

# **School Choice in Alaska**

# The Need for Educational Choice in Alaska

## Alaska's diverse educational landscape

**20% of Alaskan students are in correspondence & private schools.**  
33 private schools serve 4,000 students (20% are non-faith-based).  
30 correspondence (homeschool) schools serve 23,000 students.  
503 public schools serving 131,587 students.

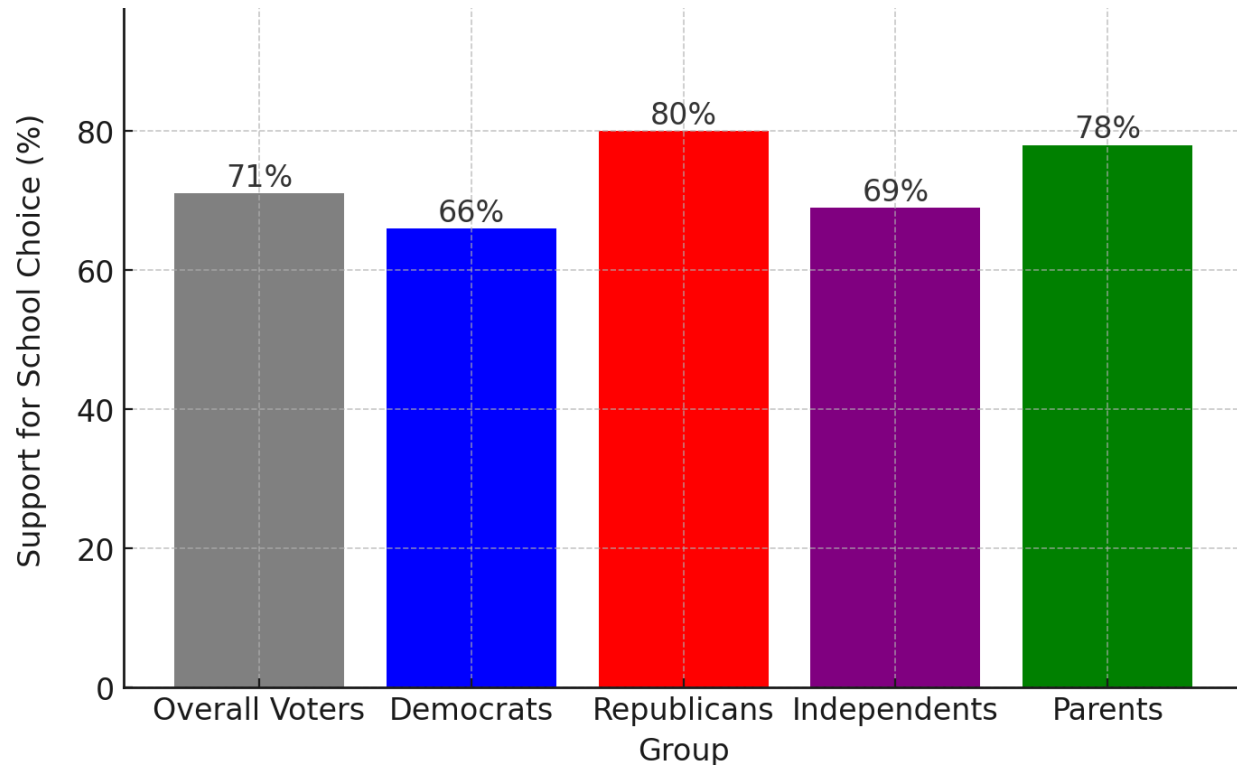


## The reality of educational costs

Public schools spend \$22,000+ per student.  
The average cost of private school tuition in Alaska is \$7,224

