

THE REPORT CARD

VOL. 9
FALL 2025

**2025 PRIVATE SCHOOL TRENDS IN NEW YORK:
NAVIGATING ENROLLMENT, FACILITIES, AND INNOVATION**

**FEDERAL SCHOOL VOUCHERS ARE HERE -
WHAT THEY MEAN FOR PUBLIC, PRIVATE, AND HOME SCHOOLS**

NEW OPPORTUNITIES WITH 529 PLANS

LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY FOR ACCOUNTING IN PRIVATE SCHOOLS



BRINGING A UNIQUE UNDERSTANDING OF KEY ISSUES FACING THE PRIVATE SCHOOL SECTOR

FROM THE EDITOR - KEN CERINI, CPA, CFP, FABFA



EDITOR

KEN CERINI, CPA, CFP, FABFA
CERINI & ASSOCIATES, LLP
MANAGING PARTNER

CONTRIBUTORS

WRITERS

KEN CERINI, CPA, CFP, FABFA
CERINI & ASSOCIATES, LLP
MANAGING PARTNER

JAMES LAINO, CPA
CERINI & ASSOCIATES, LLP
SUPERVISOR

SUSAN STEWART
CERINI & ASSOCIATES, LLP
SENIOR ACCOUNTANT

KIMBERLY ROFFI, CPA
CERINI & ASSOCIATES, LLP
PARTNER

ALBERT BORGHESE, CPA
CERINI & ASSOCIATES, LLP
PARTNER

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

IWONA SORNAT, CPA
CERINI & ASSOCIATES, LLP
MANAGER

PAGE LAYOUT & DESIGN

KRISTINA LAINO-TORTORICE
CERINI & ASSOCIATES, LLP
GRAPHIC DESIGNER



CERINI
&
ASSOCIATES
LLP
CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS

FISCAL INSIGHTS ON PRIVATE EDUCATION IN NEW YORK STATE

As the landscape of education continues to evolve, the fiscal dynamics surrounding private schools in New York State remain a subject of considerable discussion and analysis. It is with great enthusiasm that we present this edition of the Report Card, dedicated to exploring the multifaceted financial aspects of private education across New York state.

SETTING THE STAGE: WHY FISCAL PERSPECTIVES MATTER

Private schools have long played a crucial role in New York's educational ecosystem, offering diverse curricula, unique pedagogical approaches, and specialized programs that often complement or supplement the public education system. Yet, beyond their academic and cultural contributions, private schools are also economic entities, deeply intertwined with fiscal realities that shape not only their own operations but also the broader fabric of communities and the state at large.

In an era of increasing scrutiny regarding educational spending, tuition rates, and fiscal sustainability, it is more important than ever to examine how private schools manage resources, respond to financial pressures, and adapt to changing market conditions. The fiscal perspective is vital—not only for school administrators and boards, but also for parents weighing enrollment decisions, policymakers considering regulatory frameworks, and taxpayers who may see indirect effects on local and state budgets.

TUITION TRENDS AND AFFORDABILITY

One of the most prominent fiscal issues facing private schools in New York State is the ongoing rise in tuition and fees. According to recent surveys, the average annual tuition at New York private day schools can range from \$15,000 to \$55,000, with prestigious independent schools in New York City often surpassing these figures. Boarding schools, meanwhile, can reach \$70,000 or more per year.

Such costs raise important questions about accessibility and socioeconomic diversity. Many families seek private school education for its perceived academic rigor, extracurricular opportunities, and personalized attention, but the price point places these schools out of reach for a significant portion of New York's population. In response, schools have expanded financial aid programs and scholarship offerings, yet funding remains limited and competition for available resources intense.

Scholarships, endowments, and philanthropic contributions play essential roles in promoting affordability, but they are subject to market fluctuations and donor cycles. For many schools, balancing tuition revenue with meaningful financial aid is a constant challenge, requiring innovative fundraising and prudent fiscal management.

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)



OPERATIONAL COSTS AND REVENUE STREAMS

Private schools, unlike their public counterparts, rely heavily on tuition as their primary revenue stream. However, this revenue must support an array of operational costs—faculty and staff salaries, facility maintenance, technology upgrades, extracurricular programming, and more.

Many schools seek to diversify revenue through annual giving campaigns, capital projects, and auxiliary programs such as summer camps, after-school enrichment, and facility rentals. Yet, these efforts are often subject to broader economic forces. The COVID-19 pandemic, for example, tested the resilience of private schools’ fiscal models, prompting many institutions to re-evaluate spending priorities and risk-management strategies. Some schools were forced to reduce staff, defer capital improvements, or reimagine programming to ensure continued viability.

