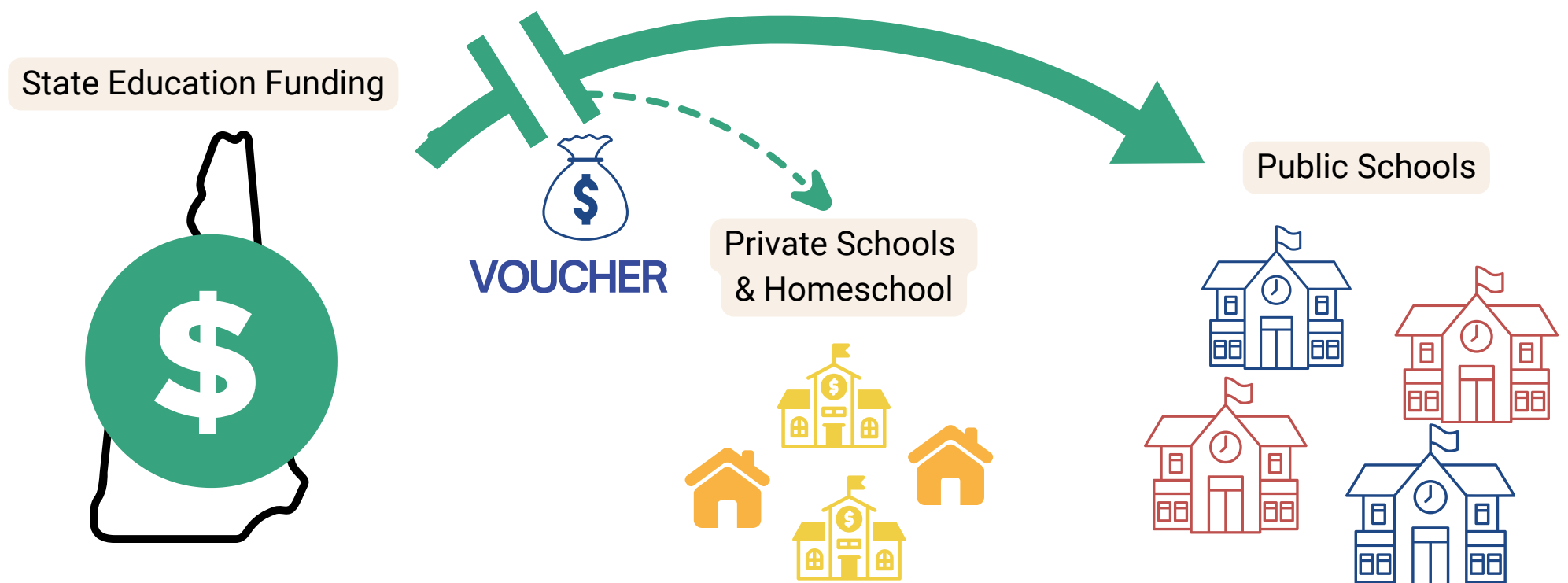


School Vouchers in New Hampshire



What are school vouchers?

School vouchers are taxpayer-funded accounts that give state funding directly to parents to pay for private and religious school tuition, homeschooling expenses, educational supplies, transportation, tutoring, and other items that are approved by the scholarship organization.



School vouchers have diverted state funding from public schools.

School vouchers have **diverted a total of \$72 million in state funds from public schools**, with about three-quarters of that money going to students who were **already** enrolled in private schools or were home-schooled.

Every dollar that the state spends on school vouchers is a dollar that isn't available to fund public schools, from school buildings, to teacher salaries, to materials for students. According to the Supreme Court, the state does not provide constitutionally adequate education funding for all NH school districts resulting in inequities and lost opportunity for students.

Student Outcomes

Statewide voucher programs have **large, negative impacts on student outcomes:**

- ✗ **Reduces achievement** in math, reading, science, and social studies
- ✗ Voucher recipients are **no more likely to graduate or enroll in college** than their public school peers
- ✗ Students who **transfer back into public schools have substantial academic gains** compared to students who stay in vouchers

Research shows that school vouchers hurt student outcomes.

Extensive, independent research shows that school vouchers cause catastrophic academic harm. Students who used vouchers in four states had lower test scores in math and reading than their public school counterparts. And, studies have also shown that students who transfer back into public schools fare better than students who stay in the voucher program.

School Vouchers in New Hampshire



Using “school vouchers” to describe New Hampshire’s program

A “school voucher” is any program that provides parents with state funds to pay for private and religious school tuition and/or educational expenses, whether the government funds a private school directly (as in a “traditional voucher”) or funds a parent to pay for the tuition (as in an “education savings account”). Voucher is the generic term for Education Freedom Accounts. Pro-voucher advocates try to increase public support for the concept by calling them other names; however, vouchers are programs that use public funds to pay for private expenses.

Who qualifies?

As the 2025 legislative session came to a close, Governor Kelly Ayotte signed SB 295 into law despite widespread public opposition. The move makes New Hampshire the 19th state to establish a universal school voucher system. The move makes any student who is a resident of the state eligible for funding regardless of their family’s income.

Aren’t EFAs for lower-income families?

Initially, EFA supporters intended the vouchers to be available to all students regardless of income. Because that idea was not broadly supported, an income cap of 300% of the federal poverty level was added as a compromise and a promise to keep state costs down when the program was first adopted in 2021. That cap was later lifted to 350%. On June 10, 2025, Governor Kelly Ayotte signed SB 295 into law removing the income cap altogether achieving the original goal of universal school vouchers.

School vouchers have eviscerated other states’ budgets, leaving less money for public schools and other public services.

School vouchers have wreaked havoc on state budgets across the country: In Indiana, an eligibility increase to 400% of the threshold for eligibility for the Free and Reduced Price Lunch program led to a surge in enrollment and now costs Indiana taxpayers nearly a half a billion dollars annually; in Arizona, school vouchers account for nearly half of their state budget deficit of \$429 million next year.

1 in 4 applications had errors, with potential fraud and misuse of state funds

The New Hampshire Department of Education found inconsistencies and errors in approximately 1 in 4 voucher applications during a compliance review done in 2024. The compliance review found that the Children’s Scholarship Fund, which manages and administers the voucher program, funded vouchers without the required proof of residency and/or income in 12 of the 50 reviewed applications. The Fund will have to reimburse the state for about 20% of the flagged applications, and it is unclear if the NHED will review the remaining 4,600 applications in the time frame to ensure that they are awarded according to state regulations.

Additionally, the New Hampshire Department of Education will not allow state auditors to have access to program data for a performance audit of the voucher program as required by state law. The audit, which is expected to be completed in Spring 2025, will be limited to the data that the NHED is willing to share.

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