

**ed** CHOICE  
**2021**  
**ANNUAL REPORT**



**“He’s just completely blossomed”:  
Wyatt’s school choice story**



## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

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### **2021 was an amazing year for educational freedom.**

In some respects, of course, it was the opposite. Many schools remained closed for long stretches of time. But the failures of the educational status quo produced a bipartisan groundswell of dissatisfaction across the United States.

EdChoice has led the way in turning that groundswell of dissatisfaction into a groundswell for freedom. With your help, American families, lawmakers, and advocates transformed COVID-era failures into policy changes that expanded educational choice in profound ways.

Surveying the educational landscape today, I truly believe that we stand on the cusp of something completely new in American education. The era of government educational monopolies might finally be coming to an end. The

big winners are the students and families who will finally be able to access and afford the education they deserve—an education that suits their individual needs.

In this report, you will find an overview of all that friends and supporters of educational freedom have accomplished through EdChoice in the past year. It was a remarkable year and a fitting way to cap off a quarter century of fighting for educational freedom.

As EdChoice celebrated its 25th anniversary, we rode high on the crests of major victories in states like West Virginia and Kentucky. Once upon a time, in the not-so-distant-past, those victories would have been thought impossible: West Virginia was a teachers' union stronghold, and Kentucky had a governor who vetoed education reform. But through the concerted and coordinated efforts of EdChoice, parents, local organizations and lawmakers,



that opposition crumbled. Now almost every family in the state of West Virginia can use their state tax dollars to customize their child’s educational experience, and underserved students in Kentucky are the beneficiaries of a sweeping educational scholarship initiative as well.

**Education reform is no longer a “top-down” effort. It has become a bottom-up transformation. Power is returning to parents and students, as they gain the freedom to choose what they need and deserve.**

But in this wonderful moment, I want to emphasize a key point: Our goal is not “school choice” but *educational freedom*. Educational freedom means more than just having a few schools to choose from. It’s about having a wealth of educational *opportunities and*

*options*—whether public, private, customized, charter, online, at home or some mix of the above.

You and I believe that fundamental truth that EdChoice’s founder, Milton and Rose Friedman, never tired of conveying: **The way to make change is to create a vibrant marketplace of options.**

If you give people the freedom to make their own choices, they *will* find better solutions that meet their needs. That requires a transfer of power, from the bureaucrats in their office towers to the people on the ground. With the support of people like you, EdChoice is making that happen.

Here’s to the next 25 years—and to the chance to remake American education for the better.

Robert C. Enlow  
President and CEO



**In 2021, EdChoice celebrated its 25th anniversary and 25 years of success advancing educational freedom.**

When Milton and Rose Friedman founded the Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice in 1996, there were six choice programs in the entire United States. Most policymakers had never supported school choice, or even heard of it. The idea that frustrated families and concerned citizens could make inroads on a government monopoly seemed absurd.

Fast forward 25 years: Today there are **76 programs in 32 states** that serve more than 600,000 students. **Seventy percent (70%) of the public supports school choice.** And 2021 was the biggest year yet for expanding educational opportunity.

**“The true test of any scholar’s work is not what his contemporaries say, but what happens to his work in the next 25 or 50 years.”**

**—MILTON FRIEDMAN**

# HOW DID WE GET HERE?



**1996**

Milton and Rose Friedman establish the Friedman Foundation (later known as EdChoice).

**1998**

First Friedman Friends Conference



**2001**

Foundation plays major role in landmark Supreme Court case *Zelman v. Simmons-Harris*



**2004**

Foundation helps enact school choice in Washington, D.C.



**2003**

First publication of *The ABCs of School Choice*



**2011**

Year of School Choice – New programs in Oklahoma, Arizona, North Carolina, Colorado and Indiana



**2012**

First Legislator training conference



Legal Defense & Education Center

**2018**

EdChoice Legal Defense & Education Center founded

**2016**

Per the Friedman's request, the Friedman Foundation officially becomes EdChoice



**2015**

Nevada passes the first of its kind universal ESA program



**2020**

Major Supreme Court victory in *Espinoza v. Montana Dept. of Revenue*



**2021**

Year of educational choice – landmark legislation passed in West Virginia providing access to 96% of all families in the state

# ABOUT EDCHOICE

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## MISSION STATEMENT

The EdChoice mission is to advance **educational freedom and choice for all as a pathway to successful lives and a stronger society.**

The EdChoice team works tirelessly with supporters of educational freedom to build support for state programs that expand educational opportunities for all American students.

