.***

In fact, the majority of voucher funds are utilized for tuition for students who [already](#) would go to private schools. Further, half of voucher funds go to families [earning more than \\$200,000 annually](#).

All the recent academic research on large scale voucher programs show they harm student achievement. That's true in Louisiana, in Indiana, in Ohio and in the District of Columbia. One recent review of that research found that the negative effects were

similar to the effects of disasters like Hurricane Katrina and Covid 19. *Just some of that research is linked [here](#).*

We should use every dollar to pay for the things we know students, parents and communities need: smaller classes, better and safer facilities, and a host of issues we have outlined in our legislative platform (pft.org/platform2023). Even with substantial public school funding increases, we have years of austerity to make up for; vouchers are the wrong priority.