

# ACTION ALERT: Indiana School Choice Expansion

February 3, 2021

**TAKE ACTION NOW!**

Dear Friends,

We need your voice. Today.

An expansion to Indiana's Choice Scholarship (voucher) Program passed out of the House Education Committee, and Ways and Means Committee and now heads to the floor for a vote.

Please use the form above to contact your representative and ask them to support [House Bill 1005](#). Personalize your email and explain why your ability to afford a school or the education environment of your choice is so important to you.

This bill expands the existing voucher program in three ways and adds a new type of program.

- HB 1005 extends income eligibility from 150% of the federal reduced lunch program threshold (\$71,456 for a family of 4) to 225% (\$107,185) in the coming year, and then 300% (\$142,912) by July 2022. This will give much needed assistance to the middle class families who typically receive little to no assistance who are struggling to afford choice, especially if they have multiple children.
- It increases and streamlines the scholarship amount that a voucher student receives in a school year. Rather than scholarship tiers of 50%, 70%, and 90% of state tuition (e.g. South Bend 50% = \$3,443.67 70% = \$4,821.14 90% = \$6,198.60), the bill sets the scholarship amount at 90% for all voucher-receiving children. This

streamlining will be of greatest assistance to families with high school students where costs and tuitions are typically higher.

- It also adds foster care as a pathway into the voucher program. Currently, foster children automatically meet the financial eligibility criteria needed to obtain a voucher, but they must also meet one of eight pathways. This creates unnecessary confusion for foster families as they try to navigate schooling options for their foster child. Adding a pathway for children in foster care is one more way that Indiana can support our foster families.
- HB 1005 also creates an Education Savings Account (ESA) program for children with special needs, children in foster care, and children of military families. ESAs allow parents to take control of their child's education and customize their student's educational experience by receiving their student's tuition support funding through a government-authorized savings account. These funds can be used for pre-approved educational expenses only, such as therapies, private tutoring, tuition and fees at approved private schools. Students with special needs often need services and therapies over and above what they can receive during a normal school day. An ESA could provide that additional assistance.