

# The Great School Debate: Choice Vouchers and Charters

The debate over school choice has been raging for decades, with no easy answers. On one side are those who believe that parents should have the right to choose the best school for their child, regardless of their zip code or income level. On the other side are those who believe that school choice will lead to a segregated and unequal education system.



## The Great School Debate: Choice, Vouchers, and Charters by Thomas L. Good

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

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One of the most common school choice programs is the voucher system. Vouchers are government-funded scholarships that can be used to pay for tuition at private schools. Supporters of vouchers argue that they give parents more options and that competition from private schools will lead to higher standards at public schools. Opponents of vouchers argue that they will drain money away from public schools and that they will lead to a segregated education system.

Another type of school choice program is charter schools. Charter schools are public schools that are independently operated. They have more flexibility than traditional public schools in terms of curriculum, staffing, and budget. Supporters of charter schools argue that they provide parents with more options and that they can be more innovative than traditional public schools. Opponents of charter schools argue that they are not subject to the same accountability standards as traditional public schools and that they can be used to promote religious or political agendas.

The debate over school choice is complex and there is no easy answer. It is important to consider all of the arguments before making a decision about whether or not to support school choice programs.

## **The Pros and Cons of School Choice Vouchers**

### **Pros**

- Vouchers give parents more options for their children's education.
- Vouchers can lead to higher standards at public schools.
- Vouchers can help to reduce segregation in schools.

### **Cons**

- Vouchers can drain money away from public schools.
- Vouchers can lead to a segregated education system.
- Vouchers can be used to promote religious or political agendas.

## **The Pros and Cons of Charter Schools**

### **Pros**

- Charter schools give parents more options for their children's education.
- Charter schools can be more innovative than traditional public schools.
- Charter schools can help to improve student achievement.

## **Cons**

- Charter schools are not subject to the same accountability standards as traditional public schools.
- Charter schools can be used to promote religious or political agendas.
- Charter schools can lead to a segregated education system.

## **The Impact of School Choice on Education Equity**

One of the biggest concerns about school choice is its impact on education equity. Critics argue that school choice will lead to a segregated education system, with wealthy parents sending their children to private schools and poor parents sending their children to underfunded public schools.

There is some evidence to support this concern. A study by the Center for Research on Education Outcomes found that students who used vouchers to attend private schools were more likely to be white and from higher-income families than students who attended public schools. The study also found that students who used vouchers to attend private schools were more likely to score higher on standardized tests than students who attended public schools.

However, it is important to note that this study only looked at the impact of vouchers on white students. There is no research on the impact of

vouchers on students of color.

Another study, by the National Bureau of Economic Research, found that charter schools did not have a significant impact on education equity. The study found that charter schools were no more likely to be segregated than traditional public schools and that students who attended charter schools were no more likely to be from higher-income families than students who attended traditional public schools.

### **The Impact of School Choice on Student Achievement**

Another concern about school choice is its impact on student achievement. Supporters of school choice argue that competition from private schools will lead to higher standards at public schools and that students who attend private schools will perform better on standardized tests.

There is some evidence to support this claim. A study by the Education Next found that students who used vouchers to attend private schools were more likely to graduate from high school and go on to college than students who attended public schools. The study also found that students who used vouchers to attend private schools were more likely to score higher on standardized tests than students who attended public schools.

However, it is important to note that this study only looked at the impact of vouchers on white students. There is no research on the impact of vouchers on students of color.

Another study, by the National Bureau of Economic Research, found that charter schools had a positive impact on student achievement. The study found that students who attended charter schools were more likely to be

proficient in math and reading than students who attended traditional public schools.

## **The Future of Public Education**

The debate over school choice is likely to continue for many years to come. It is a complex issue with no easy answers. It is important to consider all of the arguments before making a decision about whether or not to support school choice programs.

One thing is for sure: the future of public education is at stake. If school choice programs are not designed and implemented carefully, they have the potential to undermine public education and lead to a segregated and unequal education system.

However, if school choice programs are designed and implemented carefully, they have the potential to improve education for all students. They can give parents more options, increase competition, and raise standards. School choice programs can also help to reduce segregation and promote equity.

The future of public education is up to us. We need to decide what kind of education system we want for our children and our grandchildren. Do we want a system that is based on choice and competition, or do we want a system that is based on equity and equality?

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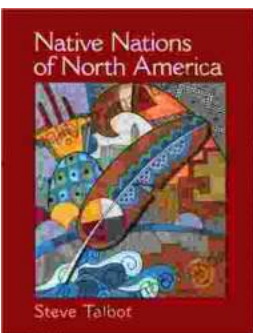


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