Endowment income is another crucial element, but few private schools in New York (*outside of the most elite*) maintain endowments of sufficient size to insulate themselves from economic shocks. The need for sound investment strategies and careful stewardship of these funds is clear, as endowments can be a lifeline in times of crisis, supporting financial aid, professional development, and strategic innovation.

REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT AND STATE SUPPORT

Private schools in New York operate within a complex regulatory environment, subject to state standards for health, safety, and educational quality, while generally retaining autonomy over curriculum and admissions. Unlike public schools, they do not receive direct operational funding from the state, though certain programs (*such as transportation aid, textbook grants, or special education services*) may provide limited support.

Tax-exempt status for private schools and related organizations is another significant fiscal issue. Property tax exemptions and sales tax relief can lower operational costs, but also raise questions about public benefit and the impact on local tax bases. Policymakers continue to debate the appropriate balance between supporting educational choice and safeguarding public resources.

In recent years, proposals have surfaced regarding tax credits for private school tuition, expanded voucher programs, and increased oversight of fiscal operations. Each of these policy options carries implications for families, schools, and state finances, and merits careful consideration in light of New York’s diverse and dynamic educational landscape.

SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Beyond their internal fiscal challenges, private schools contribute to the socioeconomic vitality of New York communities. They employ thousands of New Yorkers, invest in local infrastructure, purchase goods and services, and often serve as cultural hubs for families and neighborhoods.

The fiscal health of private schools thus has ripple effects, influencing everything from local real estate markets to employment rates. Especially in areas where public schools may face overcrowding or resource limitations, private institutions offer alternatives that can relieve pressure and promote choice. Yet, the concentration of private schools in certain affluent regions also underscores disparities in educational access and fiscal benefit.

Community engagement, partnerships with public schools, and outreach initiatives are increasingly recognized as strategies for fostering broader impact. Through programs such as scholarship collaborations, shared facilities, or community service projects, private schools can leverage their fiscal resources for public good, strengthening ties and addressing equity concerns.

LOOKING AHEAD: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The fiscal future of private schools in New York State is defined by both challenge and opportunity. Rising costs, changing demographics, and evolving expectations demand innovative thinking and strategic vision. Schools must continue to adapt—embracing new technologies, exploring alternative revenue models, and deepening their commitment to affordability and inclusivity.

At the same time, the enduring appeal of private education in New York speaks to its capacity for resilience and renewal. Whether through bold leadership, creative programming, or renewed community partnerships, private schools have the potential to navigate fiscal complexities and continue serving as pillars of excellence within our educational system.

CONCLUSION

This newsletter seeks to illuminate the fiscal realities facing private schools in New York State, providing you with comprehensive analysis, relevant data, and thought-provoking commentary. By engaging with these issues, we hope to foster informed dialogue, encourage responsible stewardship, and empower all stakeholders to make decisions that benefit students, families, and communities.

We welcome your feedback, your insights, and your participation in this important conversation. Stay connected!

KEN CERINI, CPA, CFP, FABFA
MANAGING PARTNER





2025 PRIVATE SCHOOL TRENDS IN NEW YORK: NAVIGATING ENROLLMENT, FACILITIES, AND INNOVATION

Pivate schools in New York in 2025 are adapting to a dynamic educational landscape, balancing enrollment growth, advanced facilities management, and innovative teaching practices to meet the evolving needs of students and families. With a focus on affordability, safety, inclusivity, and global preparedness, schools are leveraging New York’s unique educational environment to thrive. Drawing on industry reports and emerging patterns, this article explores the key trends shaping private schools in New York this year, focusing on strategies to boost enrollment, modernize facilities, enhance educational offerings, and look ahead to 2026.

ENROLLMENT STRATEGIES: COMPETING IN A DIGITAL AGE

Private schools face both opportunities and challenges in maintaining and growing enrollment. Recent data shows that 40% of private schools reported enrollment gains between the 2023-24 and 2024-25 school years, driven partly by school choice expansions in other states, though New York lacks universal choice programs. However, the post-COVID boom is slowing, with projections indicating potential stabilization or slight declines in some regions. To counter this, New York schools are adopting sophisticated strategies.

LEVERAGING DIGITAL MARKETING

The shift toward digital-first marketing is critical in 2025. Schools are optimizing their websites for mobile devices and search engines, targeting keywords like “*top private school in New York City*” or “*STEM-focused K–12 in Westchester*” to capture parent interest. A mobile-first approach is non-negotiable, as a one-second delay in page load time can reduce inquiry conversions by 7%. Embedding lead generation tools, such as inquiry forms and virtual tour sign-ups on every webpage, ensures accessibility. Live chat and AI-powered chatbots provide instant responses to parent queries, catering to the 60% of families who prefer real-time communication.

Remarketing is another powerful tool. Platforms like Niche’s Audience Remarketing allow schools to re-engage families who visit their websites but don’t convert, using targeted ads on social media and Google Display. Schools with robust digital strategies report up to 20% higher inquiry rates compared to those relying on traditional marketing.

