

Opportunities and Potential Pitfalls: State Expansion of Education Savings Accounts

May 30, 2023



Moderator



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CEO

Oakridge Neighborhood Services,
Des Moines, Iowa

Presenters



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Choice
ExcelinEd



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Children's Scholarship Fund,
New Hampshire



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Co-Executive Director
Save Our Schools
Arizona Network



Joann Mickens
Executive Director
Parents for Public Schools



Education Scholarship Accounts

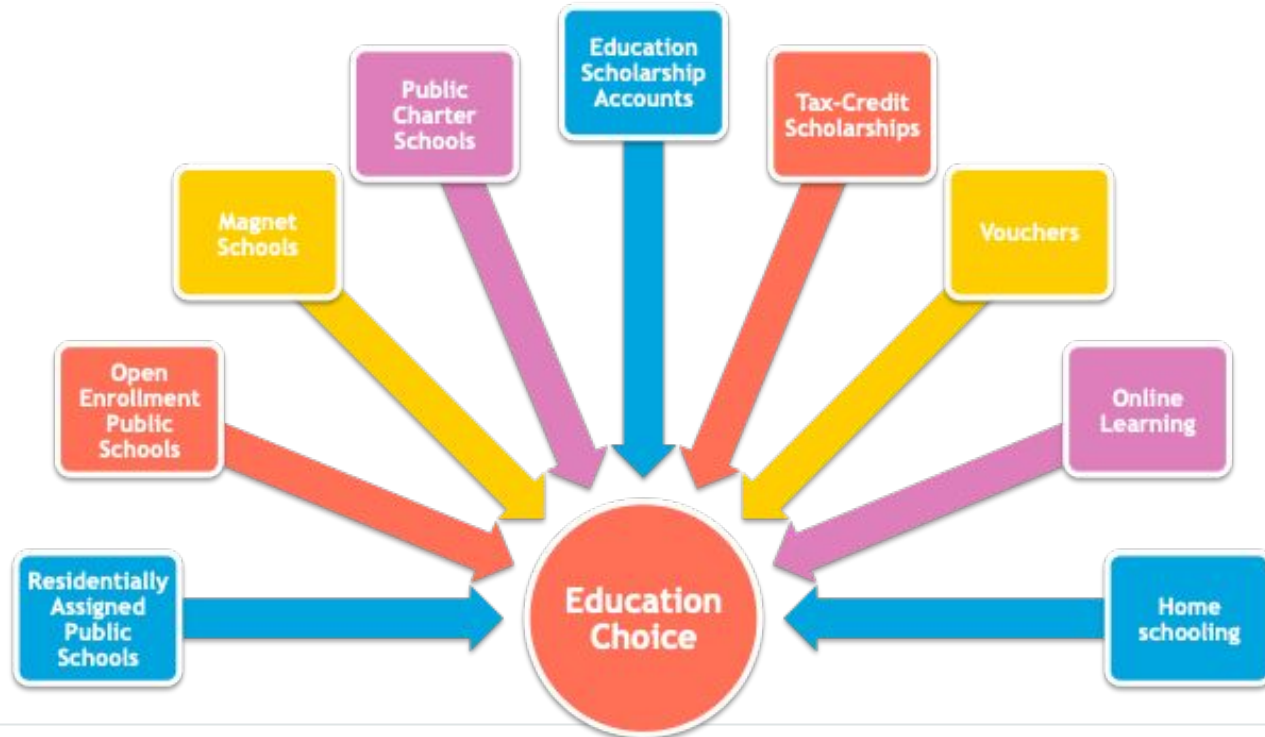
Campaign for Grade-Level Reading

May 30, 2023

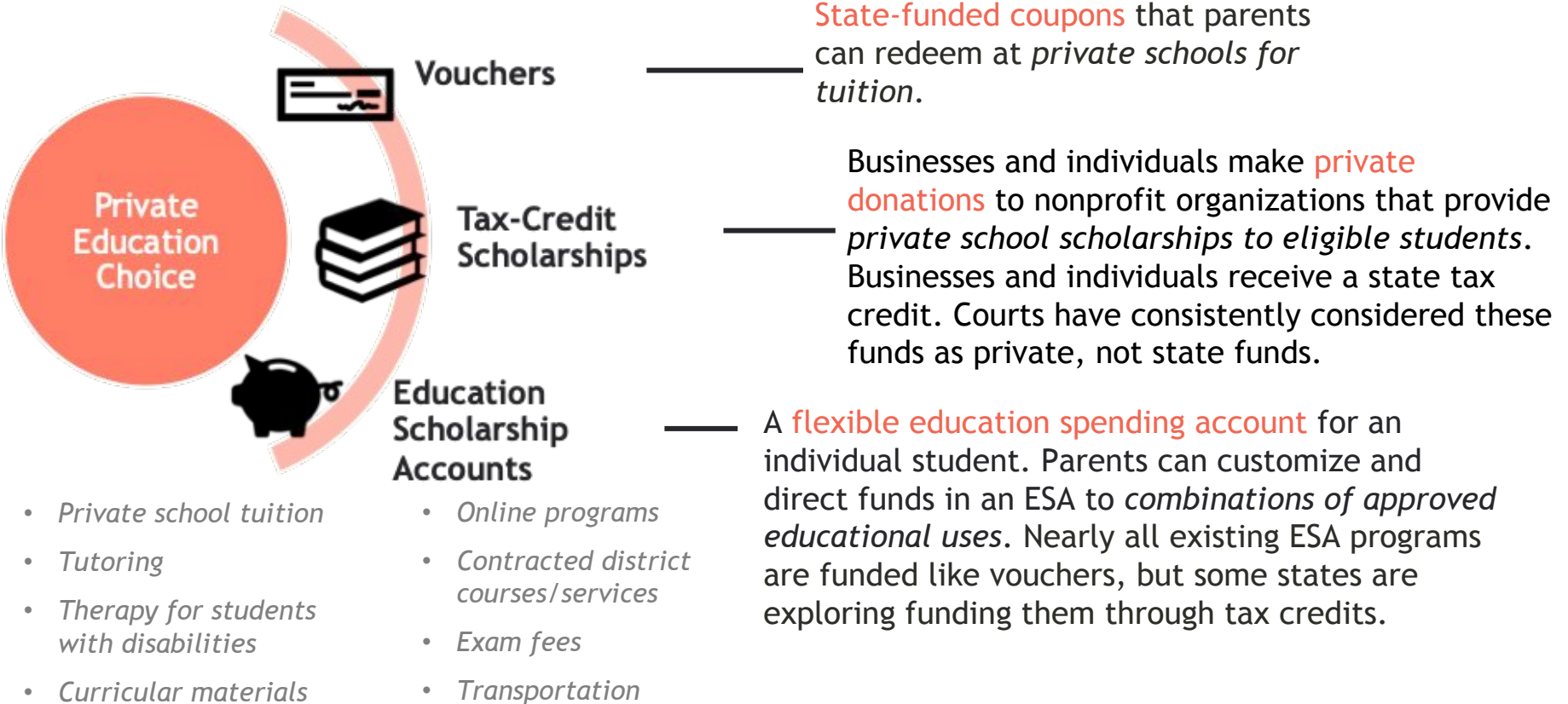
What is Education Choice?



Every child deserves access to a quality education that provides the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to prepare them for a successful career and fulfilling life. Education choice creates opportunity for families by allowing them to select the *best educational fit* for each child.



