2023-2024 EdChoice Scholarship Program Fact Sheet

WHAT IS OHIO'S EDUCATIONAL CHOICE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM?

The EdChoice Scholarship Program provides state-funded scholarships to K-12 students who meet the eligibility criteria. The scholarship must be used to attend private schools that meet requirements for program participation.

WHEN WILL EDCHOICE APPLICATIONS BE ACCEPTED?

The application periods for the **Traditional EdChoice Scholarship** and the **EdChoice Expansion Scholarship** programs will open February 1st, 2023 and will remain open through June 30th, 2024. Families must contact the participating private school and complete the enrollment/admission process for that school. Once students have been accepted for enrollment at a participating private school for fall 2023, they may apply for an EdChoice Scholarship through the participating private school.
Participating private schools enter scholarship applications for students through the secure online application system.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR TRADITIONAL EDCHOICE?

The following students are eligible to apply for a Traditional EdChoice Scholarship:

- Those enrolled in and attending EdChoice public school buildings in their districts of residence;
- Students enrolled in and attending community schools who would otherwise be assigned to EdChoice public school buildings;
- Students enrolled in and attending public schools in their districts of residence who would be assigned to EdChoice public school buildings for the upcoming year;
- Students enrolling in Ohio schools for the first time who would be assigned to EdChoice public school buildings;
- Students eligible to enter kindergarten in fall of 2023 (and who will be 5 years old by January 1, 2024) who would be assigned to EdChoice public school buildings;
- Incoming 9th-12th graders who would be assigned to EdChoice public school buildings regardless of where they attended school the previous year;
- Students whose sibling received a traditional EdChoice Scholarship in the preceding year;
- Students entering grades K-6 who would be assigned to EdChoice public school buildings regardless of where they attended school the previous year;
- Students who previously received an Autism or Jon Peterson Scholarship but no longer qualify because they no longer need special education services;
- Students who are foster children;
- Students who reside in a certified foster home;
- Students placed with a guardian, legal custodian or in kinship care;

- Students who reside in the same household as a student who was placed with a guardian, legal custodian or in kinship care for at least 45 consecutive days;
- Students who reside in the household of another for at least 45 days and but for not living there would have been homeless; or
- Students who reside in a household with a student who would have been homeless (see previous criteria) for at least 45 consecutive days.

Students who DO NOT meet any of the preceding eligibility criteria may still be eligible for the EdChoice Expansion Scholarship if they meet the following criteria:

- Student does not live in the Cleveland Municipal School District; and
- Family household income is at or below 250 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines; or
- New student has a sibling that received an EdChoice Expansion Scholarship in the preceding year or in the current school year.

WHO IS CONSIDERED A SIBLING?

In reviewing applications, the Department will use the definition in newly enacted section 3310.033 of the Ohio Revised Code:

"'Sibling' means any of the following:
(a) A brother, half-brother, sister, or half-sister by birth, marriage, or adoption;
(b) A cousin by birth, marriage, or adoption who is residing in the same household;
(c) A foster child who is residing in the same household, including a child who is subsequently adopted by the child's foster family;
(d) A child residing in the same household who is placed with a guardian or legal custodian;
(e) A child who is residing in the same household and is being cared for by a kinship caregiver;
(f) Any other child under eighteen years of age who has resided in the same household for at least forty-five consecutive days within the last calendar year."

WHAT IS THE VALUE OF THE SCHOLARSHIP?

The EdChoice Scholarship amount is currently $5,500 for grades K-8 and $7,500 for grades 9-12. EdChoice will pay either the scholarship amount or the private school's actual tuition amount, whichever is less.

NOTE: Any application submitted after the beginning of the school year will be awarded at a prorated amount based on how much of the school year remains.

WILL PARENTS/GUARDIANS HAVE TO PAY ANY AMOUNT OF MONEY?

The scholarship amount covers tuition ONLY. Parents and/or guardians still may have to pay registration fees, material fees and other similar types of fees. Families who qualify for low income status (at or below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines) do not have to pay any tuition that is not covered by the scholarship. However, if the private school's tuition is higher than the EdChoice Scholarship amount and the family does not qualify for low income status, the family may have to pay the difference.

CAN THE EDCHOICE SCHOLARSHIP BE RENEWED?

Yes, the scholarship can be renewed each year through grade 12 as long as the student:

1. Does not move to another public school district, unless the student would be assigned to an EdChoice designated public school in the student's new district (applicable only to students who were initially awarded a scholarship based on an EdChoice designated building);
2. Takes all required assessments; and
3. Does not have more than 20 unexcused absences for the school year.

NOTE: In addition to meeting the assessment and attendance requirements, EdChoice Expansion students may renew their scholarships if they continue living in Ohio.

SHOULD PARENTS AND STUDENTS APPLY FOR AN EDCHOICE SCHOLARSHIP FIRST OR APPLY FOR ADMISSION TO A PRIVATE SCHOOL FIRST?

Parents and students should first apply for admission at the participating private school. Once the student has been accepted for enrollment at the private school, the private school may submit a scholarship application for the student through the secure online application system.

WHAT INFORMATION IS NEEDED TO APPLY FOR THE SCHOLARSHIP?

Parents must provide the private school with a copy of the student's birth certificate, a copy of current proof of address and the Scholarship Request Form to apply for the scholarship. Additional information such as student report card, notarized letter, custody documentation or foster care information may be needed for determining student eligibility for a scholarship. Parents renewing their child's scholarship must provide a copy of current proof of address and the Scholarship Renewal Form.

ARE FAMILIES REQUIRED TO HAVE THEIR INCOME VERIFIED TO APPLY FOR THE SCHOLARSHIP?

New applicants applying for the EdChoice Expansion Scholarship MUST have their income verified unless the applicant has a sibling that received an EdChoice Expansion Scholarship in the preceding year or in the current school year.

NOTE: Income verification is not required to apply for a Traditional EdChoice Scholarship or to renew an EdChoice Expansion Scholarship. However, families cannot qualify for low-income status unless they have their income verified by the EdChoice Scholarship Program.

HOW WILL PARENTS/GUARDIANS BE NOTIFIED OF THE STATUS OF THE APPLICATION?

Conditional approval for EdChoice applications will be given within 5 days of the application being submitted in the online scholarship application system by the private school. The conditional approval letter will be generated and provided to parent/guardian by the private school. Conditional

Approval is the preliminary review of an application to determine if the student is eligible for a scholarship. This is not final approval of the application. The application information will be reviewed within 14 days. The private school will be notified within 14 days if errors or deficiencies have been identified. Please contact the private school regarding any questions about the application. Awarding of scholarships will be done periodically and an award letter and acceptance form are mailed to the parent/guardian.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

Visit the EdChoice Web page at education.ohio.gov/edchoice or send an email to edchoice@education.ohio.gov.

The Cleveland Scholarship and Tutoring Program is still available for residents of the Cleveland Municipal School District. For more information about the Cleveland program, please visit:

https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Other-Resources/Scholarships/Cleveland-Scholarship-Tutoring-Program.

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