HARNESSING PARENT REVIEWS

With Google no longer displaying school reviews, platforms like Niche have become essential for showcasing parent and student testimonials. Schools are proactively requesting reviews after events like open houses or parent-teacher conferences, sharing them on websites, social media, and newsletters. Highlighting strengths like academic rigor (44% of parents cite this as a top factor) or safety (a priority for 38% of families) builds trust and drives enrollment.

PERSONALIZED ENGAGEMENT

Personalized communication is proving effective in 2025. Schools are using short, authentic videos—such as a 30-second welcome from the Head of School or teacher introductions via Instagram Stories—to connect with prospective families. These efforts can boost email click-through rates by up to 300%. Parent ambassadors are also employed to send text nudges or host virtual Q&A sessions, fostering a sense of community. For example, a quick text like “*Excited to meet you at our open house!*” can increase attendance by 15%.

STREAMLINED ENROLLMENT PROCESSES

Simplifying the application process is a game-changer. Mobile-optimized forms with auto-save features, progress bars, and automated reminders (e.g., “*You’re 90% done—submit your recommendation letter!*”) reduce drop-off rates. Schools modeling their enrollment systems after e-commerce platforms like Amazon report higher completion rates, as parents value efficiency and clarity.

CAPITALIZING ON LIMITED SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAMS

Unlike states with robust **education savings accounts (ESAs)**, New York’s school choice landscape is limited, with no statewide voucher or ESA programs in 2025. However, schools are leveraging local initiatives, such as scholarships and financial aid, to attract families. Nationally, over 972,000 students benefit from choice programs, and New York schools are advocating for similar policies, which could boost enrollment by up to 10% if implemented.

ALIGNING WITH PARENTAL VALUES

Surveys indicate that 69% of parents choose private schools for alignment with their values, whether academic, religious, or cultural. Schools offering specialized programs, such as STEM, arts, or Montessori curricula, stand out in competitive markets like New York City and Long Island. Religious alignment remains a key factor for 43% of families, particularly in faith-based institutions.

INNOVATIVE TUITION MODELS FOR FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Affordability is a major hurdle in New York, where average private school tuition is approximately \$32,000 for day schools. In 2025, schools are experimenting with sliding-scale tuition, income-based scholarships, and endowment-funded models to attract middle-income families. Flexible tuition strategies, including continuous enrollment and hybrid pricing, are reshaping revenue models, fostering diversity and sustaining growth.

ADDRESSING ENROLLMENT CHALLENGES

Despite growth opportunities, affordability issues, competition from public and charter schools, and demographic shifts pose challenges. New York’s high cost of living and competition from well-funded public schools, particularly in districts like Scarsdale or Great Neck, make retention difficult. Some schools face declining enrollment due to tuition increases and inflation.

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT: BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

Facilities play a pivotal role in attracting families and supporting educational goals. In 2025, New York private schools are prioritizing sustainable, data-driven, and student-centered infrastructure.

ENROLLMENT-DRIVEN SPACE PLANNING

The **National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS)** reports that nearly two-thirds of independent schools have grown since 2019, with median enrollment rising from 385 to 404 students by 2023-2024. Growing schools, particularly in urban areas like Manhattan, are conducting **Facilities Condition Assessments (FCAs)** to optimize space for additional students, while those with declining enrollment are repurposing underutilized areas into flexible learning spaces or community hubs. For example, converting outdated libraries into innovation labs with 3D printers and VR stations enhances appeal.

INTEGRATED FACILITIES MANAGEMENT (IFM)

Integrated Facilities Management (IFM) is gaining traction as schools consolidate maintenance, security, and energy operations into a single, data-driven strategy. IFM reduces costs by up to 15% and improves coordination, allowing schools to redirect funds to academic programs. For instance, outsourcing custodial services while retaining in-house oversight ensures quality without overextending budgets.

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

AI AND MAINTENANCE 4.0

The adoption of Maintenance 4.0—leveraging AI and IoT sensors—is transforming facilities management. Predictive analytics identify potential equipment failures before they occur, reducing emergency repair costs by 20%. Smart systems optimize energy use, with automated HVAC and lighting cutting consumption by up to 30%. AI-powered surveillance enhances campus safety, detecting anomalies in real-time and reducing security incidents.

SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENT DESIGN

Sustainability is a priority in New York, driven by the state’s **Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA)**, which mandates a 40% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. Private schools are integrating solar panels, green roofs, and energy-efficient materials to align with these goals. Resilient design, such as flood-resistant infrastructure and backup power systems, is critical in areas like Long Island prone to climate-related disruptions. These upgrades reduce costs and appeal to environmentally conscious families.

