

# Education Scholarship Account

Indiana's Student-Centered School Choice Program



## OVERVIEW

The Education Scholarship Account (ESA) program offers students with disabilities and their siblings a flexible K-12 scholarship to customize their educational experience. The ESA program was established in 2021 under HEA 1001 and launched during the 2022-23 academic year.

During the 2025-26 academic year, 790 students were served, a nearly 400% increase in participation compared to the first year of the program. Interest continues to grow and demand has begun to outpace the supply of the scholarship. There are over 900 approved participating providers, including 91 non-public schools. ESA funds may be used to pay for special needs therapies and services, curricular materials, tutoring, transportation (\$750), and tuition and fees at a non-public school the family chooses.

Beginning with the 2026-27 academic year, the ESA program is administered by the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE). The student application is currently open and may be accessed [here](#).



## STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

- Be an Indiana resident;
- Have a documented disability that requires special education services (or be the sibling of an approved ESA student);
  - This requires an individualized education plan (IEP), service plan (SP), or a choice special education plan (CSEP).
- And be 5-22 years old by October 1 of the applicable academic year;
- HEA 1001-2025 removed the income limits from the ESA program, making the scholarship universal.

## ACCOUNTABILITY

- ESA students are required to take the statewide assessment or the assessment specified in the student's IEP, SP, or CSEP.
- An ESA account may be frozen by the IDOE if any applicable law or regulation is not followed.
- The ESA program undergoes an annual audit conducted by an independent public accounting firm.

## FUNDING

- Participants receive 90% of their state education dollars and all their special education funding via a government-authorized scholarship account for educational needs.
- There are categories of funding for special needs:
  - \$548 FY26 and \$550 FY27 – Communication Disorders and Homebound Programs
    - Language or Speech Impairment
  - \$2,913 FY26 and \$2,924 FY27 - Mild and Moderate (Level 1 and 2)
    - Emotional disability/All other placements, specific learning disability, developmental delay (ages 5B-8 only), mild intellectual disability, moderate intellectual disability, and other health impairments
  - \$3,798 FY26 and \$3,812 FY27 – Special Preschool Education Programs
  - \$11,592 FY26 and \$11,634 FY27 – Severe (Level 1 and 2)
    - Multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, emotional disability requiring full-time placement, severe intellectual disability, autism spectrum disorder, traumatic brain injury, blind or low vision, deaf or hard of hearing, and deaf and blind.

This is the first program in Indiana to truly put parents in control of their student's education by allowing for customized coursework, experiences, and services tailored to their child's unique needs.

## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- First parent-driven program. This is the first program in the history of Indiana to put complete control over a child's education into the hands of the parent.
- Due to the creation of the ESA, Indiana now has a program for all student types:
  - Non-accredited schools are allowed to participate in a school choice program.
  - Families who educate at home can participate in a choice program (A student who is home educating and chooses to participate in the ESA program, is no longer considered a home school student, but rather an ESA student).
  - Public schools can participate by offering individual courses for ESA students.
  - Microschools/learning pods/hybrid schools are allowed to participate.
- Allows the ESA and SGO Scholarship dollars to not only be stacked together, but the SGO can be applied to a student's account first, so that families can better maximize their resources for their child's education.
- Unspent scholarship dollars can stay with the student rather than going back to the general fund.
  - Up to \$1,000 can be rolled over annually and is cumulative.
- Empowers schools to enroll students in a few specific classes without the student having to enroll full time.
  - For example, if a private school has a unique offering like a religion course or another specialized opportunity, the student could take advantage of the course using the ESA as a funding mechanism.