

# HYBRID HOMESCHOOLING AND EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP ACCOUNTS

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HOW STATES CAN PROTECT TRADITIONAL  
HOMESCHOOLING WHILE PROMOTING ESAS AND  
EMERGING K-12 TRENDS



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## INTRODUCTION

The movement to expand parental choice in education is in high gear. Policymakers in many states have stepped up their responses to parent frustrations at the inadequacy of existing options. Although most students are likely to stay enrolled in conventional schooling for the foreseeable future, demand for alternatives has clearly increased. One in five American adults [believe](#) “nearly everything” about the education system should change, while roughly half of parents [would prefer](#) their children have multiple days of home-based education per week.

At the same time, more states are making state-funded, parent-directed spending accounts available for most or all K-12 students, allowing families to access different kinds of education goods and services. The culmination of this kind of unconventional funding is the universal (or nearly universal) [education scholarship account](#), or ESA, which both West Virginia and Arizona began to fully activate in recent months.

Following these two breakthroughs, policymakers from other states also have embraced universal ESA legislation. Notably in 2023, Iowa, Utah, Arkansas and Florida moved proposals across the finish line. Other states have advanced or approved plans to give many more families newfound education purchasing power. To date, 15 states have adopted one or more ESA programs. Yet differences in how programs are crafted can significantly affect student access to some of the less traditional modes of education.

Such unconventional structures include a range of possibilities under the umbrella of “hybrid homeschooling.” The National Hybrid Schools Project [has identified](#) two characteristics to categorize these structures: 1) Students attend in-person classes less than five days a week while otherwise schooling at home; and 2) the school, rather than the parent, retains most or all decisions pertaining to curriculum.

It is difficult to trace the precise origins of hybrid homeschooling. Responses to the Project’s fall 2022 [survey](#) suggest at least some examples emerged late in the last century. Families who take advantage of [this option](#) historically have tended to be higher-income and located in the suburbs. More recently, the changing terrain created by parent frustrations arising from COVID policy responses have fueled demand for more flexible options to meet student learning needs.

This paper explores the evolving hybrid homeschooling landscape, how it differs from traditional homeschooling and how policymakers can enact ESA legislation that ensures both can thrive and that educational opportunity can grow for all students.

## BRIDGING THE EDUCATION SPECTRUM

Public schooling, offered through residentially assigned districts or via open-enrollment alternatives, represents the predominant mode of education for America’s elementary and secondary school population. While most parents lean on traditional public schools, a growing number are looking outside that system to provide an education that best meets their children’s needs to help them succeed.

Within that group, most families select privately run institutions that in many ways – such as age-based classrooms, bell schedules and calendars – provide care and instruction much like their public school peers. They may have a religious or unique philosophical bent that shapes their curriculum and culture, and many have more freedom to dictate employment and admissions policies. But in most respects, these institutions resemble schooling as it’s familiarly known.

At the other end of the spectrum is home education, which has moved in recent decades from a tiny fringe subculture to a viable schooling alternative recognized as legal across the country. [About 3%](#) of all K-12 students today are homeschooled, up from 2% during the pandemic. This growth [represents](#) hundreds of thousands more students being educated primarily at home.

Legal requirements for homeschooling can vary widely from state to state. This affects the number of students and families who participate and also dictates the forms homeschooling may take. For many families, homeschooling encompasses far more than a parent taking on the tasks of curriculum selection and direct instruction for all their children's academic courses. Many families now trade their skills and time to have their children educated by other parents at co-ops, for example, or perhaps they teach such a course themselves.

The hybrid homeschooling approach covers a range of learning opportunities that are more structured than a simple co-op arrangement on one hand, but with less formal instruction than a typical private school offers. A family's out-of-pocket expense for hybrid schooling usually falls between the other two options.

One common approach is the [University-Model](#), which is managed by an organization that certifies and accredits local Christian schools. These schools meet on campus two or three days per week and provide structured student work accomplished at home the remainder of the week. A different alternative, **Regina Caeli Academy's** classical Catholic curriculum, is taught on-site Mondays and Thursdays to students in 15 states who otherwise learn from home. Other examples, including a variety of providers that operate independently, abound.

Hybrid homeschooling offers less cost and more flexibility than a traditional school arrangement, albeit at higher cost and with less flexibility than traditional home education. In practice, it represents a novel niche that some families consider to be the best of both worlds. As education choice scholar Mike McShane [explained the phenomenon](#) in 2018: "Hybrid homeschools offer the potential to reap the benefits of parent-driven instruction with the benefits that traditional schooling environments supply."

TABLE 1. State Profiles: Overview of Education Scholarship Account Programs

STATE	PROGRAM NAME	ESA LAW PASSED	ESA LAUNCHED	APPROVED ELIGIBILITY
Arizona	Empowerment Scholarship Accounts	2011	2011	Universal
Florida	Family Empowerment Scholarships	2014	2014	Universal
Mississippi	Equal Opportunity for Students with Special Needs	2015	2015	Disabilities
Tennessee	Individualized Education Accounts	2015	2017	Disabilities
North Carolina	Education Student Accounts+	2017	2018	Disabilities
Tennessee	ESA Pilot	2019	2022	Geographic, Income-Based
New Hampshire	Education Freedom Accounts	2021	2021	Income-Based
West Virginia	Hope Scholarships	2021	2022	Prior Public
Indiana	Education Scholarship Accounts	2021	2022	Disabilities
Missouri	Empowerment Scholarship Accounts	2021	2022	Geographic, Other Factors
Iowa	Education Savings Accounts	2023	2023	Universal
Utah	Utah Fits All	2023	2024	Universal
Arkansas	Children's Education Freedom Accounts	2023	2024	Universal
South Carolina	Education Scholarship Trust Fund	2023	2024	Income-Based
Montana	Equal Opportunity Education Savings Accounts	2023	2024	Disabilities
Alabama	Alabama Accountability Act Scholarship - Unique Abilities	2023	2024	Disabilities

