

Arizona Lawmakers Vote for More School Choice, to Put Families First

Arizona lawmakers have voted to expand educational options for parents with schoolchildren.

Legislators approved House Bill 2853 on Friday, which allows parents to receive scholarships for educational expenses such as private school tuition, online education, education therapies and tutoring.

The bill supports Arizona's Empowerment Scholarship Account program for students in grades K-12. Parents who choose an ESA for their child are accessing alternatives for their education, such as private school or homeschooling.

Students who qualify for an ESA include those with disabilities, students living within a Native American Reservation, children attending a lower-performing school, children of active-duty military personnel and several other categories.

The Arizona Senate approved HB 2853 with a vote of 16 to 10 while the House of Representatives voted 31 to 26 on June 22.

"Arizona's families are the real winners today. Arizona has long been a national leader in school choice, yet thousands of children still lacked needed options," said Steve Smith, Arizona State Director for the American Federation for Children.

"Today marks another milestone and puts children in Arizona at the forefront of educational opportunity," Smith added. "We are grateful to the bold lawmakers and Governor Ducey, who fought tirelessly to put families first. Without their

leadership, this victory would not have been possible.”

The bill is headed to Republican Gov. Doug Ducey’s desk, and he is expected to sign the expansion.

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