

Coalition of Pro-School Choice Organizations Ask Florida Legislators to Give Families Freedom to Use Family Empowerment Scholarship Funds for Full-time and Blended Private and Religious Virtual Schools

Dear Florida Legislators:

Florida has long been a national leader in school choice, and with the passage of HB1 in 2023, it became one of seven states with a universal education savings account (ESA) program.

HB1 expanded the Family Empowerment Scholarship (FES) to all K-12 students, giving Florida’s families the ability to use funds to pay for a diverse range of educational options, including sectarian and non-sectarian private school tuition, tutoring, home education, postsecondary institutions, and other education services. However, the original construction of HB1, perhaps inadvertently, [restricted families](#) from using FES funds for full-time private online or blended schools (both religious and nonsectarian).

Following passage of HB1, several Florida lawmakers and supporters of HB1 recognized the error and pledged to fix the language in 2024 legislative session.

Virtual schools are a small, but important part of the school choice ecosystem, and Florida currently has thousands of students enrolled in full-time public virtual schools. Correcting the language from HB1 would remove the obstacles preventing parents from using FES funds for full-time private and religious virtual schools. It would also enable Florida’s religious schools the ability to expand their reach to students through online and blended schools in compliance with the law. Further, it would eliminate any existing constitutional conflicts.

We are strong supporters of school choice and applaud Florida lawmakers for enacting HB1 – a landmark law that greatly expanded educational freedom to Floridians. **We ask for your support to make the small, but necessary changes to HB1403 this session, that will guarantee Florida’s families have full access to all education options, including full-time private and religious virtual schools.**

Sincerely,

American Federation for Children

Americans For Prosperity

ALEC Action

EdChoice

Florida Parents for School Options

Foundation for Florida’s Future

Heritage Action

James Madison Institute

Teach Florida

yes. every kid.