

# WASHINGTON Examiner

## Want more diversity in Catholic schools like Covington? Try school choice

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One of the pieces of shrapnel that pierced the ignorant masses as a result of the bomb blast that was the Covington Catholic debacle is the complaint that the students attending that particular school must be racist because enrollment is mostly white (and Catholic). Racism and the entire dust up on the National Mall aside, it is often true that in some parts of the country, private schools lack diversity. A solution that's often overlooked for this problem is school choice, or more specifically, school vouchers.

It works like this: Demographic groups often segregate themselves (sometimes naturally, sometimes because of government action) by race, ethnicity, religion, or income. This often seems most prevalent with race. Because of the way districts are drawn, families send their children to attend the nearby public school with much of their already-segregated neighborhood. With school voucher programs, parents could send their child, if they desire, to a school other than the one simply assigned to them because of geography. This transition to other schools that are either more diverse or better suited for the child's emotional, physical, or educational needs produces a more integrated society.

Statistics back up the concept that broadening school choice or implementing a voucher program increases diversity in school. This [article reviewed](#) that concept and found that while school choice doesn't answer every problem education poses, nor does it immediately create perfectly integrated schools (racial integration varies by region, as one would expect) it does help.

As a policy analyst at the Cato Institute's Center for Educational Freedom, Corey A. DeAngelis has studied this topic for years. He told me in an e-mail that, on average, "seven out of eight studies find that private school vouchers lead to more racial integration. None of the studies find negative effects."

The concept of school choice and vouchers in general often receives pushback for all kinds of reasons. When you think about it, the entire idea that kids should go to certain public schools based solely on geography is quite strange, and its success is dubitable.

In a February 2016 about this, DeAngelis wrote,

"In our country's disturbing history, government officials decided that people ought to be 'separate but equal' for the greater good. They thought that having racially diverse people in the same institutions would harm society through racial tension. Today, public officials make the

same argument, just in the opposite direction. They claim that government force is necessary to move people, based on skin color, to achieve some greater social goal.”

Regardless of what the government and society thinks about school choice, statistics show there are few downsides and often present an ever-increasing case to encourage states to follow this route, particularly when it comes to improving racial diversity in education.