

**From:** Dennis E. Harrold  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 2, 2021 11:38 AM  
**To:** [s42@iga.in.gov](mailto:s42@iga.in.gov)  
**Subject:** Oppose Education Savings Account (ESA)

Hi Jean,

As you know, I represent Shelbyville Central Schools; Southwestern Consolidated School District of Shelby County; and Blue River Career Programs, which is made up of all four school corporations in Shelby County. I began representing schools in 1978 and have continued to do so without interruption since.

My understanding is that the General Assembly will be faced with bills in both the Senate and House which would create an Educational Savings Account (ESA), costing more than \$150,000,000 over 2 years by providing taxpayer-funded debit cards to selected parents so that they can spend \$5,000-\$7,000 on private schools or home schooling, totally at their discretion and without financial oversight. This would leave only approximately \$70M of the Governor's proposed increase in education for public schools despite those schools serving approximately 90% of the students in the state.

We have talked several times at JR and Carol Showers' home and at the casino, and even have discussed public education on those occasions. My children attended St. Joseph Catholic School in Shelbyville from kindergarten through the fifth grade, and Mary Ann and I paid the required tuition. That was our choice, and that should be the choice of parents today. Public schools are open to all children and their education is a state constitutional duty. Private schools and home schooling should not be taxpayer-funded, especially when doing so reduces the funding available to public schools.

With the extra financial burden Covid-19 has placed on public schools and their staffs, now is not the time to create a new entitlement program that diverts funds from public schools. My information indicates there is no state fiscal oversight for the spending of these tax dollars that even approaches that placed on the public schools. The ESA amounts to providing a taxpayer funded blank check for private education at the cost of a major reduction of constitutionally required programs for public education. These new funds would be much better spent on providing public school teachers with higher wages. There is a definite shortage of teachers today and the State of Indiana should do all it can to encourage young people to teach in our public schools. This year teachers have been true heroes, who have gone above and beyond their normal duties to teach in-school and virtually-- in many cases, simultaneously. I recall Governor Holcomb's message was that much of the proposed new funding would be used for teachers salaries. The ESA only undermines his vision.

I urge you to vote NO on the ESA. Thanks.

Denny



**DEDICATED | PREPARED | DRIVEN**  
2150 Intelliplex Drive, Suite 200  
Shelbyville, IN 46176

**Dennis Harrold**  
**Partner**  
Direct: 317.680.2018

[DennyHarrold@SRTrial.com](mailto:DennyHarrold@SRTrial.com)  
[StephensonRife.com](http://StephensonRife.com)