



# IOWA ASSOCIATION OF CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

March 2024

*Strengthening, Growing, and Advocating for Christian Schools in Iowa!*

## ESA Applications Open April 16

ESA applications will be open from April 16 to June 30. The new ESA information has been updated on the Iowa Department of Education's website: <https://educate.iowa.gov/pk-12/educational-choice/education-savings-accounts>

Qualifications for the 24-25 school year for ESAs include:

- All incoming K students
- All public school or homeschool students who transfer to a Christian school, regardless of income
- Students who qualified for the ESA this year (no matter the income) – “once in, always in” – a reminder that parents still need to apply on Odyssey every year
- Students in families who are 400% of the poverty level and lower

2024 Guidelines	
Persons in family/ household	Poverty guideline
2	\$81,760.00
3	\$103,280.00
4	\$124,800.00
5	\$146,320.00
6	\$167,840.00
7	\$189,360.00
8	\$210,880.00

## Follow the 2024 Legislative Session

You can follow our real time, up-to-date [bill tracker](#) to see where IACS stands on bills that have been introduced on our website under the [advocacy](#) tab. [Make sure you are signed up to receive texts and emails from IACS!](#)

## AEA Legislation Summary

HF 2612 was signed into law by Governor Reynolds on Wednesday, March 27 after many versions, amendments, and debate.

IACS and the Catholic conference worked very hard to make sure this bill did not harm our schools, and for the most part, we believe that we accomplished that goal with a few details to work out in the future. A task force will be formed in the coming months to hash out implementation and explore possible fixes and changes next session, and we hope to be a part of that. Year one will see little to relatively few changes to what nonpublic schools have in place now. Year two is a much bigger change.

What we know:

- **The dollar amount for ESAs will increase 2.5%.**
- **All special education services for our schools remain intact.**

One of the most significant parts included in this bill is in subsection 15D. The changing of the word “may” to “shall” ensures that students will be served IN the building where they are currently attending school. This is a BIG deal! "...Provide information to individualized education program teams and public agencies that nonpublic schools shall be considered a placement option so long as the individualized education program of a child with a disability does not require some other arrangement."

Something we are monitoring:

The AEA shall charge reasonable costs that are consistent with current market rates for the educational services, special education services, professional development services, and media services established by the area education agency. We do not know what this means for nonpublic schools after year one. We will be seeking clarification on this.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to us with questions or concerns!

## 13 More Schools to Accept ESA Funding for 24-25 School Year

IACS is thrilled to share that 13 schools have completed the modules/checklist process that we have put in place this year! These schools have completed all of the requirements to become provisionally accredited and will now spend the next 3 years completing the full accreditation process. IACS has put in place a streamlined and unique process with our national accreditors that allows for schools to have access to ESA funding so they can get started strong. We are excited to announce our first "graduating class" of schools that have completed this process!

The following schools are new and have worked hard to get things up and running, ready to start classes for fall 2024:

- Davenport Christian School in Davenport
- Dubuque Dream Center Academy in Dubuque
- New City Classical Academy in Davenport
- Empigo Academy in Des Moines
- Calvary Christian Academy in Cedar Rapids

The following schools have been in existence and have now completed requirements to be able to accept ESA funds:

- Lighthouse Christian Academy in Floyd
- Coram Deo Academy in Davenport
- Joshua Christian Academy in Des Moines
- Pathway Christian School in Kalona
- Southeastern Christian School in Ollie
- Winterset Christian Academy in Winterset
- Norwalk Christian Academy in Norwalk
- Great River Christian School in Burlington

Congratulations to these schools for your accomplishment! Initial estimates are that the efforts made with new and existing schools this year will result in 1,500-2,000 more students having access to ESA funding in Iowa. IACS is also currently working with 12 additional schools that have plans to start classes in fall 2025.

If you'd like to learn more about the IACS new school and accreditation services, please contact Josh Bowar, IACS outreach director, at [josh@iowachristianschools.org](mailto:josh@iowachristianschools.org) and check out <https://www.iowachristianschools.org/new-school-services/>.

## March Education Celebration

On March 7, several IACS schools attended the annual Education Celebration sponsored by our friends at the Iowa Alliance for Choice in Education. The Celebration is held at the Iowa Capitol. Schools often schedule tours of the Capitol, and are able to visit with their legislators. A rally celebrating choice in education is held in the rotunda.



## IACS Board Of Directors

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## Sponsors and Partners

Thank you to the following organizations who financially support IACS. We are grateful for meaningful partnerships as we continue our mission to strengthen, grow, and advocate for Christian schools in Iowa.

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