Educational choice can only succeed as a grassroots effort. EdChoice strives to bring people together and equip them with the high-quality

research, data analysis, policy expertise and messaging strategies they need to make educational freedom a reality.

EdChoice was founded in 1996 by Milton and Rose D. Friedman who pioneered the idea of universal school choice as a mechanism to drive the lasting improvement of our education system.

**Our goal is to have a system in which every family in the U.S. will be able to choose for itself the school to which its children go.**

**—MILTON AND ROSE FRIEDMAN,  
FOUNDERS**



# PILLARS OF OUR WORK

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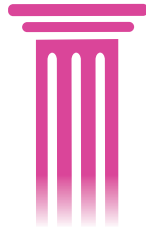
## RESEARCH AND THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

Our team conducts high-quality empirical research, national and state surveys, reviews, syntheses, working papers and data dashboards.



## STATE POLICY and ADVOCACY

We offer on the ground support at the local level in key states—including state specific data, policy advice, legal support and more.



## TRAINING AND OUTREACH

We provide in-person trainings and webinars tailored for state legislators, parent organizers and educational freedom supporters seeking to learn more about choice policies and advocacy strategies.



## LEGAL

We fight in the courts, file amicus briefs and offer policy and legal analysis in support of laws that uphold the freedom to choose the school that fits a child’s needs.

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**In all we do, EdChoice advances a K–12 education system where all families—regardless of race, origin, ZIP code or family income—are free to choose a learning environment that works best for their children: public or private, religious or secular, in-person or online, at home or away.**

# 2021 CHOICE

## YEAR IN REVIEW

### LEGAL

**EdChoice's Legal Defense & Education Center** provided influential litigation review, brief writing, legal analysis and partnership building. Most notably:

- EdChoice authored two amicus briefs for the U.S. Supreme Court, in support of Maine parents seeking to choose religious schools for their children using Maine's town tuitioning voucher program (*Carson v. Makin*). The Supreme Court heard oral arguments on December 8, 2021, and the case is now pending adjudication.
- EdChoice co-authored an amicus brief for the Tennessee Supreme Court, in support of Tennessee's Education Savings Account Pilot voucher program (*The Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County v. Tennessee Department of Education*). The court's decision in the case is pending.

### RESEARCH

EdChoice continues to offer extensive research support services for partners, influencers, parents and the media. We've furnished research to over 70 organizations and conducted an additional 50 speaking engagements reaching more than 2,300 people. Our **Research and Thought Leadership** (RTL) team produced:

- 13 major research publications
- 16 fiscal notes, memos and briefs—all of which influenced state debates
- 26 national poll tracker reports that have been cited by major funders and national media outlets
- 44 state polling briefs, updated monthly
- a new book, *Hybrid Homeschooling: A Guide to the Future of Education* by EdChoice's Mike McShane
- Project Nickel, a joint project to produce the first database in the country that provides school specific spending data by district and state



## TRAINING AND OUTREACH

In 2021, EdChoice reached almost 40,000 policymakers, advocates and community leaders through our training and outreach efforts alone. Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, EdChoice:

- Spoke at 214 events attended by nearly 23,000 policymakers, advocates and community leaders.
- Organized and ran 61 events attended by 2,280 policymakers and community leaders, and our materials were used more than 120 times by trainees.
- Conducted six state book tours for Mike McShane’s new book *Hybrid Homeschooling* and helped organize *Miss Virginia* movie showings throughout the country.
- Trained more than 150 state policymakers in six states.
- Sponsored 48 events attended by 42,334 attendees.

