

# POLICY *report*

Goldwater Institute

No. 263 | October 3, 2013

## Dollars, Flexibility, and an Effective Education: Parent Voices on Arizona's Education Savings Accounts

By Jonathan Butcher, Education Director, Goldwater Institute

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Kimber Cartwright was optimistic when her son's teacher said he would be moved to a different classroom. Doctors had diagnosed Kimber's son, David, with multiple special needs, including cerebral palsy, sensory integration dysfunction, and microcephaly (a neurological condition), so Kimber knew David could benefit from more individual attention. Weeks went by and still David was not moved, which frustrated Kimber. "My son was being completely left behind with no attention whatsoever," Kimber says.

When education savings accounts became a reality in Arizona in 2011, Kimber jumped at the opportunity for David. "So far, it's been the best experience," she says. "We've been able to choose what school he goes to, what therapies he uses, and even add extra curriculum to the private school that he's in."

Arizona's education savings accounts are the most innovative way for parents to find a great education for their child. The Arizona Department of Education deposits 90 percent of an eligible child's funding from the state funding formula into a parent's private bank account. Families then use a debit card or an online payment service such as PayPal to pay for such expenses as textbooks, private school tuition, online classes, and tutors. Each account results in a cost-savings to the taxpayer, demonstrating that a high-quality education can be provided for less than what taxpayers pay for public schools.

On May 8, 2013, the Goldwater Institute conducted a focus group for savings-account families. Key findings include:

- 94 percent of participants said they were "very satisfied" with education savings accounts, while 6 percent were "somewhat satisfied";
- Parents report that the public school and district officials they encounter say they have a low level of knowledge about education savings accounts; and,
- Parents say it is a significant challenge to renew their child's special needs diagnosis at a public school, which is required to remain eligible for a savings account.

Arizona lawmakers should use the findings from this focus group to streamline the renewal process for special needs classifications and expand the eligibility criteria so more children can benefit from an account. In addition, policymakers should conduct more surveys of participating parents or outsource such a project in order to solicit more feedback, improve the program, and better serve Arizona children.

## Introduction

In 2011, Arizona became the first state to enact education savings accounts.<sup>1</sup> Similar to Health Savings Accounts (HSAs), families of special needs children are awarded a bank account to buy educational materials such as textbooks, study guides, science experiment equipment, and other curriculum supplies; to pay private school tuition; to enroll a child in online classes; or even to save for college. The accounts' flexibility helps parents take advantage of the ever-growing number of online schools and educational applications for handheld and tablet devices, along with private schools and personal tutors.

In 2012, Gov. Jan Brewer signed HB 2622, expanding the program to include children from failing schools, children in active-duty military families, and children adopted from the state foster care system.<sup>2</sup> These families began applying for accounts in 2013, and students have begun using the accounts in the 2013–14 school year. The legislature also expanded the program in 2013 to include incoming kindergarten students that meet the existing eligibility criteria, and increased the funding amount for each account award (details on education savings account funding are provided in the next section).<sup>3</sup> More than 200,000 Arizona children are eligible, or 1 in 5 public school students. New applicants must have attended a public school for at least 100 days in the prior school year.

*The accounts' flexibility helps parents take advantage of the ever-growing number of online schools and educational applications for handheld and tablet devices, along with private schools and personal tutors.*

In fall 2011, 75 children used education savings accounts.<sup>4</sup> The department of education opened another enrollment period in December, and the number of participating students doubled to 150. In the 2012–13 school year, 302 children with special needs used accounts.<sup>5</sup> All of the parents that participated in the focus group were parents of children with special needs because children in the other eligibility categories are not participating yet. In the 2013-14 school year, 761 students used accounts.

Kimber Cartwright was so enthusiastic about the new accounts that she helped create a Yahoo! message board that allows parents to share information about how to apply, what schools and services are eligible for purchase, and best practices for helping children with special needs. More than half of the families that used an education savings account in the 2012-13 school year are registered to use the message board.<sup>6</sup>

Because parents can use the accounts for a variety of expenses, the Arizona Department of Education conducts quarterly audits to make sure the money is spent on the following qualified expenses:

- Tuition or fees at a qualified school.
- Textbooks required by a qualified school.

- Educational therapies or services for the qualified student from a licensed or accredited practitioner or provider, including licensed or accredited paraprofessionals or educational aides.
- Tutoring services provided by an accredited tutor.
- Curriculum supplies (classroom maps, science equipment, teaching materials, etc.).
- Tuition or fees for a nonpublic online learning program.
- Fees for a nationally standardized norm-referenced achievement test, advanced placement examinations or any exams related to college or university admission.
- College savings plans.
- Tuition or fees at an eligible postsecondary institution.
- Textbooks required by an eligible postsecondary institution.
- Services provided by a public school, including individual classes and extracurricular programs.<sup>7</sup>

The Arizona Department of Education makes quarterly deposits into the accounts after the audits. If a parent is found in violation of the statutes, the department will notify the parent and suspend the next deposit or withhold an amount equal to the unqualified expense.<sup>8</sup> In certain cases, if a parent has committed fraud, the account will be closed. The department will also close an account after a child graduates from college or after four consecutive years of not attending college after graduating from high school.<sup>9</sup>

*In the 2012–13 school year, the average account amount was \$15,191.*

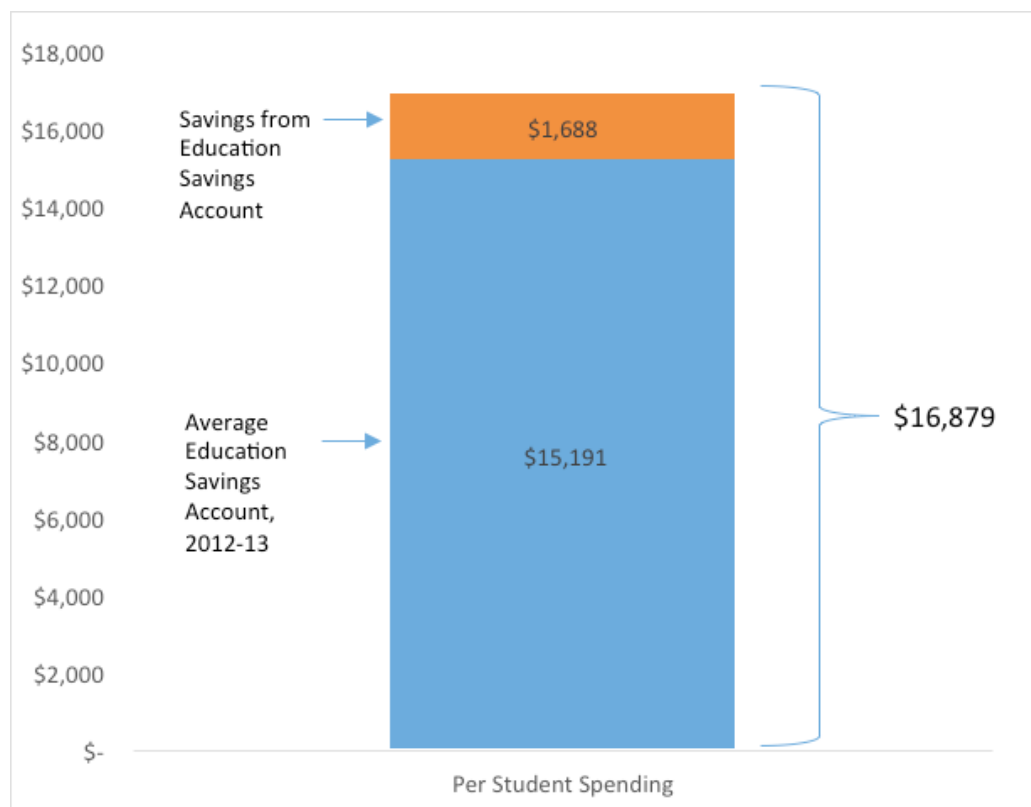
## **Benefits of Education Savings Accounts**

### **Cost Savings**

The cost savings that education savings accounts afford taxpayers is a significant benefit of the accounts. In 2011, the Arizona school-funding formula funded traditional public school students at an average of \$9,233 per student, but because of the additional services provided to students with special needs, their per-student funding levels can be significantly higher (\$7,750 of the average per student spending figure comes from state and local sources).<sup>10</sup> Students with special needs are funded using a weighted system that multiplies their base-funding amount from the state (approximately \$3,897) by a numerical figure attached to a special needs category.<sup>11</sup> For example, a child with a diagnosis of “hearing impaired” will have a weight of 4.771 multiplied by their base-funding level. In this example, the state would fund a child with a hearing impairment at \$18,593. If the child were to use an education savings account, 90 percent of this figure would be deposited in the account, and the state would consider the remaining funds to be a cost-savings.<sup>12</sup> In the 2012–13 school year, the average account amount was \$15,191.<sup>13</sup> Because each account is 90 percent of what would have been used for a child

in the public school system, public schools would have spent an average of \$16,879 on these education savings account children if they had remained in public schools. Based on these figures, Education Savings Accounts saved Arizona taxpayers nearly \$1,688 per child using an account (Figure 1). With 302 accounts in use, the total savings for taxpayers in 2012–13 came to \$509,742.

