

Special Education ESAs (Education Savings Accounts)

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Education Savings Accounts (ESAs)

ESAs are an alternative way to fund the educations of special education students

ESAs are state taxpayer dollars given directly to families that may be used to educate their child

More flexible than vouchers or scholarships

May be used to offset tuition payments at private schools and may be used for state approved tutoring or special education services outside of school walls

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President Gerald Ford, December 2, 1975

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Virtues of giving choice to families with special needs students (slide 2 of 3)

The feds initially promised they would fund 40% of the cost of educating special needs students. They never have.

Public school districts routinely complain that states also do not provide enough special education funding and even sue states for more special needs funding

A special needs student exiting a district through a choice program removes the local fiscal burden on the district of educating the student, leaving more local funding for the district to spend on the students who remain

When states pass education choice programs, public school employee groups routinely sue to stop the program

They often do not sue when special needs voucher and ESA programs are created.

Ask yourself why not?

Virtues of giving choice to families with special needs students (slide 3 of 3)

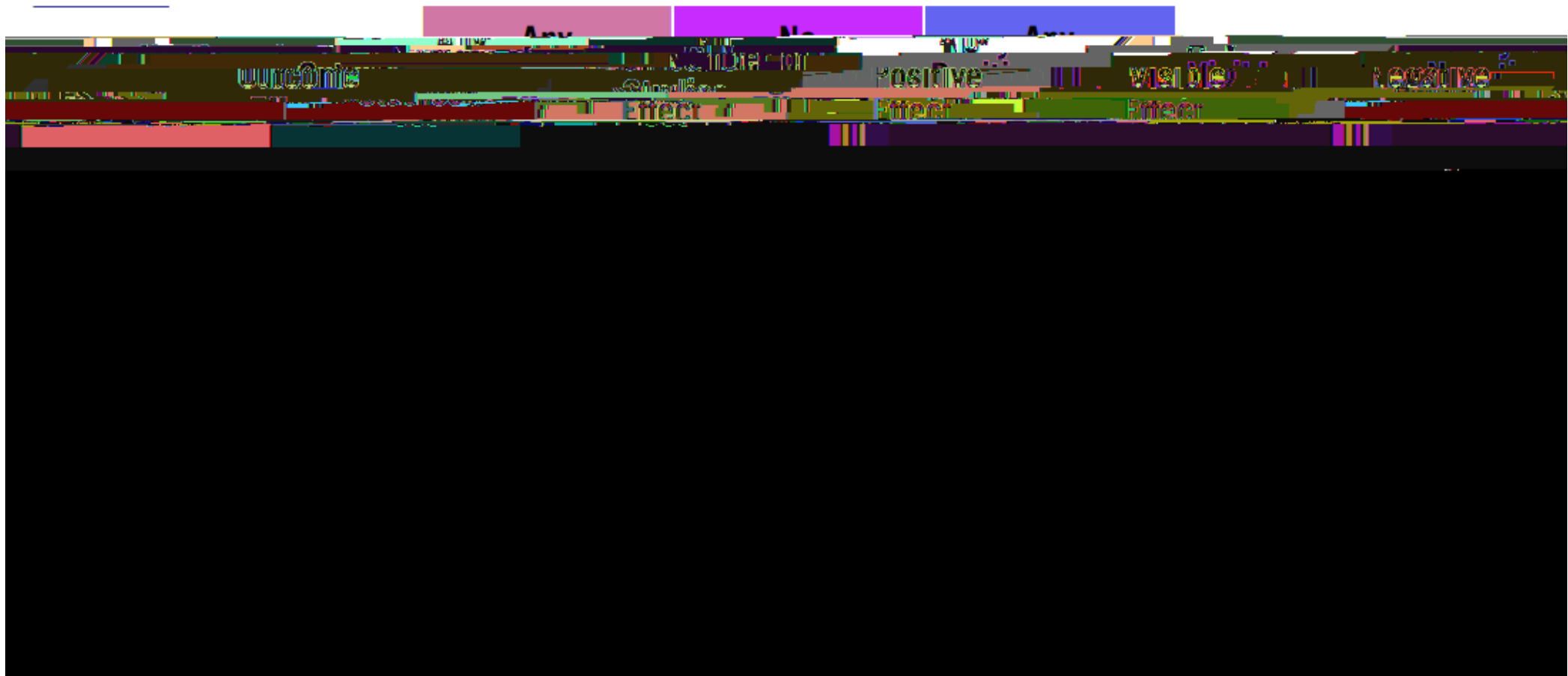
Public schools often claim they have shortages of special education teachers and other special education professionals.

Less administrative paperwork, less litigation, fewer unhappy parents for school districts

Families of special needs students often claim their students are bullied or are unfairly disciplined—ESAs allow families to choose different and sometimes smaller settings, where the students' needs can be better served.

Studies of the Effects of Education Choice

<https://www.edchoice.org/research-library/?report=the-123sof-school-choice2#report>



Fiscal Effects of Choice Programs

68 out of 73 studies find that private school choice programs have a positive fiscal impact on state and local school district budgets

Four studies found no visible effects

Four studies found both positive and negative effects

One study found a negative fiscal effect, although a study years later of the same program found a positive fiscal effect of that program

The studies are listed here:

<https://www.edchoice.org/research-library/?report=the-123sof-schoolchoice2#report>

The Fiscal Effect of Education Choice Programs on School District Budgets

The students who remain in public schools have MORE resources devoted to their education—when some students leave via choice programs (or leave for any other reason).

Because of the very favorable funding system, districts get to retain local funds, some state funds, and most federal funds, for students they no longer serve.

The positive fiscal benefits realized by districts from special needs choice programs are even larger—if there is validity to districts' routine claim they use considerable local funds to educate special needs students and that federal and state funding are insufficient

ESAs would provide good incentives

ESA programs serve as an incentive for all public and all private schools to provide the best educational, therapeutic, and social services to all students, including those with special needs.

Recognizing that all students are unique, if a school is not providing the best services needed by some children, families will be empowered to find other educational settings who will provide them the great services they deserve.