



IAASE Position Statement in Opposition To Publicly Funded Subsidies of Private Education

The Illinois Alliance of Administrators of Special Education (IAASE), a unit of the Council for Administrators of Special Education (CASE) opposes all publicly funded subsidies of private education such as private school voucher programs (including tax credits, taxpayer savings grants/scholarships, and portability) for all students, including students with disabilities, as they are contrary to the best interests of students and their families, the public school system, local communities, and taxpayers. Public education is essential to provide equitable opportunities and positive educational outcomes for all students, including students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment. IAASE opposes public subsidy of private education for the following reasons:

- Students with disabilities do not have equal access to private schools. Mission-based entrance policies which describe students who “match” a private school’s mission are often discriminatory against students with disabilities. There is evidence of discriminatory practice within this context based on race, disability, and socioeconomic status. Any organization receiving public funding must offer equal access to their programs.
- Private schools significantly lack accountability. As such, the measures so critical to considering school success are missing from private education. Standardized assessment, student achievement targets, funding oversight, reporting requirements regarding discipline, oversight on least restrictive environment, transition outcomes, discipline, disproportionality, maintenance of effort, evaluation timelines, special education teacher certification requirements, incidents of restraint and seclusion and other essential oversight required of the public school systems are necessary to ensure equitable access for students with disabilities.
- Students with disabilities and their families are not guaranteed basic due process rights afforded under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) when they enter private schools. If parents make a unilateral decision to enroll their child in a private school, the right to an individualized education program (IEP), special education and related services, mediation, dispute resolution and other due process rights are not available. Therefore, participation in the educational program is limited for students with disabilities in private schools.
- Subsidizing private schools with public funds does irreparable harm to public schools. Access to equitable public opportunities and positive educational outcomes are based on a strong state and federal investment in public education. Use of public dollars to pay for private education decreases the funding available to ensure a strong public school system which is essential to quality educational opportunities for students with disabilities. A parallel system of education publicly funded in the private sector is unsustainable for taxpayers and harmful to students with disabilities.

For these reasons, IAASE calls upon the Illinois House of Representatives and the Illinois State Senate to oppose any statutory or administrative change that promotes public subsidy to private education, such as vouchers, scholarships, voucher-like programs and/or tax credits.

For additional information, contact Shannon Miller Bellini, Governmental Relations Specialist
sbellini@iasaedu.org