

# Why Oppose School Vouchers and Tuition Tax Credits

## *Lack of Accountability to Taxpayers and Parents*

- **No accountability to taxpayers.**

Schools receiving public tax dollars in proposed voucher and tuition tax credit legislation will not held accountable to the taxpayers. They will not have to provide information on their curriculum, the academic performance of their students nor on their use of public funds or their finances in general.

- **No publicly available information to parents to allow them to make informed choices.**

Under this legislation there will be no publicly available information to parents for them to use in making choices. Private schools receiving taxpayer dollars will not have to divulge any information to the public. In the public school system, parents have a tremendous amount of information on every school to use in making choices—the school report card. Free market principles hold that real "choice" requires that consumers have ready access to high quality information in order to make good choices. This is not available under the voucher/tax credit plan.

- **No ability to make "apples to apples" comparisons.**

Accountability to taxpayers and to parents requires that citizens can make "apples to apples" comparisons among the various schools. This requires that all schools have the same curriculum standards, use the same student assessments, and use the same reporting format. Citizens can then accurately determine which schools are doing the best job of instruction and achieving the best results. Voucher and tax credit schools would have no curriculum standards. They can teach, or not teach, anything they want, and they are not required to perform the same assessments as public schools. There is no way parent and taxpayers would be able to compare performance among schools.

- **Taxpayers will be forced to fund failing private schools they don't know are failing.**

With vouchers and tax credits, taxpayers will be forced to fund private schools that are failing and/or that do not teach basic subjects like science or social studies. An investigative report on the Milwaukee voucher program by the *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel* and other research has found that parent decisions do not force voucher schools to close. The "market" does not work. In the public school system, "failing" schools are identified publicly and forced to make changes to improve their performance. The public will never know about "failing" voucher schools and will be forced to pay for them and for schools that don't provide a minimum education.

- **Involvement of the State Department of Education is forbidden.**

In the voucher and tax credit legislation, the State Dept. of Education is expressly forbidden to regulate or intervene with any of these schools receiving public tax dollars. Only the Dept. of Revenue has regulatory authority. Our state government has assigned the State Dept. of Education with the responsibility for using our education tax dollars in the most cost-effective way to achieve the best results. The voucher/tax credit law requires the use of government and taxpayer money but then says that the department with responsibility for K-12 education in this state cannot regulate or intervene with these schools.