**Figure 1: Average Per-Student Spending for Children with Special Needs, Traditional Schools vs. Education Savings Accounts**



*Projections for the cost savings that education savings accounts will bring to taxpayers are substantial.*

Source: Michelle Reese, "Arizona's Education Savings Account Program Growing," *East Valley Tribune*, December 24, 2012, [http://www.eastvalleytribune.com/local/education/article\\_e3a65f48-4df1-11e2-b6db-001a4bcf887a.html](http://www.eastvalleytribune.com/local/education/article_e3a65f48-4df1-11e2-b6db-001a4bcf887a.html). Author calculations.

Children assigned to failing schools, children in military families, and adopted children will be funded using significantly smaller weights based on their grade level, making their education savings account funding amounts smaller than those for children with special needs—approximately \$5,300 per student.<sup>14</sup> Even so, projections for the cost savings that education savings accounts will bring to taxpayers are substantial (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Cost Savings Projections for Education Savings Account Students vs. Traditional Per-Student Funding**

	Per Student Spending	Number of Students	Cost	Savings
Traditional Public Schools	\$7,750	1,000	\$7,750,000	
		3,000	\$23,250,000	
		5,000	\$38,750,000	
Education Savings Account Students (without weighted funding for special needs)	\$5,300	1,000	\$5,300,000	\$2,450,000
		3,000	\$15,900,000	\$7,350,000
		5,000	\$26,500,000	\$12,250,000

Source: Arizona Joint Legislative Budget Committee, “K-12 Funding (M&O, Capital, and All Other FY 2004 through FY 2013 est),” <http://www.azleg.gov/jlbc/allfunding.pdf>. Note that the “Per Student Spending” figure does not include federal funding because the source of federal funds is not exclusively from Arizona.

### Flexibility

Another significant benefit of the accounts is parents’ freedom to prioritize the use of the accounts according to their child’s needs. For example, some traditional public school districts do not accept academic credits that students earn from online schools.<sup>15</sup> As a result, traditional students, in some districts such as Paradise Valley Unified and Deer Valley Unified cannot enroll in online classes offered by a provider outside of the district to take advanced courses or make up classes they missed at their public schools.<sup>16</sup> But with an education savings account, parents can purchase individual public school courses or online courses. This gives families more educational options for their children.

As Kimber Cartwright’s story demonstrates, this flexibility is cherished by parents of children with special needs who are using the accounts. Other examples abound: Kathy Visser and her son, Jordan, have used an account for a variety of schools and therapies over the past two years. Jordan was diagnosed with mild cerebral palsy and struggles with his motor coordinator and vision. In particular, Jordan had difficulty with his balance. Kathy explains that at one point in his life, a gust of wind could cause him to fall.<sup>17</sup> Kathy

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uses Jordan's account to pay for therapeutic horseback riding lessons and says there has been a pronounced change in Jordan's mobility. Today, Jordan attends a weekly P.E. class for homeschool students and is able to participate in activities such as dodge ball and relay races. "Education savings accounts allow parents to have a choice they wouldn't have had otherwise," Kathy says.

### **Prior Focus Group Research for School Choice Families**

In the 2012-13 school year, 16 states along with Washington, D.C., and Douglas County, Colorado, allowed children to choose between public and private schools, using a scholarship or school voucher.<sup>18</sup> Many of these states have scholarship programs that have only been in operation for two to three school years. Only five states have scholarship programs that are more than 10 years old: Wisconsin, Ohio, Florida, Pennsylvania and Arizona (Arizona's tax credit scholarships became law in 1997<sup>19</sup>). Because most school choice programs are relatively new, researchers nationwide have conducted a select few focus group studies on participating families and their experiences.

*In education, parents are savvy shoppers. Both Milwaukee Public School parents and Milwaukee voucher parents sought out "a school with a strong reputation."*

The School Choice Demonstration Project (SCDP), based at the University of Arkansas Department of Education Reform, conducted the most substantive research using focus groups to evaluate parental satisfaction among parents using school vouchers to send their children to private schools. Arizona's education savings accounts are distinct from school vouchers because of parents' flexibility with the accounts to purchase different educational items and services; as explained above, parents are not limited to paying for private school tuition, as they are with school vouchers. However, school vouchers are the education reform that most closely resembles education savings accounts, so SCDP's focus group results represent a valuable comparison with Arizona's accounts.

From 2005 to 2012, the SCDP studied families using school vouchers in Washington, D.C., and Milwaukee, Wisconsin.<sup>20</sup> The SCDP focus groups are notable because the sessions in Milwaukee gathered information from parents participating in the nation's oldest scholarship program, the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, which has been in operation for more than 20 years. The sessions in Washington, D.C., were the first to document parents using the country's only federally funded K-12 scholarships (the Opportunity Scholarship Program).

Key findings from SCDP's Milwaukee focus groups include:

- In education, parents are savvy shoppers. Both Milwaukee Public School parents and Milwaukee voucher parents sought out "a school with a strong reputation."<sup>21</sup>

- Parents of voucher students “highly valued strong relationships with school faculty and the administration.”<sup>22</sup>
- Milwaukee Public School and Milwaukee voucher parents “seem to use similar methods to measure student progress,” such as student attendance and how effectively students complete homework assignments.<sup>23</sup> As you will see below, the results from the education savings account focus group found that parents of special needs children (the only families currently participating) also measure their children’s progress using a variety of non-academic indicators.

In Washington, D.C., the main findings were:

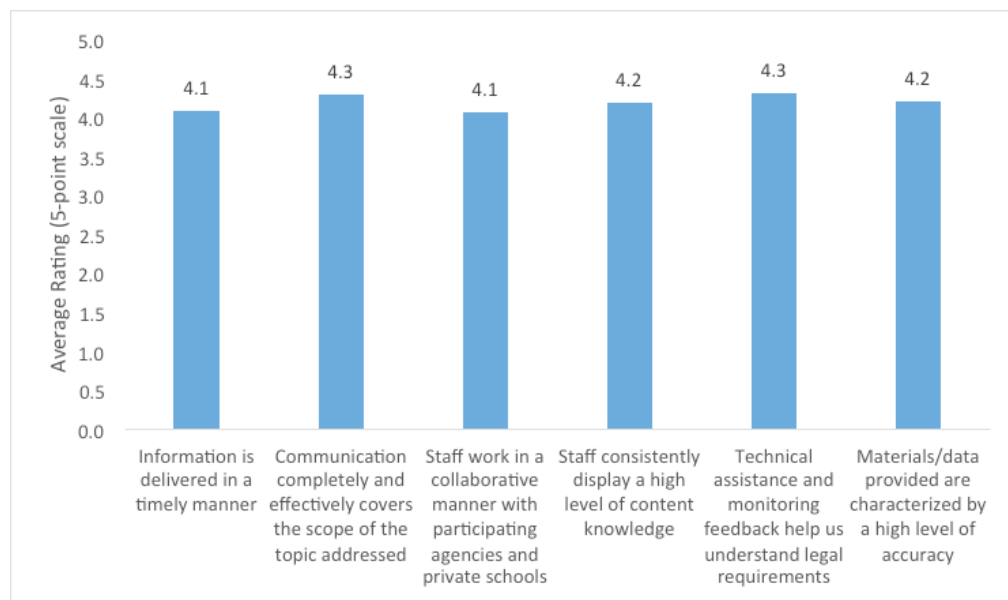
- Parents “suggested they were pursuing an opportunity versus leaving a bad situation.”<sup>24</sup> As explained below in the results of the education savings account focus group, some Arizona parents reported that they chose a savings account in order to remove their children from potentially harmful or neglectful school situations.
- Parents “listed a variety of reasons for their school choices, the most common being smaller class sizes, school safety, and a religious or values-based environment.”<sup>25</sup>
- “Despite a general satisfaction with the level of information provided by the [Washington Scholarship Fund, which administrated the vouchers], parents cited a need for more complete and accurate information, particularly with regard to the schools and transportation.”<sup>26</sup> Arizona parents made similar comments, though parents had more questions about the many different potential uses of education savings accounts.
- Parents who used a school voucher for their child for multiple years changed their focus “from an emphasis on school safety to matters concerning their child’s academic development.”<sup>27</sup>
- Parents cited informational sessions that the Washington Scholarship Fund hosted, school fairs, brochures, school visits, and meetings with school administrators as helpful sources of information. Parents who had been using vouchers for longer periods of time were more likely to say that information sessions, school fairs, and brochures were helpful.<sup>28</sup> Likewise, the Goldwater Institute asked education savings account parents similar questions about what sources of information they used and found that most parents said the Arizona Department of Education’s information sessions were the most helpful.

