

Legislative Talking Points

Charters, Vouchers & Education Savings Accounts (ESAs)

- We need to improve our public schools and make quality education opportunities available to all students, not just a select few. To provide the opportunities for charters, vouchers and ESAs to a few select students, all public-school students will suffer as a result of decreased funding. Those programs will operate by taking much needed funds away from the county in order to fund the newly created program.
- After charters or vouchers or ESAs are created, and the funding is gone, our public schools are left without the state money but still have the same bills to pay. With systems struggling to make ends meet any additional loss of revenue would be devastating for the students and the programs offered.
- Based on Census data, West Virginia ranks 42nd in the number of high school graduates, 50th in the percentage of adults with a bachelor's degrees and 50th in the percentage of adults with an advanced degree. If we are to attract industry, we must provide a highly skilled and quality workforce. Hampering our already struggling schools by taking away funding will harm our ability to attract businesses and further weaken our state's economy.
- Vouchers, charters and ESAs do not reduce public education costs. Actually, they increase costs by requiring taxpayers to fund two school systems and their bureaucracies – one public and one private.
- The term “education savings accounts – ESAs” is intended to deceive. It is not the type of account that parents can contribute their own money into (think of the Smart529 accounts). Instead, the money that goes into an ESA is money that has been reallocated from the public school budget.