Parents often [cite](#) academic preparation, a safe and effective learning environment, respect for parental rights and flexible scheduling as the attractive features of hybrid homeschooling. State policymakers are finding that a pluralistic education system can make more room for families who want to embrace this approach—without infringing on the rights of those who want to continue in a more conventional mode of schooling.

However, advancing state policies that specifically support hybrid homeschooling can be challenging. States commonly have only two basic classifications for nonpublic education: homeschool or private school. Respondents to the hybrid homeschool [survey](#) were about as likely to identify their students in either category, with a few respondents distinguishing how students were categorized based on their grade level. Overlaying hybrid schools' unique position on states' different legal frameworks leaves little room for broad consensus about how they should be overseen and regulated. This lack of clarity represents just one key barrier to increasing the supply and meeting the rising demand among parents.

Most hybrid homeschools are operated as private institutions. Yet in some places, similar approaches that combine home-based learning and conventional schooling can work through the public school system. In some states, districts and charter schools are incentivized, or even obligated, to serve homeschool students with individual courses and services. Adopting a [part-time enrollment](#) policy at the state level provides a clear path for districts and charter schools to run a program that fits under the hybrid homeschool umbrella.

## CRAFTING ESAs: ALLOWABLE USES for HYBRID HOMESCHOOL

While part-time enrollment options offer a hybrid benefit to many families, education scholarship accounts (ESAs) represent a vehicle for providing even greater access to hybrid homeschooling while also offering families more flexibility and autonomy, if desired. Ideally, the two policies can coexist and mutually support each other.

Based on state regulations, including attendance requirements, hybrid schooling can occupy different spaces along the spectrum of educational “categories,” such as homeschooling or private education or a separately defined category. For example, a loose regime in a state could count an entity with minimal attendance requirements as a private school. As such, it might even allow a traditional voucher or scholarship program to fund the option.

Alternatively, a state with rigid accreditation regulations might differently recognize a hybrid arrangement, perhaps requiring faculty and students to congregate four days a week. Adding more flexibility for qualified spending with an ESA might be the only way to enable families to pay the specialized tuition. In yet another state, some types of hybrid homeschools might qualify as private schools, while others would not. Thus, it is important to discern how specific state laws and regulations interact with the design of a state's ESA program.

### A. Homeschool Laws

Many traditional homeschoolers have expressed wariness of potential strings that come with accepting funds from the government, such as using an ESA. Some may wish to continue their commitment to home education, completely disconnected from state-funded choice options. *ExcelinEd's* [model ESA legislative language](#) explicitly protects the autonomy of education providers from additional state control, especially pertaining to curriculum, creed and admission policies. This can help assuage at least some families' fears of [experiencing government overreach](#).

## B. Private School Regulations

According to the 2022 survey, nearly 40% of hybrid homeschool respondents had no formal accreditation from their state, although most claimed some kind of recognized status. Among them, the leading accreditor was [University-Model Schools International](#), followed by the [Association of Classical Christian Schools](#) and [Association of Christian Schools International](#).

ESA laws that require qualifying schools to be formally accredited could effectively restrict, or even eliminate, the availability of these options for students. That is especially true if the state directly, or through its recognized accreditors, mandates minimum instructional hours or in-person attendance.

As an alternative, a few states have defined a separate, third category of education delivery that qualifies to receive payments from parents' state-supervised accounts. These go by different names, and some are more clearly defined than others. But each recognizes hybrid homeschooling's unique position along the spectrum of nonpublic education that is neither full-time private schooling nor full-time home education.

TABLE 2. ESA Relationship to Homeschool and Private School Status

STATE	PROGRAM NAME	HOMESCHOOL: SEPARATE LEGAL STATUS	PRIVATE SCHOOL ENROLLMENT REQUIRED	PRIVATE SCHOOL ACCREDITATION REQUIRED	PRIVATE SCHOOL INSTRUCTIONAL TIME
Alabama	AL Accountability Act Scholarship - Unique Abilities	No	No	Yes (or in process)	Not stipulated
Arizona	Empowerment Scholarship Accounts	Yes	No	No	Not stipulated
Arkansas	Children's Education Freedom Accounts	Likely Yes	No	Yes (or in process)	178+ days
Florida	Family Empowerment Scholarships	Yes	No	No	170+ days
Indiana	Education Scholarship Accounts	No	No	Yes	Public school equivalent
Iowa	Education Savings Accounts	N/A	Yes	Yes	148+ days
Mississippi	Equal Opportunity for Students with Disabilities	Yes	No	Some	180 days (if accredited)
Missouri	Empowerment Scholarship Accounts	No	No	Yes	Not stipulated
Montana	Equal Opportunity Education Savings Accounts	No	No	No	720 hours (K-3); 1,080 hours (4-12)
New Hampshire	Education Freedom Accounts	Yes	No	No	945 hours (1-6); 990 hours (7-12)

