



STATE OF ARIZONA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

DOUGLAS A. DUCEY
GOVERNOR

EXECUTIVE OFFICE

July 7, 2022

The Honorable Katie Hobbs
Secretary of State
1700 W. Washington St, 7th Floor
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Re: H.B. 2853, Arizona empowerment scholarship accounts; appropriation

Dear Secretary Hobbs,

Today, I proudly signed H.B. 2853. During my State of the State Address in January, I urged the legislature to “think big and find more ways to get kids into the school of their parents’ choice.” This bill delivers on that vision, and as a result, Arizona will now have the most expansive education savings account program in the nation.

Arizona has long led the nation in embracing school choice, and this legislation builds on those policies. We were one of the first states in the country to authorize charter schools in 1994, we were the first state in the nation to create education savings accounts, and now we are the first state in the nation to make them available to all K-12 students. Over the past eight years, we have made it our mission to empower families and allow them to access the education setting of their choice. The legislation I signed today is just the latest example of that. We’ve taken many other actions to put our kids first, such as:

- Overhauling the open enrollment process at our district schools to remove barriers and ease burdens on families
- Enacting the Transportation Modernization Grants initiative to help more students access schools of choice
- Strengthening rights of students living on reservations and children of active-duty military parents using the Empowerment Scholarship Account
- Creating the Arizona Public Schools Achievement District to expand high quality public district and charter schools

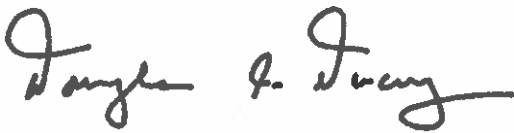
It is no coincidence that as Arizona led the nation in offering school choice, our state also improved academic attainment at the fastest rate in the nation from 2008 to 2018 as measured by the The Educational Opportunity Project at Stanford University. Now, with this legislation, Arizona is positioned to unlock the future for all of our K-12 students.

This legislation complements the overwhelmingly successful, bipartisan budget I signed last week, which provides historic levels of funding for public district and charter education options. The Fiscal Year 2023 budget includes \$329 million to raise the base support level of education spending, representing the single largest dollar and percentage increase in per pupil funding in 20 years. It also includes \$183.3 million to maintain school facilities, the single largest investment in building renewal in the history of the program. The budget also invests \$100 million in special education funding for Arizona public schools and \$50 million in ongoing funding for school safety. In sum, this budget infuses an additional \$1 billion in year-over-year spending, with total K-12 spending for this year reaching \$8.45 billion.

The State of Arizona trusts parents to choose what works best to unlock their student's greatest potential. Public education means *educating the public*, and in Arizona, government-run schools are one of many options the public has access to. Whether they select their neighborhood district school, open enroll at a district school across town, choose a public charter school, homeschool, form a learning pod, or access an Empowerment Scholarship or School Tuition Organization Scholarship to attend a private school — the choice is theirs to make, not the government's.

Arizona remains the gold standard for educational freedom.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Douglas A. Ducey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Douglas A. Ducey
Governor
State of Arizona

cc: The Honorable Karen Fann
The Honorable Rusty Bowers
The Honorable Ben Toma
The Senate Secretary
The Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives
Arizona News Service