# There is Strong Public Support for School Choice

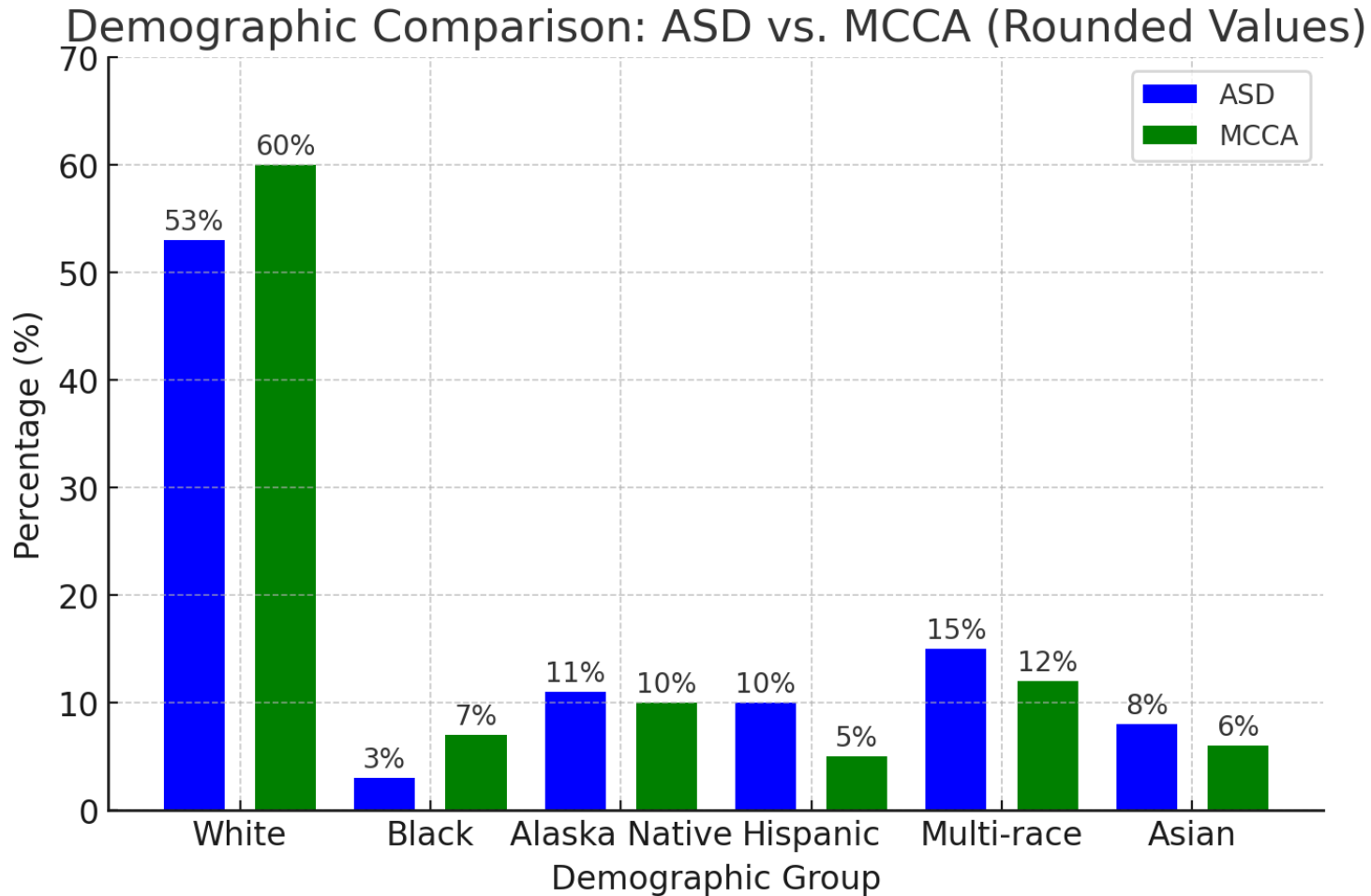
## What Do Alaskan Parents Want?



- 71% of registered voters support school choice initiatives. Notably, this support transcends party lines, with 66% of Democrats, 80% of Republicans, and 69% of Independents expressing approval (RealClear Opinion Research Poll, June 2023)
- 78% of parents support some form of school choice (Ed Choice, 2023).

# Myth vs. Reality – Who Do Private Schools Serve?

Myth #1: Private schools lack diversity.



Myth #2: Private schools are only for the wealthy.

Myth #3: Private Schools Drain Public School Resources.

- Many private schools allocate a significant portion of their budget to helping low-income families afford tuition. (e.g. At MCCA, 84% of families receive tuition assistance.)
- Private schools partner with donors, churches, and community organizations to create scholarship funds that help offset tuition costs for low-income families.
- Private schools relieve pressure on public schools by educating students at a lower cost to taxpayers, not utilizing public school funds.

