



TEXAS PUBLIC POLICY FOUNDATION

THE PARENT EMPOWERMENT ACT

PARENTS MAY USE THEIR ESA FOR:

- Core Instruction: tuition and fees at an accredited public or private school
- Instructional Supplies: textbooks and curricula
- Assessments: academic tests or post-secondary entrance exams
- Supplemental Supports: tutoring and therapy
- Enrichment: cocurriculars (activities that add value to instruction and curriculum)
- Transportation: by fee-for-service vendors

ESA AMOUNT

Each year, students in the program would have access to a digital wallet, managed by the Comptroller.¹ Funds would be deposited quarterly. Funds can only be used for approved educational expenses, consistent with the categories listed above.

INTRODUCTION

Parental choice means giving parents access to the learning environment that best serves their children. Parents should have the widest possible choices – be it traditional public schools, public charter schools, private schools, or homeschool. Thirty-one states have already established programs that put this vision into action. Education Savings Account programs (ESAs) are one method to give parents the power to customize education to their child's specific needs.

FAMILY APPLICATION

Families would have the opportunity to apply for an ESA each semester. If there are more applicants than funds can support, low-income students are prioritized. Once students enter the program, they do not need to reapply each year. Students may remain in the program until they graduate or enroll full-time in public school.

EDUCATOR APPLICATION

K-12 Schools, colleges, tutors, teaching services, and therapists would have the opportunity to serve ESA students if they are preapproved by meeting these criteria:

- 1) accredited K-12 schools and higher education providers;
- 2) tutors, therapists, and teaching services are certified or licensed.

Parents may also be reimbursed for certain expenses² from vendors and tutors who are not preapproved. Vendors and tutors in good standing may receive funds directly from the program after serving ESA students for three years.

Educators would not be required to modify their creed, practices, admissions policies, curriculum, performance standards, or assessments to serve ESA students. All providers would need to pass background checks; individuals listed on the do not hire registry cannot participate.

¹The amount would be calculated based on M&O revenue per ADA.

²Instructional supplies, assessments, supplemental supports, enrichment, and transportation.



ADMINISTRATOR

The ESA program would be administered through a public-private partnership. The comptroller would manage program funds and education provider applications. The comptroller would contract with a third party to manage student applications, educate families about their educational opportunities, summarize student achievement, and connect program participants with education services.

REVENUE SOURCE

The ESA program may be funded by state revenue and private philanthropy.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Financial: ESAs would be randomly audited by a third party, who will notify the comptroller of program or legal violations. The comptroller and program administrator will report violations to the local district attorney.

Academic: Schools with ESA students would need to administer a norm- or criterion-referenced assessment each year, which is already current practice at accredited schools. The program's private administrator would collect and publish an annual report on the number of applicants, academic outcomes, and family satisfaction.

Scan the QR Code to learn how education freedom increases student outcomes.



Hard work paired with a strong moral foundation makes education powerful. My family's success wouldn't have been possible without school choice, which gave us access to that environment... Without my parents being blessed with the choice of which school to send us to we would not be where we are today. Each one of us received and benefited from the Florida tax-credit scholarship. So, when people say that school choice doesn't work, I simply show them my family.

-HERA VARMAH (FLORIDA)



My daughter is almost six. She's had an Empowerment Scholarship Account (ESA) since she was three years old. Having the ESA opened many doors for my daughter to be able to learn in different ways. We homeschool her with a Christian curriculum... She also gets to go to weekly swim classes, dance classes, and equine therapy for social interaction with other children. All families should be able to choose the right education for their child because parents know what is best for our child.

-BRENNA MANGANO (ARIZONA)