North Carolina	Education Student Accounts+	No	No	No	Operate during 9 months
South Carolina	Education Scholarship Trust Fund	Yes	No	Some	Not stipulated
Tennessee	Individualized Education Accounts	No	No	No	Not stipulated
Tennessee	ESA Pilot	N/A	Yes	Yes	Depends on category of accreditation
Utah	Utah Fits All	Yes	No	No	Not stipulated
West Virginia	Hope Scholarships	Yes	No	No	Public school equivalent

## DIFFERENT ROADS TO HYBRID SCHOOLING

The pathway toward publicly funded options for hybrid homeschooling clearly varies among the 15 states that have approved ESA programs. The following state snapshots are broken down by which pathway best allows, or could allow, for hybrid models to qualify for families’ ESA dollars. The snapshots do not contemplate all conditions that determine the difficulty of opening nontraditional schooling options, just which pathway is most legally viable.

There are two main pathways for hybrid homeschooling to receive ESA dollars: qualifying as a private school or as a separately recognized entity. These may vary in the extent of their accessibility to students. States with unclear pathways may require further administrative action before ESAs could fund the hybrid option.

### Private School Tuition

*Alabama* expanded its tax-credit scholarship program to allow students with unique abilities (special education needs) greater flexibility to spend scholarship dollars. Hybrid programs could conceivably be licensed as private schools in Alabama to serve students with or without unique abilities. More likely, students could be funded to learn part-time in a formal environment through a private school’s sponsored [home program](#).

*Arizona* pioneered education scholarship accounts in 2011, eventually expanding the program to universal eligibility in 2022. An expansive definition of [qualified school](#) currently allows families to use an ESA to pay tuition for many varieties of hybrid schooling. Because hybrid schooling often costs less than a full-time, in-person school, families may retain extra funds to pay for tutoring, therapies, transportation or instructional materials. They also can carry over account dollars for future years.

*Mississippi*’s small ESA for students with disabilities program allows private schools to accept funds under one of two conditions. First, they can receive accreditation by offering 180 days of instruction, which effectively rules out hybrid providers. But unaccredited schools could also be eligible by “providing services for the participating student’s disability.”

*Missouri* enacted the nation’s first ESA program funded by tax-credit donations rather than direct state funding. The most logical pathway for ESA students to access hybrid homeschooling remains through

private school tuition and fees. At least two of 16 nationally recognized accredited associations oversee a small number of scholarship-accepting hybrid schools.

*North Carolina's* ESA+ program, first launched in 2018, today serves [more than 3,000](#) of the state's students with disabilities. Because of the state's broad standards for recognizing private schools, lower-income students can also use funds from the Opportunity Scholarship voucher program to select a hybrid homeschool. The proposed state budget would make those vouchers available to all K-12 students regardless of socioeconomic status starting in 2024.

*Tennessee* is the only state to operate two separate ESA programs, one for students with disabilities and another for lower-income students in three of the state's four largest metropolitan areas. The former's open-ended definition of a [participating school](#) would appear to allow for a hybrid option, provided other minimal standards are met. The latter program requires recipients to attend an [accredited school](#), only some of which have to provide 180 days of annual instruction.

*Utah* will make a limited number of ESAs available starting in the 2024-25 school year. Since private school accreditation is optional and other regulatory requirements are minimal, families could use their accounts to pay for hybrid homeschool through regular tuition and fees. But because Utah's law [does not allow](#) families to carry over funds from year to year, their incentive will be to "use it or lose it" rather than economize their spending.

**TABLE 3. Pathways to Hybrid and Part-Time Enrollment**

STATE	PROGRAM NAME	HYBRID SCHOOL CATEGORY	PUBLIC SCHOOL COURSE PROVIDER	PART-TIME ENROLLMENT
Alabama	AL Accountability Act Scholarship - Unique Abilities	Private school	Yes	Unclear
Arizona	Empowerment Scholarship Accounts	Private school	Yes	Optional
Arkansas	Children's Education Freedom Accounts	If approved as other expense	Yes	Mandatory
Florida	Family Empowerment Scholarships	Personalized education program	Yes	Optional
Indiana	Education Scholarship Accounts	Unclear	Yes	Optional
Iowa	Education Savings Accounts	Unclear	No	Dual enrollment & home school assistance programs
Mississippi	Equal Opportunity for Students with Disabilities	Private school	Yes	Unclear
Missouri	Empowerment Scholarship Accounts	Private school	Yes	Unclear
Montana	Equal Opportunity Education Savings Accounts	Educational program; or if approved as other expense	Yes	Optional

New Hampshire	Education Freedom Accounts	Specialized education programs	Yes	Mandatory
North Carolina	Education Student Accounts+	Private school	Yes	Mandatory
South Carolina	Education Scholarship Trust Fund	Private school; or, if approved as other expense	Yes	Unclear
Tennessee	Individualized Education Accounts	Private school	Yes	Unclear
Tennessee	ESA Pilot	Private school	No	Unclear
Utah	Utah Fits All	Qualified school	Yes	Statewide Online Education Program
West Virginia	Hope Scholarships	Individualized instructional program; micro-school / learning pod	Yes	Subject to county board approval

## Other Categories

In *Arkansas*, the newly enacted Children's Educational Freedom Account program obligates participating private schools to offer at least 178 days of instruction. As the list of allowable expenses expands in 2024-25, a path could emerge for families to access hybrid schooling options with EFA funds. If nothing else, the state education agency has the authority to approve other qualifying education expenses not specifically outlined in the legislation.

