

## ***EMPOWER ILLINOIS' PARENTS: IMPROVE ILLINOIS' EDUCATION***

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School choice empowers parents. Parents should be given the ability to choose the education best suited to their child's needs and desires. As their child's primary educators, parents know what is best for them and what type of school – public, charter, private, sectarian – best meets their needs.

There are many avenues Illinois could pursue to empower parents and improve education.

### **Opportunity Scholarships**

Opportunity Scholarships give parents the freedom to choose a private school for their children, using all or part of the public funding set aside for their children's education. Under such a program, funds typically expended by a school district would be allocated to a participating family in the form of a scholarship to pay partial or full tuition for their child's private school, including both religious and non-religious options.

### **Education Savings Accounts**

Education savings accounts allow parents to withdraw their children from public district or charter schools and receive a deposit of public funds into government-authorized savings accounts with restricted, but multiple, uses. Those funds can cover private school tuition and fees, online learning programs, private tutoring, community college costs, and other higher education expenses.

### **Tax-Credit Scholarships**

Tax-credit scholarships allow taxpayers to receive full or partial tax credits when they donate to nonprofits that provide private school scholarships. Eligible taxpayers can include both individuals and businesses. In some states, scholarship-giving nonprofits also provide innovation grants to public schools and/or transportation assistance to students choosing alternative public schools.

### **Individual Tax Credits/Deductions**

Through individual tax credits and deductions, parents can receive state income tax relief for approved educational expenses, which can include private school tuition, books, supplies, computers, tutors, and transportation.