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The Network for Public Education Applauds Gov. Spanberger for Rejecting Federal Voucher Program

The Network for Public Education (NPE) applauds Virginia Gov. Abigail Spanberger for declining to opt in to the federal voucher program. Her decision protects Virginia's public schools from a program that would divert public resources to private schools with little accountability.

"At this point, every governor who opts in is buying a pig in a poke," said NPE Executive Director Carol Burris. "The regulations are not final, and Treasury has not released guidance on which expenses will be eligible. A governor could opt in only to find that nearly any spending that reaches public schools or districts has been disallowed."

NPE has long urged states not to opt in, because the program fuels the growth of schools that operate without rules. As privatization has expanded, NPE has documented the fraud, abuse and chaos produced by charter and voucher programs. Offering more tax dollars with few restrictions will draw more bad actors into education. They will open low-cost, experimental schools that mislead parents and shortchange children.

"Virginia would have no power to stop money from flowing to schools with poor fiscal or academic records," Burris said. "It could not require public reporting on how funds are used or which students are served. It could not add safeguards against waste and fraud."

NPE urges other governors to recognize the flaws in this program and follow Gov. Spanberger's lead.

The Network for Public Education is a national nonprofit advocacy organization dedicated to protecting, preserving, and strengthening public schools for every child in America.