*Florida* expanded its ESA program to universal eligibility in 2023, adding a personalized education program option that should allow participating families to use funds for hybrid schooling. Allowable uses apply to K-12 students with or without unique abilities. Given the state's size and development of a robust choice ecosystem, this means great potential for innovative schooling models to thrive at a large scale.

*Montana* created a program to offer flexible education spending to families of students with unique abilities. The description of [qualifying expenses](#) makes hybrid special education options a future possibility. A wide variety of programs "using electronic or offsite delivery methods" are on the table for families to finance with account funds, in addition to the state superintendent's authority to approve other education expenses not outlined in statute. The law specifically states that students do not have to be enrolled in a private school to participate.

*New Hampshire* administrators have latitude under the qualified expense category of the state's [specialized education programs](#) to approve parents' use of Education Freedom Account dollars on formal hybrid programs that cater to homeschool families.

*South Carolina* approved an ESA program to serve up to 5,000 low-income students in its first year. The numerical cap and economic eligibility criteria both increase for two years thereafter. A fair reading of the law suggests hybrid models could be recognized as a private school tuition expense, but another pathway remains open through the state education department's authority to approve [any other educational expense](#).

*West Virginia's* governing Hope Scholarship Board has the authority to establish additional qualified expenses [for educational purposes](#) beyond the list spelled out in law. A rule was [approved](#) in early 2023 to confirm that families can use ESA dollars to pay for micro-schools as defined in statute. This ensures that hybrid homeschooling stands as a qualified expense.

## Unclear Pathways

*Indiana* operates a voucher and a tax-credit scholarship program, in addition to offering ESAs to students with disabilities. With no other avenue to qualify, a hybrid homeschool would have to be accredited as a private school to accept choice program dollars. But it isn't clear whether attendance requirements might rule out even that option.

*Iowa's* ESA students must be [enrolled full-time](#) in a recognized private school. Under the current regulatory structure, it is difficult to see how most forms of hybrid homeschooling could qualify as an ESA expense, unless one of six accreditation agencies recognized by the Iowa Department of Education were to approve. No such education options are known to currently exist in the state.

## STATE POLICY SOLUTIONS

Education Scholarship Accounts put parents in the driver's seat of their children's learning. By design, these policies expand the range of options supported beyond full-time enrollment in a conventional private school. Hybrid homeschooling represents a nontraditional approach to education that ESAs are well suited to underwrite, giving families a mixture of stability, affordability and flexibility. While the option is not yet widely known, it is one that many parents are open to exploring.

But not all ESA programs operate equally in this regard. While some programs embrace homeschool participation, not all allow families to use ESA dollars to educate at home. Others do allow homeschoolers in but add extra burdens for those who apply.

Families can certainly keep their space to educate without government interference, even as ESAs open the doors of opportunity widely for many other students. A properly developed, fully inclusive policy would guarantee them the option of using ESA funds to practice something very much like traditional homeschooling. The same policy should also enable families to customize their children's learning so they can pursue a suitable balance of home education flexibility with more organized schooling arrangements.

Both current and newly developed ESA programs could provide resources to better help families choose from a spectrum of options that best meet their children's needs and aligned with their own values and personal circumstances. To help ESAs live up to that promise, the following measures can be strongly considered:

- **Consult with trusted homeschool associations in crafting policy.** Such associations do not represent the interests of all or necessarily even most homeschoolers in the state. Nonetheless, policymakers should strive to respect their constituents' concerns without depriving others of opportunities. It can be helpful to acknowledge fears of intrusive homeschool regulations without abandoning the cause of expanding educational options. Recognize and communicate that such regulations may come regardless of whether a new choice program is enacted.
- **Maintain a separate legal status for homeschoolers who do not wish to participate.** Several states with ESA programs have in some way defined ESA participation as forfeiting recognition under the homeschool law, even while allowing families to use funds for the same purposes.

That preserves existing freedoms for some while expanding educational opportunities for others. If this approach is not followed, policymakers should at least adhere closely to the current homeschool law and not add extra application or reporting burdens that make customized education spending less attractive.

- **Consider defining a third status to ensure robust access to hybrid options.** A customized educational environment puts parents in charge, creating access beyond existing private school options. It clearly matters how a state defines the ranges of qualified uses for ESA funds. Since hybrid homeschooling may only be covered as “tuition and fees to a qualified school,” officials must ensure that applicable private school regulations, including accreditation requirements, don’t foreclose the possibility. Creating a way for the program administrator to approve hybrid homeschooling as “other qualifying ESA expenses” might work as an alternative.
- **Allow different avenues to fund nonpublic student access to public school courses and activities.** Families may want to maintain access to public school courses and services for their nonpublic students on an à la carte basis. Policymakers should ensure not only that these courses and services are clearly stated as an allowable ESA expense, but also that part-time enrollment policies equitably guarantee this option for non-ESA families through other state-funded means.

## CONCLUSION

The pluralist ideal recognizes that true alternatives in education, such as hybrid homeschooling, can coexist without threatening conventional public, private or home-based options. In the post-pandemic landscape, more parents are demanding versions of schooling that combine the best of different educational worlds. Increasing the range of options is a win-win for families. As more parents venture into less familiar territory for their children’s education, existing institutions and freedoms can be preserved or even strengthened for students in those homes and communities.

