

# Fiction

## ESA's are Driving Public School Enrollment Decline

“On a larger level, the new law also speeds up the same sort of death spiral that has afflicted public schools across the country, by steadily draining funds away from public education... the money to cover children who leave public schools in coming years will be deducted from public school budgets.”[xii]

### Key Facts

- **Traditional public school enrollment in Arizona is stuck in a transition and long-term decline.**

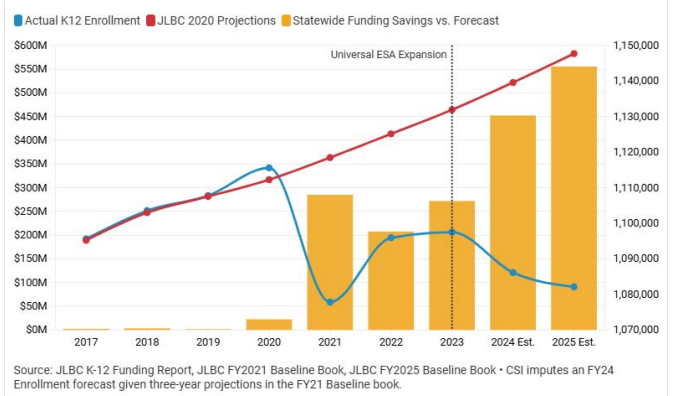
This decline accelerated during the pandemic and is independent of the universal ESA program (2022).

- **2010-2011:** The state's largest-ever public Kindergarten class entered the school system in 2010 and is graduating now. **The incoming District Kindergarten class is 25% smaller today than it was 14 years ago.**[xiii]

- Following extended school closures and a collapse in confidence in the public school system [xiv], **enrollment in Arizona public schools fell by 40,000 kids in 2021, prior to the creation of the ESA program.** Today, combined public school enrollment is 53,000+ kids below expectations.
- **Enrollment growth isn't coming back – even if ESA's were repealed tomorrow.** For two years in a row, Census data shows Arizona's school-aged population declining. Based on a review of Census and State Demographer data, CSI projects the total number of school-aged kids in Arizona will fall by 10% over the next 10 years.
- **Among these fewer students, there is more interest in school choice.**[xv] Private school parents are increasingly more satisfied than public school parents.[xvi]

#### Public School Enrollment Trends Since 2020

Arizona public school enrollment is over 53,000 students below pre-pandemic projections, saving nearly \$500M annually



## B O T T O M L I N E

**Traditional District public school enrollment has been slowly declining in Arizona for years.**

This decline has accelerated and because of demographic decline and changing attitudes will continue – no matter what happens to the universal ESA program.