



April 24, 2025

Arizona State Board of Education
1700 W. Washington Street
Executive Tower Suite #300
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Dear Members of the Arizona State Board of Education:

On behalf of the Arizona Education Association (AEA), which represents more than 20,000 educators across the state of Arizona, I am writing with concern about the revised guidelines for the ESA voucher program in the *Empowerment Scholarship Account (ESA) Handbook for School Year 2025-2026* that Board Members will consider during your upcoming April 28, 2025 meeting.

Last year, Arizona paid at least [\\$700 million](#) for ESA vouchers - more than [ten times](#) the original cost estimate presented to lawmakers. As state budget analysts cut revenue projections by [more than half](#) for Fiscal Year 2026, Arizona cannot afford to continue the [waste](#), [fraud](#), and [abuse](#) that have become hallmarks of the voucher program.

Instead of addressing the [billion-dollar hole](#) that vouchers have blown in Arizona's budget, the 2025-2026 Handbook would worsen this crisis. The revised ESA guidelines will virtually eliminate any semblance of guardrails on state expenditures, allowing individual recipients to spend up to \$2,000 with little to no oversight. Under these guidelines, recipients could receive approval to spend taxpayer money on a wide array of inappropriate luxury purchases — from \$300 waffle makers to \$1,695 top-of-the-line skis.

Arizona public schools are subject to strict accountability standards to ensure that our students receive the high-quality education they deserve. The ESA voucher program is not. To date, extensive reporting has detailed how Arizona's voucher program has [failed to help low-income students succeed](#) while diverting taxpayer money to subsidize wealthy families and fund poorly-regulated programs that [put children at risk](#).

As educators, our members (who earn [considerably less](#) than their peers in other states) are expected to be good stewards of taxpayer resources, and they take that responsibility seriously. AEA urges members of the State Board of Education to uphold the same expectations for Arizona's ESA voucher program. If you have further questions, please contact Isela Blanc on our staff at Isela.Blanc@arizonaaea.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marisol Garcia". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Marisol Garcia
President
Arizona Education Association