

## VOTE YES ON SENATE BILL 2494!

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Senate Bill 2494 creates a pilot program to give parents in Chicago's lowest-performing and most severely overcrowded schools educational options. Each family enrolled in one of these schools will be offered a school voucher to cover qualified education expenses at a state recognized nonpublic school. The bill will be amended to mirror the original intent of the sponsors, as well as to take into consideration suggestions of interested parties.

- **This program will come at no additional cost to taxpayers!** As amended, the bill now guarantees that the voucher program will be paid for by Chicago Public Schools out of CPS's portion of the education budget.
- **The maximum voucher will not exceed the amount of per pupil state aid received by CPS.** At just under \$4,000, the voucher will cover costs at most private schools in Chicago.
- **Students in failing schools will receive vouchers.** Vouchers will be offered to students who attend the 48 schools that make up the lowest-performing 10 percent of CPS elementary schools; 37 of these 48 schools have been under state or federal sanctions for 9 consecutive years or more.
- **Students in severely overcrowded high-poverty schools will receive vouchers.** Dozens of schools across Chicago are overcrowded. This program would provide the voucher option to parents of students enrolled in the 5 percent of schools determined by the Chicago Board of Education to be the city's most overcrowded.
- **The Illinois Standards Achievement Test will be used to monitor student progress.** By using the same test used to evaluate students in public schools, it will be possible to compare student progress on an apples-to-apples basis.
- **An official evaluation will be conducted.** The Chicago Board of Education and State Board of Education will submit a report in December 2015 that will assess the academic benefits and financial impact of the program.
- **The school choice program is constitutional in Illinois.** Many legal experts, as well as precedent at the U.S. and Illinois Supreme Courts, indicate the program meets constitutional tests.

This legislation will not harm state taxpayers. It will not hinder other efforts within Chicago to improve education. And, most importantly, it will give parents in the worst-performing and overcrowded public schools a choice in their child's education.