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### 2012 Arizona Department of Education Customer Satisfaction Survey

In 2012, the Arizona Department of Education conducted the only other survey of education savings account families. The department's survey measured parents' satisfaction levels with the department's services.<sup>29</sup> The department sent the survey to 100 parents, schools, and other educational providers, and collected 32 responses. On a scale of 1 to 5 in each area surveyed, with 5 being the highest rating, parents gave the department at least a 4 (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Arizona Department of Education Customer Satisfaction Ratings for Education Savings Account Parents**



Source: Arizona Department of Education, "Empowerment Scholarship Account Customer Satisfaction Survey," <http://www.azed.gov/esa/files/2012/12/esa-survey.pdf>.

Overall, respondents gave the department a satisfaction rating of 4.23.

But these results are of limited use because the survey did not address parents' satisfaction with the accounts, just the department's administration of the accounts. As a result, questions of parental satisfaction and what families are struggling with remained unanswered.<sup>30</sup>

## Goldwater Institute Focus Group Participants

On May 8, 2013, the Goldwater Institute hosted the first focus group of parents using education savings accounts. The Arizona Department of Education maintains little information on account holders and has not surveyed account holders to learn more about their experiences. The Goldwater Institute's goal for the focus group was to evaluate how families are using the accounts and learn more about the strengths and weaknesses of the accounts as currently designed.

All participants in the session were parents of children with special needs. Children attending failing schools, children in active-duty military families, and children adopted from the state foster care system are eligible for savings accounts starting in the 2013–14 school year. An open invitation to the focus group was posted on the Yahoo! message board, and individual emails were sent to all message board members. Twenty-four parents agreed to participate, and 18 parents attended the focus group. Attendees were a self-selected group, and responses are not necessarily representative of the opinions of the entire education savings account population. However, the responses are an authentic sample of participating families.

The Goldwater Institute hired Heart+Mind Strategies to conduct the session. Heart+Mind staff gave each participant a handheld remote control when he or she entered the room. Parents used the remote to answer 33 multiple-choice questions about their experiences with the accounts. In between the questions, the moderator paused and asked parents to comment on their answers and give more details when they selected “other” as a response to a question. The session lasted one hour and seven minutes.

*While focus group participants reported high levels of familiarity with education savings accounts, the participants said that public school employees have little to no knowledge about the accounts.*

### Focus Group Participant Responses

#### *Who Knows About Education Savings Accounts and Who Does Not?*

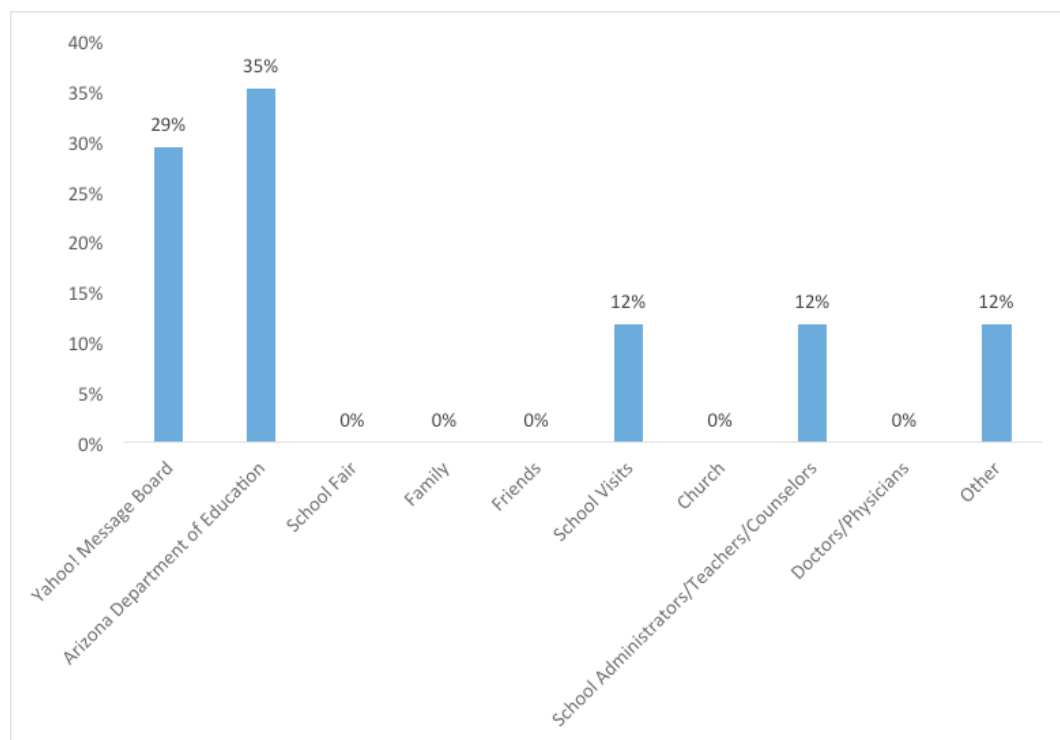
While focus group participants reported high levels of familiarity with education savings accounts, the participants said that public school employees have little to no knowledge about the accounts. Parents related their experiences from meetings with school district officials to renew their child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team (MET) report, a condition of maintaining eligibility for an education savings account.

Fifty-nine percent of participants said they were “extremely familiar” with education savings accounts' features, offerings, and details; 29 percent said they were “very familiar”; and 12 percent said they were “somewhat familiar.”

- *“Being in a school district . . . the school officials knew nothing about the scholarship at all. They were asking me questions about the scholarship, completely unfamiliar, and put me in a corner about the scholarship. They were not familiar with it at all.”*
- *“I was recently having my son’s MET, and I was talking to the psychiatrist, and she had no idea what the scholarship was. She was asking questions about it. She thought it was really great. She thought it was great that he was able to use this scholarship. But she had never heard of it before.”*

Parents learned about education savings accounts from a variety of different sources (Figure 4). Among respondents, 35 percent said the Arizona Department of Education was their most helpful source of information, and 29 percent said the Yahoo! message board for education savings account families was their most helpful source. Twelve percent said school visits were the most helpful source of information, 12 percent said school administrators/teachers/counselors were the most helpful source, and 12 percent said “other.”

**Figure 4: What Were the Most Helpful Sources of Information When Choosing How to Use Your Education Savings Account?**



- *“I think the Arizona Department of Education has been very good informing the public as much as they can. They actually have been doing a lot of groups out in the community . . . I think they have been extremely helpful and I think their website has been helpful as well.”*

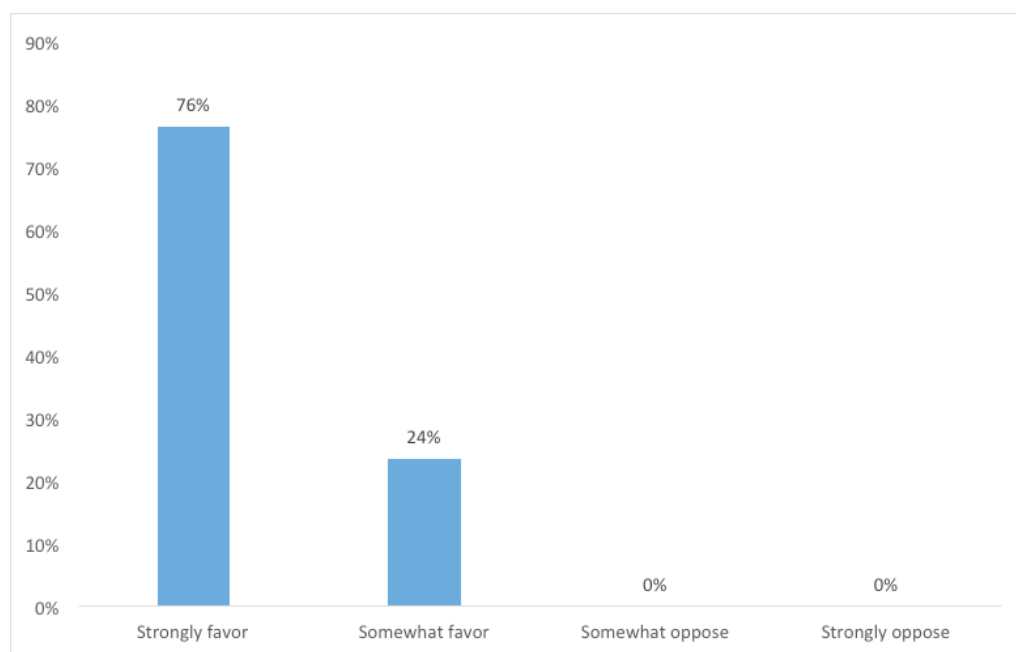
## Parent Satisfaction

Consistent with findings from focus groups and surveys from other states in which parents can choose a public or private school for their child, focus group participants reported a high level of satisfaction with education savings accounts.<sup>31</sup> All focus group participants said they had a “very favorable” opinion of the accounts. Ninety-four percent of participants said they “very satisfied” with education savings accounts, while 6 percent were “somewhat satisfied.” All participants said they were “very likely” to continue using the accounts and to recommend education savings accounts to other families.

## Education Savings Account Expansion

All focus group participants were in favor of expanding student eligibility for the accounts. Seventy-six percent of participants said they “strongly favor” expanding eligibility to more families in need, and 24 percent said they “somewhat favor” an expansion.