## STATE POLICY and ADVOCACY

EdChoice organized parents and advocates and partnered with education freedom organizations to expand school choice in states across the country. In many of these states, we faced stiff opposition. But at the end of the day, educational freedom prevailed in every single one:

- New programs are now available in 7 states through the provision of bill design advice, communications support and research analysis on new programs.
- EdChoice provided educational support for 21 expanded programs in 14 states.
- Landmark education savings account (ESA) legislation passed in West Virginia after 5 years of support from EdChoice and other partners—the most expansive program to date.

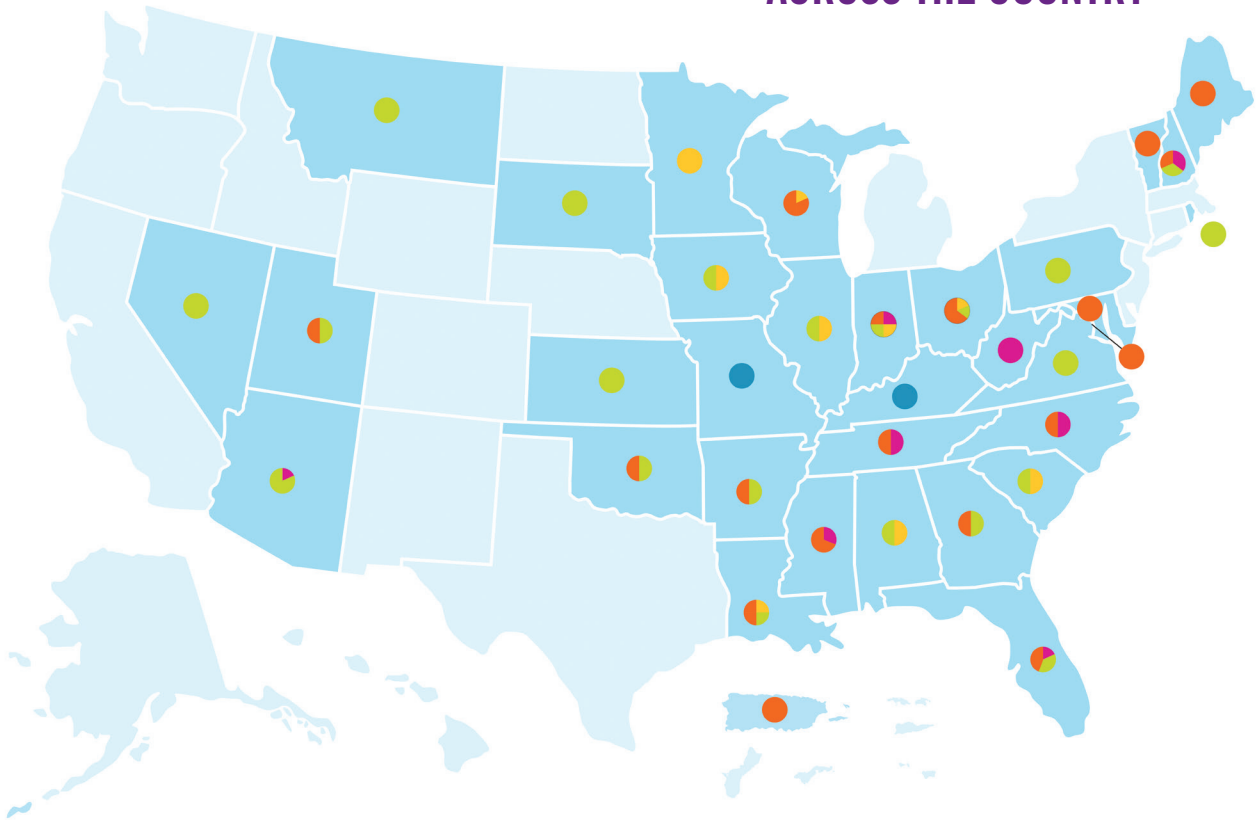
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**“What an excellent event! The changing landscape in education poses the question of reform vs. transformation. This isn’t a time for policymakers to do nothing. EdChoice provides the data to move the nation forward.”**

**— EDCHOICE EVENT ATTENDEE**

# SCHOOL CHOICE

## ACROSS THE COUNTRY



- Education Savings Accounts
- School Vouchers
- Tax-Credit Scholarships
- Tax-Credit Education Savings Accounts (ESAs)
- Individual Tax Credit & Deductions

**76 Programs**  
*(On the Books)*

**32 States**  
*Plus Washington, D.C.  
and Puerto Rico*

**608,000 Students**

# WEST VIRGINIA SPOTLIGHT

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No state better captures the dramatic shift of the past few years toward educational freedom than West Virginia.

