



A project of the  
American Federation for Children.

# INVEST IN KIDS WITH LB364

LB364, the Opportunity Scholarships Act, provides more scholarship opportunities for low-income children to attend a private school of their choice.

## JACOB'S STORY

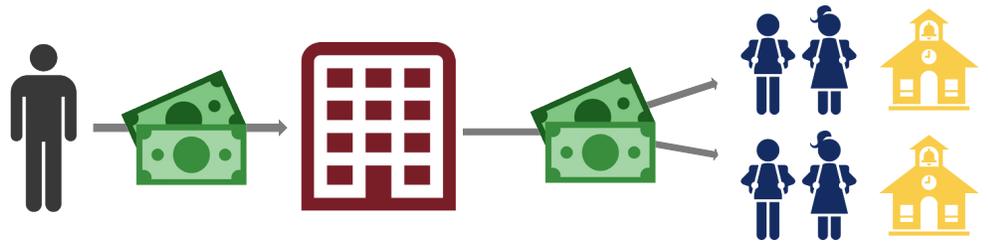


*"At a very early age, my father ingrained the importance of education in our identity.... My parents worked countless hours to make sure we had a private education. Their hard work, along with All Saint's [scholarship opportunities], allowed us the privilege of receiving a private education which has been a blessing from God. From All Saints, I attended Mount Michael Benedictine [with the assistance of a scholarship], which altered my life in so many positive ways. One of those being continuing my private education at Creighton University where I received a full ride academic scholarship.*

*I support school choice because expanding such policies will allow for more students with similar stories as mine to have a choice in their education, a choice that could change their lives."*

Jacob's family immigrated to the United States from Egypt in 2003.

## TAX CREDIT SCHOLARSHIPS: HOW DO THEY WORK?



When an individual or business donates to a scholarship granting organization (SGO), they are eligible to receive a partial or full tax credit on their state income tax liability.

Low-income parents then work with the SGO to find the best educational fit for their child. The child receives a scholarship to attend a private school of his or her choice.

## More info about tax credit scholarships at [INVESTINKIDSNEBRASKA.ORG](http://INVESTINKIDSNEBRASKA.ORG)



## HOW WILL LB364 WORK IN NEBRASKA?

- The proposed program provides a 100% state income tax credit for donations to scholarship granting organizations and is capped at 50% of an individual or business's state tax liability.
- The state will provide \$5 million in total income tax credits.
- This program will change the lives of thousands of Nebraska's kids every year! In 2016 alone, Children's Scholarship Fund of Omaha turned away 600+ applicants due to lack of funds.



## NEXT PAGE: HOW YOU CAN HELP KIDS LIKE JACOB!

# INVEST IN KIDS WITH LB364

## HOW YOU CAN HELP US



### SHARE YOUR STORY

If you have a personal story about a positive experience with private or parochial education, you can have a powerful impact by sharing it with others. Maybe you wanted a faith-based environment for your child. Maybe private or parochial school better met your child's needs. Maybe you or your child have benefited from a privately-funded scholarship and you want others to have the same opportunity.



### CALL, EMAIL, OR WRITE YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

Contact your senator and Governor Ricketts to personally convey why private or parochial education was best fit for your child, or to simply encourage them to support Opportunity Scholarships (LB364). You can contact your senator by visiting [investinkidsnebraska.org/be-an-advocate](https://investinkidsnebraska.org/be-an-advocate).



### MEET WITH YOUR SENATOR

Senators appreciate hearing directly from constituents, especially about how public policy can personally change lives. Call your senator's office and set up a meeting, or talk to them in the Capitol Rotunda during floor debates.

## “BUT WHAT SHOULD I SAY?” GOOD QUESTION!

*When communicating with your elected officials, it's best to share your personal beliefs and experiences in your own words. But if you need a little help, here are some reasons why we think LB364 will benefit students, parents, and our state.*

- Different children have educational different needs.
- Every child has the right to an education that best meets their unique needs.
- LB364 simply helps incentivize more private donations to help fund scholarships for low-income and middle-class families.
- Tax-credit scholarships are funded purely by private donations, not public school funds.
- Tax-credit scholarships exist in 18 states, including Iowa, South Dakota and Kansas. Nebraska should be next!
- LB364 saves taxpayer dollars. Iowa's scholarship tax credit program saves their state over \$12 million annually.
- Nebraska's private schools already save \$450 million in public funds every year.
- Successful private schools promote successful public schools, and vice versa.
- Studies consistently demonstrate that public schools benefit from the existence of scholarship tax credit programs. Twenty of 21 studies showed these programs improve the performance of nearby public schools.
- A 2017 study on the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program shows participating students 43% more likely to enroll in college than their peers.

