



SELS 2019 Legislative Recommendations Keep Public Funds in Public Education

Keep Public Funds in Public Education

Current Happenings

- Supreme Court will be hearing a school choice case (Espinoza) in the Fall. This is a BIG threat to public school advocates.
- From *Espinoza*:
“In Montana, for example, several students participating in the scholarship program **are disabled** and have been using scholarships to attend Cottonwood Day School, a secular school specializing **in treating students with special needs.**”

FACT: Approximately 0.3% of all religious schools are focused on **educating students with disabilities.**



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Current Happenings

- The Administration has **proposed changes to Title I spending rules** that would allow religious organizations to provide Title services to (currently taking comments in Federal Register).
- From the Federal Register:
“That means an LEA may **enter into a contract** with a **religious organization** to provide equitable services on the same basis as any other entity. Those services still must be secular, neutral, and non-ideological under ESEA section 1117(a)(2).”

FACT: Teachers in private schools are not always required to obtain licensure.



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Our Messages

- **Keep public funds in public education because:**
 - There is not a guarantee of **equal access** to private schools for students with disabilities.
 - Private schools are held to different standards (if there are standards at all) and therefore there is **little** if any **guarantee of accountability**.
 - There is **not a guarantee of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) and procedural safeguards**.



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What They Say

- I don't think that we get **anywhere** by taking **options off of the table**.
 - Our response: The most **appropriate option** for students with disabilities is in their fully funded public **Keep public funds in public education**.
- This is just a small \$75 million tax credit. It's not really school choice.
 - Our response: All money diverted from public schools is harmful. **Keep public funds in public education**.



Keep Public Funds in Public Education

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Members of Congress are urged to:

- Support efforts that maintain and enhance the use of public funds for public education and services offered through public school districts.



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Members of Congress are urged to:

- Oppose the use of public funds for families to access private education through private school vouchers, tuition tax credits, direct tuition payments, taxpayer savings accounts, scholarships, and portability of public funds to private education entities for all students, including students with disabilities.
- These are contrary to the best interests of students and their families, the public school system, local communities, and taxpayers.



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Members of Congress are urged to:

- Oppose the Education Freedom Scholarships and Opportunity Act, S. 634 (Cruz, R-TX), that would expand elementary, secondary and vocational education opportunities for students by providing a federal tax credit to encourage individuals and business to donate to nonprofit scholarship funds.



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Questions?