Only four years ago, West Virginia was the birthplace of the “Red for Ed” movement around the country, as a statewide teachers’ union strike pushed legislators to quickly pass a pay raise. The following year, efforts were mounted to block the passage of education savings accounts (ESAs) for students with special needs. They boasted that 88% of West Virginians opposed school choice. At that point, public education soaked up 45% of the entire state budget.

The situation in West Virginia today couldn’t be more different. In 2021, EdChoice helped pass the state’s **Hope Scholarship Program**, which gives an applicant *100% of their state education dollars* (\$4,600 annually) to attend the school (or homeschool) of their choice. What’s more, this scholarship is available to almost every child in the state.

This miraculous transformation wasn’t simply miraculous: It was the result of the tireless efforts put in by EdChoice, our partners in West Virginia and our supporters. In particular, EdChoice Legislator Training sessions helped prepare West Virginia lawmakers, coalition members and choice advocates to turn the tide against the powerful teachers’ unions.

**“EdChoice has been an invaluable intellectual, financial and strategic partner and has ensured that the momentum for education reform will never cease,” said Garrett Ballengee of West Virginia’s Cardinal Institute.**

Looking at West Virginia today in comparison to 2018, it’s clear that the momentum for educational freedom has become a tidal wave.

# THE EDCHOICE DIFFERENCE

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## “HE’S JUST COMPLETELY BLOSSOMED”: WYATT’S SCHOOL CHOICE STORY

When South Carolina parents Elizabeth and Chris were enrolling their little boy Wyatt in kindergarten, they quickly realized how limited their options were at the local public school. They wanted Wyatt in a general ed classroom, but because of his special needs he also needed behavioral therapist support . . . and that wasn’t going to happen.



“There were no accommodations provided at the public school. There were none,” said Chris. Elizabeth

added: “I felt like at the public school we were going to lose time trying to convince them of the services that Wyatt needed.”

Thanks to the efforts of EdChoice and our South Carolina partners, they were able to enroll Wyatt at a local parish school instead. And the difference was night and day. “It wasn’t like a one size fits all,” Elizabeth says. “We brought Wyatt in and they were willing to make those adaptations in the classroom to meet his needs.”

Two years later, Wyatt is thriving. Instead of being isolated, he plays on the basketball team and is “one of the kids” happily playing on the playground.

Kelly, his ABA therapist, attests to his progress. “His emotional cues and everything have just completely blossomed,” she said. “It is so great to see him keep developing and growing!”

## FROM DEAD-END TO WORLD OF OPPORTUNITY: DREW'S SCHOOL CHOICE STORY

“As a parent of three children, I am always thinking about the best education options for my children. My husband and I believe in creating an environment for lifelong learners. We want our children to get excited about learning. We want our children to be challenged academically and to have education options.

The HOPE Scholarship accomplishes this and more. The introduction of the HOPE Scholarship will help ease the financial burden of choosing private education for our children. Drew is five years old and will be entering Kindergarten in the fall. The HOPE Scholarship will help our family afford the cost of three children in private school.

School choice is important to West Virginia students because it will open up a variety of options for parents. **They can explore and determine what will be the best education for each of their children. Providing options creates an opportunity for every education option to improve the services that they offer.** The HOPE Scholarship will benefit



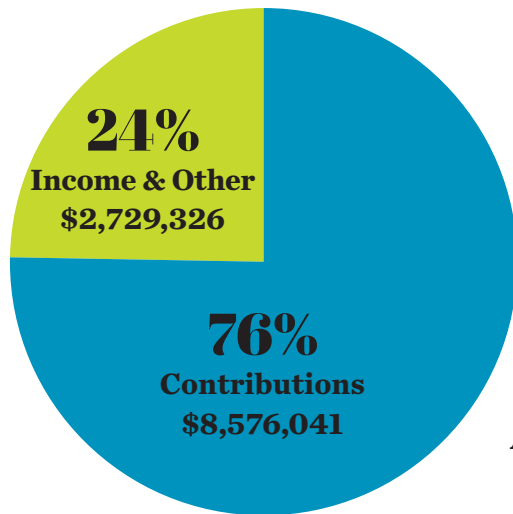
the public schools because class sizes will be smaller, and students are able to get more 1:1 attention. Private schools will be able to accept more students that otherwise would not be able to afford it. Families choosing to homeschool their children will benefit from the structured curriculum options along with the flexibility that homeschooling allows.

