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The Public Wants Public Schools, Not Vouchers

By Anne Hyslop, Director of Policy Development at All4Ed

As All4Ed wrote when releasing the initial [OpinionatED](#) findings in January, “a national debate about the future of education is happening in an information vacuum, without considering what the public wants and needs from our education system.”

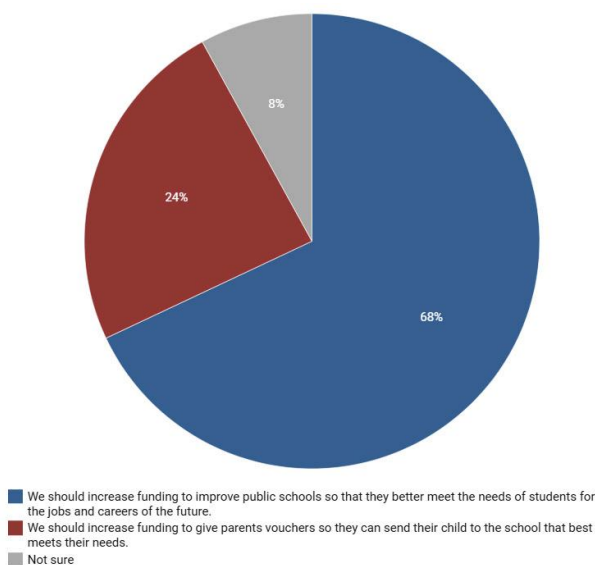
That’s certainly the case when it comes to one of President Trump’s main education [priorities](#): using federal funds for vouchers and scholarships at private and religious schools. In fact, his nominee to be Secretary of Education, Linda McMahon, highlighted the administration’s goal to “free American students from the education bureaucracy through school choice” at her recent Senate confirmation [hearing](#).

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But is that what parents—and the public—really want? Not even close.



Our [data](#) is clear and consistent: **When given the direct choice between increasing federal funding to support public schools or to support private school vouchers, the majority of voters—regardless of age, gender, race, political views, education level, or the state they live in—pick public schools.**

Among all voters, more than two-thirds choose funding for public schools over vouchers, as do an even higher share of parents – 70% – the same parents that the Trump administration claims to hope to empower. And despite vouchers’ popularity among Republican leaders, including incoming Secretary McMahon and President Trump’s last Education Secretary, [Betsy DeVos](#), **majorities of Republican and Trump voters also prefer to spend federal funds on public schools over vouchers.** Likewise, two-thirds of voters in states that voted overwhelmingly for President Trump, including Alabama, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and West Virginia, pick public school funding over private school vouchers.

Voters’ support for public schools also shone through when asked about the importance of 22 different education priorities. Vouchers were among the lowest ranked, coming in at number 19 and number 22, dead last. On the other hand, over half of voters said it was extremely important to ensure schools are safe and welcoming for all children, no matter how they learn, what language they speak at home, or where they are from. This was the top priority for voters in our poll.

President Trump [says](#) voucher and scholarship programs are growing because they “offer teachers and parents an alternative to classrooms that are micromanaged from Washington, DC.” But that’s not the alternative most teachers and parents want. Just 25% of parents and 19% of teachers would prefer the federal government to fund vouchers over public schools. And the U.S. Department of Education plays no role in what is taught in America’s classrooms.



Providing parents **vouchers** to enable them to choose the best school for their child.

Rather than promoting vouchers and scholarship programs that take taxpayer funds from under-resourced public schools to pay for tuition at private and religious schools that can discriminate and pick and choose their students, let’s heed parents, our educators, and the American people and invest in the high-quality public education our children deserve.

Read All4Ed CEO Amy Loyd’s related blog on [“Why Public Schools Must Remain a Priority Amid School Choice Expansion.”](#)