

Arizona voucher scandal coming to Ohio?

There is no accountability to the public on how voucher money is used in the private school sector in Ohio. The charter school industry lacks much less accountability than the traditional public school system, as revealed in the two attached articles.

Ohio is known throughout the nation for a multitude of fiscal scandals and student performance outcomes.

In Arizona, the scandals in the school voucher business are being made public. In Arizona, the state voucher funds are sent directly to parents to be used at their discretion within some broad and nebulous guidelines. As the attached article reveals, lack of accountability in Arizona leads to rampant misuse of tax funds.

In Ohio there is no way to determine if tax funds being given are being misused because private schools are not subject to public audit by the state.

How is tax money via vouchers being used by private schools in Ohio? The Auditor of State does not know. The Department of Education does not know. Taxpayers do not know.

How long will Ohio taxpayers tolerate billions of dollars going to private schools with no accountability for the use of those tax dollars? Are tax dollars paying for vacations? Luxury automobiles? Private jets? What?

School vouchers fraudulently bought millions of dollars in gift cards and condoms: report

[Matthew Chapman](#)

February 26, 2026 5:03PM ET

Millions of dollars more in fraud have been discovered in Arizona's controversial school voucher program.

[According](#) to 12 News, "records show at least 18,000 [Empowerment Scholarship] account holders — close to 20% of the entire program — used voucher funds intended for private and home schooling on a myriad of banned purchases, according to Arizona Department of Education records."

Specifically, according to the documents, nearly 84,000 banned purchases were made through ESAs, amounting to around \$10 million. Those purchases included "Parents paying themselves several thousand dollars each; \$1,500 gift cards; electric dirt bikes; custom tires; luxury hotel stays; insurance payments; wedding gifts; [and] even sexually explicit items like condoms, lubricants and lingerie."

While all of this has been going on, per the report, "the Department of Education and Treasurer's Office, which co-manage the program, have slow-walked or refused to respond to public records requests on total ESA spending for nearly a year from 12News, leaving gaps in the public's understanding of how widespread the issue may be."

While Arizona's governor, Katie Hobbs, is a Democrat, state superintendent Tom Horne and treasurer Kimberly Yee are both Republicans who sit in separately elected offices.

The ESA program, the first statewide program in America to let any family receive public funds to attend [any private secular or parochial school of their choice](#), was sold to the public as a means of giving lower-income families greater freedom. However, [studies have found](#) that the vast majority of funding is flowing to wealthy families.

Allegations of fraud in ESA first [surfaced last year](#), with reports that families were using the money to buy diamond rings and televisions, among other things. Horne has defended the program, said the fraud is a

small percentage of the money being spent, and insisted his office has already recovered \$600,000 in fraud.

[School vouchers fraudulently bought millions of dollars in gift cards and condoms: report - Raw Story](#)

WV: Removing Accountability From Private Schools

[Peter Greene](#)

Feb 03, 2026

West Virginia passed a law to [allow taxpayer-funded school vouchers in 2021](#), and they've been tweaking it ever since. They opened it up [to more and more students](#). Consequently, the costs of the program are ballooning: when the law was passed, supporters declared it would cost just [\\$23 million in its first year](#), and now the estimate for the coming school year [is \\$245 to \\$315 million](#).

With that kind of money on the line, you'd think that the state might want to put some accountability and oversight rules in place. You know-- so the taxpayers know what they're getting for their millions of dollars.

But you would be backwards. Instead, the legislature is considering a bill to reduce accountability for private and religious schools.

[SB 216](#), the Restoring Private Schools Act of 2026, is short and simple. It consists of the current accountability rules for private, parochial or church schools, or schools of a religious order-- with a whole lot of rules crossed out.

What are some of the rules that the legislation proposes to eliminate for private and religious schools? Here's the list of rules slated for erasure:

- * The requirement for a minimum number of hours of instruction.
- * The requirement to maintain attendance and disease immunization records for each enrolled student.
- * The requirement to provide, upon request of county superintendent, a list of the names and addresses of all students in the school between ages 7 and 16.
- * The requirement to annually administer a nationally normed standardized test in the same grades as required for public schools. Ditto the requirement to assess the progress of students with special needs.
- * Since there's no test requirement, there is also no requirement to provide testing data to parents and the state department of education.
- * The requirement to establish curriculum objectives, "the attainment of which will enable students to develop the potential for becoming literate citizens." Scrap also the requirement for an instructional program to meet that goal.

So under this bill, private schools would not have to have a plan for educating students, would not have to spend a minimum amount of time trying to educate students, and would not have to provide the state with any evidence that they are actually educating students.

The bill does add one bit of new language:

As autonomous entities free of governmental oversight of instruction, private, parochial, or church, schools may implement such measures for instruction and assessment of pupils as leadership of such schools may deem appropriate.

In other words, private religious schools accepting taxpayer-funded vouchers may do whatever the hell they want.

[This frickin' guy](#)

The bill is sponsored by Senator Craig Hart. Hart calls himself a school teacher, and is mentioned as an agriculture/FFA teacher, though I could find no evidence of where he teaches. He was [elected in 2024](#) after running as a [hardcore MAGA](#). He has pushed [for requiring Bibles in school](#), among other MAGA causes.

Said Eric Kerns, [superintendent of Faith Christian Academy](#), "It just gives private schools a lot more flexibility in what they would be able to do as far as assessment and attendance and school days. Our accountability is that if people aren't satisfied with the education they're receiving, then they go to another private school or back to the public school or they homeschool." Also known as "No accountability at all." A school is not a taco truck.

As reported by Amelia Ferrell Knisely at West Virginia Watch, at least one legislator tried to put some accountability back in the bill. GOP Sen. Charles Clements tried to put back a nationally-recognized testing requirement and share results with parents. Said Clements

I want to see private schools survive, but I think we have to have guardrails of some sort. There's a lot of money around, and it's a way for people to come in and not produce a product we need ... I think it just leaves the door open for problems.

Exactly. And his amendment was rejected. The School Choice Committee chair said the school could still use a real test if they wanted to, but the bill would allow more flexibility to choose newer test options; I'm guessing someone is pulling for the Classical Learning Test, the conservative unwoke anti-SAT test.

Democrat Mike Woelfel tried to put the immunization record back; that was rejected, too.

Look, the Big Standardized Test is a terrible measure of educational quality, and it should be canceled for everyone. But for years the choice crowd promised that once choice was opened up, we'd get a market driven by hard data. Then it turned out that the "hard data" showed that voucher systems were far worse than public schools, and the solution has not been to make the voucher system work better, but to silence any data that reveals a voucher system failure.

The goal is not higher quality education. The goal is public tax dollars for private religious schools-- but only if the private religious schools can remain free of regulation, oversight, or any restrictions that get in the way of their power to discriminate freely against whoever they wish to discriminate against.

This is not about choice. It's about taxpayer subsidies for private religious schools, and it's about making sure those schools aren't accountable to anyone for how they use that money. It's another iteration of the same argument we've heard across the culture--that the First Amendment should apply because I am not free to fully exercise my religion unless I can unreservedly discriminate against anyone I choose and unless I get taxpayer funding to do it.

We've been told repeatedly that the school choice bargain is a trade off-- the schools get autonomy in exchange for accountability, but that surely isn't what's being proposed here. If West Virginia is going to throw a mountain of taxpayer money at private schools, those schools should be held accountable. This bill promises the opposite; may it die a well-deserved death.

[WV: Removing Accountability From Private Schools](#)