



March 31, 2026

Governor Maura Healey  
Massachusetts State House, 24 Beacon St.  
Office of the Governor, Room 280  
Boston, MA 02133

**Re: Letter Opposing the Federal School Voucher Program**

Dear Governor Healey,

On July 4, 2025, President Trump signed into law a budget reconciliation bill that contains a harmful provision for a [federal school voucher program](#)<sup>1</sup> that takes effect in 2027. We write to urge you strongly to opt out of the federal school voucher program, which threatens to undermine public education in the Commonwealth and across the United States.

The program is a one-to-one tax credit that enables families to donate up to \$1,700 to scholarship granting organizations (SGOs) and then reclaim that amount through a tax credit. These SGOs will collect the donated funds, use up to 10 percent of the donations for administrative costs, and provide the remaining as vouchers to eligible students. Students in households with incomes up to 300 percent of the area median income are eligible to receive these vouchers. In [Boston](#), the threshold for a family of three is \$446,700; in rural areas like [Belchertown](#), the amount is \$324,450. This means most families will qualify for the school voucher program, which can be used to pay for tuition at private schools. The voucher program [subsidizes private tuition for families who would never have enrolled their children in public schools](#), diverting public funding to private education, as we have seen in states with existing voucher programs.

Research shows that public schools in voucher-implementing states have seen a significant decrease in state funding, sometimes by as much as [12](#) percent. For instance, in Arizona, the K-12 budget is \$8.3 billion (which, per capita, is one of the lowest in the country) and as of November 2025, the annual costs of the voucher program [reached \\$1 billion](#). Vouchers are [siphoning a full 12 percent of state K-12 dollars away from local public schools](#), forcing them to not only make significant budget cuts, but also leading to [school closures](#). Public schools in West Virginia, especially those serving [rural](#)

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<sup>1</sup> H.R. 1, 119th Congress, § 70411 (2025)

communities, are facing the same plight. As is evident in other states, the voucher program undermines public education and likely will drain funding from our public schools by diverting taxpayer dollars into private schools. Public schools in Massachusetts already face a financial crisis in which school districts are unable to keep up with inflation, rising transportation costs, and the costs of support services. Any enrollment losses driven by public school students transferring to private schools will lead to reduced budgets and further strain the financial crisis, exacerbating the challenges for school districts. Opting into such a voucher program would risk depriving our school districts of much-needed funding and rob students of an opportunity for the high-quality, public education mandated by the Constitution of the Commonwealth.

School voucher programs do not lead to better educational outcomes for students. Studies on academic outcomes for students using vouchers have found that there is either no significant change in student test scores or that students actually perform worse than peers in public schools.<sup>2</sup> Research on Louisiana's school voucher program showed students experienced declines in both math and reading in their first two years in the program. A study on Indiana's voucher program revealed low-performing students attending private schools were being "pushed out" of these schools, and many ended up back in public schools.

School vouchers also disproportionately harm students of color, those from low-income families, and students with high needs. Research shows that students attending private schools were disproportionately disciplined and more harshly punished than their white or non-disabled peers for the same, or lesser, offense. Research on the impact of school vouchers in the District of Columbia revealed that after students left public schools, the schools faced severe budget cuts, forcing them to cut programs, extracurricular activities, and support services. These cuts often led to layoffs or hiring freezes, resulting in teacher shortages, larger class sizes, and reduced individual attention for students who chose to remain in public schools. Voucher programs will intensify these issues in districts that educate our most vulnerable students.

In addition, voucher programs can lead to fragmentation of communities by pulling students out of local public schools and scattering them across various private schools. Public schools serve as community hubs where children from diverse cultures and

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<sup>2</sup> Public Funds Public Schools, "[Research Shows Private School Vouchers Don't Work for Students and Harm Public Schools](#)"; Center on Education Policy. (2016). [Keeping Informed about School Vouchers: A review of major developments and research](#); Barrow, L., & Rouse, C. E. (2008). [School Vouchers and Student Achievement: Recent evidence, remaining questions](#). Chicago: Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago.

backgrounds come together, enhancing social interactions and understanding. There is ample research that suggests voucher programs risk worsening school segregation, increasing [separation of students by race and ethnicity and religious background](#). Moreover, unlike public schools, private schools have selective policies and can cherry-pick students, [excluding](#) them based on socioeconomic status, religion, academic performance, disability status, and other distinctive identities. Opting into the voucher program undermines the principle of providing all children with access to a quality education. In short, the federal voucher program threatens public education.

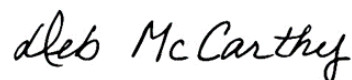
Another important issue to consider in this context is that, as you know, the Commonwealth's Constitution has strong language limiting public support for private education. Courts have interpreted these limitations broadly to prohibit both direct and indirect funding of private education. Opting into a private school voucher program could conflict with the requirements of the Massachusetts Constitution, as well as the Commonwealth's commitment to public education. When the U.S. Treasury Department issues regulations, if there appears to be a path for limiting the use of these tax credit funds only to students in public schools, we think that possibility would be worth exploring. Absent that, we ask you to please protect our public schools and do not opt in to this dangerous program.

Governors now hold the authority and responsibility to act in every student's best interests. The state has a moral responsibility to ensure that every child has access to opportunity, equity, and a future built on justice.

Sincerely,



**Max Page**, President  
Massachusetts Teachers Association



**Deb McCarthy**, Vice President  
Massachusetts Teachers Association