SAFETY AND SECURITY ENHANCEMENTS

Parental concerns about safety are driving investments in advanced measures. In 2025, trends include wearable panic buttons, multi-sensory notifications (e.g., *strobes for inclusive alerts*), and AI-driven threat detection. 45% of teachers fear student harm, prompting schools to adopt biometric access, visitor management systems, and partnerships with local law enforcement, especially in urban areas like Brooklyn. Cyber safety is also rising, with rules on smartphone use and anti-cyberbullying tools. These enhancements reduce incidents and boost parent confidence.

EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION:
PREPARING STUDENTS FOR 2025 AND BEYOND

Private schools are reimagining curricula and teaching methods to prepare students for a rapidly changing world.

TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION

Hybrid learning models, combining in-person and virtual instruction, are standard in many New York private schools, particularly in response to urban density and parental demand for flexibility. Interactive platforms like Google Classroom and AI-driven tools personalize learning, adapting content to individual student needs. Coding and robotics programs are expanding, with 60% of private schools offering STEM-focused courses to meet demand for tech skills. Interest in AI for instruction is growing, though cautiously.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL)
AND MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Post-pandemic, SEL remains a priority, with schools embedding mindfulness programs, peer mentoring, and restorative justice practices. These initiatives improve student well-being and academic outcomes, with 75% of parents citing SEL as a key reason for choosing private schools. Mental health trends in 2025 emphasize early intervention, digital support tools, and on-site counselors. With 40% of high school students experiencing persistent sadness, New York schools are integrating teletherapy, wellness apps, and behavior-focused programs to address anxiety, depression, and social media impacts.

EXPERIENTIAL AND
PROJECT-BASED LEARNING

Hands-on learning is on the rise, with schools offering project-based curricula that emphasize real-world problem-solving. For example, students might design sustainable city models or collaborate on community service projects in local New York communities, fostering critical thinking and teamwork. These programs align with parental demand for holistic education, with 50% of families prioritizing experiential learning.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND
INCLUSION (DEI) INITIATIVES

DEI efforts are prominent in New York, where diverse urban populations drive demand for inclusivity. In 2025, 65% of independent schools have formal DEI programs, including cultural competency training, diverse curricula, and scholarships for underrepresented groups. These initiatives combat discrimination and appeal to 30% of parents valuing diversity, though schools navigate varying local attitudes toward DEI.

GLOBALIZATION AND
INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

New York’s global hub status fuels demand for international programs. Schools are expanding global exchanges, virtual collaborations, and language immersion to prepare students for a global economy. In 2025, 45% of boarding schools report increased international enrollment, with the market generating \$67.3 billion in fee income. Trends include AI-personalized learning and hybrid international models, attracting diverse families.

HYBRID AND MICROSCHOOL MODELS

Hybrid models (*part-time in-person, part-time online*) and microschools (*small cohorts of 16-22 students*) are gaining traction in New York, particularly in areas like Brooklyn and the Hudson Valley, where families seek personalized education. Microschools serve 750,000 students nationwide, with costs at \$5,000-12,000 annually, appealing to families seeking affordable, community-based options.


LOOKING AHEAD TO 2026 AND BEYOND

As New York private schools navigate 2025, several trends are poised to shape the sector in 2026 and beyond. Advocacy for school choice programs may gain traction, potentially introducing limited voucher or scholarship programs in New York by 2027, boosting enrollment by 5–10%. AI integration will deepen, with adaptive learning platforms reducing teacher workloads by 10–15% and personalizing education further. Microschools and hybrid models may account for 15% of private school enrollment by 2026, driven by demand for flexibility and affordability. Sustainability efforts will accelerate under New York’s CLCPA, with more schools targeting net-zero campuses by 2030, supported by state incentives for green retrofits. Mental health and safety will remain critical, with innovations like AI-driven emotional monitoring and advanced security systems gaining adoption. DEI initiatives may face challenges in navigating community expectations, requiring schools to balance inclusivity with local dynamics. These developments suggest New York private schools will need to stay agile, leveraging technology and advocating for policy changes while addressing affordability and societal shifts to thrive.

In 2025, New York private schools are thriving by embracing digital marketing, innovating tuition models, and aligning with parental values to boost enrollment. Facilities management is evolving with AI-driven tools, sustainable practices aligned with New York’s climate goals, and enhanced safety measures. Innovative curricula blending technology, mental health support, DEI, global programs, and hybrid models prepare students for a complex world. Looking to 2026, schools that anticipate policy shifts, deepen technological integration, and prioritize affordability and inclusivity will remain competitive, delivering exceptional education in New York’s dynamic landscape.

