



Arkansas Department of Education

Division of Elementary and Secondary Education

Jacob Oliva, Secretary

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Arkansas Leads Nation in Education Freedom, Celebrates School Choice Week

Governor Sanders, ADE highlight school choice programs and expanded options for families

LITTLE ROCK — The Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) joined Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders in celebrating National School Choice Week. Governor Sanders signed a [proclamation](#) designating Jan. 25-31 as School Choice Week in Arkansas.

Because of Arkansas' commitment to empowering parents to choose the educational path that best meets their child's individual needs, the state continues to lead the nation in education freedom. For the second consecutive year, Arkansas has ranked among the top three states for education freedom. In the American Legislative Exchange Council's 2026 [Index of State Education Freedom](#), Arkansas received an "A" letter grade in the categories of Education Freedom Programs, Virtual Schooling, and Open Enrollment.

"The Arkansas Department of Education is committed to ensuring every student has access to the high-quality education they deserve," **said Secretary of Education Jacob Oliva**. "Through school choice and our Education Freedom Account program, parents can evaluate their child's individual needs and pursue the educational path that best fits them. The power to choose belongs in the hands of families, and those choices are actively shaping the future leaders of Arkansas."

"School choice is about more than choosing a school – it's about matching every student with the learning environment where they can succeed," **said Governor Sanders**. "That's why I signed Arkansas LEARNS: to put students first and make Arkansas a national leader in education freedom. I'm glad that with the support of the Trump Administration, Arkansas offers parents more education freedom than ever before."

Under the Public School Choice Act of 2015, K-12 students may attend school in a nonresident district. In 2023, Governor Sanders expanded school choice by signing Arkansas LEARNS into law, which established the Education Freedom Account (EFA) program, among other initiatives. Through EFAs, Arkansas families seeking to enroll their children in private, parochial, or homeschool settings may receive financial assistance. During the 2025-26 pilot year, ADE issued EFAs to more than 44,000 families, demonstrating strong interest in the program.

In January 2026, Governor Sanders announced Arkansas' participation in President Trump's federal tax credit scholarship program. The program allows individual taxpayers to claim a nonrefundable federal tax credit for cash contributions to scholarship-granting organizations that provide scholarships for elementary and secondary education expenses. The tax credit scholarship program will begin in 2027.

See more information about President Trump's Education Freedom Tax Credit [here](#).

For more information about the office of School Choice and Parent Empowerment, visit this [link](#).

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Pictured (l to r): Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders, Secretary of Education Jacob Oliva

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