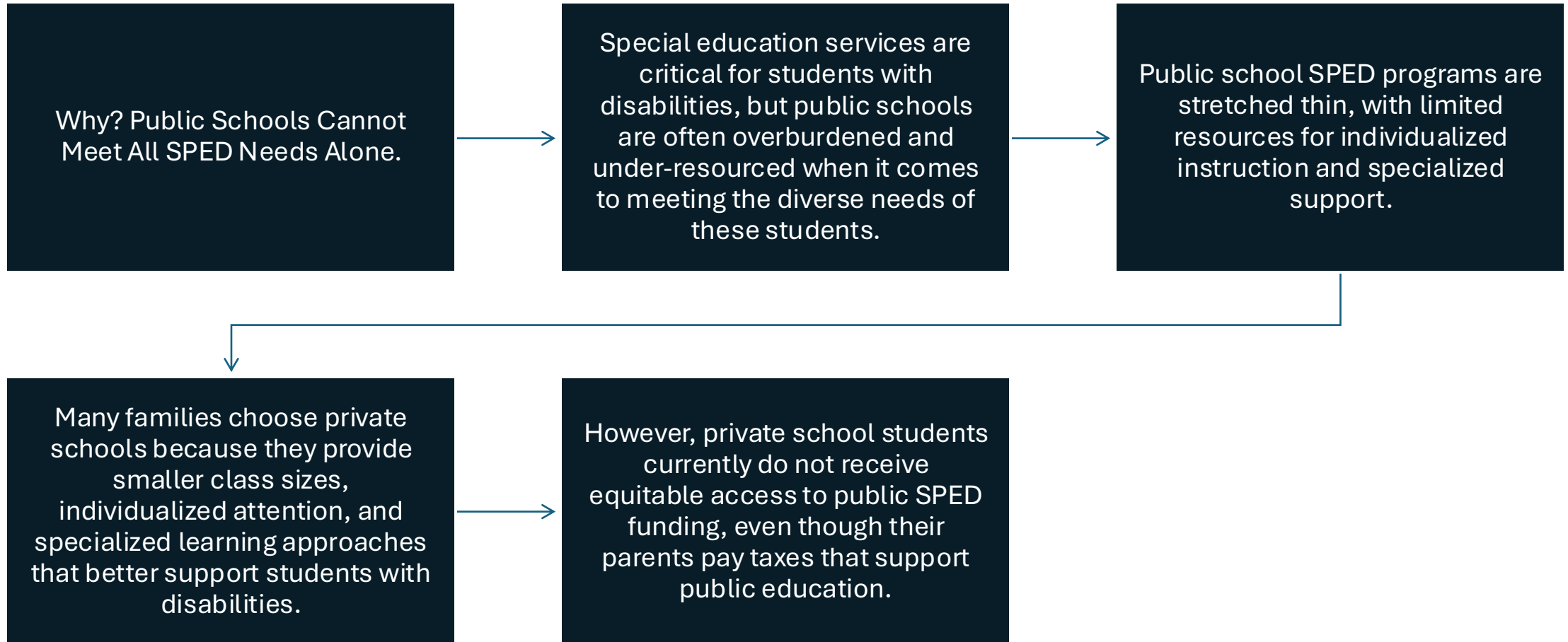
Myth #4: Private Schools Are Not Held Accountable.

Myth #5: Private Schools Are Exclusively Religious.

Myth #6: Private Schools Do Not Serve Special Education Students.

- Private schools must meet strict accreditation standards and are accountable to families, accreditation boards, and state regulations. (e.g. MCCA is dually accredited through ACSI and Cognia).
- Many private schools participate in state assessments, national accreditation programs, and rigorous teacher certification processes.
- 20% of Alaska's private schools are non-religious, and many faith-based schools serve students of all backgrounds.
- Many private schools provide high-quality support for students with special needs but lack access to public SPED funding.

# Pathway #1: Special Education (SPED) Funding for Correspondence and Private Schools



- SPED funding is about helping students with disabilities succeed—not about funding religious education. These funds would only apply to SPED services, such as assistive technology, academic support, and specialized instruction—not religious curriculum.
- This approach has been successfully implemented in other states, where SPED services are provided in both public, correspondence, and private school settings.
  - Florida: McKay Scholarships for Students with Disabilities Program
  - Arizona: Empowerment Scholarship Accounts (ESAs)
  - Ohio: Autism Scholarship Program
  - Georgia: Special Needs Scholarship Program



# Pathway #2 Tax Credits & Reimbursements

---

Why? Makes school choice affordable without taking money from public schools.

---

How? Families receive tax credits for private school expenses.

---

Option #1: Personal Income Tax Credits or Deductions

---

Families can deduct a portion of their private school tuition or educational expenses (such as books, tutoring, and fees) from their state taxes.

---

Example: Iowa allows families to claim tax credits for 25% of their private school tuition costs, up to a set limit.

---

## Option #2 Tax Credit Scholarships

---

Businesses or individuals donate to a state-approved scholarship fund and receive tax credits in return.

---

These scholarships are then awarded to low- and middle-income families to help offset private school tuition.

---

This does not take money away from public schools because it is based on charitable giving and tax incentives.

---

Example: Florida's Step Up for Students program has awarded scholarships to more than one million students, funded entirely through private donations incentivized by tax credits

# Legislators Serve All Alaskan Families—Not Just Those in Public Schools

---

The mission statement of the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) is to provide an excellent education for **every** student in Alaska.

---

20% of Alaska's students are in private, charter, or homeschool programs. Their families deserve representation in education policy.

---

School choice empowers parents, supports student success, and keeps education affordable.

---

Supporting school choice is a win for **all** Alaskans—ensuring that **every** child has access to the education that fits them best.

# Education Freedom for Alaska

**Every child deserves the best education possible—regardless of income or zip code.**

**School choice is about empowering families, not politics.**

**Alaska has the opportunity to expand educational options without harming public schools.**