

**Universal voucher scheme sparks an increase in the private school charter applications.**

A year ago, the Department of Education granted 18 charters for private schools. In the 2023-2024 school year, the Department received 60 applicants. It is inevitable that the number of applicants for private school charters will escalate in the future.

The public school privatizers in the legislature will increase the value of each voucher and adopt more voucher-like schemes, such as Education Savings Accounts (ESC's) and Tuition Tax Credits, all of which will attract entrepreneurs and groups with economic, political, or religious beliefs or philosophies. Applications for private school charters will likely expand exponentially. Private school finances are not audited, and their programs and services are not subject to public scrutiny; hence they escape accountability and transparency even though they use public funds.

What are state officials thinking?