

# [Voucher system in public education](https://assignbuster.com/voucher-system-in-public-education/)

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Striving to Improve Public Education: An Investigation of the Voucher System Education is extremely important. It prepares new generations to sustain the society they are part of. When any amount of failure is evident within the education system, it is crucial to make effective improvements. The voucher system is one of the current initiatives being used in the U. S. to battle deficiencies in public education. It involves utilizing a lottery system to award private school vouchers to students at public schools that have been recognized as having less-than-desirable performance. The voucher system is currently used by Milwaukee, Cleveland and Florida. (NEA, 2008). In order to fully comprehend the effectiveness of the school voucher scheme, it is crucial to examine both the positive and negative aspects of this concept.
One benefit of the voucher system is that it allows parents the financial freedom to send their children to private schools, where they may receive better education. Typically, parents wishing to send students to private schools must pay for the private school as well as continue to pay taxes supporting a public school education that their children no longer receive. (Landry, 1998). If parents feel that a public school is not effectively educating their child, the voucher system allows them to move their child to an effective private school without having to pay double.
Another interesting advantage of the voucher system is its ability to encourage competition in a free market. Similar to the way businesses must compete for customers and profits, public schools must improve their standards if they do not want to lose their students and funding. (Ferguson & Norton, 2007). In this sense, the voucher system should pressure public schools toward improvement. Adversaries of the voucher system, however, feel differently about the effectiveness of this scheme.
According to its opponents, one of the inherent consequences of the voucher system is that it does nothing to directly enhance the quality of public schools. Rather than give aid to public schools, the voucher system funnels more money into private schools that already have relatively high standards. " Most American youths attend public schools, and school reform should therefore focus on making the public schools better." (Ferguson & Norton, 2007).
Congruent to this problematic issue is the notion that many students who use vouchers to attend private schools are smart and easy to educate. Although vouchers are available to any of the students who are selected through a lottery (which is another issue of questionable fairness), private schools are allowed to approve or deny the admittance of potential students, often leaving public schools with those students who are more difficult and expensive to educate. (Ferguson & Norton, 2007). This can cause the performance ability of public schools to plummet further.
Important to note is another consequence of school vouchers that pertains to the U. S. Constitution. More specifically, this concern regards the separation of church and state. (ADL, 2001). It has been found that " about 85 percent of private schools are religious." (NEA, 2008). Many individuals feel that directing state funds to religious private schools is a violation of the Constitution. Although in 1998 the Supreme Court ruled that vouchers could be used at religious private schools (Coulson, 1998), the issue of separation of church and state remains a relevant concern.
It is clear that there are both advantages and disadvantages of the utilization of a voucher system in the realm of public education. While other forms of state aid for education exist, it is crucial to recognize the extraordinary difficulty in finding a solution that will satisfy everyone. Although difficult, steps must continue to be made to find a solution to sub-par education.
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