



# DO PRIVATE SCHOOLS PROMOTE INTOLERANCE?

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**FACT: VOUCHERS WILL LEAD TO MORE TOLERANCE, POLITICAL PARTICIPATION, AND VOLUNTEERING**

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Eighteen analyses have addressed the effects of a private school education on tolerance (Greene 2005). As a measure of political tolerance, researchers asked respondents whether or not they would be willing to allow certain advocacy groups to be politically engaged in their community (through marches, running for office, etc.). As shown in the table below, 10 of these 18 analyses report a statistically-significant positive relationship between receiving a private school education and political tolerance; only one analysis reports a similar relationship between public schools and tolerance. One study actually looked at the effects of a private education on political tolerance as the result of randomly-assigned private school vouchers. The researchers found political tolerance in-

creased by 33% after just one year in the voucher program.

Four analyses have been done on the effects of private schooling and political participation, as measured by voting rates of those who attended public and private schools. Three of these four analyses show a statistically-significant increase in voting rates among those who received a private school education. The estimates of this increase ranged from 9% to 16%, depending on how long the individual went to a private school.

Finally, there have been 12 analyses on the effects of private schooling and volunteering for charitable activities. Eight of these analyses show a statistically-significant positive relationship between receiving a private school education and the likelihood of volunteering at a charitable event. One analysis finds a statistically-significant positive relationship on charitable volunteering for those



	Political Tolerance	Political Participation	Charitable Volunteering	Total
Private School Advantage	10	3	8	21
Public School Advantage	1	0	1	2
Statistically Inconclusive	7	1	3	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>34</b>

students attending public schools. The increase in the likelihood of volunteering for those who attended private schools is estimated to be approximately 20%.

Of the 34 available analyses of the effects of private schooling on democratic virtues, twenty-one (61.8%) find benefits for those who attend private schools while only two find benefits for public school students. Clearly, Utahns who use vouchers to attend private schools will not be robbed of the democra-

tizing experience claimed by some critics as being a unique characteristic of public schools.

### ENDNOTE

Greene, Jay P., Forster, Greg, Winters, Marcus A. 2005. *Education Myths: What Special Interest Groups Want You to Believe about Our Schools—And Why It Isn't So*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., Lanham, Maryland. 197-200.