AFP FOUNDATION

The L.E.A.R.N.S. Act

YOUR GUIDE TO EDUCATION FREEDOM

WHICH OPTION IS RIGHT FOR YOUR FAMILY?

Arkansas recently passed one of the most extensive education choice bills in the country. Learn how you and your student can ***re-claim up to $6,600 of your tax dollars*** and use them for the education that's best for your child.

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SIX WAYS TO *Learn:*

1. PUBLIC SCHOOLS

This is the school model that 90 percent of students will choose. Students attend schools located near their homes. The school attendance zones are determined by geographic boundaries.

2. CHARTER SCHOOLS

These schools differ from the traditional public school model and operate with a level of independence. Every charter school has a performance contract that clearly defines its mission, education approach, objectives, target student demographics and evaluation methods. There are two types of Arkansas charter schools:

Open Enrollment Charters

These schools are overseen by specific groups or organizations. These groups include governmental entities, institutions of higher education or non-religious/non-political organizations.

District Conversion Charters

These are former public schools that have transformed into charter schools, catering exclusively to students who live within the attendance zones of the school.

3. PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT TRANSFER

The new L.E.A.R.N.S. program allows students to transfer to another school district (inter-district) or a specific school within their resident district (intra-district). A student may not transfer to a failing school (F-rated).

Students must apply for transfer. Transfer can be limited by the capacity of a program, class, grade level or school building. Students with a sibling or step-sibling already attending the school or with a parent or guardian who is an active-duty member of the military residing on a military base may be given special consideration. There are specific application procedures for the different types of transfers, visit ade.arkansas.gov for more information.

4. PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Some students will qualify for Education Freedom Accounts (EFAs) to cover private school tuition, fees, uniforms and some other necessary expenses. The funding amount can be up to 90% of the State's prior year per-student funding, approximately $6,600 for the 2023-2024 school year. Eligibility for Education Freedom Accounts (EFAs) varies and grows each year.

Students eligible for EFAs in the 2023-2024 school year:

- Students with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- Homeless students under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act
- Foster children
- Kindergarten newcomers

Students eligible for EFAs in the 2024-2025 school year:

- Students from D-rated schools
- Children of law enforcement officers and first responders
- Children of veterans or reserve military members

By 2025, all K-12 students in Arkansas will qualify for the EFA program, and there will be no enrollment cap.

5. MICRO-SCHOOLING

Micro-schools could be described as the modern-day one-room schoolhouse. Micro-schools differ from homeschooling co-ops because they offer a full curriculum similar to traditional schools and often encompass a small group of students in several grade levels in one classroom. Micro-schools can be established in various settings, such as homes, local spaces (similar to co-ops) or rented spaces where students pay fees.

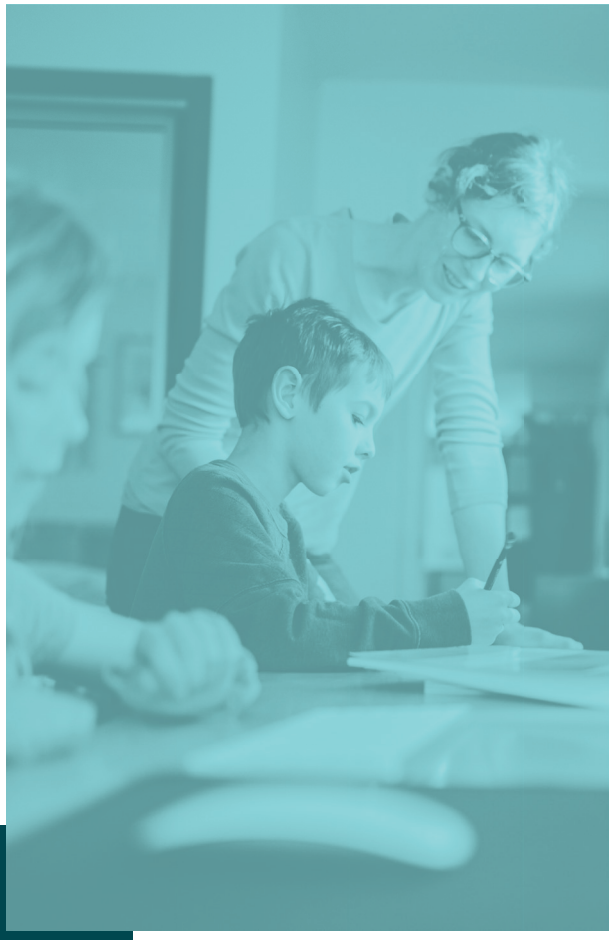
Education Freedom Accounts (EFAs) may not be available to micro-schoolers in the current school year but will be available in the following year (2024-2025).

For more information on micro-schooling, you can visit microschoolingcenter.org.

6. HOMESCHOOLING

Homeschooling involves the education of children at home by their parents. Currently, homeschoolers are not eligible to access Educational Freedom Accounts (EFAs).

However, by 2025, homeschoolers will be able to opt into the EFA program and keep homeschooling, using the program funding for their approved homeschool curriculum. Just keep in mind that homeschoolers who participate in the EFA program will be required to take an annual reading and math assessment and may need to meet additional requirements that non-EFA homeschoolers statewide are not obliged to meet.



For more information about The L.E.A.R.N.S. Act visit ade.arkansas.gov.

To learn more about how Americans for Prosperity Foundation is empowering parents in education visit AmericansForProsperityFoundation.org.

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