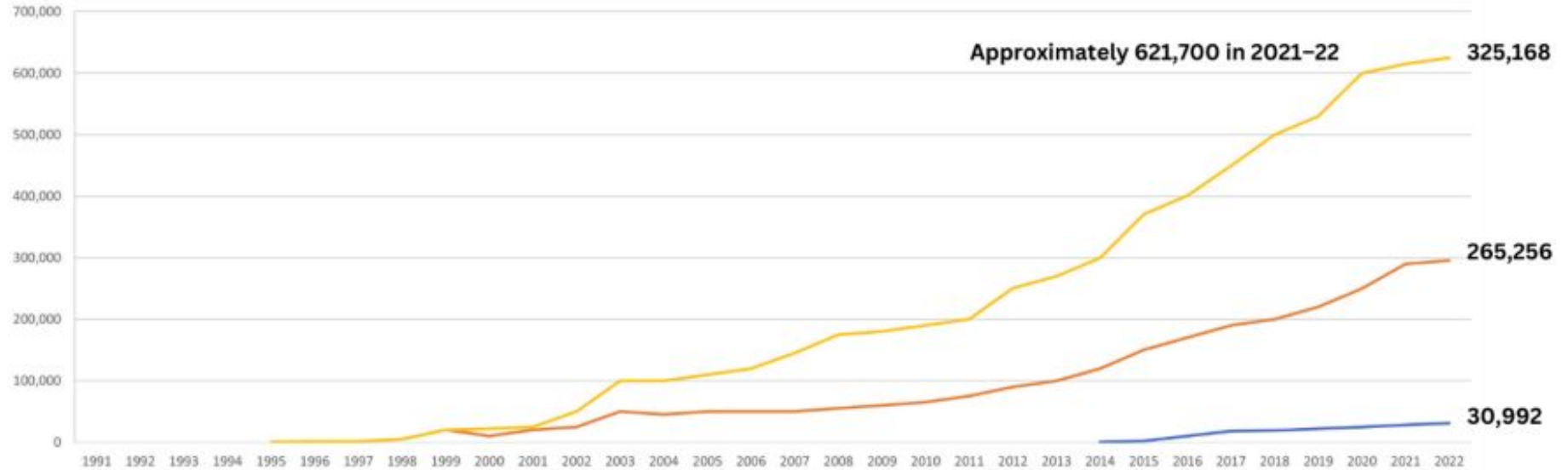
Private Education Choice: 3 Main Varieties



ESAs = Potential to Create Education Playlist



...and Student Enrollment Growing



Approximately 621,700 in 2021-22

325,168

265,256

30,992

Education Scholarship Account

Voucher

Tax-Credit Scholarship

1990

First voucher

1997

First tax-credit scholarship

2011

First ESA

2022

First Universal ESA

Source: EdChoice
(2023)

ESA Growth Over Time



YEAR of EDUCATION CHOICE ->

YEAR	States with ESAs	Approved Programs	Students Served	Additions
2011-12	1	1	153	Ariz.
2012-13	1	1	302	
2013-14	1	1	761	
2014-15	2	2	2,894	Fla.
2015-16	4	4	7,498	Miss., Tenn. IEA
2016-17	4	4	11,980	
2017-18	5	5	15,801	NC
2018-19	5	5	19,537	
2019-20	5	6	26,214	Tenn. ESA Pilot
2020-21	5	6	29,385	
2021-22	10	11	33,093	Ind., Ky., Mo., NH, WV
2022-23	10	11	100,000+	

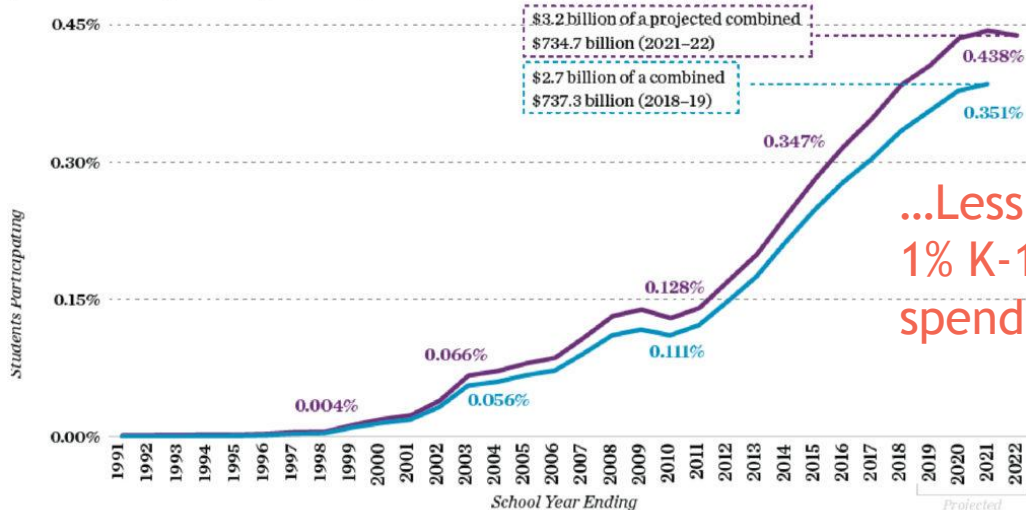


Fitting into the Big K-12 Picture

1.2% of All K-12 Students Enrolled in Private School Choice Program...