Some families have the means to enroll in, and even create, nontraditional learning environments for their children. For other families, access to hybrid homeschooling and the like fully depends on access to state-funded flexible spending. The explosion of education scholarship accounts, both in terms of new programs and expanded eligibility, has rightly raised the hopes of many parents interested in nonpublic and nontraditional options. But how well can ESAs deliver on the promise?

All states have at least some work cut out for their policymakers to deliver on expectations. Priority actions may include enhancing the focus on serving families within program administration; increasing parental awareness and access to reliable information; and/or reducing barriers to expand the supply of innovative options, to name a few. Fortunately, some ESA programs have an important head start through policies that foster dynamic systems where parents clearly can use their state-supervised accounts in innovative ways.

More states can consider following their lead, not only in funding students but breaking down barriers that hamper the growth of a flourishing, pluralistic education ecosystem. Let’s ensure that hybrid homeschooling and similar customized options are truly available to all.

## APPENDIX: STATE PROFILES

A closer look at states that have approved education scholarship accounts (ESAs) provides a sense of how different legal frameworks affect the likelihood of homeschoolers to participate as well as general access to flexible learning options. Each of the subsequent state profiles highlights the following:

- Basic requirements of [homeschool law](#) beyond expectations of teaching core academic subject matter;
- Relationship of ESA funding to homeschool eligibility;
- Requirements that participating private schools face beyond basic health and safety standards and compliance with federal nondiscrimination law;
- Relevant scope of qualified expenses that could fund hybrid homeschool participation within the ESA program; and
- What part-time public school enrollment options, if any, exist for nonpublic students.



### Alabama

Alabama lawmakers approved a 2023 expansion of the state’s tax-credit scholarship program. Among the enhancements made, families of students with unique abilities may now use scholarship funds to purchase various educational goods and services, not just private school tuition.

*Homeschool Law:* In Alabama, parents may [educate at home](#) under the auspices of a private or church school or by hiring a tutor to serve for a minimum number of days and hours annually.

*Homeschoolers and ESAs:* Nothing in the law precludes a family from using ESA funds to cover qualifying expenses while educating their eligible special-needs student at home.

*Private School Requirements:* To receive tuition payments from an ESA, an Alabama private school must be accredited by one of several named organizations or operate under the oversight of an accredited private school’s board and obtain accreditation within three years. State laws and regulations [do not strictly stipulate](#) the amount of instructional days and hours.

*Qualified Expense: Private School Tuition.*

*Part-Time Enrollment Options:* State law is silent on the option of allowing students to receive funding for being enrolled part-time in public school. But eligible students with unique abilities [are allowed](#) to expend ESA funds on individual public school courses and other contracted services.



### Arizona

In 2011, Arizona became the first state to adopt education scholarship accounts. The program was initially small in scope, targeted at families of students with disabilities. Gradual growth was fueled by making funds available for students in the foster care system, with parents on active duty in the military and those living on Native American reservations. More recently, Arizona became the first state to make ESAs available to all K-12 students. This universal program has witnessed dramatic growth since it came online in 2022. [More than 64,000 students](#) are reported as participants (as of August 2023), a number five times greater than the year before.

*Homeschool Law:* Arizona families who wish to educate at home must file with local school officials [an affidavit](#) that includes basic information.

*Homeschoolers and ESAs:* In crafting the original legislation, Arizona policymakers adopted a provision that distinguishes ESA usage from homeschooling to meet the state’s compulsory education requirements. As a condition of accepting an ESA, parents [agree](#) to not file a homeschooling affidavit.

*Private School Requirements:* Arizona’s ESA law requires providers of tutoring services and educational therapies to hold recognized accreditation status. It has no additional mandates for a qualified school beyond upholding a nondiscrimination policy. Under this approach, many hybrid homeschools are eligible to receive parent-directed funds.

*Qualified Expense: Private School Tuition.*

*Part-Time Enrollment Options:* A portion of ESA funds can be used to enroll students in individual courses or extracurricular activities through the public school system. Arizona law sets parameters for how public schools are funded to [serve part-time students](#). Districts are obligated to let [homeschoolers try out](#) for local public school athletic teams and other interscholastic activities on the same terms as other students.



## Arkansas

Arkansas’s Educational Freedom Account (EFA) program was signed into law in March 2023 as part of a larger omnibus education reform bill. Over a span of three years, the state’s limited-eligibility voucher program will effectively grow into a universal ESA.

*Homeschool Law:* To begin [homeschooling](#), Arkansas families must file with the local school district superintendent a notice that includes basic student and contact information. If filed during the academic year, families are supposed to wait five days before withdrawing their children from the public school.

*Homeschoolers and ESAs:* The agreement parents sign to accept EFA funds satisfies the state’s compulsory attendance requirement. Families who do not enroll their children full-time in a school or service provider [will promise](#) to educate them in at least the core academic subjects. This appears to place those traditional homeschooling families who want no government money into a separate legal category from their peers who accept ESA dollars.

*Private School Requirements:* To be approved as an option for families’ EFA dollars, private schools must be accredited or in the process of accreditation. Although many private schools operate in the state [without this status](#), the Arkansas Nonpublic School Accrediting Association currently claims [nearly 100 member schools](#). Participating schools also [must offer](#) a [full academic year](#) of at least 178 instructional days.

*Qualified Expenses: Other Category* (subject to approval by state education agency).

*Part-Time Enrollment Options:* Arkansas law grants private and homeschool students the right to enroll in individual district or charter school courses, provided the student lives in the same district where the course is offered. Public schools receive a [fraction of regular student funding](#) for these enrollments. Families also can use EFA funds to purchase a wide range of qualifying services from these same schools.



