

May 10, 2017

Word Count 214

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QuickPoint! –Education Savings Accounts Treat Kids Like the Individuals They Are

By Kathryn Hickok

Six years ago, Arizona [became the first state](#) to pass an Education Savings Account law for some K-12 students. In April, [lawmakers there passed a new ESA bill](#) which expands the program eligibility to include all Arizona children. Florida, Mississippi, and Tennessee also have ESA programs limited to certain students, such as those with special needs. Nevada also passed a near-universal ESA bill, but it is yet to be funded.

Education Savings Accounts put parents in the educational “driver’s seat.” An ESA is analogous to a debit card for qualifying education expenses. It gives parents who want to opt out of a public school that is not meeting their child’s needs a portion of the per-student state funding for spending on their child’s education in other ways. Funds not used by the student in a given year can be rolled over for future years.

To really empower Oregon families, [the Legislature should enact Senate Bill 437](#). [This ESA bill](#) would allow parents to choose the education that meets their child’s needs, such as private or home schools, tutors, online courses, and therapy.

Children learn in different ways, and the landscape of educational options is more diverse today than ever. Education Savings Accounts for Oregon parents are a life-changing education solution whose time has come.

The Senate Education Committee will hold an informational hearing on SB 437 on Tuesday, June 13, from 3-5 pm at the Oregon State Capitol. You can make a statement in favor of school choice by attending the hearing and/or submitting written testimony on the bill.

Kathryn Hickok is Publications Director and Director of the Children’s Scholarship Fund-Oregon program at Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon’s free market public policy research organization.

