

Updated 3/17/2018 by C.Noggle

LWV-VA Standards and Approval Criteria for (non-Public) School Choice Options
School Choice Options in Virginia: Charter, Vouchers, Tuition Tax Credits, Virtual
[Funding and Operation Parameters for K-12 Options]
 [Also See Appendix D.]

			Yes	No	Comment/Explain/Concern
1	Is this Position update needed?	Updating the LWV-VA Position on K-12 Education is needed, and needed promptly. Changes and additions are proposed to expand the Education Position to address Charter Schools, funding of private schools with tuition tax credits, funding of private schools and students with vouchers, and the recent establishment of online learning programs.			
2		Should these 5 Principles be adopted?			
		Principle #1 Public schools should prevail as the highest priority for school choice in Virginia.			
		Principle #2 Public schools sustain democracy by being open to all children.			
		Principle #3: Public schools serve the public and prepare citizens to maintain our government.			
		Principle #4: A Public school system allows the public to vote on school governance and school policy.			
		Principle #5: Public schools allow the exchange of ideas and participation in decision-making.			
		Ergo, Public money should go to Public Schools, not to Private Schools			
	I. Charter and Virtual Schools. NOTE: All Virginia Charter Schools ARE <u>Public</u> Schools.	Please see the complete Matrix for discussion of Charter Schools.			
3	II. All School Choice Option Requirements	Should these parameters, standards and policies be adopted?			

		<i>A. Fair and legal funding [No Public funds shall go to sectarian schools.]</i>			
		1. Require Separation of church and state (See U.S. and VA Constitutions)			
		2. Oppose unconstitutional <u>ESAs</u> <i>aka</i> <u>Vouchers</u> that would allow public funds for private sectarian schools. (See VA Constitution Article VIII, Section 10)			
		3. Prohibit for-profit operations and profiteering.			
		<i>B. Ensure Nondiscrimination</i>			
		1. Uphold Federal civil rights law			
		2. Uphold Virginia non-discrimination law: <i>Shall not discriminate against any individual on the basis of disability, race, creed, color, gender, national origin, religion, ancestry, or need for special education services: See Virginia Charter School Law. Others needed?</i>			
		<i>C. Ensure equity in choices, e.g. Transportation problems can limit participation by low-income students</i>			
		1. Require a non-biased student selection process; such as lottery, or by criteria for the special purpose of a school option, such as by need, or ability, or at or below a certain FPL percentage.			
		2. Prevent re-segregation (analysis available; see “Controlled choice” (Brookings, TCI.2) Brookings: https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2017/06/23/integrating-charter-schools-and-choice-based-education-systems/)			
		<i>D. Standards for School Climate</i>			
		1. Require proper and effective student retention process. (Prevent easy removal of problem students that would return a student to public school.)			
		2. Require proper and fair discipline policy, e.g. “Classroom, not Courtroom.”			
		3. Provide health and safety measures; follow			

		laws.			
		4. Provide “positive”, “proactive” role in meeting needs of children.			
		<i>E. Accountability/oversight/transparency.</i> (See NCSL National Conference of State Legislatures.)			
		1. Require proof of well-maintained, monitored financial/fiscal management system; fiscal soundness and budget accountability including:			
		a. Annual audit by independent licensed accounting firm with no personnel from receiving agency/individual.			
		b. Tracking in the budget of designated gifts			
		c. Tracking of public money in the budget by line item.			
		d. Require Board of Directors of agency receiving funds to be legally responsible for ensuring that all funds are used as designated.			
		2. Require open meetings and public access to records.			
		3. Evaluate periodically with minimum frequency established.			
		4. Report attendance often, track students’ participation and completion of program.			
		5. Assess student achievement in all schools and report to Virginia DOE.			
		6. Establish method and parameters for closing, discontinuing or denying recertification.			
		7. Comply with Federal requirements (e.g., Titles I, VI, IX, ADA, IDEA, ESSA, FAPE) (Free Appropriate Public Education))			
		8. Notify parents, prior to enrollment, of any loss of rights protection. (e.g. for students with disabilities; see GAO report, COPAA			
		<i>F. Credentialed and qualified teachers;</i>			

		<i>Personnel support</i>			
		1. Maintain adequate number of personnel (Both Brick-and-Mortar and Virtual)			
		2. Provide Human Resource quality (employee pay, benefits, grievance process)			
		3. Provide a fair pay scale; Incentives to succeed not based on monetary bonus.			
		4. Require continuing professional education and re-certification			
		5. Require substantial initial mentoring of teachers.			
		6. Require background checks			
	III. Virtual Schools – Public, charter, and private				
		A. Require robust VDOE oversight, accreditation, and accountability [Multidivision Online Provider (MOP) Guidelines at VDOE]			
		B. Require best student/teacher ratio (Need to define “best” that is effective; standard 150:1 or better)			
		C. Require in-person monitoring of testing (for validation, accountability, reporting)			
		D. Require method to determine actual time at computer, to prevent signing-in and leaving.			
		E. Assure integrity and purpose of providers – motive <u>must not be for profit</u> .			
		[Note that private MOP lobbyists and private companies have donated to members of Virginia Education Committee members.]			
		F. Require counseling that meets the Virginia Standards for <u>Academic</u> , <u>Career</u> , and <u>Personal/social</u> School Counseling:			
		1. <u>Academic</u> counseling, that assists students and their parents to acquire knowledge of the <u>curricula</u>			

		choices available to students, to plan a <u>program of studies</u> , to arrange and interpret academic testing, and to seek post-secondary academic opportunities;			
		2. <u>Career</u> counseling, that helps students to acquire information and plan action about work, jobs, apprenticeships, and post-secondary educational, and career opportunities;			
		3. <u>Personal/social</u> counseling, that assists students to develop an understanding of themselves, the rights and needs of others, how to resolve conflict and to define individual goals, reflecting their interests, abilities and aptitudes.			
		G. Require records and reports of amount of teacher's instruction and assessment time.			
		H. Assure fair funding statewide: (Payment to MOP based on per pupil SOQ of student's resident jurisdiction; <u>not</u> the current practice that pays the MOP based on the school jurisdiction where the MOP establishes itself.) [Also see Appendix C.]			
	IV. Non-Public schools funding	Oppose funding of Private Schools with Tuition Tax Credit Programs, Vouchers (aka ESAs, NeoVouchers). LWVUS opposes Tuition Tax Credits and Vouchers. (<i>See NCPE.</i>)			
		If in place, a program must meet certain requirements. Virginia currently has a Tuition Tax Credit Scholarship program: <u>EISTC</u>			
		A. Assure that any Tuition Tax Credit program is well-managed.			
		1. VDOE should establish and apply an approval process for Scholarship Foundations that receive and disburse donations.			
		2. VDOE should monitor compliance with reporting requirements of schools and report to			

		the Board of Education and legislators as prescribed in regulations.			
		B. Assure that a Tuition Tax Credit program is not a fiscal detriment to public schools			
		C. Limit or repeal the VA EISTCP (Education Improvement Scholarship Tax Credit Program)			
		D. Lower EISTC annual donation cap and/or lower the per cent tax credit allowed.			
		E. Prohibit private schools that receive public funds from using the funds for religious training.			
		F. Prohibit establishing <u>ESAs (Educational Savings Accounts)</u> aka “Vouchers” because...			
		1. Vouchers, voucher-like funding for individuals cause loss of funds to local school division.			
		2. LWVUS opposes vouchers.			
		<i>(See opposition statements by NCPE and The Commonwealth Institute (TCI))</i>			