

School Choice: The Right Choice for Parents

Providing a quality education for our children is the most critical investment we can make for our future. Parents have the duty and responsibility to provide the best education possible for their children. They have a right to determine which school will best meet the needs of their children. A school choice program that includes both vouchers and an increase to EITC is the right choice for Pennsylvania's parents.

Parents want school choice.

Recent polls in Pennsylvania surveyed parents' attitudes toward their children's education. Overwhelmingly, parents say they wish they had more choices.

- *In November 2010 Pew Research Foundation survey, **62% of parents** in Philadelphia public schools said they have actively considered sending their children to charter, Catholic or private schools.*
- *Despite the new array of options including charter schools and EITC scholarships, parents want still more. Seventy-two percent say that parents in Philadelphia **do not have enough** good choices in picking a school.*

The public supports parental choice.

Taxpayers favor education vouchers, too.

- *In another November 2010 poll, half of Pennsylvanians said they support and another 20% are undecided about education vouchers which help parents pay the costs at the school of their choice (Pulse Opinion Research).*

Newspapers are endorsing school choice.

- *"The objective of school choice programs is not just to transfer students out of poor schools, but to create competition that will force all schools to improve in order to survive. The Legislature should embrace the opportunity to help do that by passing the Williams-Piccola bill." **EDITORIAL: School choice is about justice**, Scranton Times-Tribune, January 14, 2011*
- *"The system is just not working for our poorest kids and hasn't for a long time. It is something that should upset each and every one of us and urge us to call for a huge change." **EDITORIAL: If school districts fail, why not give students vouchers?** Harrisburg Patriot News, September 19, 2010*

Parental choice is a matter of social justice.

All parents should be able to choose a school that best suits their children. Financial realities often preclude parents from having that choice. Parents who pay their school taxes deserve some benefit from those taxes, in the form of some assistance in the exercise of their right to choose a nonpublic school, if that is best for their children.

A school choice plan that includes a voucher program and an increase to EITC is a step in the right direction toward expanding those opportunities to more parents.