JAMES LAINO, CPA
SUPERVISOR





FEDERAL SCHOOL VOUCHERS ARE HERE – WHAT THEY MEAN FOR PUBLIC, PRIVATE, AND HOME SCHOOLS

On July 4, 2025, the United States entered a new era in education funding with the passage of the first federal school voucher program, part of the “*One, Big Beautiful Bill Act*.” This legislation marks a significant shift in how federal funds can support students’ educational choices, with wide-ranging implications for K–12 education across the country.

WHAT IS THE NEW FEDERAL SCHOOL VOUCHER PROGRAM?

The program introduces a permanent, uncapped federal tax credit for individuals who donate to **Scholarship Granting Organizations (SGOs)**—nonprofits that distribute vouchers to families. These vouchers can be used for private school tuition, homeschooling materials, tutoring, and other educational expenses.

Participation is voluntary for states, which may choose to establish SGOs and regulate their operations. There is no federal cap on total spending, and individuals can receive a dollar-for-dollar federal tax credit for donations up to \$1,700 annually starting in 2027.

Unlike public charter schools, which are tuition-free and publicly funded, voucher programs redirect public funds to support private and religious schools or homeschooling. This “*funds-follow-the-student*” model can reshape how education is financed and accessed.

KEY FEATURES OF THE PROGRAM

- ▶ **No federal spending cap:** Unlimited contributions and tax credits are allowed, with a \$1,700 annual limit per individual donor (\$3,400 for a married couple).
- ▶ **State flexibility:** States may opt in and define their own rules for SGOs and participating schools. The federal credit is only available in states that have “*opted in*” and provided a list of qualified SGOs to the US Treasury Department.
- ▶ **Federal oversight:** The Secretary of the Treasury has authority to regulate SGOs and schools receiving voucher funds.

ACCOUNTING AND FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

From an accounting standpoint, several challenges may arise for participating states and districts:

- ▶ **Budgeting uncertainty:** Enrollment shifts can make revenue projections volatile, affecting staffing, capital planning, and debt service.
- ▶ **Administrative complexity:** Tracking mid-year student exits, reconciling federal and state funds, and meeting reporting standards adds burden.
- ▶ **Audit exposure:** Federal oversight may extend to schools and organizations not previously subject to public audits.
- ▶ **Dual funding systems:** Public money may support both public and private institutions, complicating accountability and resource tracking.

CONCLUSION

The federal school voucher program introduces a new funding mechanism that could reshape educational access and equity across the U.S. Its impact will vary widely depending on state-level decisions. While some states may embrace the opportunity to expand school choice, others may prioritize stability and accountability within public education systems. As implementation unfolds, stakeholders will need to weigh the fiscal, administrative, and educational trade-offs of participation.

SUSAN STEWART
SENIOR ACCOUNTANT

STATE-LEVEL PARTICIPATION AND IMPACT

As of August 2025, some states have begun implementing the program, while others remain undecided or opposed. For example, New York State has not adopted the federal voucher program and has not established SGOs or legislative infrastructure to direct federal funds to private education.

In states that choose not to participate, several outcomes are possible:

1. **Preservation of public-school funding:** Public dollars remain within traditional public education systems.
2. **Greater fiscal stability:** Predictable enrollment and funding support long-term planning and budgeting.
3. **Maintained accountability standards:** Funds continue to support institutions subject to public reporting and civil rights compliance.
4. **Reduced administrative burden:** Districts avoid the complexities of voucher tracking and federal compliance.
5. **Limited access for families:** Families seeking private or religious education may not benefit from federal tuition support.
6. **No access to new federal funds or tax incentives:** Residents in non-participating states cannot leverage the tax credit for SGO donations.



NEW OPPORTUNITIES WITH 529 PLANS

5 29 plans have always been an attractive tax savings plan with a proactive education benefit. Contributions grow tax-free and withdrawals for qualified expenses are tax-free. **The One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA)** has enhanced the benefits of contributing to a 529 plan. This is a tremendous opportunity to those who may not choose the traditional education or career route. 529 accounts can be used for additional academic and professional goals acknowledging that many students pursue trades schools and other certifications and licensing. Additionally, many adults completely change career paths. The OBBBA significantly broadens the benefits of a 529 plan starting with the current year, as follows:

	PRIOR	EFFECTIVE 7/5/2025	EFFECTIVE 1/1/2026
K-12 QUALIFIED EXPENSES			
TUITION LIMIT	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$20,000
BOOKS & MATERIALS	N/A	YES	YES
STANDARDIZED TEST FEES (EX: ACT/SAT)	N/A	YES	YES
DUAL ENROLLMENT COLLEGE COURSES TAKEN IN HIGH SCHOOL	N/A	YES	YES
TUTORING (QUALIFIED PROFESSIONAL)	N/A	YES	YES
EDUCATION THERAPY FOR DISABLED STUDENTS	N/A	YES	YES
POSTSECONDARY & CAREER EXPENSES			
TRADITIONAL COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY COSTS	YES	YES	YES
ADULT LEARNERS' AND CAREER CHANGERS' CREDENTIAL PROGRAMS	NO	YES	YES
PROFESSIONAL LICENSES, CERTIFICATES, APPRENTICESHIPS	NO	YES	YES
CONTINUING EDUCATION IN FIELDS OF AUTOMOTIVE REPAIR & FOOD SAFETY	NO	YES	YES
STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENT (SUBJECT TO LIMITS)	NO	YES	YES

