



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF  
**EDUCATION**

March 17, 2026

**Sent Via Email to:** KMorris@12News.com

Ms. Kate Morris  
President & General Manager  
KPNX, Channel 12  
200 E. Van Buren Street  
Phoenix, AZ 85004

Dear Ms. Morris:

I am writing to express my sincere disappointment in the lapse of professionalism and integrity in recent reporting by KPNX regarding Arizona's universal Empowerment Scholarship Account program.

The Department of Education prepared a news release last week to correct an outrageous report from KPNX that said up to 20% of ESA expenditures involve fraud or inappropriate purchases. This was not only false, but it was also obviously false. Roughly 60% of the program is tuition for private schools with virtually no problems, so you were suggesting that half of the remaining purchases in the program were fraudulent. That is ridiculous on its face.

The Department recently conducted a statistical analysis to establish the accurate rates of unallowable expenses and fraud to correct the record. I was invited by anchor Troy Hayden to do an interview regarding the results of our analysis. We welcomed this invitation in good faith, drove to your station to do the interview in person, and agreed to give Troy a semi-exclusive in that we would not send out our press release for an hour after the interview. We kept that promise.

My interview with Troy Hayden never ran. Instead, a few short clips of my comments were used by Joe Dana, in an attack piece to undermine confidence in our statistical analysis. This was a despicable trick. His story was especially inappropriate because it gave the appearance that Joe Dana had conducted the interview, and it included segments with an erroneous and ridiculous critique of our methodology from Jennifer Jennings.

Our study was conducted by Joseph Guzman, who has a PhD which includes a Master's degree in statistics. Jennings is a sociologist, and a professed opponent of school choice who according to her own biography online "studies racial, socioeconomic, and gender disparities." She is not qualified to comment on Dr. Guzman's sampling methods.

One of her criticisms was that our sample did not match previously released data. It must be noted that our random sample of 3,000 orders from the current academic year was representative of the whole program,

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while the previous study included non-random selections from the Reimbursement and MarketPlace categories, excluding Direct Pay and Debit Card data. Anyone from our team would be happy to help her with the reading of either report.

I respectfully request that you air my interview with Troy Hayden. I also urge KPNX to evaluate whether certain reporters, such as Mr. Dana, are so immersed in their opposition to school choice, that they can no longer provide professionally balanced and factually accurate reports.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely, *Tom Horne*



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Tom Horne  
State Superintendent of Public Instruction  
1535 West Jefferson Street  
Phoenix, Arizona 85007  
Office: 602-542-2875  
Email: [Tom.Horne@azed.gov](mailto:Tom.Horne@azed.gov)

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