## Florida

Florida, a long-time school choice leader, was the second state to pass ESA legislation. Originally known as the Gardiner Scholarship, the expanded Family Empowerment Scholarship Program has served a growing number of students with unique abilities during its eight years of operation. Starting in the fall of 2023, newly enacted [House Bill 1](#) extends the benefits of flexible, robust, parent-directed funding to students regardless of income or special needs. Many Florida students previously enjoyed a more limited form of private school choice.

*Homeschool Law:* Florida families may [homeschool](#) either by filing notice with local public school officials, enrolling in a state-approved private “umbrella” program or hiring a certified tutor. Depending on the path chosen, parents may have to annually conduct and submit an academic evaluation of the student.

*Homeschoolers and ESAs:* HB 1’s enhancements to education freedom include the creation of a third legal way for families who want an alternative to the public education system: the [personalized education program](#). The requirements for homeschoolers, as defined above, are strictly for those who wish to avoid entanglement with the ESA program. Parents who accept ESA funds sign an agreement that ends a student’s status as a homeschooler and allows them to participate.

*Private School Requirements:* To accept ESA funds, a private school must demonstrate its fiscal soundness through three years of continuous operation or by filing a third-party legal statement to affirm the ability and responsibility to cover funds received through the state program. State regulations largely preclude recognizing a hybrid model as a [scholarship-accepting private school](#), which must be in attendance for a minimum of 170 days and provide 900 hours of instruction for students in most grades.

*Qualified Expenses: Other Category* (Personalized Education Program).

*Part-Time Enrollment Options:* The adoption of House Bill 1 effectively creates two different ways to fund public schools for providing nonpublic students à la carte courses or services. A district or charter school could accept payment [from a student’s ESA](#) or directly from the state for serving a non-ESA homeschool or private school student.



## Indiana

Indiana is one of a small handful of states with separate voucher, scholarship tax-credit and education scholarship account programs. The Hoosier State’s versions of the first two programs offer families in most income levels aid to underwrite their choices of nonpublic schools. The ESA program was added in 2021 to give a range of customized options to students with disabilities.

*Homeschool Law:* Indiana students who learn at home under parental direction are, in the eyes of the state, [attending unaccredited nonpublic schools](#). Homeschoolers are not required to register with state or local officials.

*Homeschoolers and ESAs:* Homeschoolers who otherwise qualify as having recognized disabilities can benefit from program funds for any of the services allowed.

*Private School Requirements:* All nonpublic students are required to attend school the same number of days as students in local public school districts. [According to state law, attendance](#) can be on campus or “at another location where the school’s educational program...is being conducted.” In 2021, the Indiana Board of Education accredited its first two [full-time virtual private schools](#). It is unclear whether a

combination of days spent on campus and days spent learning at home under parental supervision would qualify as a hybrid program for the same sort of official sanction.

*Qualified Expenses:* **Unclear.**

*Part-Time Enrollment Options:* Separate from guidance on use of state funds for education choice, Indiana statute states that homeschool students [can get permission](#) from a public or private school official to take a course or participate in that school's offerings.

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## *Iowa*

Iowa became the first state in 2023 to approve a new ESA program, setting the state on a path for all K-12 students to be eligible for an ESA within three years. Unlike most similarly named programs, Iowa Education Savings Accounts require participants to enroll in a recognized private school to participate. If lawmakers do not amend the new statute, the opportunities for families to take advantage of hybrid homeschool programs are, at best, highly limited.

*Homeschool Law:* Iowa sanctions [multiple approaches](#) to home education, each with various requirements for reporting and evaluation. The category of [Independent Private Instruction](#) offers [somewhat more flexibility](#) but more limited access to outside services than different modes of what the state calls Competent Private Instruction.

*Homeschoolers and ESAs:* Current homeschool students [must enroll full-time](#) in an accredited private school for their family to receive ESA funding. There is no option to use state-funded parent accounts to underwrite costs for students who are primarily educated at home.

*Private School Requirements:* To accept ESA student funds, private schools must be accredited by either the Iowa Department of Education or an accreditation agency recognized by the department. There are currently [six such agencies](#). State policy currently requires private schools to provide instruction for at least [148 days](#) per academic year. Attendance must be “under the guidance and instruction of the instructional professional staff.”

*Qualified Expense:* **Unclear.**

*Part-Time Enrollment Options:* Nonpublic students, regardless of receiving an ESA, have access to various other options within the public school system. Students in Competent Private Instruction may participate in a [Home School Assistance Program](#) or take other shared-time classes or services, which generate proportional funding for the school district.

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## *Mississippi*

Mississippi was one of the earliest adopters of education savings accounts. The Equal Opportunity for Students with Special Needs program has [grown little](#) since it launched in 2015.

*Homeschool Law:* To educate children at home, parents must annually [file a certificate of enrollment](#) with local school officials. The state has no standardized testing or other substantive requirements.

*Homeschoolers and ESAs:* As a condition of receiving an ESA, Mississippi parents not only withdraw their child from public schooling but also forfeit the formal status of home instruction.

*Private School Requirements:* All state-accredited private schools are automatically recognized as eligible to receive ESA funds. That includes a requirement to deliver 180 days of instruction. Other private

schools can agree to [participate](#), as long as they provide services designed to meet the child’s special learning needs.