**Figure 5: Would You Favor or Oppose Expanding the Education Savings Account Program in Arizona So It Could be Made Available to More Families in Need?**



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## **Parent Expectations**

All parents in the focus group had positive expectations for students using the savings accounts. Forty-seven percent of focus group participants expected “excellent” outcomes from the accounts for their students, while 53 percent had “good” expectations.

Education savings accounts have met or exceeded all participants’ expectations. Eighty-eight percent of respondents said their overall experiences so far were “excellent,” and 12 percent reported that their experiences were “good.”

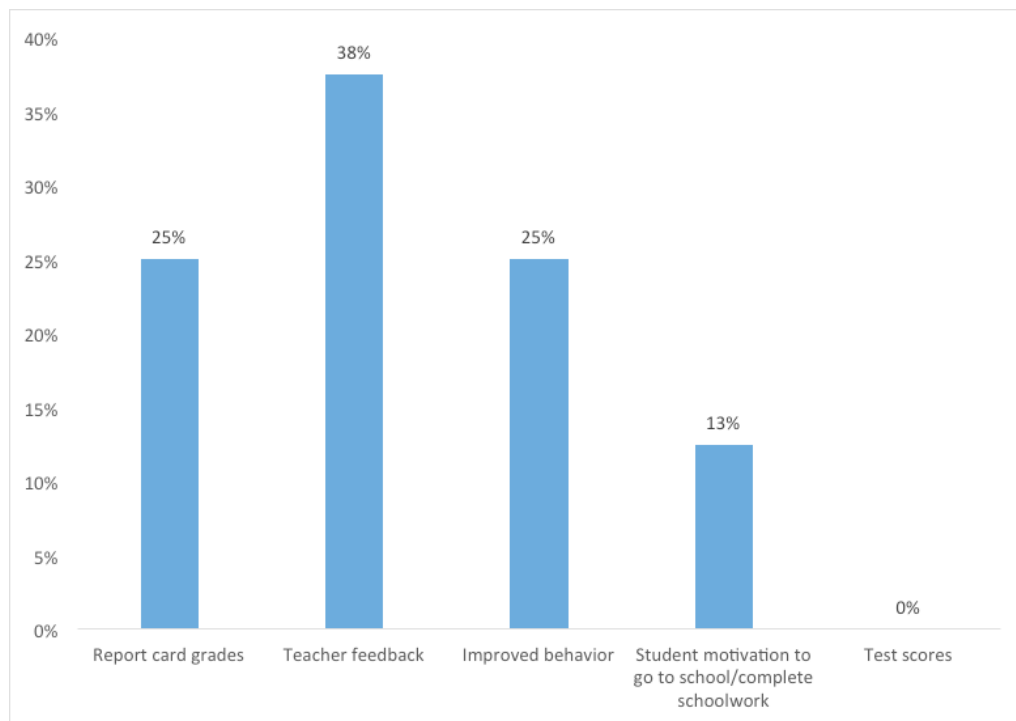
- *“I am, by and large, extremely happy with the fact that we have the account and that we have anything. I’m amazed that this is even possible, and every day I wake up and just pinch myself that this is a possibility.”*
- *“We haven’t had any issues with the ESA account. Other than the learning curve with the program being new, it’s been incredible.”*

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## **How Parents Measure Their Child’s Success**

Parents measure their child’s success with an education savings account in different ways. Twenty-five percent of respondents said report cards were the best measure of academic development, while 38 percent said they depended on teacher feedback. Another 25 percent said their child’s improved behavior was their measure for success, while 13 percent said their child’s motivation to go to school and complete their schoolwork was the best indicator. Focus group participants suggested that “IEP progress” should have been a response option because some students with special needs do not receive report cards.

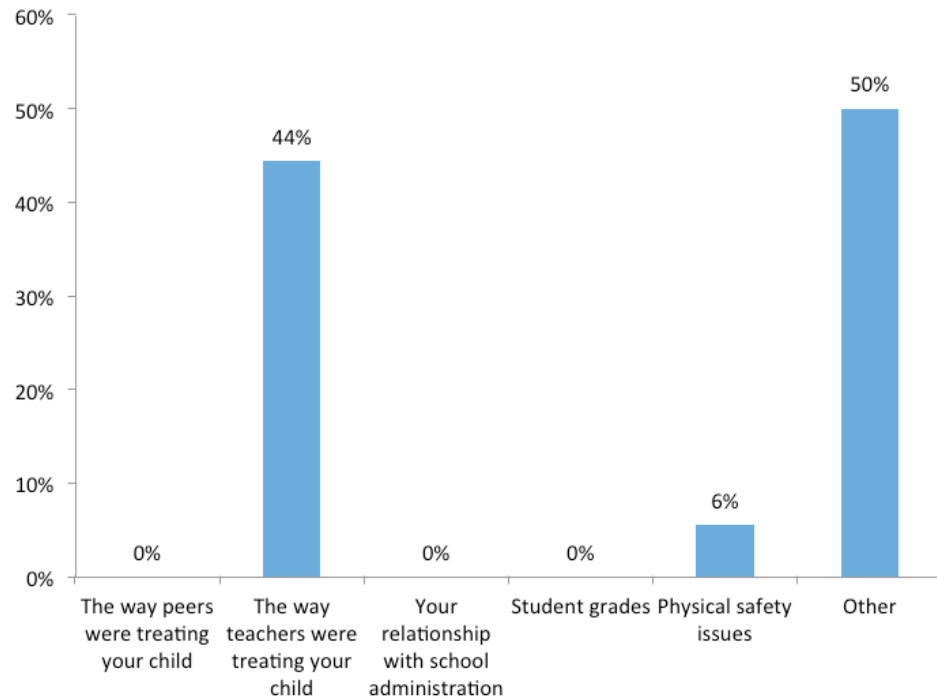
**Figure 6: How Do You Measure Your Child’s Academic Development Since Beginning to Use an Education Savings Account?**



### **Parent and Child Experiences in Public School Before Using Accounts**

Parents cited several reasons for removing their child from public school and using an education savings account. Forty-four percent of focus group participants said they left a public school because of “the way teachers were treating their child,” while 50 percent responded with “other” (see below for specific comments). When asked how they wanted their child’s day-to-day experience to change when their child was attending a public school, 39 percent of respondents wanted more of a “mix of inclusion [in traditional classrooms] and breakout sessions [with a teacher].” Thirty-three percent wanted their child to be fully included in a traditional classroom with extra supports, while 22 percent wanted “mainly break-outs with a support specialist.”

**Figure 7: What Factor Influenced You the Most When You Decided to Leave a Public School and Apply for an Education Savings Account?**



*“I am so grateful that the Empowerment Scholarship exists, because without it I would not be able to provide my son with the opportunities that he’s being provided with the scholarship.”*

- *“My choice was ‘other’ based on the student placement. He was shipped to a school 10-plus miles away from our assigned school. He was placed with 10 or 12 students that had behavior plans. The teacher was overloaded, and then [there was] gossip that every child was going to inclusion classes and not having an exclusion option.”*
- *“I would have to say that there were a myriad of reasons why I pulled my child out of public school, and I would have done it with or without the Empowerment Scholarship. But I am so grateful that the Empowerment Scholarship exists, because without it I would not be able to provide my son with the opportunities that he’s being provided with the scholarship. I had an MET meeting with the school, and they could tell they could not provide for him what I was providing for him with the account.”*
- *“For myself, there were several that would apply. But I chose #2 particularly because my child’s teacher wanted me to keep him sedated in order for him to go to school because she didn’t know how to channel his energy. He was receiving medication, but I did not like what the medication did for him because he wasn’t the usual bubbly kid. He was falling asleep and groggy. So I chose not to use the medication, and the teacher kept asking me to use it. She simply did not have enough experience dealing with children with autism. And there were many other instances, too, for why I chose to put him in a private school.”*

In addition, most respondents found the traditional classifications for students with special needs in the public school system to be undesirable. As explained above, special needs children in Arizona are funded using a weighted system based on their diagnosis. A child's services in the public school system and their education savings account award, if they leave the system, are based on these categories:

