

# IT'S TIME TO GIVE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IN EDUCATION TO ALL IOWANS!

## What Iowans Think About Choice in Education

- Iowans agree that a quality education is important. It's time to give K-12 parents freedom of choice in education.
- 57% of Iowans agree that ESAs should be available to all families, regardless of income or special need.

## Education Savings Accounts (ESAs)

- Level the playing field by giving parents the choice of all educational options available in Iowa
- Inject healthy competition into the education market

## Features of Education Savings Account

- Parents who choose nonpublic education would receive a grant of state funds they would use to cover education costs for their children
- The amount received would be a portion of the amount the state would spend to educate that child in a public school
- The grant would be placed in an Education Savings Account and the parent would use that money to cover educational costs from approved providers such as nonpublic schools, home instruction, virtual courses, and tutors.



**Informational Video on ESAs:**

[iowaace.org/education-savings-accounts](http://iowaace.org/education-savings-accounts)



**IOWA ALLIANCE**  
FOR CHOICE IN EDUCATION

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IOWA ALLIANCE  
FOR CHOICE IN EDUCATION

Iowa Alliance for Choice in Education (Iowa ACE)

February 8, 2017

**Polling Shows Excellent Environment for Advancing School Choice Legislation**

New statewide polling conducted by Braun Research, Inc. (January 19-24, 2017; N=1200; +/-2.8% w/a 95% confidence level) shows the environment for advancing Education Savings Account (ESA) legislation in Iowa is excellent.

***Strong majority of Iowans would choose a non-public school option, if they could...***

In fact, 60% of Iowans said if they had the option to select "any kind of school for your child..." they would select something other than a regular public school.

***Cost of private school options key impediment to parental choice...***

Of those surveyed who send their children to public schools, but who would choose to use non-public options if they could, 60% said COST was the primary impediment to making that choice.

***Super-Majority of Iowans support the creation of Education Savings Accounts in Iowa to help with "educational expenses for school-aged children"...***

A whopping 70% of Iowans indicated support for the creation of Education Savings Accounts that provide "all families with a grant of state funds to pay for approved educational expenses for school..." including... "private school tuition, tutoring, therapies for special needs, or some combination..."

***Messages about ESAs that resonate with Iowans, include...***

Here are some of the messages that Iowans find most compelling when talking about ESAs (including data and intensity):

- Parents should have the freedom to choose the learning options that are necessary for their child's success: 71-29 (28-9)
- ESAs give parents options to seek schools with smaller class sizes and more individualized teacher attention: 72-28 (32-9)
- ESAs offer parents the opportunity to access schools with curriculums that better fit their needs (high level science, engineering, and math): 71-29 (23-8)
- ESAs would be available to all families, regardless of income or special needs: 65-35 (23-10)

***Complete polling results available at <http://www.iowaace.org/resources>.***



## **SCHOOL CHOICE**

- School choice programs:
  - Remove barriers, such as address and income, that prevent parents from choosing the education that best fits their child.
  - Encourage parents to become more engaged, involved, and invested in their child's education, which generally increases student achievement.
- Parents are the first educators of their children, and parents know their children's needs, strengths, and deficits better than anyone. They should have the freedom to choose an educational environment that enhances each student's unique ability to learn.
- Many studies have shown that school choice programs **do not** have a detrimental effect to the public schools in that area.

## **WHAT IS AN EDUCATION SAVINGS ACCOUNT (ESA)?**

- A state grant equal to a portion of the state per-pupil funding, for which EVERY Iowa student would be eligible regardless of income level;
- Students would utilize the grant for approved educational expenses such as private school tuition, textbooks, tutoring, and online learning; and
- Any funds not used by graduation could be used for tuition at an Iowa college or university.

## **BENEFITS OF A STRONG ESA PROGRAM**

- Parents can choose the educational option that best fits their child's unique needs, regardless of income, location, cost, special needs, or other barriers currently preventing that choice.
- When children receive the education that best meets their needs, they are better equipped for success, resulting in a well-qualified Iowa work force.
- ESAs would allow every Iowa student to become eligible for a grant equal to a portion of the state's per-pupil funding.
  - Local funding for the child using the ESA grant would remain with the public school district.
  - There is no intent or plan to reduce public education funding for an ESA program.

## **AN ESA IS NOT A "VOUCHER"**

- While vouchers typically allow for one type of learning at a brick and mortar school, ESAs allow money to be used for a wider variety of approved education expenses such as private school tuition, textbooks, tutoring, and online learning.



## SCHOOL CHOICE

- School choice programs:
  - Remove barriers, such as address and income, that prevent parents from choosing the education that best fits their child.
  - Encourage parents to become more engaged, involved, and invested in their child's education, which generally increases student achievement.
- Many studies have shown that school choice programs **do not** have a detrimental effect to the public schools in that area, and in the history of school choice programs, there has never been a mass exodus from the public schools when a widespread choice program was implemented.