For those looking to save additional amounts beyond the limit of the 529 plans, the OBBBA also created a new program called the **Money Accounts for Growth and Advancement (MAGA)** which can be funded up to \$5,000 per year. These contributions can be from a parent or guardian for a child under the age of 8 and any gains would be taxed at long-term capital gains rates when used for higher education expenses, a first-time home purchase or starting a small business. Funds that are withdrawn for other purposes will be taxed at ordinary income tax rates with penalties. Any MAGA account opened for a child who was a US Citizen at birth and born between January 1, 2025 and January 1, 2029 can receive a one-time contribution of \$1,000 directly from the Federal government. The \$1,000 deposits will commence January 1, 2026.

The **Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE)** accounts also benefit from the OBBBA. Families who have 529 plans but want to transfer funds into ABLE accounts only had until December 31, 2025 to do so. The OBBBA has removed the expiration date and rollovers from 529 plans into ABLE accounts are now permitted beyond 2025.

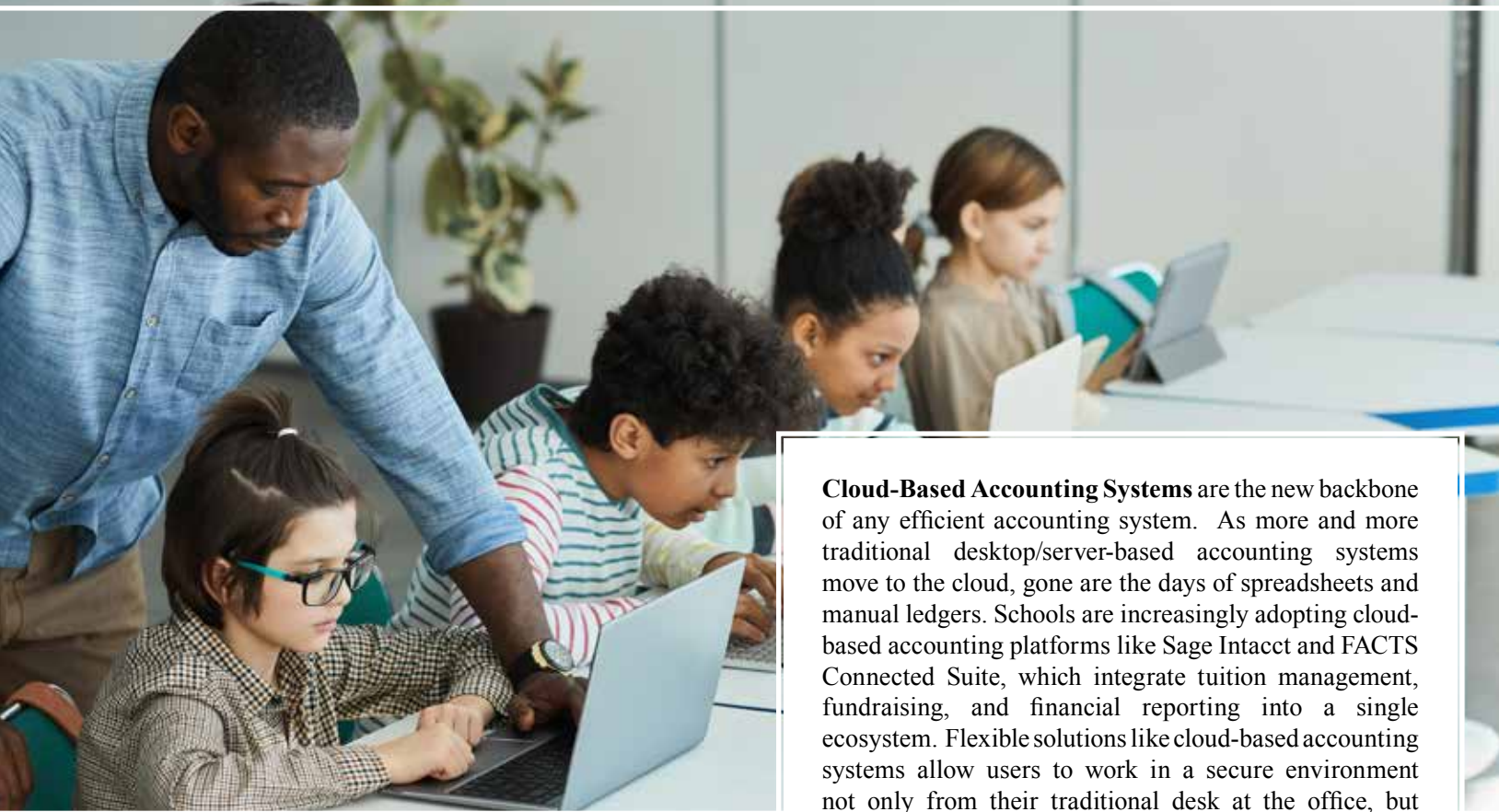
Some additional changes impacting ABLE accounts are as follows:

