STAY IN SCHOOL FUND PROGRAM

Oklahoma Governor Kevin Stitt

Program Report | December 2020

Thank you for helping me stay in school.
Governor Azui
The Stay in School Fund tuition assistance program, launched by Gov. Kevin Stitt in July, has exceeded the expectations of even its strongest proponents, helping children from all corners of Oklahoma obtain a private school education.

The Stay in School Fund program used $10 million from the Governor’s Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund—provided through the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act—to pay for returning Oklahoma private school students to remain in their schools. Critics claimed the program would benefit only “rich families” living in Oklahoma metros and would never cover the cost of actual tuition.

Those criticisms have been dashed to pieces by the real-world results.

When the Stay in School program was announced in July, officials predicted it would benefit more than 1,500 Oklahoma children with scholarships of $6,500 each. Instead, as of December 18th, the program helped 1,893 children at a cost of $5,132 per child because private school tuition was often lower than what officials expected. Put another way, the program served 25 percent more children at a 20-percent-lower per-child cost than predicted.

The average scholarship grant of $5,132 is also substantially less than what the state would have spent to educate those children in a traditional public school where per-pupil spending was $12,069 in 2019, based on data from the Oklahoma Cost Accounting System (OCAS).

And there is no doubt most recipients could not have remained in their private schools without the program.

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**Average public school per-pupil spending in 2019**

*Data from the Oklahoma Cost Accounting System*
More than one out of every five recipients came from a home with income at 100 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL) or lower—a family of four with $26,200 or less in annual income.

Fifty-seven percent of recipients were from families with incomes at 185 percent of FPL or less, or $48,470 for a family of four. All those children would qualify for the free-and-reduced lunch program in a traditional public school.

Even with the significant restrictions for participation in the program, demand far exceeded supply. More than 15,000 students applied for tuition assistance. For roughly every eight students that applied, the state was able to provide just one award.

Recipients were from all parts of Oklahoma. Those receiving grants included children residing in 86 of the 101 districts that make up the Oklahoma House of Representatives and 42 of the 48 districts in the Oklahoma Senate.

Recipients are now attending 97 private schools across the state, including in communities well outside Oklahoma’s metro areas, such as Clinton, Durant, Sulphur, Ponca City, Muskogee, Bartlesville, Tahlequah, Enid, Miami, Choctaw, McAlester, Okarche, Corn and Ardmore.

Gov. Kevin Stitt’s Stay in School Fund program proves the strong desire of Oklahoma parents from all income levels and all locations for school-choice, proves the state can provide needy families a quality education for an average of as little as $5,132 per child, and proves that private schools across Oklahoma will gladly accept children from the lower rungs of the economic ladder.

More than one out of five recipients come from a home with income at 100% of FPL or less—a family of four with $26,200 or less in annual income.

57% of recipients qualify for free or reduced school lunches*

* Families with incomes at 185% of FPL or less, or $48,470 for a family of four

Students reside in 86 of 101 House Districts

Students reside in 42 of 48 Senate Districts
Put simply, parent choice works.
   For low-income families.
   For rural families.
   For Oklahoma families.
Dear Governor Stitt,
Thank you for supporting Oklahoma’s private schools!

Governor Stitt
Thank you for the Stay in School and Bridge the Gap Scholarship for the families here.
Sincerely,
Elie

Dear Governor Stitt,
Thank you for helping us stay in school. You bridge the gap in our hearts. You gave us scholarships so we can get to learn about the world.
Sincerely,
Tzung

