

Special Needs Scholarship

What is the Special Needs Scholarship Program?

- It is a parental choice program for special needs students attending GA public schools who are served under an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).
- The GSNS Program allows parents of eligible students to transfer their children to another public school, public school system, state school, or private school authorized to participate.

How do I learn about the GSNS Program?

- The GSNS web page <http://www.gadoe.org/External-Affairs-and-Policy/Policy/Pages/Special-Needs-Scholarship-Program.aspx> has all information regarding the program. Parents must complete the application online using the GSNS calculations.

Who is Eligible?

- A student must have a parent who currently lives in GA and has been a resident for at least one calendar year, AND
- A student has been enrolled and attended a GA public school (grades k-12) the entire prior school year (2014-15), AND
- Have been reported by a school district during the mandatory FTE conducted in Oct and March of previous school year by public schools, AND
- A student who has received services under an IEP at some point during the previous school year. A student does not have to receive services under an IEP for an entire school year. At some point is defined as: a student reported by a school system in either the October FTE count (first Tuesday in Oct), OR the March FTE count (first Thursday in October) OR in final student record as a student receiving special education services
- For students that do not meet these eligibility requirements, a parent can complete an application to *Request waiver of Prior School Year attendance requirements for Medical Reasons* which is sent to the GaDOE.

Who is Not Eligible?

- Pre-school students
- Home school students
- Students privately placed in residential treatment facilities
- Students attending a school administered by the Department of Juvenile Justice
- Students in the early Intervention Program (EIP)
- Students with an Individualized accommodation Plan (IAP, Section 504 plan)
- Students otherwise not eligible per Official Code of Georgia Annotated 20-2-2114

Things to Note

- Transportation is not provided, so it becomes the responsibility of a parent
- Funds from the GSNS Program cannot be used to pay for out of district tuition, charter schools, or other options available under public school choice.
- The authority to approve or deny public school transfer requests belongs to a school system. The request can be denied if no space is available at the public school and/or The public school cannot provide the special education services outlined in a student's IEP.

If a transfer request is granted by a school system, the student must be allowed to complete all grades at a school. For example, if a student is granted transfer to a middle school that serves grades 6-8, the transfer request would apply to the student's attendance through grade 8.

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