

Florida to Implement Voucher Program for Bullied Students

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Category : Education/Family

Unlocking Word Meanings

Read the following words/expressions found in today’s article.

- 1. **voucher** / **ˈvaʊ tʃər** / (n) – a document used to get something for free
Example: The supermarket gave me a \$30 **voucher**. Now, I can buy some grocery items for free!
- 2. **reach out** / **ritʃ aʊt** / (phrasal) – to do something to help other people
Example: The program **reaches out** to poor students.
- 3. **eligible** / **ˈɛl ɪ dʒə bəl** / (adj) – qualified for something
Example: Students from poor families are **eligible** for the scholarship.
- 4. **assault** / **əˈsɔlt** / (n) – a sudden and violent physical attack
Example: He was severely wounded after the **assault**.
- 5. **compelling** / **kəmˈpɛl ɪŋ** / (adj) – having a powerful impact
Example: The **compelling** campaign gained a lot of public attention.

Article

Read the text below.

The state of Florida addresses bullying in public schools by offering private school **vouchers**.

Florida has become the first state in the United States to grant students the privilege of attending safer schools through an initiative called the Hope Scholarship Program. To be implemented during the academic year 2018-2019, the program aims to **reach out** to victims of bullying in public schools.

The program involves the use of vouchers of up to \$6,800 per year. These vouchers will be funded not by the state but will instead be supported by sales tax credits from vehicle purchases. Although bullied students can use the vouchers mainly for private school education, they can also opt to move to another public school.

To be considered **eligible** for the program, alleged victims of bullying or their parents must file an incident report to school officials. **Assault**, any form of harassment, kidnapping, and sexual offenses are some of the cases that can be included in the incident report. One’s eligibility will then be confirmed after a 15-day investigation.

The Hope Scholarship Program is not the only anti-bullying initiative in Florida. Stop Bullying Now Foundation, a South Florida-based organization, aims to raise funds for 67 school districts in Florida and those in other parts of the country to help them develop **compelling** anti-bullying programs. To raise bullying awareness in schools, the organization also plans to regularly organize talks and discussions to be led by mental health experts. These experts will suggest strategies on how students, teachers, and the school administration can prevent and handle bullying cases.

Viewpoint Discussion

Enjoy a discussion with your tutor.

Discussion A

- Do you agree that moving students to another school is the solution to bullying? Why or why not?

- What other initiatives can schools do to prevent bullying? Explain your answer.

Discussion B

- Aside from bullying, what other issues do you think schools should immediately address (e.g. absenteeism, poor academic performance)? Explain your answer.

- What do you think is the best way to resolve these issues? Discuss.

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