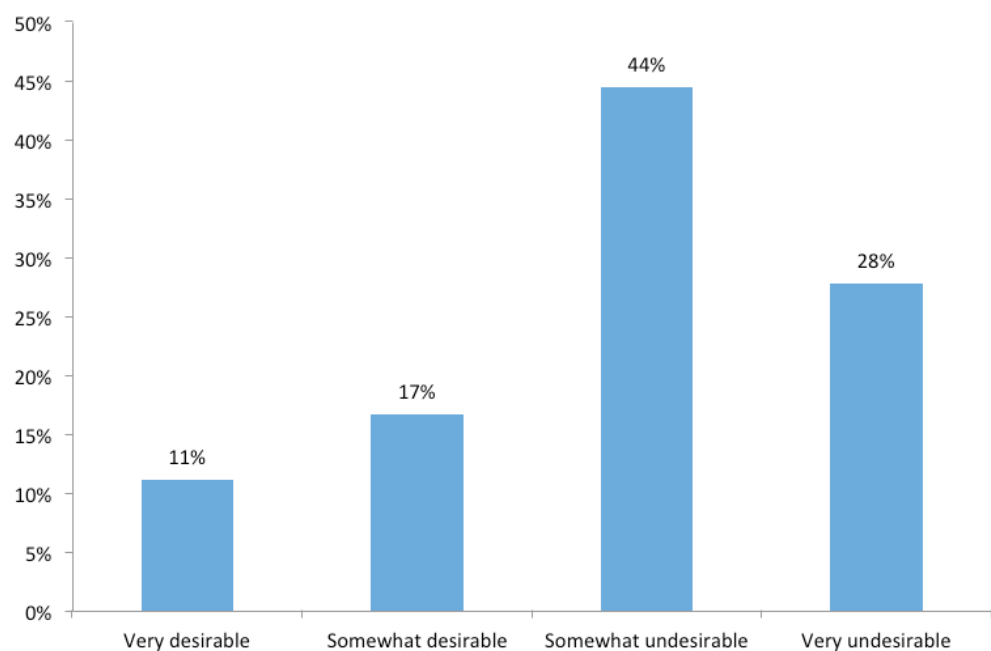
**Figure 8: Special Needs Categories and Weights**

<b>Disability Category - Definition</b>	<b>Weight</b>
HI – Hearing impaired	4.771
MD-R, A-R & SMR-R – Students with multiple disabilities, autism, and severe mental retardation placed in resource programs	6.024
MD-SC, A-SC & SMR-SC – Students with multiple disabilities, autism, and severe mental retardation in a self-contained program.	5.833
MD-SSI - Students with multiple disabilities and severe sensory impairments.	7.947
OI-R – Students with orthopedic impairments in a resource program.	3.158
OI-SC – Students with orthopedic impairments in a self-contained program.	6.773
P-SD – Preschool students with hearing impairments, visual impairments, developmental delay, preschool severe delay, or speech/language impairment.	3.595
DD, ED, MIMR, SLD, SLI & OHI - Students with developmental delays, emotional disabilities, mild mental retardation, specific learning disability, speech/language impairment, and other health impairment.	0.0093
ED-P – Students with emotional disabilities enrolled in private special ED or intensive district programs	4.820
MOMR – Students with moderate mental retardation	4.421
VI – Visually impaired	4.806

Additional Weights	
K3 – Students in Kindergarten through third grade	0.060
ELL – English Language learners	0.115

Source: Arizona Department of Education, “Approximate Funding Levels, Empowerment Scholarship Accounts,” <http://www.azed.gov/esa/files/2011/12/approximate-funding-levels.docx>.

**Figure 9: What Is Your Opinion of the Categorization Process for Students with Special Needs in the Public School System?**



Parent feedback on this question is significant because determining an accurate count of the special needs population in public and private schools is difficult.<sup>32</sup> Research indicates that parents may not want their child labeled because it may lead to negative feedback from the child’s peers. Private schools do not have the same categorization process for special needs children, adding to the challenge of determining how many special needs children are in the system. Yet, Arizona’s funding formula (as well as the formulas in other states) provides schools with more dollars per student for special needs children. Research indicates schools have been over-identifying children as needing special services in order

to gain more funding.<sup>33</sup> This dilemma has implications for education savings accounts because special needs children are eligible for the accounts—which means schools may over-identify children that are harder to educate and under-identify other types of students. Parents may disagree with their child’s diagnosis but are incentivized to have their child classified in order to be eligible for an account.

Policymakers and researchers have struggled with this issue for decades. While education savings accounts do not eliminate the conflicting incentives among schools and parents, the accounts help parents of special needs children meet their child’s unique needs, whatever the diagnosis.

### Parent and Child Experiences Using the Accounts

Focus group participants report that families in their child’s new school or homeschool community have been welcoming to their child. All respondents reported that families have been either “welcoming” (35 percent) or “very welcoming” (65 percent).

With their comments, participants reported they did not know enough about what expenses were approved or not approved.

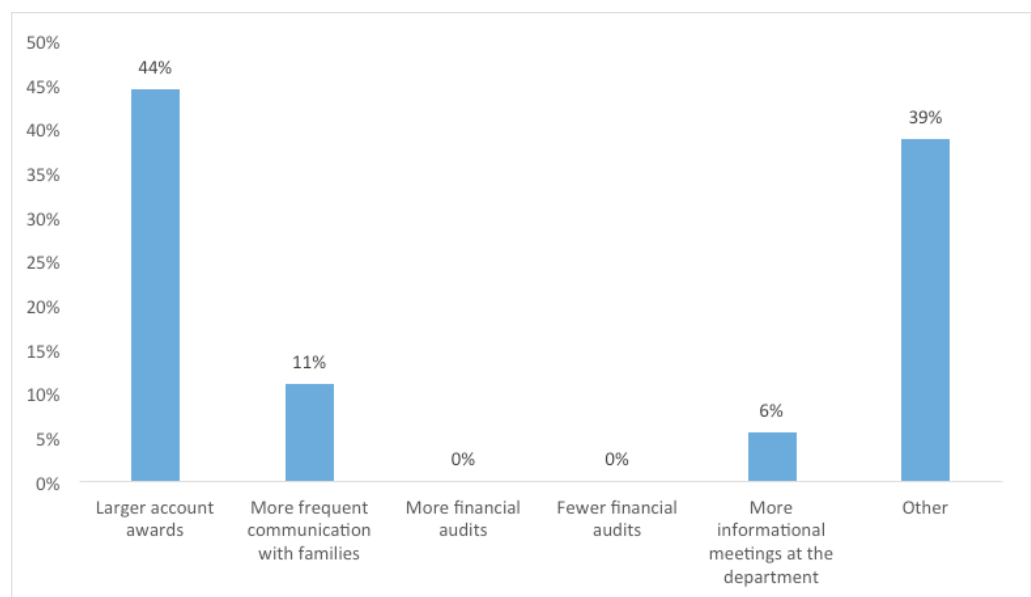
- *“So I know sometimes there is not a lot of clarity on what is going to be covered and what’s not, and some of this stuff can be hard to make decisions on. And then the other problem is trying to get certifications approved. I think it took me about three months to get one of the swimming certifications approved that is now approved. And one mom came back and said the Red Cross that wasn’t approved was approved and I said that didn’t make sense . . . It would be nice if there was a list of what has been approved as a certificate and . . . maybe even what’s not approved as well, to be a little more clear on that.”*
- *“I would say that the expenditures that are covered can be very ambiguous. There were things as far as therapies and curriculum items that were approved the first year that ended up being denied the second year. And some particular curricular items end up being approved and some don’t. And I think the guidelines need to be further expanded so that it’s clear before we spend the fund what will be approved.”*
- *“I got on the scholarship the first year and so I had no idea what would be approved or not, so I was just Googling private schools. I figured out we could use it for therapy, and he was already attending speech therapy, and I asked if he could continue. They said we needed the certifications, and I had those sent over. I had no idea what would be covered or not, but now there is so much information available, it is really cool.”*

*While education savings accounts do not eliminate the conflicting incentives among schools and parents, the accounts help parents of special needs children meet their child’s unique needs, whatever the diagnosis.*

- “I guess the reason that I chose ‘other’ was as far as not always knowing what we can and can’t use it for and the fact that it seems to change on a regular basis. Things I was told in my first year that we either could or could not do obviously changed and we don’t always know, so it is usually from another parent or from someone else that says, ‘Oh, I got it denied,’ but someone else says they got it approved. So we’re always trying to figure out what is approved and what is not approved. Things like iPad apps, when I originally signed up I was supposed to get the iPad with it and then get the apps for a speech device, but that changed, so we couldn’t do that . . . Again it’s just not knowing and not having that set of guidelines out there saying, ‘Yes, this is what you can do,’ and ‘No, this is what you can’t do.’ And then finding out that you’re really missing out on something because there really is a way to do it.”*
- “In regards to this question, I think there needs to be a very clear dispute process for expenditures that are denied and that we’re all talking about. Another issue is the funds to be able to be rolled into a college plan of some sort. I know a lot of us have wanted to do that, but there have been barriers as to that process. I don’t know if it’s a Coverdell, I don’t know if it’s something else, but to my knowledge none of us have been able to utilize putting some of the funds, especially those of us that have larger awards, putting money in a college fund.”<sup>34</sup>*

Participants suggested the account awards were not enough to cover all of their child’s needs.

