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QuickPoint! ● Texas Parents Break Records for School Choice Applications

By Kathryn Hickok.

At last count, more than [one and a half million children](#) now benefit from school choice programs across the United States. With 75 programs in 34 states, plus Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico, more than half of America's K-12 students are eligible to participate in an educational choice program if they choose.

That number is set to rise. Last week, the Texas Education Freedom Accounts (TEFA) program opened its application process. On February 4, the parents of [more than 42,000 students applied](#), breaking Tennessee's record of 33,000 first-day applications for its school choice program in 2025.

When the Texas legislature created TEFA, it was the [largest school choice program](#) at the time of its inception in the country. The legislation funded Education Savings Accounts for an initial [90,000 students](#), with a total of one billion dollars. Each student account will be valued at \$10,000 or more, [depending on individual circumstances](#). Funds can be used for private school tuition, tutoring, transportation, special needs therapies, and other education-related expenses. Eighty percent of first-day applicants indicated they intend to use the funds to attend private schools, and 20 percent plan to choose other options.

Last year, new educational choice programs launched in [seven states](#): Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Wyoming, Idaho, and Tennessee. Now Texas is giving record numbers of children access to learning environments in which they have better opportunities to reach their potential. Oregon education policies should expand options for students here, too, so all children can have an effective, meaningful, and empowering school experience.

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. She specializes in research and policy in school choice legislation and other key issues relating to education.

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