



# Recommendation #1

## Counter pro-voucher argument by explaining the scheme's harmful effects on students of color and low-income students.

In the education space, privatization is often framed as an opportunity for equity. Protecting public education means that we all need to counter that narrative. Help people better understand what equitable solutions that center students and communities truly look like by explaining exactly how school choice initiatives, such as voucher programs, work; why they are harmful to students of color and low-income students; and how they create further inequity.

When resources are taken away from public schools, particularly in communities that are already facing disinvestment, students may be left with oversized classrooms, under-supported facilities, and outdated materials. Parents, students, educators and advocates can work together to protect the future of public education.

Here are sample talking points that can be used to counter the pro-voucher argument.



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**Changing the Narrative on Public Education:  
A Communications Toolkit**

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## Talking Points

### Example 1

#### Parents and Students Need True Equity

We need the talents and contributions of all learners in our community. Public schools make that possible. While there are elements that need to be addressed and updated for today and the future, everyone can access an education, no matter their circumstances. Schools that rely on vouchers cannot say the same; they often choose the students *they* want. Children with unique learning needs are especially disadvantaged under this model. Such private schools rely on scripted instruction which is not inclusive or expansive enough to accommodate students with disabilities, so they do not seek them out for enrollment. And research consistently shows that these schools are less likely to share basic information with the parents of children with special needs.

- Choice may be a difficult frame to reclaim and advance for public education efforts. Instead, it is a more effective strategy for advocates to highlight how public schools are the more equitable option and why.
- Lead with a value like *Human Potential* to orient people's thinking toward an education system that can expand our collective pool of talent.
- Shift attention toward the desired outcome. The goal is to gain support for public education, so its value is necessary to lead with.
- Explain how school choice efforts work, the ways in which they do not advance equity, and create potential harm for students.

### Example 2

#### Disinvestment Puts Students at a Disadvantage

Investing in public education is investing in our community. Right now, that is not happening. Under the guise of budget concerns, district schools are being closed only to reopen as private schools, which actually costs our communities more. Additionally, funding that should be going to neighborhood schools is being diverted into voucher programs. These programs take funding away from programs that support Black and Brown students like art and music, ethnic studies, librarians, and counselors and nurses. Instead, schools without funding experience oversized classrooms, overextended educators, and facilities falling into disrepair.

- Use the value of *Progress* to remind the public that we can only move forward as a country when we make a collective investment to modernize or update our public infrastructures, which includes the education system.
- Here, again, is a counter-narrative to the claim that voucher programs are equitable, followed by an explanation of how lost funding puts students at a disadvantage.