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## QuickPoint! – Report shows ESA programs can give students the options they need, while increasing per-student funding for those remaining in district schools

By Kathryn Hickok

Cascade Policy Institute has released a new [report](#) evaluating the effect of an Education Savings Account program on local public school district budgets.

“[Education Savings Accounts Can Boost Per-Student Spending in Public Schools](#)” examines funding for every Oregon school district. The report finds that if 5% of public school students used an ESA program to transfer to schools outside the government-run school system, per-student spending for the remaining students would increase by an average of 1.7%.

In fact, [evidence](#) indicates it’s rising *public* school enrollment that puts the greatest strain on public school funding. [Research](#) indicates that states with the largest increases in public school enrollment tend to experience the biggest decreases in per-student spending. Moreover, states with smaller enrollment increases—if not declines—tend to be the states that have most significantly increased their K-12 spending per student.

Report author Eric Fruits concludes: “Contrary to critics’ concerns, school choice programs such as ESAs do not ‘defund’ public schools. Instead, school choice programs simultaneously reduce costs to public schools and increase per-student funding.”

Oregon students need more education options now. Children can’t afford to wait years or decades for slow-motion policy changes. Oregon should join the increasing number of states that have enacted ESA programs, so families can match their children’s needs and goals with the education environments that will serve them well.

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

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