**Figure 10: What Recommendations Would You Make to the Arizona Department of Education about Education Savings Accounts?**

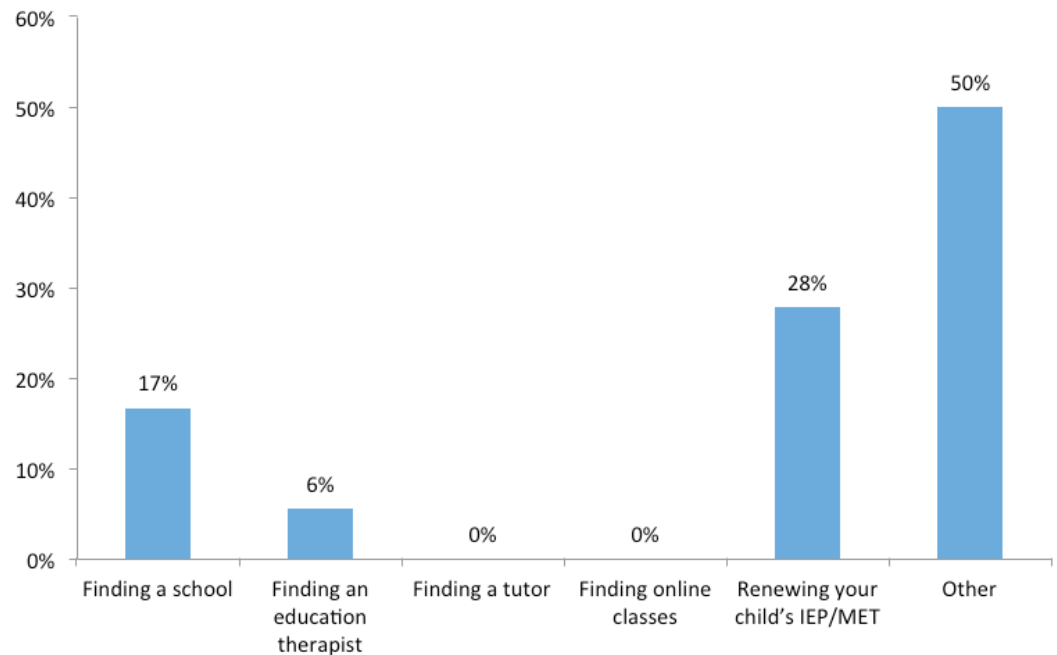


Forty-four percent of respondents said their recommendation for the Arizona Department of Education is for larger account awards. Respondents answered this question before legislators increased account awards in the 2013 legislative session.

- *“We are very satisfied with what we have gotten from the ESA, and I would recommend it to other families, but I just wanted to mention that one of my friends whose son is severely disabled. His funding was so small that it is really hard to get him a private education at all, and I am concerned for the families that are coming in, that the formula that some of us are getting gives us lots of liberty and lots of freedom over how to educate our child. Then there are other people who are coming in that because . . . their diagnosis qualifies them for less money, but their need is as great as ours. And I’d like to see that addressed, and I don’t know how you’d do it because it is an IEP formula, but it is a concern for me. That some of these kids that need more services get \$3,500, and it’s hardly enough to do much at all.”*
- *“I selected other because my daughter qualified under the developmental delay . . . and we did choose to put her in a private school mainly because the class sizes at her public school were very large and we thought she would do very well because she has attention issues. But she could use therapies, and with the funding as low as it is, it doesn’t cover her private school tuition amount . . . which is fine, we’re still happy with the school and paying the extra. But our insurance doesn’t cover the therapies, so right now she’s not getting therapies where I think it would be beneficial for her. So I guess our biggest struggle right now is with the amount.”*
- *“Our award does not cover the level of the school that my son needs or that he would be accepted at. So there’s about a \$5-10,000 differential that we can’t cover. The other thing is that 10 percent that we don’t get that the state keeps, that would normally be going to cover the overhead in the district, you know, the lights and electricity in the building and school supplies, I’m homeschooling and I’d really love to have school supplies. At public school they are able to have paper and computers and manipulatives. As a homeschooler and a single parent to have to come up with the money to be able to purchase those things and pay for field trips is a matter of being resourceful. And I’m so grateful for what we have, I’m so grateful, I would take this a million times over what we had before, but it would be great to have access to the same resources as he had when he was at the public school.”*

Parents reported a variety of different challenges with the new accounts (Figure 11).

**Figure 11: What Has Been Your Family's Greatest Challenge with Education Savings Accounts?**



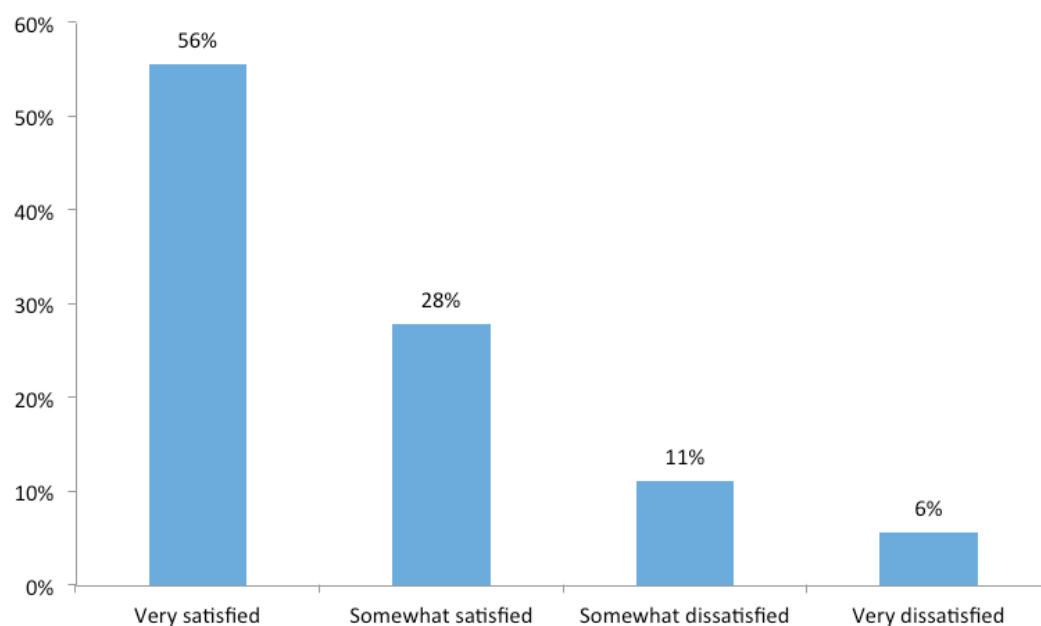
- “Our biggest concern is that ESA only funds, if you’re in the program now, age 19, but if you are new to the program, it’s age 18. Public school funds through age 22. So that transition period for special needs students usually starts in your junior/ senior year of high school. For those not earning a diploma, you spend those years working with transition services. And that is currently not available at all, so that is a huge concern.”*
- “I [selected] ‘other.’ The first year was absolutely wonderful in the private school, and the second year we had to go through the MET with our local district, and they threw everything out. So now we’ve been going through [a process] and struggling to find another school and therapists and anybody on the minimum level. And I can’t provide speech therapy, let alone curriculum.”*
- “I had a couple of things we’ve done with private school and homeschooling. With private school we couldn’t get into a school that we could pay for with a scholarship even with my son’s funding level, which is so high . . . As far as homeschooling, I’m not having trouble finding people, it’s finding people with the qualifications that the state requires . . . That’s the frustration that we’re finding now.”*

Focus group participants reported difficulty with the MET/IEP renewal process (the documents that specify the treatment procedures for different physical, cognitive, and emotional needs), which is mandatory to remain eligible for an education savings account.

- “We’re doing [our daughter’s] MET process. That is a concern of ours. The school board is not in our district, because of her school being in a certain district, that’s where she has to get her MET done. They don’t know her, and they don’t know anything about the scholarships.”
- “The area of concern that I have is the renewal process . . . Having to take them to a district, they don’t know him . . . and we’re concerned about doing that and trying to explain who we were and what the ESA is.”

More than half of participants reported being “very satisfied” with the Arizona Department of Education’s quarterly audit process (Figure 12).

**Figure 12: How Satisfied Are You with the Audit Process Every Quarter for Education Savings Accounts?**



## Policy Recommendations

Based on this focus group, state lawmakers should consider the following reforms to the accounts:

**Expand student eligibility for the accounts.** More children should be eligible for education savings accounts. Parents report high levels of satisfaction, parents' flexibility with the funds is demonstrably superior to traditional schools, and the cost savings to taxpayers is significant. Using the accounts, parents can do more for their children with less money. State lawmakers should give all children this innovative opportunity.

**Streamline the MET and IEP renewal process.** Parents report that public school officials have little information about the accounts. In some cases, parents must have their children evaluated by teachers and counselors who are seeing their child's case for the first time. The resulting confusion and complications in renewing a child's MET or IEP causes chaos for children and their families. The Department of Education and state lawmakers should distribute information on the accounts to all Arizona special education administrators so that school officials can better help parents of special needs children. Parents should also be allowed to use private providers to determine their child's diagnosis and help design their MET/IEP.

**Conduct more comprehensive surveys of parents to evaluate their satisfaction levels and learn more about how parents can successfully use the accounts.** More research is needed on families using the accounts. The Arizona Department of Education should use the application process to gather information on both new and continuing account applicants. The department should measure parent satisfaction with their previous public school, and ask specific questions about parents' experiences with the accounts in order to better serve families.

