

## QuickPoint! – Every Student Deserves Access to a Quality Education

By Helen Doran

Every student deserves access to a quality education. Despite the setbacks caused by closing public school buildings, many Oregon students were already struggling to succeed in the public school system before the pandemic. According to the National Association of Education Progress, only 34% of Oregon fourth-graders tested “proficient” in reading in 2019. Moreover, Oregon continues to have one of the lowest graduation rates in the nation.

Now, more than ever, students and families are demanding greater access to a quality education that fits their unique needs. A proven way of providing that access is by giving families [control over their students’ portion of the state’s education funding](#).

Currently, **more than half the states in the U.S. give families flexibility to direct their children’s education** through scholarships, tax credits, and Education Savings Accounts.

Oregon is one of 29 states to have introduced legislation this year to fund students directly. [Senate Bill 658](#) would establish an Education Savings Account (ESA) program for Oregon parents who want to opt out of their government-assigned public schools for other options, such as private school or homeschool. The program “allows participating students to obtain grants from education savings accounts to fund attendance at specified types of schools or education programs.”

Not every child is going to thrive in the public school system. It’s time for Oregon to provide equal opportunities for a quality education by funding students, not systems, through such legislation as SB 658.

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*Helen Doran is a Program Assistant, External Affairs at Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon’s free market public policy research organization.*

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Please contact:

Cascade Policy Institute  
4850 SW Scholls Ferry Rd.  
Suite 103  
Portland, Oregon 97225

Phone: (503) 242-0900  
Fax: (503) 242-3822

[www.cascadepolicy.org](http://www.cascadepolicy.org)  
[info@cascadepolicy.org](mailto:info@cascadepolicy.org)

4850 SW Scholls Ferry Road  
Suite 103  
Portland, Oregon 97225

t: 503.242.0900  
f: 503.242.3822  
[info@cascadepolicy.org](mailto:info@cascadepolicy.org)  
[www.cascadepolicy.org](http://www.cascadepolicy.org)

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