

Family Council, and its Education Alliance division that represents homeschoolers, recommends that the Arkansas Department of Education make the following changes to the proposed “Rule Governing the Arkansas Children’s Educational Freedom Accounts” issued for public comment on November 13, 2025:

COVERAGE FOR TEAM SPORTS SHOULD BE REINSTATED BASED ON EQUITY, EXISTING STATE PUBLIC POLICY, AND PROGRAM GOALS.

Many homeschoolers have expressed concerns about the new prohibitions on EFA funding for team sports located on page 5 under the definition of “Extracurricular activity.” The prohibition provides that registration fees, equipment, dues, and any costs associated with club and team sports cannot be paid for with EFA funding. **Many homeschoolers are concerned that this complete prohibition is inequitable since public schools fund team sports with state money.**

The State of Arkansas recognizes the value of team sports funding in existing state public policy, so this funding prohibition appears to single out homeschoolers for disparate impact. For example, with students who attend private schools, the funding of team sports will usually be rolled into tuition and fees instead of singled out as a separate line item. However, this is not the case with homeschoolers, whose team sports expenditures will be itemized and prohibited by the proposed rule in its current form.

In addition, there are concerns that this complete prohibition on funding for team sports contradicts the purpose of the program to “provide Arkansas families with more educational options for their children as they seek educational solutions and curricula that fit the needs of their families.” While we have the “Tim Tebow” law that lets homeschoolers play for Arkansas public schools if they make the team and otherwise qualify, a different option for team sports may work better for some families. In addition, new proposed rules on page 4 recognize the value of extracurricular activities that “support the ...physical...development of a student” and that have a “developmental purpose that promotes personal growth, discipline, physical health, teamwork, responsibility, or civic engagement.” The restriction on team sports seems to contradict those stated purposes.

Spending on team sports is already limited by Act 920 of 2025, which limits spending on extracurricular activities, like sports, to 25% of a student’s annual EFA funding. This spending restriction is reasonable, and the EFA rules should track with Act 920 instead of exceeding what the law requires.