



School Models Comparison Guide

School Model	Description	Governance & Regulation	Funding	Schedule / Learning Format	Curriculum & Instruction	Ideal Students / Families	Pros	Challenges / Considerations
Traditional Public School	Government-funded schools open to all students in the district.	Operated by local school districts; must comply with state education standards.	Public funding (state & local taxes).	Typically, 8 a.m. - 3 p.m., Monday-Friday.	State-mandated curriculum; limited flexibility.	Families seeking standard education without tuition costs.	No tuition; community-based; access to extracurriculars.	Large class sizes; less curriculum flexibility; limited individualized attention.
Charter School	Publicly funded but independently operated schools with greater flexibility in curriculum and operations.	Charter held by nonprofit or management organization; accountable to authorizer.	Public funding; may receive grants and donations.	Varies; often similar to traditional schedule; some offer extended day programs.	Innovative or specialized curriculum; can focus on STEM, arts, language immersion, classical, etc.	Families seeking alternative education options without paying tuition.	Flexibility in teaching methods; innovation-focused.	Must meet charter performance requirements; may have selective enrollment.
Private School	Independently funded school; tuition-based; not bound by public school mandates.	Independent board; state oversight only in licensing.	Tuition; donations; ESA scholarships; endowments.	Flexible; may include full day, half day, year-round, or hybrid.	Can design unique curriculum; often specialized (classical, faith-based, Montessori, etc.).	Families seeking specific educational philosophy or smaller class sizes.	Highly flexible curriculum; individualized learning; smaller classes.	Tuition costs; less oversight can lead to variability in quality.
Microschool / Learning Pod	Small, community-based schools with personalized learning; often <20 students.	Parent-led, nonprofit, or private; may need state registration.	Tuition or co-op contributions; ESA scholarships.	Flexible; can include blended, hybrid, or project-based learning; may include after school enrichment.	Highly personalized; often project-based, or multi-age.	Families seeking personalized education in a small, close-knit environment.	Personalized attention; adaptable learning environment.	May require active parental involvement.
Hybrid / Blended School	Combines in-person and online instruction.	Can be charter, private, or public program; often regulated by state or authorizer.	Public funding (for charter or public hybrid); tuition (private hybrid) and/or ESA scholarships.	Flexible schedule; students may attend campus part-time and learn online part-time.	Mix of digital curriculum and in-person instruction; self-paced or teacher-led.	Families seeking flexibility, remote options, or advanced tech integration.	Flexible; tech-forward; personalized pacing.	Requires self-discipline; access to technology needed.

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Faith-Based / Religious School	Focuses on integrating faith-based instruction with general education.	Independent or parochial governance; subject to state standards.	Tuition, donations, ESA scholarships, church support.	Often mirrors public school hours; may include additional religious instruction and after-school enrichment.	Combines secular and religious curriculum; varies by denomination.	Families seeking education aligned with religious values.	Faith integration; community focus.	Tuition cost; must balance religious and academic rigor.
Specialized / Magnet School	Focuses on specific academic themes like STEM, arts, or language immersion.	Public or charter-operated; often competitive admission.	Public funding; sometimes grants.	Similar to traditional school schedule; may include after-school enrichment.	Specialized curriculum in focus area; rigorous academics.	Students with high interest/talent in specialized areas.	Focused learning; access to advanced resources.	Competitive admissions; may be less flexible in other subjects.

Key Factors to Consider When Choosing a School Model

1. **Governance & Accountability** - Who makes decisions and how are they held accountable?
2. **Funding & Tuition** - What resources are available and what costs are required?
3. **Curriculum Flexibility** - How much freedom does the school have to innovate?
4. **Student-Teacher Ratio** - Smaller classes often allow for personalized attention.
5. **Schedule & Learning Format** - Full-day, half-day, hybrid, or asynchronous learning.
6. **Family Involvement** - Some models require active parental participation.
7. **Student Fit** - Consider the child's learning style, interests, and social needs.