

Georgia

This excerpt is taken from the [Public Funds Public Schools](#) report [The Fiscal Consequences of Private School Vouchers](#) by Samuel E. Abrams and Steven J. Koutsavlis. The report documents the growth of voucher programs and spending in seven states between 2008 and 2019.

Georgia operates one conventional voucher program, the Special Needs Scholarship Program launched in 2007, as well as the Qualified Education Expense Tax Credit Program, launched in 2008. The first was modeled after Florida's McKay Scholarship vouchers.

Georgia's two voucher programs served approximately 21,000 students in 2019. This total represented only 1.2 percent of the state's nearly 1.8 million PK-12 students.

In fiscal year 2009, the first year for which data are available in Georgia, total state spending on the two voucher programs amounted to \$11,109,059.* By fiscal year 2019, total spending for these programs had risen to \$109,168,339, an astonishing increase of 883 percent in total spending and an annual growth rate of 25.6 percent.

During the same time period, Georgia decreased its per-pupil funding for public education by 1.9 percent, from \$10,536 in fiscal year 2009 to \$10,336 in fiscal year 2019. The 49 other states, on average, increased per-pupil spending over this time period by 5.6 percent.

This decline in per-pupil funding in Georgia cannot be attributed to economic duress. It coincided with a 3.7 percent annual growth rate in GDP for the state from 2008 to 2019, exceeding the 3.1 mean annual growth rate over this time period for the 49 other states.

In terms of educational effort, measured as the percentage of state GDP allocated to PK-12 funding, this decline shows Georgia to be retreating significantly in its commitment to public education at the same time it substantially increased its funding of private schooling. In fiscal year 2008, Georgia allocated 4.3 percent of its GDP to PK-12 funding, giving it a rank of 8 among the 50 states. In fiscal year 2019, Georgia allocated 3.2 percent of its GDP to PK-12 funding, conferring a rank of 31 among the 50 states. Over this time period, however, enrollment in Georgia public elementary and secondary schools climbed 7.1 percent.

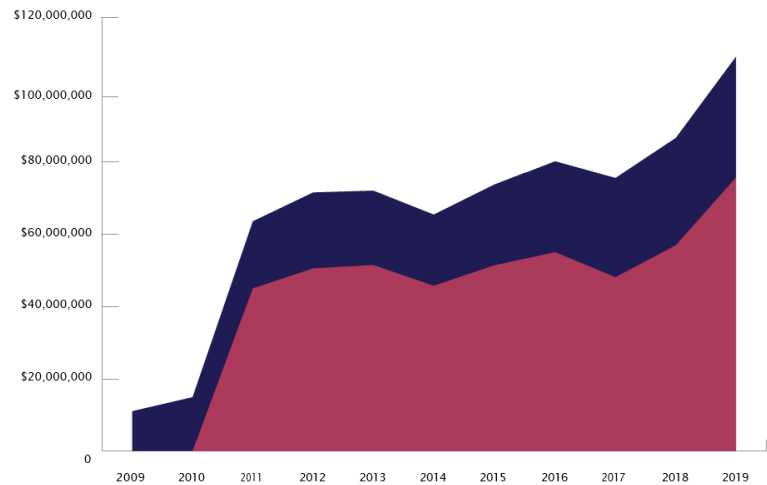


Fig 3 Georgia Voucher Spending 2008–2019

Voucher spending total in 2019 equals \$109 million. See Table 3 in Appendix for details.

1 Qualified Education Expense Tax Credit, 2008

1 Georgia Special Needs Scholarship Program, 2007

* All spending amounts presented here are in 2020 dollars.