

**Georgia Special Needs Scholarship Program  
Parents Re-Enrolling in Program**

**IMPORTANT:** This is an attempt to summarize important requirements related to the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship Program (GSNS). This page is only a guide. The provisions written in GSNS law and rule take precedence.

The Georgia Special Needs Scholarship Program is a parental choice program for Georgia public school special needs students served under an IEP (not EIP or IAP).

Schools and school districts are not responsible for providing information regarding the GSNS program. They are not responsible for administering the program.

**Parent Responsibilities**

1. The GSNS website <http://public.doe.k12.ga.us/sb10.aspx> is your one stop shop for all information regarding the GSNS program. We recommend you bookmark it and check it often since it is updated continuously.
2. You are responsible for knowing and meeting all deadlines associated with the GSNS program.

**Parent/guardian is responsible for enrolling their children in an authorized private school**

1. The data from the last year your child was in a Georgia public school will be entered into the State public education funding formula for the 2009-2010 school year. Pending appropriations from the Georgia General Assembly, the scholarship amount will be approximately the same amount received during the 2008-2009 school year.
2. **Parents will not be able to go onto the website and reprint a *Scholarship Eligibility and Award sheet* from the 2008-2009 school year.** The GSNS calculator, which is available on the website, only pertains to parents who wish to have their children begin participating in the scholarship program for the 2009-2010 school year. If you need another copy of your child's award sheet, contact the school your child currently attends for a copy.
3. The initial list of authorized private schools for the 2009 – 2010 school year will be posted on the GSNS website in late February and will be updated monthly through August.
4. If you are re-enrolling your child at the same private school he/she attended during the 2009-2010 school year, simply follow the procedures at the private school for re-enrollment.

5. If you are enrolling your child at a **new** private school, you will need to contact each school directly to learn about their application process. You are required to provide the private school with a copy of the *Scholarship Eligibility and Award sheet* for your child.
6. Follow up with the private school to ensure they have enrolled and submitted your child as a GSNS student to GaDOE. If a school fails to report a GSNS student to GaDOE, a scholarship payment for the student will not be issued.
7. **In order to be eligible to receive the scholarship for the 2009 – 2010 school year, a student must be enrolled and in attendance in an authorized private school by September 11, 2009, no exceptions.**
8. A student must be enrolled and attending at an authorized private school for 35 school days during a payment cycle before they can receive payment for that cycle.
9. Checks are made out to parent/guardian of record at the private school, but are mailed directly to a private school. The private school is required to notify all parents when they receive scholarship payments. By law, parents are required to endorse scholarship checks over to a private school using a restrictive endorsement within 30 days of the notice from the private school. A parent/guardian cannot take a scholarship check from a school nor can he/she refuse to endorse a check; both will result in forfeiture of scholarship. It is illegal for private schools to endorse scholarship checks for parents.
10. GaDOE is authorized to make one payment per student per quarter and is not authorized to make any partial or retroactive payments. Upon endorsing a check to the private school, the parent and the private school validate that the payment amount is correct. Any discrepancies thereafter shall be resolved between the parent and the private school. In addition, the IRS has determined that acceptance of a scholarship under this program is not considered personal family income as long as a parent/guardian does not attempt to deposit in or cash the check against an account.
11. A private school participating in the GSNS program is not required to alter any of its business practices or school policies under the program. Therefore, parents are responsible for complying with the private school's business practices and your child must comply with the private school's policies. Obtain written copies of any agreements entered into between yourself and the school (e.g. tuition reimbursement, fee schedules). GaDOE staff **cannot** resolve any disputes between a parent and a private school.
12. ***Acceptance of scholarship shall have the same effect as a parental refusal to consent to services pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C.A. Section 1400, et seq. This means that accepting a scholarship waives a parent/guardian's rights under IDEA and a participating private school is not required to follow a student's IEP.***

13. Keep your child in attendance at a participating private school throughout the school year unless excused by the school for illness or other good cause.
14. If at any time, you are dissatisfied with a private school you can transfer your child to another authorized private school on the GSNS list. Do not remove your child from his/her current private school until you have received acceptance from another private school on the list. If you transfer your child back into public school, your child's eligibility for the scholarship will end. Your child will need to attend a public school for one full school year and retain his/her IEP to regain eligibility. Refer to GSNS eligibility criteria.
15. GSNS funds **cannot** be used to pay for student transportation. You must provide and pay for transportation for your child to attend an authorized private school unless the school provides daily transportation for students. This also applies, if you would like for him/her to participate in statewide assessments.
16. GSNS funds **cannot** be used to pay for the following:
  - **Before or after school care**
  - **Meals**
  - **Tutoring**
  - **Transportation**
  - **Fees associated with field trips**
  - **Athletic fees**
  - **School supplies**
  - **Any of other fees as determined by GaDOE**
17. Any complaints regarding a GSNS authorized private schools must be submitted using the official GSNS Complaint form. The form must be notarized and mailed to the GSNS office. Complaints will not be taken over the telephone.