*Find more information about LB364 at*

**INVESTINKIDS**NEBRASKA.ORG



# MISCONCEPTION VS. REALITY

*School choice is a reality for more than half of the United States. For the few states that do not offer families the opportunity to send their children to a school that best fits their learning needs and values, some misconceptions may be standing in the way.*

## 1. SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAMS DRAIN MONEY FROM PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

Reality: Tax credit scholarship programs across the country, in the aggregate, have been proven to save state governments millions—even billions—of dollars. When a student attends a nonpublic school using a tax credit scholarship, state governments do not have to pay the public school the full cost for providing an education for that student. And the cost to educate a child in a traditional district school is greater than the revenue a state foregoes through scholarship tax credit programs. It's no wonder that tax credit scholarship programs, for example, end up saving each participating state anywhere from \$13 million to \$120 million annually. So, not only do tax credit scholarships not harm public school funding, but they provide additional revenues that could be used to invest in kids in public school settings.

## 2. SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAMS VIOLATE THE SEPARATION BETWEEN CHURCH AND STATE.

Reality: The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that appropriately designed private school choice programs are fully constitutional. And numerous state courts have upheld the constitutionality of tax-credit scholarship programs.

## 3. STUDENTS DON'T BENEFIT FROM PRIVATE SCHOOL CHOICE.

Reality: Seventeen empirical studies examined academic outcomes for tax-credit scholarship recipients using random assignment, the “gold standard” of social science. Of these studies, 11 report positive test score effects among their primary findings. Four studies found no significant effects, and two found negative impact in the early years of study. School choice also leads to more students graduating from high school and enrolling in college, as we've seen in Milwaukee and Florida. In Florida, for example, tax credit scholarship students are up to 43% more likely to enroll in college than their peers in traditional public schools if they enroll in the program for four years or more.

## 4. SCHOOL CHOICE IS ANTI-PUBLIC SCHOOL AND HURTS TRADITIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

Reality: Public schools are an integral part of American society, and, in many cases, they offer a quality education. But public schools are not an ideal fit for every child—parents deserve a choice. All students can learn, and we believe they should all have the opportunity to do so in a safe and supportive school, chosen by their parents, that meets their individual learning needs.

Studies consistently demonstrate public schools benefit from the existence of scholarship tax credit programs. Twenty-one empirical studies examine private school choice programs' impact on academic outcomes for nonparticipating students in nearby public schools. Of those studies, 20 found that private school choice improved the performance of nearby public schools; one found no significant effects of this competition.

## 5. WE ALREADY HAVE SCHOOL CHOICE IN NEBRASKA.

Reality: While it's important children and families to have access to option enrollment and alternative public schools, we know students and parents need expanded options. Schools, organizations, private groups work tirelessly to offer as many scholarships as possible, but demand for scholarship opportunities continue to outweigh supply. Nebraska families deserve more opportunities to set their children and our state up for success.



# MISCONCEPTION VS. REALITY

CONT.

## 6. THERE IS NO ACCOUNTABILITY IN PRIVATE SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAMS.

Reality: All school choice programs have some level of administrative and financial accountability. And most programs have academic accountability. Private schools in every state must comply with health and safety regulations as well as anti-discrimination laws. Already in Nebraska, approved and accredited private schools have testing standards, health and safety standards, financial accountability standards, among other standards. And, in addition to all these requirements and regulations, private schools are accountable to those who matter the most: parents.

## 7. PRIVATE SCHOOLS HAVE SELECTIVE ADMISSIONS POLICIES.

Reality: Private schools often have just as diverse classroom settings as traditional public schools. Not every school needs to meet the needs of every student. In fact, that isn't realistic. But what we do need is diverse schools all kids can access to meet their specific educational needs.

## 8. PRIVATE SCHOOLS DON'T SERVE STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS.

Reality: Private schools are meeting the needs of a substantial number of students with special needs, and doing so without the funding mechanisms accessible to public schools. Education funding for students with special needs is complex, but it boils down to this: state and federal funding cannot follow a student to the school of their choice. This means all special needs education funding can only go to public schools. This places private schools at a disadvantage when educating children with special needs, especially those with the highest needs. Nevertheless, private schools are increasingly developing funding and programming to accept more children with special needs, as well as creating schools specifically tailored to serving certain populations of students with special needs. As studies show, about 12% of students in public schools have special needs, while about 7% of students in private schools have special needs.

## 9. PRIVATE CHOICE PROGRAMS INCREASE RACIAL SEGREGATION IN SCHOOLS.

Reality: No reputable study shows that private school choice increases racial segregation. In fact, of the 10 studies using valid empirical methods to examine school choice and racial segregation, nine found that school choice creates more racially integrated classrooms; one found no significant effect on integration. And a 2016 analysis found the Louisiana Scholarship Program aides desegregation efforts in Louisiana. Moreover, most school choice advocates believe in the power of diverse schools and celebrate the fact that private school choice programs give kids from different socioeconomic backgrounds the opportunity to learn and collaborate together, helping them develop key skills for the 21st Century workplace.

## 10. SCHOOL CHOICE ONLY HELPS URBAN STUDENTS.

Reality: Public and private school choice are critically important to increasing education options for rural and suburban students. Students outside of major urban districts face real challenges due to population sparsity and school size, limiting many families' high-quality educational options. More rural and suburban policymakers are embracing school choice as a way to bring new and better opportunities to their constituents.

[INVESTINKIDSNEBRASKA.ORG](http://INVESTINKIDSNEBRASKA.ORG)

