

Georgia Private School Vouchers: Grade C

Georgia's main school choice program is the Georgia Promise Scholarship, an Education Savings Account (ESA) that provides up to \$6,500 per student each year.

- **Requirements:** Students must be zoned for a public school ranked in the state's bottom 25% or be entering kindergarten. View the full list via the Governor's Office of Student Achievement.
- **Strengths:** Families gain more educational options, and funds can be used for private school tuition, approved therapies, and some homeschooling expenses.
- **Weaknesses:** Eligibility is limited to students in designated low-performing school zones, participating private schools are limited, and the scholarship often does not cover the full cost of private school tuition.

The criteria, deadlines, and details on the allowable uses of funds in on the [Georgia Promise Scholarship Portal](#).

Georgia also offers two additional school choice programs:

1. **[Georgia Special Needs Scholarship](#):** Helps students with disabilities transfer from a public school to an eligible private school.
 - **Strength:** Expands educational options for students with special needs.
 - **Weakness:** Available only to qualifying students with disabilities.
2. **[Tax-Credit Scholarship Program](#):** Provides scholarships funded by voluntary corporate tax-credit donations to approved scholarship organizations.
 - **Strength:** Expands private school access without direct state appropriations.
 - **Weakness:** Funding depends on donations, making scholarship availability limited and inconsistent.

Georgia's school voucher programs create significant challenges; the most critical is that many low- and middle-income families afford the difference between the \$6,500 voucher and full tuition cost. The communities in District 51 constantly struggle with having few or no participating private schools, making the program unavailable to many taxpayers who pay for the program.

Private schools receiving vouchers aren't held to the same standards as public schools and can limit admissions, while over 90% of Georgia students rely on public education. Expanding vouchers diverts resources from these schools.

Georgia should focus on strengthening public education by updating the grossly outdated 1984 Quality Basic Education (QBE) funding formula, increasing targeted funding, improving efficiency, raising teacher pay, expanding programs, and modernizing facilities. If vouchers continue, private schools should should meet the same minimum standards and requirements as public schools.