

OPPOSE

Federal Vouchers

The Council OPPOSES vouchers for private religious and nonsectarian schools that divert resources away from public schools.

Over the last several years, Congress has considered a variety of vouchers type programs that would divert public dollars for private religious and nonsectarian schools. While Congress has shown moments of wavering, as these major voucher proposals have not been enacted, we urge continued action to avoid harming public education.

During negotiations over the Every Student Succeeds Act, portability of Title I funds was nearly enacted, but fortunately defeated. This Congress, a proposal was considered to divert Impact Aid from public schools and convert it into a voucher program. The Impact Aid program provides millions to New York School districts that have military bases, native American reservations, and/or other federal land within their boundaries. Had the \$1.3 billion Impact Aid program become a voucher program, a number of NY school districts would have sustained significant financial harm.

These voucher programs and other threaten the very existence of public education. Stripping public schools of valuable resources leaves those public schools less able to serve some of our state's most vulnerable students. We recognize the drastic need to improve some of our low performing schools. Superintendents working in these struggling schools take the struggles of their students seriously.

However, when funds are stripped from these schools and sent to private entities, the ability of those schools to improve is hindered. Instead of diverting federal dollars from public education, Congress should instead focus on providing additional federal dollars to the most impoverished schools and students with disabilities.

Our public schools are institutions of, by and for the people. Our governing boards are elected by and from the communities they serve. Our employees have chosen careers committed to helping children learn and thrive and most have made it their life's work. We serve all children – whatever their circumstances, wherever they come from, whenever they arrive. Assuring the viability and success of all public schools should be the leading priority.

The Council opposes federal vouchers and urges Congress to resist any and all such efforts to divert federal dollars from public schools to private entities.