Spending on ESAs, Vouchers and Tax-Credit Scholarships as a percent of combined program and public K-12 current and total expenditures

Current expenditures include instruction, support services, food services and enterprise operations. Total expenditures include those categories and also capital outlay, interest payments on debts and programs outside of public elementary/secondary education, such as adult education and community services.



...Less than 1/2 of 1% K-12 current spending

Note: Only includes expenditures in states and Washington, D.C.

Sources: EdChoice (2021), *The ABCs of School Choice: The Comprehensive Guide to Every Private School Choice Program in America, 2021 Edition*; National Center for Education Statistics (2021), *Digest of Education Statistics tables*, retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/>; Stephen Q. Cornman, Jeremy J. Phillips, Malia R. Howell, and Jumaane Young (2021), *Revenues and Expenditures for Public Elementary and Secondary Education: FY 19* (NCES 2021-302), retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2021/2021302.pdf>

Source: EdChoice (2022)

Who We Are

We are a nonpartisan, community-based organization fighting for strong public schools for a stronger Arizona.



BUILDING A
BETTER ARIZONA

sosaznetwork.org



What are ESA Vouchers?

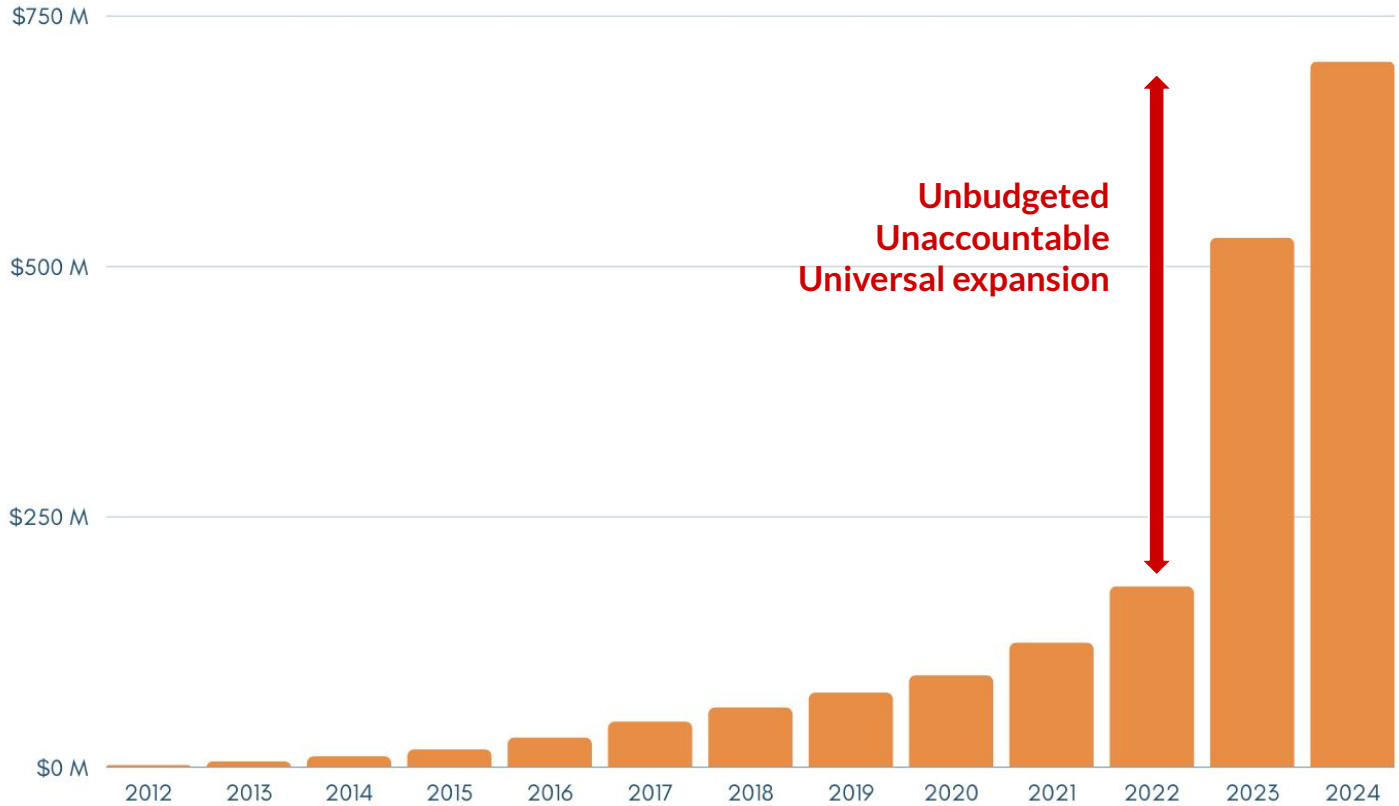
- ESA = “Empowerment Scholarship Accounts”
- ESA vouchers are public, taxpayer dollars issued by the ADE to parents via state-provided debit cards & a private account
- Can be used for **private school, microschool & homeschool** expenses (not charter schools)
- Can be rolled over year-to-year and used for university & community college tuition

