

The Indiana School Boards Association and the Indiana Association of Public School Superintendents **oppose** the creation of education savings/scholarship accounts (ESAs). The proposed ESA program provides parents who opt out of public schools with the equivalent of a taxpayer-funded debit card loaded with an estimated \$5,000 to \$7,000 per eligible child to spend at their discretion on private schools, home schools, tutoring, camps, or any number of private education products and services. We urge lawmakers to build on the good budget for public education passed in 2019 by prioritizing funding for a tuition support increase that keeps pace with, or exceeds, inflation. Public funds should fund public schools, which are open to all children and are a state constitutional duty.

- Parents are pleased with how traditional public schools have responded to the pandemic. An Education Next [survey](#) conducted in November-December 2020 found 65% of parents give their local public schools an A or B grade, up from 60% before the pandemic.
- Indiana already ranks [fifth](#) among states in state budget support for private school choice but only [39<sup>th</sup>](#) for public K-12 per-pupil expenditures.
- The proposed legislation grossly underfunds state oversight activities. The amount of money available to the State Treasurer's Office for oversight is capped at no more than \$250,000 per year (see [page 34 of HB 1005](#)).
- The proposed ESA program lacks comprehensive fiscal and academic accountability for taxpayer dollars. ESA funds are permitted for home schools, which *do not* have to give the ILEARN exam, nor report any academic performance measurements whatsoever.
- There are zero academic qualifications for an individual to become an approved tutor and accept ESA money.
- Vendors of education courses and programs do not have to prove that their curriculum works before they are allowed to receive ESA money.
- ESAs are funded directly out of the tuition support appropriation, further depleting the monies available to support traditional public education. The choice expansion proposals in the House-passed budget cost an estimated \$144M over two years, at the expense of the K-12 public schools that educate 90% of students.
- The education savings account proposal *does not* require expenses to be pre-approved or approved by the State Treasurer's Office, despite claims to the contrary.
- Resolutions opposing ESAs [have been adopted](#) by 180 Indiana school boards that collectively serve 670,000 students.
- ESA programs enacted in other states have been plagued with [fraud and abuse](#).
- Public schools are the true schools of choice in Indiana. Indiana's family-friendly public school transfer laws already ensure that children are not limited by Zip code. More than 70,000 Hoosier students currently choose to enroll in a neighboring public school district outside their corporation of legal settlement.