

Talking Points for Parents

Empowerment & Choice

- *“I get to choose what’s best for my child.”*

ESAs give parents control over a portion of their child’s state education funding to use for tuition and fees at an accredited private school or on other qualified educational services. All state educational dollars come from taxpayer pockets. Parents choosing private schools pay taxes. For many years, parents choosing private education for their children paid for two educations: one through taxes and one through tuition. The current system brings equity.

Access & Opportunity

- *“Private education isn’t just for the wealthy anymore.”*

The ESA program removes financial barriers, making high-quality private or faith-based education an option for thousands of Iowa families. Equity exists in educational choice in Iowa. And as a society, we have determined that having an educated public is for the common good. It’s why school is mandatory and taxpayer dollars fund it. But up until this point, Christian schools haven’t been really recognized as contributing to that common good, at least not financially. The ESA legislation finally acknowledges, “We see you, parents, churches, and supporters of Christian schools, and we recognize the good work your schools are doing to help educate the youth of Iowa.”

Support for Unique Learners

- *“Every child learns differently.”*

For students struggling academically, emotionally, or spiritually in a traditional setting, ESAs open the door to schools better suited to their individual needs. Choice programs expand diversity of all kinds in private schools. No school, public or Christian, is a best fit for every child. That’s the point – parents should have more say in the educational environment that best fits their child’s needs. The State of Iowa has removed some of the financial barriers families may have regarding school choice.

No Harm to Public Schools

- *“This doesn’t defund public education.”*

Public schools keep local (property tax) and federal funding, and the ESA simply redirects the state per-pupil portion for students who choose to leave. Education dollars are for educating students, not supporting particular schools. Public schools receive \$1,205 (or more) in state funding for each child who receives an ESA that is not even in their buildings.

Education Savings Accounts are Here to Stay

- *“School choice can be depended upon in Iowa.”*

Any changes to ESA legislation would take a change in all three branches of government, something very unlikely in Iowa. Government representatives and officials come and go. It’s up to parents, school leaders, and school choice supporters to advocate for and keep ESA access for families.