Data collection is a sensitive subject, especially for families of children whose special needs have been diagnosed, measured, and evaluated for many years. Lawmakers should not mandate that the department collect personal information for distribution. The department of education could give parents the opportunity to voluntarily participate in these studies. Arizona taxpayers and policymakers, along with state officials from other states, need to know more about education savings account usage in order to design effective accounts and make sure children have challenging, successful experiences.

*Using the accounts, parents can do more for their children with less money. State lawmakers should give all children this innovative opportunity.*

## **Conclusion**

Education savings accounts have changed the lives of hundreds of Arizona children and could change the lives of hundreds of thousands more. Parents can prioritize what their child needs and take advantage of tutors, online classes, educational therapy, and private school tuition. The accounts are the first cost-saving alternative to public schools that allows parents to provide more than what traditional schools offer. Taxpayers benefit from the accounts' cost savings, and children benefit from the flexibility.

The Goldwater Institute's focus group was the first research project to gather information about participating families, how the accounts helped them, and what obstacles were preventing them from using the accounts to their full potential. More research is needed, but evidence strongly indicates parents are pleased with their choice to use an account. Arizona lawmakers should give every child the opportunity to use an education savings account because all children deserve the chance at an excellent education.

## Appendix: Focus Group Responses

Session Name: Goldwater Focus Group

Date Created: 5/8/2013

2:25:46PM

Active Participants: 18 of 18<sup>35</sup>

Questions: 33

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### Results By Question

#### 1) What is your gender? (Demographic Assignment)

	Responses	
	Percent	Count
Male	12%	2
Female	88%	15
Totals	100%	17

#### 2) What is your age? (Demographic Assignment)

	Responses	
	Percent	Count
18-25	0%	0
26-30	6%	1
31-35	6%	1
36-40	35%	6
41-45	35%	6
46-50	18%	3
51-55	0%	0
56+	0%	0
Totals	100%	17

3) How many children living in your household used an Empowerment Scholarship in the 2012–13 school year? (Demographic Assignment)

	Responses	
	Percent	Count
1	94%	16
2	6%	1
3	0%	0
4 or more	0%	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17</b>

4) What is your relationship to the Empowerment Scholarship Account student living in your household? (Demographic Assignment)

	Responses	
	Percent	Count
Mother	94%	16
Father	6%	1
Grandparent	0%	0
Aunt	0%	0
Uncle	0%	0
Guardian	0%	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17</b>

5) What is the gender of the Empowerment Scholarship Account child you are using for this focus group? (Demographic Assignment)

	Responses	
	Percent	Count
Male	82%	14
Female	18%	3
<b>Totals</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17</b>

6) What is the age of the child using an Empowerment Scholarship Account in your household?  
(Demographic Assignment)

	Responses	
	Percent	Count
3-5	6%	1
6-8	35%	6
9-11	18%	3
12-14	29%	5
15-17	12%	2
18+	0%	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17</b>

7) What was your child's Empowerment Scholarship Account award for the 2012–13 school year?  
(Demographic Assignment)

	Responses	
	Percent	Count
\$0-\$1,499	0%	0
\$1,500-\$4,999	6%	1
\$5,000-\$9,999	6%	1
\$10,000-\$14,999	0%	0
\$15,000-\$19,999	6%	1
\$20,000+	82%	14
<b>Totals</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17</b>

## 8) What grade is your Empowerment Scholarship Account child in? (Demographic Assignment)

	Responses	
	Percent	Count
K-3	47%	8
4	12%	2
5	6%	1
6	6%	1
7	12%	2
8	6%	1
9	6%	1
10	0%	0
11	6%	1
12+	0%	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17</b>

## 9) How familiar are you with the program, features, offerings, and details of the Empowerment Scholarship Account program? (Multiple Choice)

	Responses	
	Percent	Count
Extremely familiar	59%	10
Very familiar	29%	5
Somewhat familiar	12%	2
Not too familiar	0%	0
Not at all familiar	0%	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17</b>

10) Overall, what is your opinion of the Empowerment Scholarship Account program? (Multiple Choice)

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Very favorable	100%	17
Somewhat favorable	0%	0
Somewhat unfavorable	0%	0
Very unfavorable	0%	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17</b>

11) Overall, how satisfied is your family with the Empowerment Scholarship Account program? (Multiple Choice)

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Very satisfied	94%	16
Somewhat satisfied	6%	1
Somewhat dissatisfied	0%	0
Very dissatisfied	0%	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17</b>

12) How likely would you be to use again or continue using the Empowerment Scholarship Account program? (Multiple Choice)

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Very likely	100%	17
Somewhat likely	0%	0
Somewhat unlikely	0%	0
Very unlikely	0%	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17</b>

13) How likely would you be to recommend the Empowerment Scholarship Account program to another qualifying family? (Multiple Choice)

	Responses	
	Percent	Count
Very likely	100%	17
Somewhat likely	0%	0
Somewhat unlikely	0%	0
Very unlikely	0%	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17</b>

14) Would you favor or oppose expanding the Empowerment Scholarship Account program in Arizona so that it could be made available to more families in need? (Multiple Choice)

	Responses	
	Percent	Count
Strongly favor	76%	13
Somewhat favor	24%	4
Somewhat oppose	0%	0
Strongly oppose	0%	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17</b>

15) What were your expectations of the Empowerment Scholarship Account program before your family started participating? (Multiple Choice)

	Responses	
	Percent	Count
Excellent	47%	8
Good	53%	9
Fair	0%	0
Poor	0%	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17</b>

16) How would you describe your family's overall experience with the Empowerment Scholarship Account program? (Multiple Choice)

	Responses	
	Percent	Count
Excellent	88%	15
Good	12%	2
Fair	0%	0
Poor	0%	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17</b>

17) What were the most helpful sources of information when choosing how to use your Empowerment Scholarship Account? (Multiple Choice)

	Responses	
	Percent	Count
Yahoo! Message Board	29%	5
Arizona Department of Education	35%	6
School Fair	0%	0
Family	0%	0
Friends	0%	0
School Visits	12%	2
Church	0%	0
School Administrators/Teachers/Counselors	12%	2
Doctors/Physicians	0%	0
Other	12%	2
<b>Totals</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17</b>

18) How do you measure your child's academic development since beginning to use an Empowerment Scholarship Account? (Multiple Choice)

	Responses	
	Percent	Count
Report card grades	25%	4
Teacher feedback	38%	6
Improved behavior	25%	4
Student motivation to go to school/complete schoolwork	13%	2
Test scores	0%	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>16</b>

19) What factor influenced you the most when you decided to leave a public school and apply for an Empowerment Scholarship Account? (Multiple Choice)

	Responses	
	Percent	Count
The way peers were treating your child	0%	0
The way teachers were treating your child	44%	8
Your relationship with school administration	0%	0
Student grades	0%	0
Physical safety issues	6%	1
Other	50%	9
<b>Totals</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>18</b>

**20) What is the special need diagnosis for your oldest child using an Empowerment Scholarship Account? (Multiple Choice)**

	Responses	
	Percent	Count
HI or VI – Hearing impaired or Visually impaired	6%	1
MD-R, A-R & SMR-R – Students with multiple disabilities, autism, and severe mental retardation placed in resource programs	22%	4
MD-SC, A-SC, & SMR-SC – Students with multiple disabilities, autism, and severe mental retardation in a self-contained program	39%	7
MD-SSI – Students with multiple disabilities and severe sensory impairments	6%	1
OI-R – Students with orthopedic impairments in a resource program	0%	0
OI-SC – Students with orthopedic impairments in a resource program	11%	2
P-SD – Preschool students with hearing impairments, visual impairments, developmental delay, preschool severe delay or speech/language impairment	6%	1
DD, ED, MIMR, SLD, SLI, & OHI – Students with developmental delays, emotional disabilities, mild mental retardation, specific learning disability, speech/language impairment, and other health impairment	11%	2
ED-P – Students with emotional disabilities enrolled in private special ED or intensive district program	0%	0
MOMR – Students with moderate mental retardation	0%	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>18</b>

21) What is your opinion of this categorization process for students with special needs in the public school system? (Multiple Choice)

	Responses	
	Percent	Count
Very desirable	11%	2
Somewhat desirable	17%	3
Somewhat undesirable	44%	8
Very undesirable	28%	5
<b>Totals</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>18</b>

22) When your child was in a public school, how was your child treated compared to other students at the school? (Multiple Choice)

	Responses	
	Percent	Count
Fully included with no extra supports	0%	0
Fully included with some extra supports	22%	4
Mix of inclusion and break-out sessions with support specialist	11%	2
Mainly break-outs with a support specialist	22%	4
Other	44%	8
<b>Totals</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>18</b>

23) When your child was in a public school, how did you want your child's day-to-day experience to change? (Multiple Choice)

	Responses	
	Percent	Count
To be fully included with no extra supports	0%	0
To be fully included with some extra supports	33%	6
Mix of inclusion and break-out sessions with a support specialist	39%	7
Mainly break-outs with a support specialist	22%	4
Other	6%	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>18</b>

24) If your child is now attending a private school, how satisfied are you with the information you are receiving about your child from the school? (Multiple Choice)

