



TEXAS PUBLIC POLICY FOUNDATION FAQ: HOW WOULD PARENTS USE AN ESA?

INTRODUCTION

Parents should have access to the learning environment that best serves their children, whether in a neighborhood public school, charter schools, private school, or homeschool.

To increase options for families, 31 states maintain education choice programs; of these, 14 offer Education Savings Accounts (ESAs). With an ESA, funds can be used to pay for tuition at any accredited school of a parent's choosing, as well as for tutoring, books, transportation, or other qualified educational expenses shown at the right.

PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

Any accredited school or college can opt-in and be preapproved to serve ESA students. Active or retired teachers as well as therapists can also opt-in and be preapproved to serve ESA students. As the graphic below shows, preapproved schools, colleges, tutors, and therapists can be paid directly from an ESA. Parents may also pay out of pocket for qualified educational expenses and be reimbursed from their child's ESA.

RECOMMENDED QUALIFIED EDUCATIONAL EXPENSES:

ESAs may be used for:

1. tuition or fees at accredited schools and colleges;
2. tutoring;
3. books, instructional supplies, and uniforms;
4. cocurriculars related to classroom instruction;
5. academic tests;
6. fee-for-service transportation; and
7. therapy and technology for disabled students.



ACCREDITED SCHOOLS & COLLEGES

Private: There are 1,200 accredited private schools in Texas, which are accredited by 19 organizations, listed at right.

Higher Education: There are about 200 accredited public and private colleges in Texas, which can opt-in to serve ESA students.

Public: There are 8,800 public schools accredited by the Texas Education Agency. Public schools could serve ESA students by offering qualified educational expenses, including part-time instruction or tutoring.

Additional Accreditors: We recommend that the ESA program recognize additional accrediting organizations in the future, with a priority of seeking accreditors focused on career and military readiness.

TUTORING & THERAPY

The following educators can be preapproved to offer tutoring or therapy to ESA students:

- an active or retired teacher from an accredited K-12 school or college, and
- a person licensed or accredited by a state, regional, or national certification or accreditation organization.

When tutors and therapists are preapproved, families can pay them directly from an ESA.

REIMBURSEMENT

Parents can also pay for a qualified educational expense out-of-pocket, then submit a request for reimbursement. The program administrator would ensure that the request is for a qualified educational expense and, upon verification, reimburse the parent.

ESAs IN PRACTICE

Scan the QR code to watch 1-minute videos from ClassWallet about how parents pay with an ESA. ClassWallet supports six ESA programs nationally and Texas' SSES program for special education students.



PRIVATE SCHOOL ACCREDITORS:

1. Commission of the Texas Assn. of Baptist Schools
2. American Association of Christian Schools
3. American Montessori Society
4. Association of Christian Schools International
5. Assn. of Christian Teachers and Schools
6. Assn. of Classical and Christian Schools
7. Christian Schools International
8. Cognia
9. Independent Schools Assn. of the Southwest
10. International Association of Learner Driven Schools
11. International Christian Accrediting Assn.
12. Lutheran Schools Accreditation Commission
13. Middle State Assn. Commissions Elementary and Secondary Schools
14. National Christian Schools Assn.
15. Southern Assn. of Independent Schools
16. Southwestern Assn. of Episcopal Schools
17. Texas Alliance of Accredited Private Schools
18. Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops
19. 7th Day Adventist School System

ACCREDITED COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES:

Higher education providers that may opt-in to serve ESA students include:

1. public junior or senior colleges,
2. technical institutes, such as Texas State Technical College, and
3. private non-profit Texas colleges and universities.

These opportunities will improve college and career readiness. Students will be able to pursue trade certifications that allow them to step into a mid- or high-skill job right out of high school, or to save significant time in earning an Associate's or Bachelor's degree.