

QuickPoint! - North Carolina Becomes the 9th State to Offer Students Universal School Choice

By Kathryn Hickok

North Carolina has become the ninth state to enact universal school choice for K-12 children. The [Opportunity Scholarship Program](#), created in 2013, offers vouchers applicable to private school costs, including tuition, fees, transportation, and necessary expenses.

In September, the General Assembly [expanded eligibility to all families](#) through an income-based system. Lower-income households have first priority. Middle- and upper-income families may apply as funding remains available, up to the statewide program cap. Lower-income families are eligible for 100 percent of the average state per-pupil allocation based on the prior fiscal year, about \$7,200 in 2023-24. Households in higher income brackets will receive scholarships at reduced rates.

Arkansas, Florida, Iowa, Utah, and West Virginia now have universal Education Savings Account (or “Scholarship Account”) programs. Indiana’s ESA program allows about 98% of families to participate, making it nearly universal. Oklahoma recently passed a universal tax credit program, and Ohio made its voucher program universal.

According to [recent polling](#), seventy-one percent of voters say parents should “have the right to use tax dollars designated for their child’s education to send their child to the public or private school which best serves their needs.” Oregon policymakers should note that it’s increasingly important to families today to match their children’s educational needs with school environments that will serve them best. It’s time to offer more options to students here.

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October 11, 2023

Word Count: 223

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