	Responses	
	Percent	Count
Very satisfied	33%	6
Somewhat satisfied	22%	4
Somewhat dissatisfied	0%	0
Very dissatisfied	6%	1
NA	39%	7
<b>Totals</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>18</b>

25) How welcoming are other parents in either your child's new private school or new homeschool community where you first began using an Empowerment Scholarship Account? (Multiple Choice)

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Very welcoming	65%	11
Welcoming	35%	6
Somewhat welcoming	0%	0
Not very welcoming	0%	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17</b>

26) How is your child treated compared to other students at the school? (Multiple Choice)

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Fully included with no extra supports	11%	2
Fully included with some extra supports	28%	5
Mix of inclusion and break-out sessions with support specialist	6%	1
Mainly break-outs with a support specialist	6%	1
Other	50%	9
<b>Totals</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>18</b>

**27.) How would you like your child's day-to-day experience to change? (Multiple Choice)**

	Responses	
	Percent	Count
More inclusion	22%	4
Less inclusion	0%	0
More work with a support specialist	33%	6
I am satisfied with day-to-day services	44%	8
<b>Totals</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>18</b>

**28) What has been your family's greatest challenge with Empowerment Scholarship Accounts? (Multiple Choice)**

	Responses	
	Percent	Count
Finding a school	17%	3
Finding an education therapist	6%	1
Finding a tutor	0%	0
Finding online classes	0%	0
Renewing your child's IEP/MET	28%	5
Other	50%	9
<b>Totals</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>18</b>

**29) How satisfied were you with the Empowerment Scholarship Account application process? (Multiple Choice)**

	Responses	
	Percent	Count
Very satisfied	78%	14
Somewhat satisfied	22%	4
Somewhat dissatisfied	0%	0
Very dissatisfied	0%	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>18</b>

30) How satisfied are you with the different kinds of services and items eligible for purchase with an Empowerment Scholarship Account? (Multiple Choice)

	Responses	
	Percent	Count
Very satisfied	28%	5
Somewhat satisfied	50%	9
Somewhat dissatisfied	22%	4
Very dissatisfied	0%	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>18</b>

31) How satisfied are you with the audit process every quarter for Empowerment Scholarship Accounts? (Multiple Choice)

	Responses	
	Percent	Count
Very satisfied	56%	10
Somewhat satisfied	28%	5
Somewhat dissatisfied	11%	2
Very dissatisfied	6%	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>18</b>

32) How satisfied are you with the annual audit process for Empowerment Scholarship Accounts? (Multiple Choice)<sup>36</sup>

	Responses	
	Percent	Count
Very satisfied	50%	1
Somewhat satisfied	0%	0
Somewhat dissatisfied	50%	1
Very dissatisfied	0%	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2</b>

**33) What recommendations would you make to the Arizona Department of Education about Empowerment Scholarship Accounts? (Multiple Choice)**

	Responses	
	Percent	Count
Larger account awards	44%	8
More frequent communication with families	11%	2
More financial audits	0%	0
Fewer financial audits	0%	0
More informational meetings at the department	6%	1
Other	39%	7
<b>Totals</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>18</b>

## Notes

1. Under Arizona law, the accounts are called “Empowerment Scholarship Accounts.” See Fiftieth Arizona State Legislature, Second Regular Session, H.B. 2622, [http://www.azleg.gov/FormatDocument.asp?inDoc=/legtext/50leg/2r/bills/hb2622c.htm&Session\\_ID=107](http://www.azleg.gov/FormatDocument.asp?inDoc=/legtext/50leg/2r/bills/hb2622c.htm&Session_ID=107).
2. Fiftieth Arizona Legislature, Second Regular Session, HB 2622, [http://www.azleg.gov/FormatDocument.asp?inDoc=/legtext/50leg/2r/bills/hb2622c.htm&Session\\_ID=107](http://www.azleg.gov/FormatDocument.asp?inDoc=/legtext/50leg/2r/bills/hb2622c.htm&Session_ID=107).
3. Fifty-first Arizona Legislature, First Regular Session, SB 1363, [http://www.azleg.gov/DocumentsForBill.asp?Bill\\_Number=1363&Session\\_Id=110&image.x=-919&image.y=-34](http://www.azleg.gov/DocumentsForBill.asp?Bill_Number=1363&Session_Id=110&image.x=-919&image.y=-34).
4. Michelle Reese, “Arizona’s Education Savings Account Program Growing,” *East Valley Tribune*, December 24, 2012, [http://www.eastvalleytribune.com/local/education/article\\_e3a65f48-4df1-11e2-b6db-001a4bcf887a.html](http://www.eastvalleytribune.com/local/education/article_e3a65f48-4df1-11e2-b6db-001a4bcf887a.html).
5. Personal email communication with the Arizona Department of Education, January 10, 2013. See also Arizona Department of Education, “ESA Parent Handbook: Chapter 2: Program History & Authority,” <http://www.azed.gov/esa/files/2013/08/chapter-2.pdf>.
6. Yahoo! Groups: ESAAZ, <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/esaaaz/>.
7. Arizona Revised Statutes, Title 15, Chapter 19, Article 1, 15-2402, <http://www.azleg.gov/FormatDocument.asp?inDoc=/ars/15/02402.htm&Title=15&DocType=ARS>.
8. For more information, see Jonathan Butcher, “Education Savings Accounts: A Path to Give All Children an Effective Education and Prepare Them for Life,” Goldwater Institute Policy Report No. 253, October 30, 2012, [http://goldwaterinstitute.org/sites/default/files/PR253ESAsPathToAllChildren\\_0.pdf](http://goldwaterinstitute.org/sites/default/files/PR253ESAsPathToAllChildren_0.pdf)
9. Parent comments from the focus group indicate that some parents are confused as to the conditions by which the department will close a child’s account after high school. While the education savings account law does not indicate the department can close an account when the child reaches a specific age, parent comments suggest the department has told them they will close accounts when a child reaches a certain age.
10. Joint Legislative Budget Committee, “K-12 Funding (M&O, Capital and All Other), FY 2004 through FY 2013 est,” August 10, 2012, <http://www.azleg.gov/jlbc/allfunding.pdf>.
11. Arizona Department of Education, “Approximate Funding Levels, Empowerment Scholarship Accounts,” <http://www.azed.gov/esa/files/2011/12/approximate-funding-levels.docx>.
12. The Arizona Department of Education can retain up to 5 percent of the savings to use for account administration. See Arizona Revised Statutes, Title 15, Chapter 19, Article 1, 15-2402, <http://www.azleg.gov/FormatDocument.asp?inDoc=/ars/15/02402.htm&Title=15&DocType=ARS>.
13. Reese, “Arizona’s Education Savings Account Program Growing.”
14. Email communication with the Arizona Department of Education, August 13, 2013.

15. Arizona Revised Statutes, Title 15, Chapter 7, Article 1,  
<http://www.azleg.gov/FormatDocument.asp?inDoc=/ars/15/00701-01.htm&Title=15&DocType=ARS>.
16. See, for example, Paradise Valley School District, North Canyon High School,  
<https://sites.google.com/a/pvlearners.net/nchs/home/counseling-career>; Scottsdale Unified School District, High School Planning Guide 2013–14, p. 14;  
[http://susd.schoolfusion.us/modules/groups/homepagefiles/cms/394763/File/Planning%20Guide/2013-2014\\_HSPG.pdf](http://susd.schoolfusion.us/modules/groups/homepagefiles/cms/394763/File/Planning%20Guide/2013-2014_HSPG.pdf); Deer Valley Unified School District, Barry Goldwater High School July 2011 Newsletter,  
<http://bghs.dvusd.org/Documents/Summer11Newsletter.pdf>.
17. American Federation for Children, “Jordan’s Journey,” YouTube.com, March 29, 2013,  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iVbMrfTta\\_g](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iVbMrfTta_g).
18. Malcom Glenn and Randan Swindler, *School Choice Now: The Power of Educational Choice* (Washington, D.C.: Alliance for School Choice, 2013), 11.
19. See Arizona Revised Statutes, Title 43, Chapters 15 and 16,  
<http://www.azleg.gov/ArizonaRevisedStatutes.asp?Title=43>.
20. See School Choice Demonstration Project, “Home Page,”  
<http://www.uaedreform.org/school-choice-demonstration-project/>.
21. Thomas Stewart, Ph.D., and Patrick J. Wolf, Ph.D., “Parent and Student Experiences with Choice in Milwaukee, Wisconsin,” School Choice Demonstration Project Evaluation Report #13, March 2009,  
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29. Arizona Department of Education, "ESA Customer Satisfaction Survey," <http://www.azed.gov/esa/files/2012/12/esa-survey.pdf>.
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31. The Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice and the School Choice Demonstration Project have conducted surveys measuring parental satisfaction. See <http://www.edchoice.org/Research/Our-Studies---Reports.aspx> and <http://www.uaedreform.org/school-choice-demonstration-project>.
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35. One participant arrived late and did not complete all of the questions with the rest of the group.
36. Most respondents reported that the department had not conducted an annual audit on their account.

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