

Public Schools Brace for Impact as States Expand Voucher Programs

Caissa K12 is helping districts boost student enrollment as vouchers expand.

MEMPHIS, TN, UNITED STATES, August 15, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Across the country, public school districts are working to stem student losses as new voucher programs send taxpayer dollars to private institutions.



Since the Tennessee Education Freedom Scholarship program launched on May 15, more than 33,000 families have applied. Memphis-Shelby County Schools (the largest school district in Tennessee) estimates the program could draw as many as 2,500 students away from public classrooms this school year alone.

“

We're not here to hope kids come back, we're here to find them and bring them home,”

Brian J. Stephens

In neighboring states, similar measures are taking hold:

Alabama: The CHOOSE Act will provide eligible families up to \$7,000 for private school tuition and \$2,000 for homeschooling expenses.

Louisiana: The Gator Scholarship Program joins three other private school choice initiatives, including tax-credit scholarships and education savings accounts.

New Jersey: The proposed “New Jersey Student Support Act” would divert an estimated \$250 million in taxpayer funds to private school scholarships through tax incentives.

Texas: A statewide voucher program launching in 2026–2027 will offer approximately \$10,000 per student for private school tuition or homeschooling.

Florida: All K–12 students are eligible for scholarships averaging \$7,700 for private school tuition.

Amid these shifts, some education leaders are calling for public schools to take a more proactive

approach to retaining and attracting students.

Brian J. Stephens, a Memphis-based public education strategist recently featured in [The New York Times](#), says districts must actively compete for enrollment.

“Public schools need to make the case for why they’re the best option,” Stephens said. “The monopoly is over.”

Stephens advocates for community-based outreach and clear communication about the value of public education, emphasizing that for many communities, schools are more than classrooms: they’re centers for meals, safety, and essential services.

Advocates stress that this is not about criticizing parents for making choices they believe are best for their children, but about ensuring those choices are fully informed. Many families are unaware of what they give up when they leave public schools, including access to specialized programs, extracurricular activities, and a community committed to supporting every child, not just some.

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