**Qualified Expense: Private School.**

*Part-Time Enrollment Options:* Public school courses and services are not listed as a qualified ESA expense. Further, state law is silent regarding the opportunity to enroll any nonpublic school students on a part-time basis.



## *Missouri*

In the uniquely decentralized Empowerment Scholarship Account program, the six nonprofit [educational assistance organizations \(EAOs\)](#) approved by the Missouri State Treasurer’s Office award scholarships to students to attend mostly different subsets of private schools. From the program’s official launch in July 2022, organizations raised \$9 million to support [more than 1,000](#) geographically eligible students in the program’s first year.

*Homeschool Law:* Homeschool families in Missouri have two basic [legal obligations](#): provide children with 1,000 hours of instruction each year and maintain records of student academic progress. Due to limited awareness and added burdens that come with participation, the number of homeschool students served is very small.

*Homeschoolers and ESAs:* To [receive an ESA](#), home educators must certify to an EAO that they are following the basics of homeschool law, pass a criminal background check and share a proposed curriculum plan or other required records. Some of these requirements may delay access to funds or even ultimately deter families who show initial interest in the ESA.

*Private School Requirements:* According to the rules governing the Empowerment Scholarship Account program, a participating private school must be recognized by an EAO and accredited by either the state education department or one of [16 nationally recognized associations](#).

**Qualified Expense: Private School.**

*Part-Time Enrollment Options:* While state law contemplates funding for part-time district enrollment, nonpublic school students’ only clear access to public school courses and services comes as a [qualified ESA expense](#).



## *Montana*

The Treasure State adopted one of the nation’s newest choice programs in 2023: an ESA geared to serve students with unique abilities. Although serving a limited number of students, the Equal Opportunity Education Savings Account appears to provide families with broad flexibility to customize participants’ learning experiences.

*Homeschool Law:* Montana families who wish to [educate at home](#) must notify the local superintendent each year and agree to provide minimum hours of instruction that covers a range of basic subjects.

*Homeschoolers and ESAs:* Nothing in the law precludes a family from using ESA funds to cover qualifying expenses while educating their eligible special-needs student at home.

*Private School Requirements:* In addition to meeting basic health and safety requirements, participating private schools must provide minimum prescribed instructional hours (720 for full-time K-3; 1,080 for grades 4-12).

*Qualified Expense: Other Category* (Educational Program, or subject to approval by state education agency).

*Part-Time Enrollment Options:* School districts are allowed, but not mandated, to enroll private school and homeschool students in individual courses (a Great Falls Public Schools [policy](#) provides an example). ESA recipients can also use portions of their accounts to pay for public school classes and activities.

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## *New Hampshire*

In 2021, the Granite State adopted and launched Education Freedom Accounts, the nation's first ESA program to limit student eligibility solely based on family income. A decade earlier, New Hampshire created the nation's first scholarship tax credit program that [funds homeschoolers](#). Both programs are open to students from families at or below 300% of the federal poverty level to help finance a diverse set of flexible private education options. State lawmakers recently expanded EFA eligibility to cover families up to 350% of the poverty level.

*Homeschool Law:* Families who wish to educate at home are obligated to notify either the state or a local school official. Parents choose one of [several methods](#) to annually evaluate student progress but are not generally required to report the results. Income-eligible families can receive up to \$2,500 through the [scholarship tax credit program](#) to cover expenses for some à la carte services like tutoring and distance learning.

*Homeschoolers and ESAs:* New Hampshire's law specifically states that participation in home education [terminates](#) as soon as a student starts participating in the Education Freedom Account program. The acceptance of state funds revokes a homeschool student's status, with only the additional obligation of reporting yearly test results to the EFA program administrator.

*Private School Requirements:* EFA administrators automatically approve providers that are accredited by the state's department of education. Among the rules that govern New Hampshire private schools are required minimum hours of [instructional time](#). Interpreted narrowly, that language effectively rules out recognizing a hybrid model as a private school.

*Qualified Expense: Other Category* (Specialized Education Programs).

*Part-Time Enrollment Options:* New Hampshire law [requires school districts](#) to provide local homeschool and private school students with access to courses, field trips and related academic activities. This legal arrangement enables districts to create formal hybrid programs in partnership with either homeschool or Education Freedom Account students.

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## *North Carolina*

North Carolina's ESA+ program, first launched in 2018, today serves more than 3,000 of the state's students with disabilities. Because of North Carolina's broad standards for recognizing private schools, students can also use funds from the Opportunity Scholarship voucher program to select a hybrid homeschool.

*Homeschool Law:* To legally practice [homeschooling](#) in North Carolina, families must notify a state agency, operate on a regular schedule and annually test students' academic progress.

*Homeschoolers and ESAs:* Both full-time and part-time homeschoolers who otherwise qualify as having recognized disabilities can benefit from ESA+ program funds.

*Private School Requirements:* The state's nonpublic schools are required to operate during nine months of the calendar year, but specific numbers of days and hours are [not specified](#). At least one example of a hybrid homeschool, the [Asheboro Hybrid Academy](#), is listed in North Carolina's directory of nonpublic schools.

*Qualified Expense: Private School.*

*Part-Time Enrollment Options:* Students who participate in the ESA+ program are able to mix and match attendance between two different schools or types of schools. Those who spend part of their class day in a public school receive a prorated award. Fewer than 100 students use the [co-enrollment option](#), first made available in 2022.

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## *South Carolina*

The newly enacted South Carolina Education Scholarship Trust Fund will make a limited number of ESAs available starting in 2024. Over three years, the program's cap is slated to expand from 5,000 to 15,000 students and its income eligibility from 200% to 400% of federal poverty level.