I am very excited for the doors that the HOPE Scholarship will open not only for my family, but for my fellow parents in West Virginia. I cannot believe that my youngest child will be ready for Kindergarten, and I'm sure I will be misty eyed watching him walk into the school of our choosing. **Thank you HOPE scholarship and thank you to those who worked tirelessly to make it happen!"**

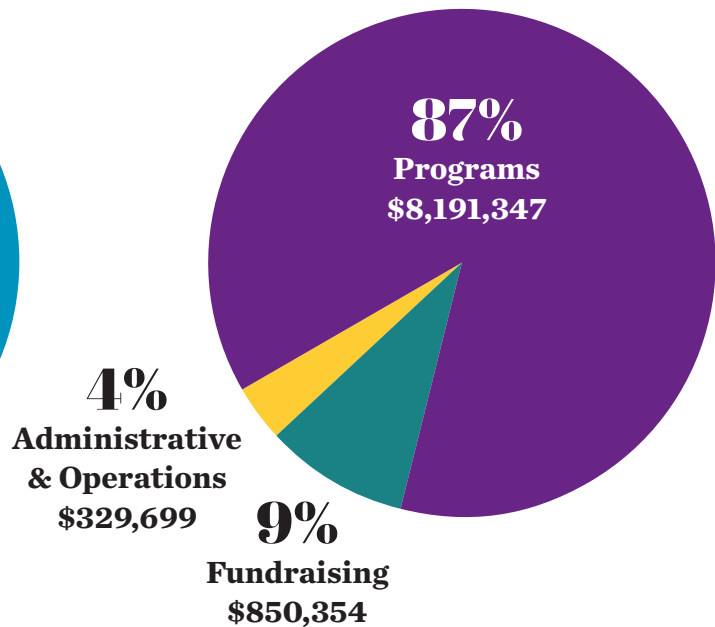
**—KIM, WEST VIRGINIA MOTHER  
OF DREW (KINDERGARTEN)**

# 2021 FINANCIALS

## REVENUE



## EXPENSES



Thank you to all our friends and supporters who made 2021 a tremendous year for educational freedom. Your generous commitment to the cause of educational choice had profound impact on thousands of students and families all across the country. EdChoice's accomplishments are only possible thanks to your steadfast support. We hope you will stand with us in the next 25 years!



# WHY I SUPPORT EDCHOICE

**“EdChoice has been a pathfinder in the school choice movement.** It’s an extraordinary talent spotter and has worked with numerous reformers who are state and national leaders in K–12 education policy . . . EdChoice is a growth stock. Buy it.”

—DAN PETERS  
LOVETT AND RUTH PETERS FOUNDATION  
(DONORS SINCE 1996)

**“I support EdChoice because I was a product of choice myself.** My parents managed to move from where the schools were subpar and unchallenging to a place where they knew the schools were outstanding. Far too many parents of underprivileged kids can’t do that. Nobody should be trapped in a dysfunctional or failing school and thus likely consigned to a lifetime of disadvantage or desperation. Good education matters. In the long-run, it may well be what really matters.”

—LARRY BLADES  
(DONOR SINCE 2000)

“Access to a high quality, individualized education is a precursor to a meaningful, self-determined life. **No child should be denied access to upward mobility simply because she is zoned to a school that does not fit her needs or interests** . . . EdChoice and its national network of advocates, scholars, and practitioners are uniquely positioned to transcend singular policy approaches or school models to help build toward dynamic, individualized opportunities for kids.”

—LORI ARMISTEAD  
WALTON FAMILY FOUNDATION  
(DONORS SINCE 1996)



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