

## Quick recap

The main focus was on education policy and reform, with Jorge and Myles sharing their experiences and perspectives on school choice, Democratic Party involvement in education, and the potential of the Educational Choice and Competition Act. The discussion concluded with strategic planning for the Education Freedom Scholarship Act, emphasizing the need for broad support and successful implementation by 2027.

## Summary

### Democrats for Education Reform Journey

Steve introduced the meeting, highlighting the backgrounds of Jorge and Myles in education reform and their efforts to advance policies that support school choice. Myles shared his journey from social work to education reform, including his work in Illinois to pass a tax credit scholarship policy, which was later reversed. Jorge discussed his experience as a law professor and mayor of Providence, where he learned about the challenges of reforming traditional public schools and the importance of alternatives like charter schools. The meeting aimed to explore how Democrats for Education Reform, under Jorge's leadership, could support private school choice.

### Education Reform and Democratic Challenges

Jorge discussed his experience with the Democratic Party and education reform, highlighting how the party's focus on procedural governance and underappreciation of innovation hinders progress. He shared his time as mayor of Providence, where he faced tensions with public sector unions but maintained a high approval rating. Jorge emphasized the need to apply an "abundance mindset" to education, focusing on delivering outcomes and embracing innovation to meet current needs.

### Education Outcomes Over Delivery Models

Jorge discussed the importance of focusing on outcomes rather than specific delivery models in education, emphasizing the need to support any tool that achieves the goal of a more educated public. He highlighted the disconnect between what Democratic voters want and what elected officials are providing, particularly on issues like private school choice. Jorge expressed optimism about a new moment in history where Democrats may be more open to change, citing the need for better education policies to align with the party's base and regain trust on education issues.

### Democrats' School Choice Strategy

Jorge discussed the Educational Choice and Competition Act (ECCA) as a potential lifeline for Democrats on education, highlighting its opt-in provision that catalyzes a national debate on school choice. He predicted that Democratic states would eventually opt in due to financial benefits and the ability to align with Democratic priorities. Jorge emphasized the need for Democratic leadership to address the education crisis, calling for a sense of urgency and accountability in failing school systems. Myles shared his experience in Illinois, where Democrats faced challenges in supporting private school choice, and questioned the effectiveness of DFER's efforts in certain states. Jorge outlined key Democratic governors who have expressed interest in

opting into ECCA, including Polis, Shapiro, and Meyer, and predicted that more governors would follow suit.

## Education Freedom Act Implementation Discussion

Jorge and Myles discussed the implementation of the Education Freedom Act, focusing on accountability measures and the role of governors in opting in or out of the program. Jorge explained that under ECHA, governors must either fully opt in or out, with no ability to pick and choose aspects, and emphasized that SGOs would design their own programs based on local needs and funding. Myles raised concerns about accountability and student achievement outcomes in tax credit scholarship programs, particularly in low-performing school districts, and Jorge acknowledged the complexity of designing effective education programs, noting that policy experimentation is ongoing.

## Empowering Education Through Choice

Jorge discussed the poor academic performance in Baltimore schools and highlighted the potential of educational choice programs to drive innovation and empower communities. He emphasized the importance of measuring different aspects of education beyond traditional academic metrics and argued that educational choice is a progressive position that can benefit all students. Myles shared his experience with school choice policies in Illinois and raised concerns about the limited eligibility of such programs, suggesting that expanding access could strengthen the political support for school choice. The discussion touched on the need to shift from a scarcity mindset to an abundance mindset in education policy.

## Education Freedom Scholarship Act Implementation

The meeting focused on the strategic implementation and advocacy for the Education Freedom Scholarship Act (ECHA), emphasizing the need to build a broad constituency to ensure program longevity, even as political winds change. Jorge highlighted the importance of starting program implementation immediately to achieve success by January 1, 2027, and encouraged governors to opt in, noting that the program is a win-win situation. Myles and others discussed the potential for bipartisanship and the need for Democratic support, while Steve proposed exploring the fiscal implications of a large-scale program. Participants agreed on the importance of clear communication and collaboration to ensure the program's success.