*Homeschool Law:* Families may [homeschool](#) in the Palmetto State by submitting an application to the local school board or by enrolling in recognized homeschool associations that provide support with curriculum, record-keeping and test administration.

*Homeschoolers and ESAs:* As a condition for accepting ESA funds, parents must agree not to participate in any type of home instruction program.

*Private School Requirements:* To be recognized as an education service provider, a school [must be](#) either approved by the State Board of Education, belong to a statewide association or operate under the authority of a church or denomination. [No strict guidance](#) is offered regarding instructional days and hours.

*Qualified Expense: Private School or Other Category* (subject to approval by state education agency).

*Part-Time Enrollment Options:* State law is silent on the option of allowing students to receive funding for being enrolled part-time in public school. But eligible students [are allowed](#) to expend ESA funds on individual public school courses and other contracted services.

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## *Tennessee*

Tennessee has enacted two different ESA programs: Individualized Education Accounts (IEA) for students with disabilities (enacted in 2015) and the ESA Pilot program for low-income students who live in three of the state's largest metropolitan areas: Nashville, Memphis and (as of 2023) Chattanooga. The two programs, which each serve fewer than a thousand students, operate somewhat differently in terms of private school participation and public school access.

*Homeschool Law:* Parent educators in [home education families](#) must hold a high school diploma or equivalent, file a notice of intent to homeschool, keep attendance records and test their children in three different grades. They also have the option to participate under the auspices of a church-related school.

*Homeschoolers and ESAs:* IEA and ESA Pilot participants must enroll in an accredited private school, thus ruling out the option of homeschooling.

*Private School Requirements:* Accreditation and instructional hours are not stipulated for schools that participate in the IEA program. ESA Pilot schools [must be accredited](#) by one of three agency types. The state education department and state-recognized agencies mandate offering the equivalent of 180 instructional [days](#), but regional accreditors do not have the same obligation.

*Qualified Expense:* **Private School.**

*Part-Time Enrollment Options:* Parents of IEA students can use a portion of their funds to [pay for](#) courses and services offered by public schools. State law is otherwise silent on the ability of nonpublic students to access public schools on a part-time basis.

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## Utah

The Utah Fits All Scholarship Program, enacted in January 2023, will make a limited number of ESAs available starting in the 2024-25 school year. ESA spending can be customized by families to cover a wide range of educational purposes. All K-12 students in the state are eligible to apply, but the law gives first preference for scholarship awards to lower- and middle-income families.

*Homeschool Law:* As in Arizona, Utah families who desire to [homeschool](#) must simply file an affidavit with the local school board.

*Homeschoolers and ESAs:* The state's new ESA legislation creates a definition for [home-based scholarship student](#) that makes these students distinct from other homeschoolers as a result of their enrolling in the ESA program.

*Private School Requirements:* For [private schools](#) that operate in Utah, accreditation is optional and other regulatory requirements are minimal. The [new ESA law](#) mandates participating schools to implement measures that ensure fiscal integrity and student safety and to recognize a student's right to transfer during the school year. Nothing in state policy would preclude families from paying for a hybrid mode of education with their ESA dollars.

*Qualified Expenses:* **Private School Tuition.**

*Part-Time Public School Enrollment Options:* Utah's private and home-educated students in middle and high school may [enroll part-time](#) in a school district. Prorated ESA funding is available for students who follow this route. Nonpublic students may also take free publicly funded digital courses through the [Statewide Online Education Program](#).

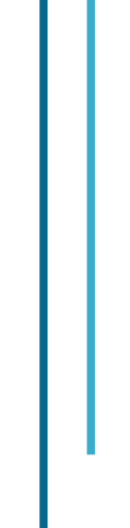
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## West Virginia

The Hope Scholarship program in West Virginia, approved in 2021, was the first available to students regardless of household income or unique abilities. After implementation was delayed by a failed attempt to litigate the program out of existence, parents began to receive their first account payments in January 2023. State statutes provide a high degree of clarity and specificity regarding [alternatives](#) to conventional schooling that fulfill compulsory education requirements. These include micro-schools and learning pods.

*Homeschool Law:* Families may [homeschool](#) by securing local school board approval. More commonly, though, parents who have at least a high school diploma may alternately just notify the board and submit a student's academic assessment results at the end of grades 3, 5, 8 and 11.



*Homeschoolers and ESAs:* At present, the biggest barrier for some homeschooling families to accept a Hope Scholarship is the requirement that students must first attend public school for 45 days. Those West Virginia parents who fully want to avoid government funding don't need to take any action. But receiving an ESA places a student into the separate category of an [individualized instructional program](#). For these families, if they are willing to comply with the 45-day requirement, accepting a Hope Scholarship can help cover or defray the cost for flexible, collaborative models – including hybrid homeschooling.

*Private School Requirements:* State law [mandates](#) a private school to provide the same hours of instruction as the county school district where it is located. This seat-time requirement effectively deters hybrid homeschoolers from pursuing recognized private school status. However, the state's recognition of micro-schools and learning pods greatly minimizes this concern.

*Qualified Expenses:* **Other category** (Individualized Instructional Program).

*Part-Time Enrollment Options:* Families may use a Hope Scholarship to [pay for classes and activities](#) provided by a public school. Even without ESA funds, homeschool families retain the right to enroll in individual public school courses, subject to county board approval.