***New statewide polling shows that, when given the option to select "any kind of school for your child," 60 percent of Iowans would select something other than a regular public school.\****

## WHAT IS AN EDUCATION SAVINGS ACCOUNT (ESA)?

- A state grant equal to a portion of the state per-pupil funding, for which EVERY Iowa student would be eligible regardless of income level;
- Students would utilize the grant for educational expenses such as private school tuition, textbooks, tutoring, and online learning; and
- In Iowa the ESA program would compliment the current STO program, and vice versa. Each program would work to meet needs for various school populations, and the combination would help meet all educational needs in Iowa.
  - STO grants are based the financial need of the family.
  - Under the ESA program, every family would receive the same amount of funding.

***New statewide polling shows of those surveyed who send their children to public schools, but who would choose to use non-public options if they could, 60 percent said COST was the primary impediment to making that choice.\****

## BENEFITS OF A STRONG ESA PROGRAM

- Parents can choose the educational option that best fits their child's unique needs, regardless of income, location, cost, special needs, or other barriers currently preventing that choice.
- When children receive the education that best meets their needs, they are better equipped for success, resulting in a well-qualified Iowa work force.
- With ESAs, Iowans would have access to a variety of strong educational options, attracting new families to our state and keeping families here.
- ESAs would allow every Iowa student to become eligible for a grant equal to a portion of the state's per-pupil funding.
  - Local funding for the child using the ESA grant would remain with the public school district.
  - There is no intent or plan to reduce public education funding for an ESA program.
  - Estimated cost of the ESA program, including all current nonpublic students and a small percentage of transfer students from public schools, would be at most \$185 million.
  - Fraud protection built into the program

## AN ESA IS NOT A "VOUCHER"

- While vouchers typically allow for one type of learning at a brick and mortar school, ESAs allow money to be used for a wider variety of approved education expenses such as private school tuition, textbooks, tutoring, and online learning.

***New statewide polling shows a whopping 70 percent of Iowans indicated support for the creation of Education Savings Accounts that provide "all families with a grant of state funds to pay for approved educational expenses for school." including "private school tuition, tutoring, therapies for special needs, or some combination..."***

\*Iowa statewide polling conducted by Braun Research, Inc. (January 19-24, 2017; N=1200; +/-2.8% w/a 95% confidence level).



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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**STATEWIDE SURVEY SUGGESTS MAJORITY OF IOWANS SUPPORT SCHOOL CHOICE,  
CREATION OF EDUCATION SAVINGS ACCOUNT PROGRAM**

*Results of online poll show favorable response to school choice amongst registered voters ages 18+*

**DES MOINES, Iowa (February 8, 2017)** – Results from a recent statewide survey suggest a majority of Iowans support both school choice and the creation of an Education Savings Account (ESA) program in Iowa. The online “[Iowa K-12 School Choice Survey](#),” administered by Braun Research, Inc., polled registered Republicans, Democrats, and those with no political party affiliation on their education preferences in late January.

A key finding within the survey results showed a strong majority of Iowans would choose a non-public school option if they could. Approximately 60 percent of respondents said if they had the option to select any kind of school for their child, they would select something other than a regular public school. Results also showed the primary impediment to parents making that choice was cost. Sixty percent of respondents who currently send their children to public school, but would choose a non-public school option if they could, reported they cannot afford to do so.

“We believe all parents should have the freedom to choose the learning options that are necessary for their child’s success,” said Trish Wilger, executive director of the non-profit, non-partisan organization [Iowa Alliance for Choice in Education](#). “This is a concept many Iowans have strongly supported for years, and these new polling numbers reflect that support.”

Results also showed 70 percent of Iowans – a super-majority – indicated their support for the creation of Education Savings Accounts that provide all families with a grant of state funds to pay for approved educational expenses for school, including private school tuition, tutoring, therapies for special needs, or some combination.

“One across-the-board K-12 education model isn’t going to fit every student’s unique needs or learning style,” Wilger said. “Education Savings Accounts would go a long way in providing every Iowa parent, regardless of address or income, the ability to choose the optimal educational environment for each of their children.”

Braun Research, Inc. conducted the online interviews from January 19 to January 24, 2017. The population sample was more than 1,200 registered Iowa voters statewide, with a margin of error of +/- 2.8 percent and a 95 percent confidence level.

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To view [complete survey methods and results](#), and to learn more about the Iowa Alliance for Choice in Education, please visit <http://www.iowaace.org/>.

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Iowa Alliance for Choice in Education (Iowa ACE) is the voice for school choice in the state of Iowa. We are a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to expanding school choice options in Iowa for the benefit of Iowa’s children.