

EDUCATION NEWS & NOTES

Recognizing The Best In Education

(NAPSA)—When it comes to educating children and giving parents a choice in the process, some states have been found better than others. Here's a look at the ones the experts on school choice at EdChoice voted to win last year's educational choice yearbook superlatives.



Most Empowering: Indiana's Choice Scholarship Program

Indiana's program helps more families than any other voucher or education savings account (ESA) program in terms of participation and it has rather wide eligibility with more than 607,000 students eligible statewide. Data show the average per-student funding is \$4,024, or 42 percent of public school per-student spending. Some choice programs have caps that leave applicants unable to access funds, and some programs require the state legislature revisit whether they remain funded every single year during the budgeting process. What sets Indiana apart is its guaranteed purchasing power, meaning its funding stream is secure, and any eligible student who applies will receive a voucher. Parents don't have to worry from one year to the next.

Robust school choice legislation is on the move across the nation. These are the best states to watch this session, according to EdChoice.

Best New Program: South Dakota Partners in Education Tax Credit Program

South Dakota's unique testing mandate puts the power to choose which state or national tests students take into the hands of parents. This regulatory choice is the first of its kind.

Most Likely to Succeed in 2017: Iowa
The organization expects Iowa to be the state most likely to succeed in creating a new educational choice program with strong policy design. Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad is a strong school choice supporter. "Both houses of the Legislature have said they want to make this [expanding educational choice] a priority," he said.

He has already signed an expansion to the state's existing tax-credit scholarship program, and it's likely the state legislature will consider a statewide ESA program this session.

Other states to watch this legislative session include Arizona, Arkansas, Kentucky, Indiana, Missouri, New Hampshire, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas and West Virginia.

These states are considering or are likely to consider bills that would create or expand ESA programs so they are open to most children.

Learn More

For further facts and data about getting your kids the education they deserve, go to www.edchoice.org.

Most Well-Rounded Policy: Nevada Education Savings Accounts

Nevada's ESA program design makes it nearly universal in terms of eligibility, with strong funding of the state's per-pupil spending in public schools.

With Nevada's ESAs, not only can students get up to 100 percent of the state's per-pupil allocation for kids in public schools, but parents may also use their ESA dollars to customize their children's education beyond paying tuition.

Most Improved: Ohio's Income-Based Scholarship Program

Ohio's Income-Based Scholarship Program was designed by the Ohio legislature so a new grade level is eligible each year. Last year, the state's vouchers were opened up to third-graders.