OKLAHOMA

Overall Market Rating: Challenging; Funding Constrained

Market Overview:

Oklahoma is home to two private school choice programs, one for students with disabilities and one for underserved students. The Oklahoma Equal Opportunity Education Scholarships program was enacted in 2011 and launched in 2013. The program gives individuals and businesses a 50 percent tax credit for contributions made to nonprofit organizations that provide school scholarships to students who meet the income and/or zoning requirements. The income guidelines are fairly inclusive, with 82% of families in the state eligible for the program.

Oklahoma’s Lindsey Nicole Henry Scholarships for Students with Disabilities provides students with special needs a voucher to attend a private school of their parents’ choice. The program was enacted and launched in 2010. Students must have or qualify for an Individualized Education Plan or an Individualized Service Plan to participate.

Summary Statement: Oklahoma is not well suited for network growth at this time, due to restricted funding for the scholarship and political instability around the general scholarship and ESA policy.

Demographic Analysis:

Enrollment Figures by Sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrollment Type</th>
<th>Oklahoma (15-16)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Public School Enrollment</td>
<td>692,878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(including Charter Schools)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K-12 Private School Enrollment</td>
<td>93,839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charter School Enrollment</td>
<td>44,162</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Eligibility by Program (numbers may be duplicative)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>% Eligible Students</th>
<th>Current Enrollment (2017-18)</th>
<th>Eligibility Requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Opportunity Education Scholarship** | 82% of families statewide | 2,209 students 93 schools | • Households with incomes up to 300 percent of the free and reduced-price lunch program ($139,305 for a family of four in 2018–19)  
• Attend or live in the attendance zone of a public school designated as “in need of improvement.” |
| **Students With Disabilities** | 15% of families statewide | 669 students 52 schools | • Students with IEP or in effect and who either (1) spent the prior year attending an Oklahoma public school or (2) is the child of an active-duty member of the military.  
• Foster care students or students adopted out of state custody. |

The income limits on the Opportunity Education Scholarship allows for a large pool of eligible students statewide, though the funding cap on the program only allows a small fraction of those students to be served. The recent expansion of the special needs program to include foster students and those in the care of the state has allowed the program to expand.

**Funding:**
**Assessment:** Per pupil and program caps are prohibitively low.

**Opportunity Education Scholarship**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Cap</th>
<th>Disbursement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scholarships may be worth up to 80</td>
<td>$1,765 (2017–18)</td>
<td>$5M Annually</td>
<td>Payments are made jointly payable to the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
percent of the average per-pupil expenditure in the assigned public school district, whichever is greater.

For students with special needs who attended a public school with an IEP, the scholarship is worth up to $25,000.

**Trend:** Initially private schools were allocated $3.5M for scholarships under the program, with an additional $1.5M available for public school programming. After the public schools failed to utilize the allocated funds the money was all pooled together, creating was is effectively a pot of $5M for private school scholarships.

Tax credits are worth only 50% of the donation, and are distributed on a pro-rata basis once the cap is hit, making it less than ideal for donors.

**Students with Disabilities Scholarship**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Cap</th>
<th>Disbursement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The voucher is worth 95%-100% of the state and local dollars spent on the child in his or her public school or the chosen private school’s tuition and fees, whichever is less.</td>
<td>$6,161 (2017–18 projected)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Payments made to schools in two installments and require parent endorsement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Trend:** Funding follows the student when moving from a public to a private school. The child’s resident school district can keep up to 5 percent of the funds for administrative purposes.
Policy & Regulatory Climate:
Assessment: Regulatory requirements may prevent new school development.

The regulatory climate is fairly flexible, but the accreditation requirement may create barriers for some schools. Schools must be accredited by the state board of education or an approved accrediting association, and it would seem that is required before a school can begin to accept public money. Additionally, the State, as well as many of the approved accreditors, require certification of all teachers, creating an unintended regulatory barrier. Schools are affirmatively required to operate for one year before the may participate in the special needs program. Schools must comply with some health and safety requirements, but there are no specific testing requirements.

Human Capital:
Assessment: More restrictive than many markets, but talent may be available.

The licensing requirement embedded in the accreditation requirement may create a challenge for some operators who need to flexibility to hire non-credentialed instructional staff and leadership. Oklahoma has become increasingly active in recruiting young professionals, and there are active TFA chapters in Oklahoma City and Tulsa that continue to tout the livability and affordability of the region as a boon to recruitment.

Local Champions & Climate:
Assessment: Network of champions and supporters is less well developed than needed to improve conditions.

The local support infrastructure is not as strong as in some similar states. There is not an infrastructure of local advocacy. Most legislative and political advocacy is led by operatives of national organizations. Existing operators are not well coordinated and attempts to expand or protect the program have been defeated even in a politically favorable environment.

Facilities:
Assessment: No facilities strategy or resources are available.

Real estate is available and affordable, but there is no clear or comprehensive strategy to support private school facilities. While charters have some access to public bonding and financing, neither sector of choice has any prescribed or preferential access to surplus district facilities.