

Types of Schools in Indiana

There are many options for schooling in Indiana. This chart summarizes some of the differences among the various types. When choosing a school, it is best to visit the school and meet with teachers and administrators as well as speak to parents and students attending the school. All types of schooling, except homeschool, can be either in person or online.

	Traditional Public School	Charter School	Private "Choice" (Voucher) School	Private "Non-Choice" (Non-Voucher) School	Homeschool
Admissions	Must accept all in the district at any time, may accept transfers	Open to all, but may have limited spots	Does not have to accept all students	Does not have to accept all students	N/A
Oversight & Accountability	Elected school board that meet in public; accountable to community	Charter authorizer that may not be local; privately managed	Privately managed	Privately managed	Overseen and accountable to parents only
Tuition	No tuition. But may have fees for activities, technology, special courses, etc.	No tuition. But may have fees for activities, technology, special courses, etc.	Charges tuition and fees but accepts government subsidies "Choice Scholarships" (vouchers) and/or provides scholarships and discounts	Charges tuition and fees but may provide scholarships and discounts	No tuition. Fees based on curriculum and activities as decided by parent
Funding	Publicly funded by sales, income, use, and property tax	Publicly funded by sales, income, use, sometimes property tax	Privately funded and publicly funded by sales, income, use, but NOT property tax	Privately funded	Privately funded by the parents
Meals	Participates in National School Lunch Program; provides free meals to those who qualify	Ask school if it provides breakfast and lunch and participates in National School Lunch Program	Ask school if it provides breakfast and lunch and participates in National School Lunch Program	Ask school if it provides breakfast and lunch and participates in National School Lunch Program	Provided by the parents
Special Ed (SPED) and English Language Learners (ELL)	Must provide SPED and ELL services	Must provide SPED and ELL services	Does not have to provide SPED and ELL services, ask what is provided	Does not have to provide SPED and ELL services, ask what is provided	Can obtain SPED equitable services from local public school
Transportation	Provides free busing to those that geographically qualify	Does not have to provide busing	Does not have to provide busing	Does not have to provide busing	N/A
ILEARN Testing	Required to administer	Required to administer	Required to administer	Not required to administer	Parents are not allowed to administer

Rights and protections for students are fewer the farther one travels from public school



100% parent control. Federal rights and protections do not apply.

Be an Educated School Choice Consumer

There Is So Much School Choice

There have always been education options in Indiana and now more options than ever are funded using public dollars.

In 2008, public funds, for the most part, went to 2 public school districts in Monroe County.

In 2023, due to "choice" expansion, public funds followed Monroe County school-age children to over 30 different outside-of-district schools including 9 charters and 9 private "choice" schools.

Find your local schools on the Indiana Department of Education's INview website- <https://inview.doe.in.gov/>

Indiana has also created a dashboard to measure schools on more than just test scores. It is called Indiana Graduates Prepared to Succeed. <https://indianagps.doe.in.gov/>



INview



Indiana GPS

Want to Learn More? Join Us!

Indiana Coalition for Public Education-Monroe County (ICPE-Monroe County) advocates for all children to have high quality, equitable, well-funded schools that are subject to democratic oversight by their communities. We are a nonpartisan and nonprofit group of parents, grandparents, caregivers, teachers, and other community members of Monroe County and surrounding areas.

We meet once a month. Meeting schedule is on our website.

Special Education Rights

Traditional public schools and charter schools in Indiana all follow IDEA guidance to identify and provide services to eligible students with disabilities attending these schools. Private schools in Indiana are not required to provide special education services, but they can choose to offer them to their students or partner with the local public school to provide equitable services at no cost. Equitable services are not the same services that a student would receive in a public school. Parents of school-age children in Indiana have the right to select a private school for their student with disabilities, however if the parent places the child in the private school, many rights are waived. Homeschooled students in Indiana are considered privately schooled students for the purposes of determining access to special education services; therefore, they may be eligible for equitable services from their local public school. It is important to ask what services the school can provide and who would provide those services.

Disability rights (physical, learning, mental) for "parentally placed" private school children can be found on the U.S. Department of Education. <https://bit.ly/3KgpSVG>



School Rankings Are Not Accurate

State school grades and rankings can be found on real estate apps and elsewhere. It is important to note that the data on those sites may be a few years old as the state paused grading schools due to the roll out of new ILEARN and then the pandemic. Grades that can be accessed publicly may not reflect the current performance of the schools.

Can My School Close?

Yes. A traditional public school can close. Sometimes a school closes due to a new building being built or redistricting due to population change. When a public school closes, it happens at the end of a school year, unless a safety issue. And when a public school closes, there is another school in the district to attend. Charter and private schools can close too. These schools can close at any time during the year. Closing a school or losing its charter (contract) with its authorizer are forms of accountability for charter schools. Private schools are not accountable to any community or group. They can close at any time. When a charter or private school closes, it is up to the consumer to find a new school. As a consumer, it is important to ask charter schools and private schools about their fiscal state and academic performance records.

Brush Up on Vouchers

Indiana Choice Scholarship voucher information can be found at the following website. At the school you are seeking, it is important to read parent and student handbooks and ask many questions. Private schools don't have to accept all children/families and can ask children to leave for many reasons. If you can't find the handbooks online, request it from the school. <https://bit.ly/3ZnyPB4>