- ▶ *Employed individuals can contribute more than the annual limit. The ABLE-to-Work provision would have expired in 2025 but is not permanent.*
- ▶ *Contributions to ABLE accounts up to \$2,000 are eligible for 50% saver's credit (max of \$1,000)*
- ▶ *Account eligibility expands to individuals whose disability began before age 46 (no longer before age 26). This is effective January 1, 2026.*

Work with your families to help them take advantage of these enhancements which make the 529 plans even more attractive than just the tax-free growth.

KIMBERLY ROFFI, CPA
PARTNER

LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY FOR ACCOUNTING IN PRIVATE SCHOOLS



Cloud-Based Accounting Systems are the new backbone of any efficient accounting system. As more and more traditional desktop/server-based accounting systems move to the cloud, gone are the days of spreadsheets and manual ledgers. Schools are increasingly adopting cloud-based accounting platforms like Sage Intacct and FACTS Connected Suite, which integrate tuition management, fundraising, and financial reporting into a single ecosystem. Flexible solutions like cloud-based accounting systems allow users to work in a secure environment not only from their traditional desk at the office, but anywhere. The benefits of utilizing these systems include real-time financial insights for administrators and board members, automated workflows for accounts payable, payroll, and reconciliation, and multi-campus reporting for institutions with multiple sites or programs. In addition, the capabilities of these systems typically allow users to integrate other applications to feed data into the system versus manual data entry.

Strengthening Internal Controls and Segregation of Duties is a must for any organization and leveraging technology and more sophisticated systems is integral into maintaining security over the financial assets of the school. Assigning role-based access to financial systems is now easier and more transparent than ever before. Further, utilizing tools such as [Bill.com](#) will help not only automating approval workflows but also transparency over the process by tracking changes and maintaining audit trails. Clear documentation and oversight is now built into the system compared to the paper driven approval processes which were easier for policy and procedure to break down or be circumvented. Private schools must comply with federal and state mandates, donor restrictions, and nonprofit accounting standards. Technology helps by making it easier than ever to implement good systems with proper levels of internal controls to safeguard organizational assets and the integrity of information.

P rivate schools today face a complex financial landscape, balancing tuition revenue, grants, donations, payroll, and compliance with increasing demands for transparency and efficiency. Technology offers a transformative solution, enabling institutions to streamline operations, strengthen internal controls, and make data-driven decisions. With this, it has become increasingly important for the finance function to become quicker and more efficient and in order to accomplish this, it is important to leverage technology and embrace AI to automate tasks.

Outsourcing for Specialized Expertise and Cost Efficiency is now easier than ever to implement through technology as well. As more employees begin to reach the age of retirement, and the pool of qualified accounting professionals gets smaller, there is a parallel shift in an organization's ability through technology to allow for easier avenues to outsource certain functions of the internal finance team. Leveraging technology to allow your organization the option to potentially outsource certain functions gives your School the ability to: gain access to additional CPA-level expertise without full-time hiring, ensure compliance with evolving regulations, reduce administrative burden on school staff, and reduce the stress of having to fill positions as people leave and the processes of hiring, training, and retaining staff. Outsourced teams can also assist with internal audits, bank reconciliations, and assist in keeping you updated on new accounting pronouncements and implementing cost-effective changes to strengthen your bottom line.

Fundraising can be a challenge for organizations, but leveraging technology can make it easier than ever before. Online donation platforms like Donorbox, GoFundMe, and Classy allow organizations to collect contributions not only locally but globally. These platforms offer customizable pages, transparency features, and integration with websites, making it easier to track and showcase impact. Utilizing social media as a powerful tool for storytelling and donor engagement and adding videos to social media and email blasts can increase shares and engagement in a fun way. Also, tools like Jasper.AI are being used to automate donor communications, develop fundraising collateral, and personalize donor outreach. Fundraising success depends on understanding donor behavior and campaign performance. Integrating data across systems helps eliminate silos and enables real-time impact tracking. This is especially important for grant reporting and donor stewardship.

Technology is no longer optional, it's essential for private schools seeking financial stability, operational efficiency, and regulatory compliance. Whether through cloud platforms, automation, or outsourcing, schools must embrace digital transformation to thrive in today's educational environment.