Sources: Arizona Revised Statutes (2022)



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Rising ESA Voucher Costs



Sources: Arizona Department of Education (2022) & Joint Legislative Budget Committee (2022)



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AZ's ESA Voucher Scheme

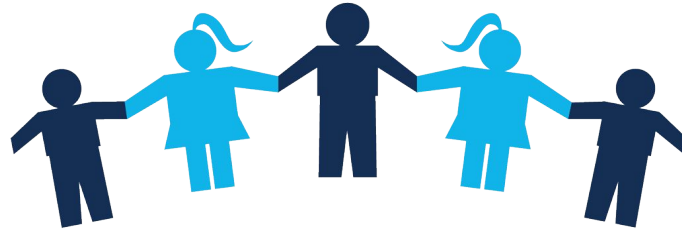
- Estimated cost universal ESA vouchers = **\$33M**
- Actual cost in 1st year: **over \$300M (and growing)**
- **80%** of universal ESA applications were already private school students or homeschoolers – NOT students leaving public schools
- Designed to have little to no oversight or transparency of taxpayer dollars
- ZERO academic accountability



Sources: Grand Canyon Institute (2022), AZ Dept of Education (2022)

SOS
ARIZONA
NETWORK

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BETTER ARIZONA



Children's Scholarship Fund

New Hampshire



PPS

OUR VISION

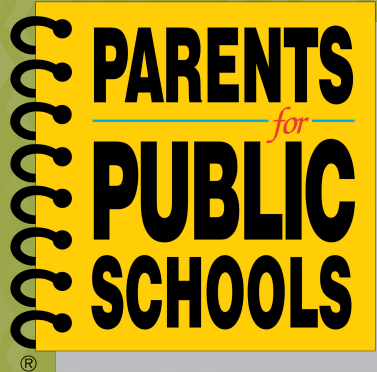
A nation where families and communities are actively engaged in strengthening public schools for every child

OUR MISSION

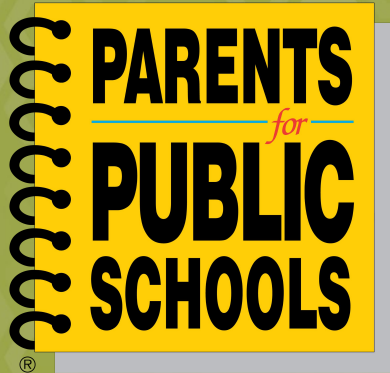
Parents for Public Schools advances the role of families and communities in securing a high-quality public education for every child.

PPS: educating, engaging, and mobilizing parents

Founded in Jackson, MS in 1989



PPS Network of Chapters



California
San Francisco

Hawai'i
Hawai'i

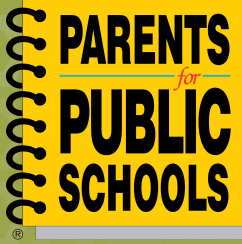
Mississippi
Greenwood & Leflore County
Moss Point
Philadelphia

North Carolina
Pitt County

Ohio
Cincinnati

Oregon
Portland

Wisconsin
Milwaukee



Leadership Development

When parents, schools, and communities work together, everybody wins.



