



## Invest in Kids voucher program

### Case study:

South Side Christian Academy, Peoria IL  
State House District 92  
State Senate District 46

South Side Christian Academy located in Peoria is a private religious school that had 23 students using vouchers via Illinois' Invest in Kids voucher program last year even though it advertises itself as a ["tuition-free"](#) school.

SSCA [has an explicitly homophobic and transphobic mission statement](#). And they advertise to parents that they [do not accept students with IEPs and may reject admission for students with academic or behavior problems](#). The school is [90% Black students](#). [The faculty and staff are all white, as are 7 of 9 members of their board](#).)

[The school was founded in 2016 by three couples](#). One of the founders is the current board president, Chad Zobrist.

According to the school's [990 form from 2022](#), the school paid a Morton IL-based firm, N. Zobrist Construction, \$1.6 million for a construction contract for their new school building. The total revenue for 2022 for SSCA was \$2.2 million according to the same 990, so the construction contract was a major budget item.

[N. Zobrist Construction](#) was founded by SSCA board president Chad Zobrist's grandfather Noah Zobrist, and the company is currently run by Chad's nephews, Wes, Nick and Grant Zobrist.<sup>1</sup>

The IRS prohibits 501c3 organizations from self-dealing and private benefit. If Chad Zobrist or his wife Susan Zobrist, also a board member according to the 2022 990 form, still have an interest in the firm, this could be a violation of this prohibition or the SSCA board of director's conflict of interest policy. Because SSCA is a private institution, there are no public documents on whether other firms' bids were considered for this contract or whether the potential conflict of interest with board members was discussed at a meeting open to the public.

### Nearby public schools

South Side Christian Academy is located just a block away from public school [Pleasant Hill Elementary](#), a one-school-district (Pleasant Hill SD 69), where 30% of the students have IEPs and the district is short [\\$2,277](#) per student in state funding.

A few blocks further from SSCA is Trewyn Primary school, a public school in Peoria District 150, which has 23% of students with IEPs. Peoria D150 as a whole is 18% students with IEPs & had a [state aid gap of \\$2,269/student this year](#).

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<sup>1</sup>Family relationships: Chad is the son of [Calvin Zobrist](#), and the grandson of Noah Zobrist, Sr. who founded N. Zobrist Construction. [One of Chad's brothers is Phil Zobrist](#). [Phil ran N. Zobrist Construction](#), prior to his sons, Chad's cousins, [Wes, Nick and Grant Zobrist](#).