ALBERT BORGHESE, CPA
PARTNER





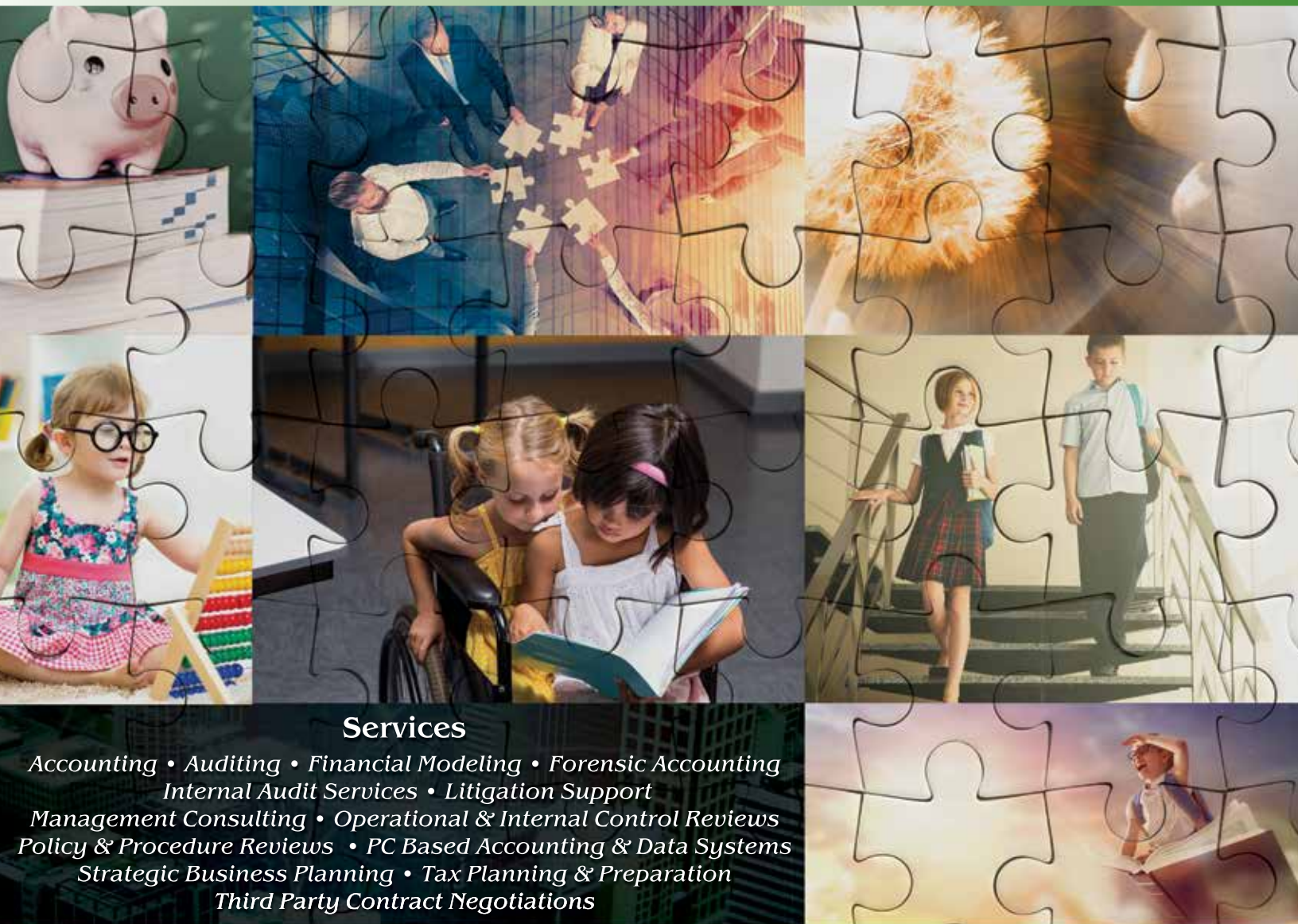
CERINI & ASSOCIATES^{LLP}

CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS

Copyright © 2025 by Cerini & Associates, LLP.

All rights reserved.

Please request permission to reprint or copy any part of The Report Card.



Services

Accounting • Auditing • Financial Modeling • Forensic Accounting
Internal Audit Services • Litigation Support
Management Consulting • Operational & Internal Control Reviews
Policy & Procedure Reviews • PC Based Accounting & Data Systems
Strategic Business Planning • Tax Planning & Preparation
Third Party Contract Negotiations

Cerini & Associates, LLP

www.CeriniCPA.com

P: (631) 582-1600 | F: (631) 582-1714 | 3340 Veterans Memorial Hwy., Bohemia, NY 11716