Education and Information



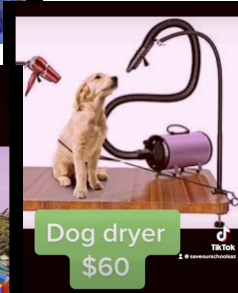
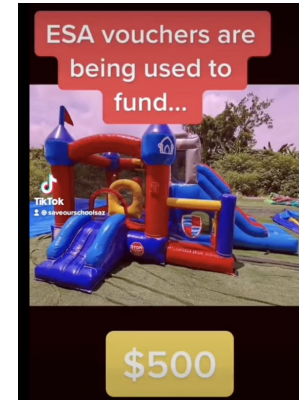
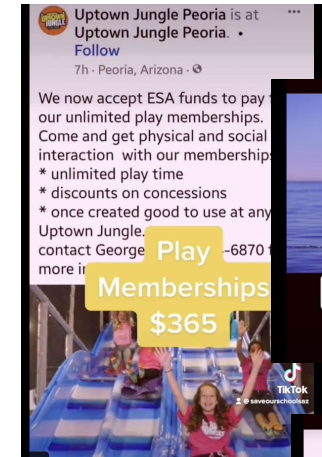
Advocacy and Organizing

What ESA Vouchers Fund

- **Private school expenses.** Tuition, uniforms, club fees
- **“Educational” expenses.** Bounce houses, espresso machines, snow cone machines, home gyms, chicken coops, zoo and bounce memberships, trips, etc.
- **Private lessons.** Swim, tennis, gymnastics, karate, music, cooking, horseback riding, archery, etc.
- **Curriculum.** Abeka, Bob Jones U, etc



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Sources: ADE website, State Board of Education meetings, AZ Revised Statutes

The Reality of “School Choice”

- **It’s the “school’s choice.”** Private schools do not have to accept vouchers — they choose students
- AZ private schools lead to segregation & serve significantly fewer students of color than public schools
- ESAs rarely cover the full cost of attending a private school; low-income families are often unable to make up the gap
- Voucher students are not protected by laws protecting LGBTQ+ students, special education students, or English Language Learners

Sources: Arizona Republic (2017-2021)



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Children's Scholarship Fund

New Hampshire

Implementation Question: Who is choosing Education Freedom (Savings) Accounts?

We hear from kids who are bullied or facing discrimination and need a different building, kids who are below grade level and need a smaller school setting, and children with special needs with parents who are dissatisfied with their special education services.



