



## **East Valley Athletes for Christ Statement on ESA Attestation Form**

From its inception East Valley Athletes for Christ (EVAC) has been a private homeschool organization. Throughout the history of the modern homeschool movement the migration from public to private has been the vision and goal of many who have gone before us. For East Valley Athletes for Christ the distinction between “public” and “private” is a critical one and one that must be protected for the long-term stability of our organization. The Empowerment Scholarship Account (ESA) expansion that occurred approximately one year ago has created challenges for us as we continue to guard the private status of our organization.

As you may be aware there is an additional requirement this year that we sign an Accreditation Attestation Form issued by the Arizona Department of Education on which we are required to list our coaches (called tutors) and attest to either their academic achievement (high school diploma or higher degree) or certification in the area of instruction. It should be noted that EVAC complies with all Canyon Athletic Association (CAA) requirements concerning the certification of our coaches.

The requirement that we list coaches and sign the attestation form has prompted many hours of discussion, emails, meetings, and prayer at the Board level concerning what our position should be in the face of this additional requirement. The overriding issue for many has been, and continues to be, seeing this issue through a lens that places priority on maintaining the maximum level of freedom for our private homeschool organization. Although the Board is split on how to deal with the form, a majority of the Board has determined that the requirement to execute the Accreditation Attestation Form, at a minimum, “blurs the lines” with regard to the important distinction between public funding (and all associated requirements) and our clear and present status as a private homeschool organization able to function with the highest level of freedom possible. As a result, EVAC will not be signing this form, nor do we authorize its use as a vehicle to obtain reimbursement of EVAC related expenditures through the ESA system.

The need to exercise an abundance of caution here is both critical and prudent during a time when ESA programs are emerging. Outside of initial rollouts of these programs in states like Arkansas and West Virginia, additional requirements were soon “on the table.” In addition, the dependence on these funds for the ongoing operation of our EVAC organization is also a critical concern if at some point in the future we must “pull back” our support due to more onerous requirements or if ESA funds are no longer available. The results could have significant negative consequences for the EVAC organization.

The protection of our private status and maintaining maximum organizational freedom is so important at the present time. A majority of the Board feels strongly that the decision outlined above is in the best interests of East Valley Athletes for Christ as we continue to stand firm as a private homeschool organization.

EVAC Board Majority

9/18/2023