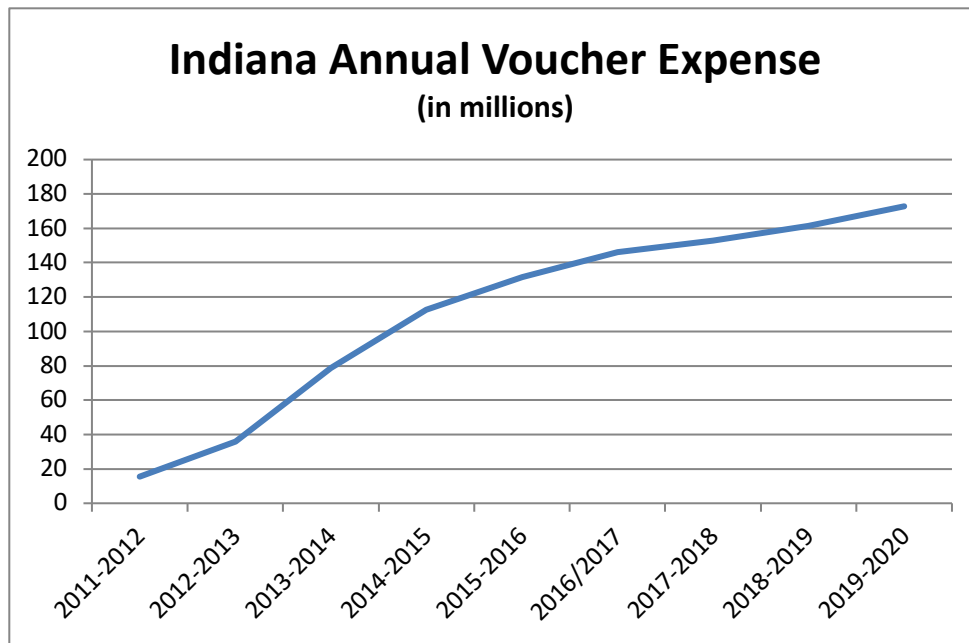




Indiana Coalition for Public Education Talking Points:

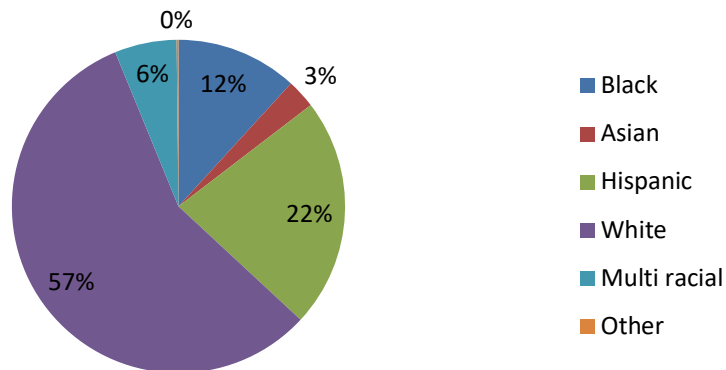
Why Indiana should not expand eligibility for voucher schools

- Vouchers in Indiana – your tax money – currently pay all or part of private school tuition for families earning up to \$95,000 a year.
- Legislation calls Indiana’s voucher program “choice scholarships.” But expanding voucher eligibility doesn’t give school choice to additional students. In most cases, wealthy families with students already in private school would have their tuition bill paid for by all taxpayers, including low-income taxpayers.
- The voucher program takes from the poor to give more to the rich.
- It is wrong to give money to wealthy families during this time of economic crisis.
- Expanding vouchers diverts state dollars from the poorest and neediest of public school students in order to give to the wealthiest.
- We must continue to support Indiana’s public schools to the maximum degree as they have gone above and beyond to deal with the demands of the pandemic and as they face the challenges of making up for lost learning and providing additional services for students.
- Expanding the private school voucher program would divert even more funding from public schools.
- Indiana’s voucher system already deprives every public school system in Indiana \$172 per student. That means a school system of 6,000 students is losing more than \$1 million each year.
- Indiana currently ranks 45th in the nation for total K-12 education spending as a percentage of gross state product.
- Indiana’s spending of tax dollars on vouchers program has increased exponentially since it was created in 2011.
- Every public school family, and every business-conscious member of the public, should protest the voucher expansion and discourage legislators from diverting scarce public education dollars.
- In 2011-2012 the state spent \$15.5 million on vouchers; in 2019-2020 it was \$172.8 million dollars, that’s 11 times more than the initial expense.



- Indiana’s cumulative state spending for private school vouchers has now topped \$1 billion.
- Since enacting vouchers in 2011, the Indiana General Assembly has repeatedly expanded voucher eligibility.
- Indiana has one of the nation’s largest voucher programs; it does not need to expand again.
- In Indiana’s current voucher system, if a family qualifies for vouchers and their income increases, they remain eligible even if they make about double Indiana’s median household income. Isn’t that enough?
- According to legislators, the voucher program was created to help poor and minority children “trapped” in low-performing schools. The most recent statistics show that 57% of students receiving vouchers for the 2019-2020 school year were white, and 26% of voucher families have annual incomes of more than \$75,000.

Race/Ethnicity of Indiana Voucher Students 2019-2020



- Indiana’s voucher system funds thousands of families that could afford private school tuition without help from taxpayers. (*School Matters March 5, 2018*)
- Supporters say the program isn’t costing Indiana, because it would cost more to educate the students if they attended public schools. But according to the report, 58 percent of voucher students have no record of having attended a public school. Chances are they never would have. (*School Matters March 5, 2018*)
- “When the legislature created the program in 2011, advocates claimed it would save the state money. Republicans who led the charge in 2011 said the state would spend less money since it’s only funding a portion of the education...the original legislation mandated that the IDOE calculate the savings using a formula dictated in the law. It said **the savings from this program would be redistributed to public schools**. The first two years of the program showed a savings of around \$4 and 5 million a year, but **since the 2013-2014 school year, as the number of students using vouchers grew, it became a deficit.**’ (*School Voucher Program Cost State \$18 Million More Than Previous Year, Indiana Public Media, July 18, 2016*)
- Ninety-nine percent of Indiana private schools that accept vouchers are religious schools.
- Indiana religious schools accepting vouchers are allowed to discriminate in their admissions, and they are allowed to discriminate in their hiring.
- Initially sold as a way to help underprivileged children escape “failing” public schools, the program evolved into a costly state [subsidy for religious education](#). (*School Matters, June 17, 2020*)
- The voucher expansion bills you are seeing in Indiana are part of a long-term coordinated effort to diminish public schools. The list of states where voucher expansion bills have been introduced recently are: South Carolina, Iowa, Missouri, Kentucky, Montana, Arizona, Florida and Georgia.