PASA Position: Senate Bill 2

**SB 2** would create “education savings accounts” for students in the lowest 15 percent of public schools to use for private school education.

**Why We Oppose This Bill...**

* Education Savings Account Vouchers will drain desperately-needed funding from public schools and reduce access to educational opportunities for all students in order to fund the private education of a few. Estimates show that SB 2 could siphon more than $500 million from the state's 500 school districts.

* Education Savings Account Vouchers allow discrimination against Pennsylvania’s children into law. Education Savings Account Vouchers enable the re-segregation of public schools and allow private schools accepting taxpayer dollars to discriminate on the basis of gender, religion, and disability status. Students with disabilities, if they are permitted to enroll in a private school, give up their rights under Federal law to an appropriate education. Most parents don’t understand this until it is too late.

* Education Savings Account Vouchers are expensive to administer and financial oversight and accountability are limited, leaving taxpayer dollars ripe for waste, fraud, and abuse. Arizona, which has had Education Savings Account Vouchers for six years, has seen families use ESA funding to make non-educational purchases and other fraud. Once families spend these taxpayer dollars, it is almost impossible to recover them. Taxpayers deserve to have oversight of all public dollars that are used for non-public education.

* Education Savings Account Vouchers can impact any school district, not just districts with low performing schools. Amazingly, a student who receives an ESA is eligible for an ESA for the rest of his K-12 school career, regardless of their school district of residence. When students with ESAs move to another district, their new school districts will have state funding reduced by the amount that is deposited into the student’s ESA, even if they are not on the low performing school district list.

* There is little academic oversight or accountability for private schools that would receive public funding. SB 2 does not require private schools to administer the PSSA or Keystone exams or require any regulation or oversight over the education that private schools provide students.