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# School Choice in US Education

Based on the work of Nora Gordon and Paul E. Peterson

“What We Know About Our Schools,” an essay by Nora Gordon and Paul E. Peterson, includes an examination of the forms of school choice in the US education system and their effects.

## Key Points on School Choice

1. As of 2022, 76.5 percent of US students ages 5–17 attended district-operated traditional public schools, 7.2 percent attended charter schools, 9.7 percent attended private schools, and 6.6 percent were homeschooled.
2. Charter schools have spread to all but four states since 1991, with enrollment increasing from about 2 percent in 2002 to about 7 percent in 2022.
3. A 2023 study reports that charter students gain 16 more days of learning per year in reading and 6 more days in math than those at nearby district schools.
4. Charter schools generally receive about 20 percent less in revenue per pupil than district schools from government sources.
5. Private school enrollment has declined from 15 percent in 1958 to 10 percent in 2021, with the largest drop occurring in the Catholic school sector.
6. Studies of small-scale voucher and tax credit programs have detected positive outcomes for disadvantaged students, especially in high school graduation rates and college attainment.
7. On the large scale, statewide voucher interventions in Indiana and Louisiana show zero or even negative benefits to student achievement.
8. Homeschooling is allowed in all US states, with regulations varying widely. A 2022 survey indicates that the percentage of students were being homeschooled nearly doubled since 2019, from 3 percent to more than 6 percent.
9. Little is known about the effectiveness of homeschooling, as most states do not require homeschooled students to participate in standardized testing.

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at [www.hoover.org/fact-based-policy-program](http://www.hoover.org/fact-based-policy-program).**



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