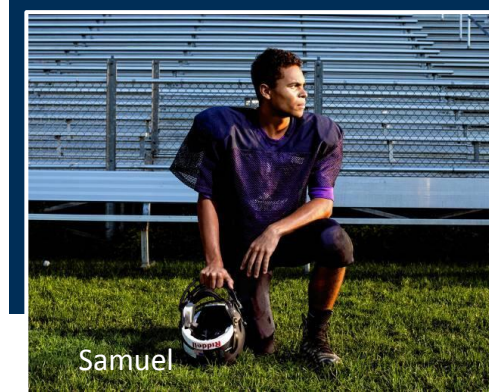
Thomas



Gabriel



Amanda



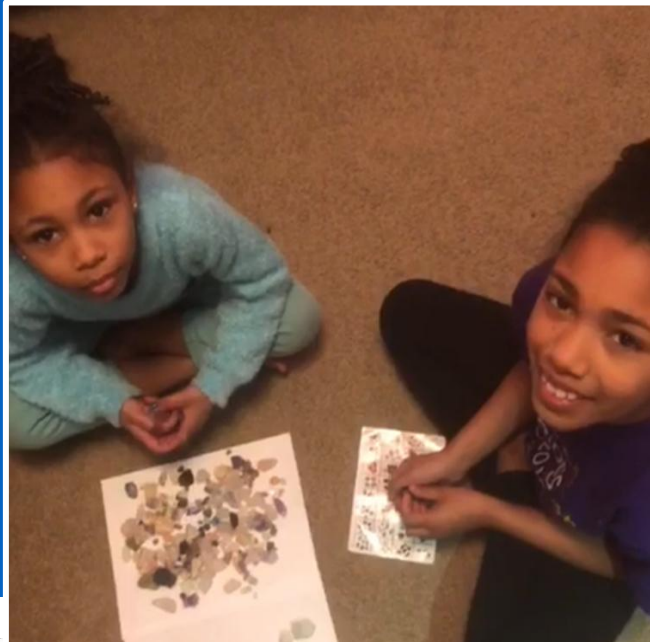
Samuel



Peter

During the pandemic school closures, our waitlist went from 30 children to **800** children!

These are children of single parents that needed to work in person to survive, like LNAs, delivery drivers, and grocery store employees. They are children with special needs, for whom remote therapy was not working. They are medically fragile children that cannot go into a classroom setting now.



Children's Scholarship Fund

New Hampshire



Research on Private Education Choice



The most rigorous studies yield overwhelmingly positive results.

Research Topic	Positive Finding	Neutral Finding	Negative Finding
Choice Participants: Test Scores	11	4	3
Choice Participants: Graduation and Attainment	5	2	0
Parent Satisfaction	30	1	2
Public School Students: Test Scores	25	1	2
Effect on Racial Composition of Schools	6	1	0
Effect on Student Civic Values	6	5	0
Fiscal Impact on Taxpayers and School Districts	68	4	5

Source: EdChoice
(2023)

What's Next?

- **Cottage industry:** strip mall private schools, microschoools, homeschool co-ops charging \$7,000 per child
- **Charters converting:** Great Hearts Christos
- **Price increases:** Private schools already raising tuition
- **Grift:** Already see attempts to allow ESA/STO voucher double-dipping
- **Dramatic public school impacts:** Neighborhood school closures, teacher layoffs, 4-day school weeks, shared teachers, etc.



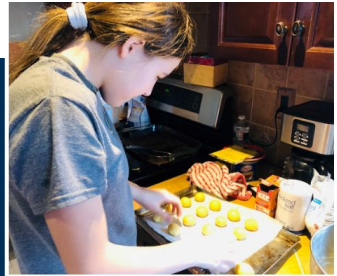
Bresnahan Family

Let's Rethink and Reimagine Education!

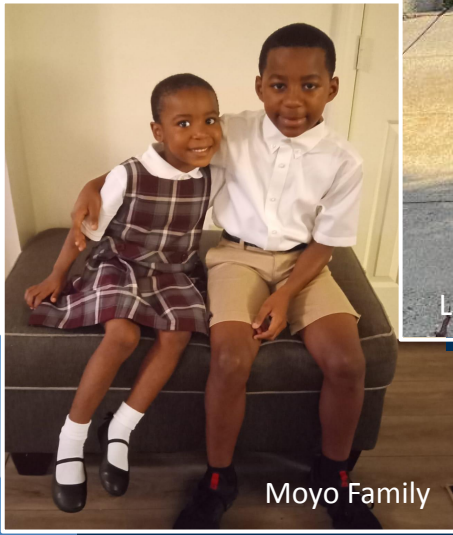
The parents of today are not the same as parents were pre-pandemic. We now know what works or doesn't work for our children. NH parents believe they should have the power to spend the taxes they pay for education, on an education that they know will work for their children.



LeGeyt Family



Micheli -Swenson Family



Moyo Family



Fleurant Family



Children's Scholarship Fund

New Hampshire



MISSISSIPPI'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS ARE UNDERFUNDED BY

-\$279,342,511

-\$3,346,290,638

The **Mississippi Adequate Education Program** (MAEP) is a formula set by state law to determine the funding each public school district should receive from the state in order to meet academic standards established by the State Board of Education.

The last time Mississippi's public schools were fully funded was in the 2007-2008 school year.

Source: Parents' Campaign, <https://msparentscampaign.org/education-funding-2/>

Questions & Discussion



GLR WEEK 2023

BRIGHT SPOTS AND SILVER LININGS

SAVE THE DATE

JULY 17- 21