All artwork in this report was produced by students at schools participating in Oklahoma’s Stay in School Fund.
All Saints Catholic School (Broken Arrow)
All Saints Catholic School (Norman)
Altus Christian Academy (Altus)
Antioch Christian Academy (Moore)
Ardmore Adventist Academy (Ardmore)
Bishop John Carroll School (Oklahoma City)
Bishop Kelley High School (Tulsa)
Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School (Oklahoma City)
Boulevard Christian School (Muskogee)
Cascia Hall Preparatory School (Tulsa)
Christ the King School (Oklahoma City)
Christian Heritage Academy (Del City)
Christian Montessori Academy (Tulsa)
Claremore Christian School (Claremore)
Corn Bible Academy (Corn)
Cornerstone Christian Academy of South Oklahoma City (Oklahoma City)
Cristo Rey Oklahoma City Catholic High School, Inc. (Oklahoma City)
Crossings Christian School (Oklahoma City)
Crossover Prep (Tulsa)
Destiny Christian School (Del City)
Eagle Point Christian Academy (Sapulpa)
Emmanuel Christian School (Enid)
Family of Faith Christian School (Shawnee)
First Lutheran School (Ponca City)
Good Shepherd Catholic School (Oklahoma City)
Good Shepherd Lutheran School (Midwest City)
Higher Plain Christian Academy (Oklahoma City)
Holland Hall School (Tulsa)
Holy Family Cathedral School (Tulsa)
Holy Trinity Lutheran School (Edmond)
Holy Trinity School (Okarche)
Hope Harbor Academy (Claremore)
Immanuel Lutheran Christian Academy (Broken Arrow)
Keystone Adventure School and Farm (Edmond)
King’s Gate Christian School (Yukon)
Lakewood Christian School (McAlester)
Legacy Christian Academy (Broken Arrow)
Life Christian Academy (Choctaw)
Lighthouse Christian Academy (Tulsa)
Lincoln Christian School (Tulsa)
Little Light Christian School (Oklahoma City)
Marquette Catholic School (Tulsa)
Messiah Lutheran School (Oklahoma City)
Metro Christian Academy (Tulsa)
Mingo Valley Christian School (Tulsa)
Mission Academy High School (Oklahoma City)
Monte Cassino School (Tulsa)
Mount St. Mary Catholic High School (OKC)
Mt. Olive Lutheran School (Miami)
Muskogee Seventh-Day Adventist Christian Academy (Muskogee)
Odyssey Leadership Academy (Oklahoma City)
Oklahoma Bible Academy (Enid)
Oklahoma Christian Academy (Edmond)
Oklahoma Christian School (Edmond)
Paths to Independence (Bartlesville)
Positive Tomorrows (Oklahoma City)
Rejoice Christian School (Owasso)
Riverfield Country Day School (Tulsa)
Rosary Catholic School (Oklahoma City)
Sacred Heart Catholic School (El Reno)
Sacred Heart Catholic School (Oklahoma City) School of Saint Mary (Tulsa)
Shiloh Christian School (Tahlequah)
SNU Lab School (Bethany)
Solid Foundation Preparatory Academy (Tulsa)
Southwest Covenant Schools (Yukon)
St. Augustine Academy
St. Catherine Catholic School (Tulsa)
St. Charles Borromeo Catholic School (Oklahoma City)
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic School (Edmond)
St. Eugene Catholic School (Oklahoma City)
St. James Catholic School (Oklahoma City)
St. John Catholic School (Bartlesville)
St. John Lutheran School (Moore)
St. John Nepomuk Catholic School (Yukon)
St. John’s Lutheran School (Moore)
St. Joseph Catholic School (Muskogee)
St. Mary Catholic School (Ponca City)
St. Paul’s Community School (Oklahoma City)
St. Philip Neri Catholic (Midwest City)
St. Pius X Catholic School (Tulsa)
Stillwater Christian School (Stillwater)
Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic School (Tulsa)
Summit Christian Academy (Broken Arrow)
The Academy of Classical Christian Studies (Oklahoma City)
Town & Country School (Tulsa)
Trinity School (Oklahoma City)
Tulsa Adventist Academy (Tulsa)
Tulsa Hope Academy (Tulsa)
Undercroft Montessori School (Tulsa)
Veritas Christian School Inc. (Sulphur)
Victory Christian School (Tulsa)
Victory Life Academy (Durant)
Western Oklahoma Christian School (Clinton)
Westminster School (Oklahoma City)
Wright Christian Academy (Tulsa)
Young Achievers Christian Academy (Oklahoma City)