

Study Shows Long-Term Benefits in Georgia Education Scholarship Accounts

ATLANTA, GEORGIA, UNITED STATES, January 27, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Education savings accounts could increase Georgia's graduation rates and workers' lifetime earnings as well as reduce crime and its related costs, according to a study released today by the [Georgia Public Policy Foundation](#).

During the pandemic, while private schools and public charter schools have offered in-person learning, many traditional public schools have been fighting for the opposite, notes researcher Corey DeAngelis in his study, "[Funding Students Instead of Institutions](#): The Economic Impacts of Universal Education Savings Accounts in Georgia."

Education savings accounts, also known as education scholarship accounts or ESAs, allow families to use state education funding for a variety of alternatives to public schools, including private school tuition, homeschooling materials and tutoring services.

"One of these sectors receives funding from families regardless of how well they meet their needs and, in this case, regardless of whether the institutions even open their doors for business," DeAngelis writes.

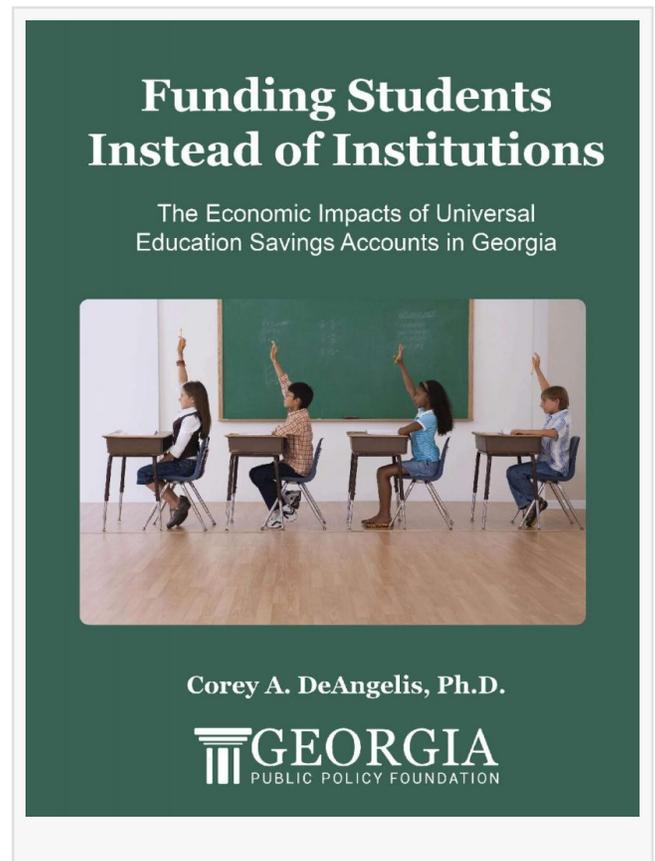
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Kyle Wingfield

“Funding students, as opposed to systems, would benefit families by empowering them to choose the education provider that best meets their needs – public or private, in-person or remote.”

The study examines the effects an ESA would have on academic achievement, educational attainment and crime reduction in Georgia in the long run. If it served 5% of Georgia's students,



DeAngelis found, the economic benefits would be \$1.7 billion in economic benefits from higher lifetime earnings associated with increases in academic achievement; \$1 billion in economic benefits from additional high school graduates; and \$13 million from reductions in the social costs associated with crimes.

These economic benefits should be assessed separately because of potential overlap, DeAngelis notes: “For example, higher academic achievement increases the likelihood of high school graduation, and receiving a high school diploma reduces the likelihood of incarceration. It is also possible that results would differ in Georgia based on context, geographic location and implementation.”

Georgia already has taken a step in the right direction, empowering families through tuition tax credit scholarships and special needs scholarships that allow students to attend a private school of their choice. The eligibility and funding limitations of these programs, however, mean that only 1.1% of the school-age population actually use them.

“This is National School Choice Week, and it’s especially poignant,” said Kyle Wingfield, president and CEO of the Georgia Public Policy Foundation.

“Many parents are keenly aware during the pandemic that their children are flailing in their public school environment. Families feel trapped and helpless. The challenges of learning – in-person, remote and hybrid – during COVID-19 will have troublesome long-term consequences for students who fall behind academically and struggle socially.

“Education scholarship accounts are too promising to pass up, and Georgia’s families deserve the opportunity of education options – now, more than ever.”

DeAngelis’ cautious estimates suggest a 5% ESA participation rate of students would produce a 4-percentage-point increase in Georgia graduates, translating to \$1 billion in economic benefits over their lifetime.

“Families are overwhelmingly satisfied when they have access to private school choice,” DeAngelis writes. Additionally, taxpayers should be: “It is also possible that universal education savings accounts could save taxpayer funding because they are typically funded at an amount below what would have been spent in district-run public schools.”



ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Corey A DeAngelis, Ph.D., is Director of School Choice at Reason Foundation, Executive Director of the Educational Freedom Institute, and an Adjunct Scholar at Cato Institute.

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