

Mississippi ESA Update: The Magnolias Are Blooming

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Back in February, opponents of educational choice criticized Mississippi's new ESA program for attracting fewer than half the number of students with special needs as there were slots available, claiming that this showed that the program was a "failure."

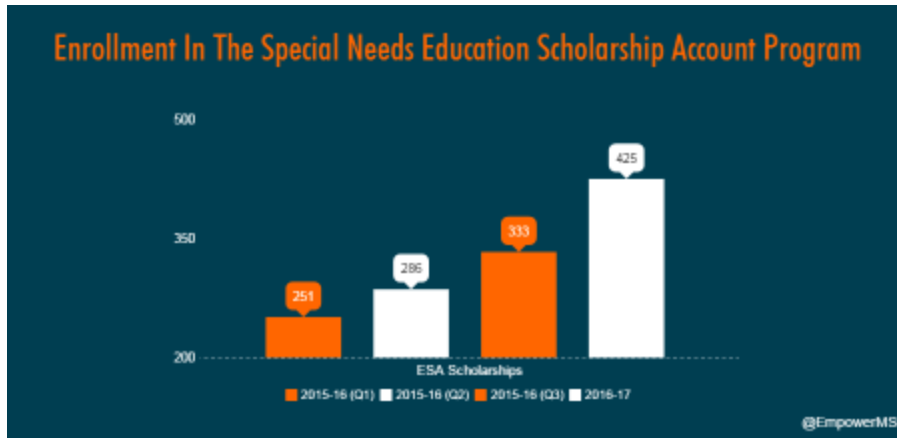
Well, surely they will now issue a press release declaring the ESA program a success now that it is oversubscribed for next year. Empower Mississippi has the details:

Yesterday the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) conducted a lottery to award the remaining 175 scholarships for the Special Needs Education Scholarship Account (ESA) program. This year a total of 425 scholarships will be awarded to students in Mississippi.

The lottery drawing, held at MDE's temporary headquarters at the South Pointe Business Park in Clinton, utilized a random number generator to determine the 175 recipients. There were 304 approved applications in the lottery competing for the available slots. Those that did not receive a scholarship, along with those that continue to apply, will have their name put on a waiting list for future openings.

Last year, in the first year of the program, 251 of the 434 available scholarships had been awarded by the beginning of the school year. Because of the rolling application process, and the available slots, that number increased each quarter last year. This year the program will be at maximum capacity of 425 students at the beginning of the year.

Enrollment in the program has grown by 70 percent over a one-year period and the number of approved applications has increased by more than 120 percent during the same time period.



Source: Empower Mississippi

Next step: raise the cap on participation!

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