

Catoosa County Public Schools

May 1, 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian:

As the parent of a student who receives special education in our school system, we wanted to let you know about your options to exercise public and private school choice. Under a state law passed by the Georgia State Legislature in 2007, parents of students who receive special education may request to transfer their child to a private school or another public school in Georgia.

Private School Choice Option (See Georgia Department of Education website for more information)

If you are interested in transferring your child to a private school in Georgia, you may be able to take advantage of a Georgia Special Needs Scholarship. These scholarships provide funding that can be used to offset tuition costs at participating private schools in the State of Georgia. For more information on the application process, please visit the Georgia DOE website at www.doe.k12.ga.us.

Parental Right to Choice (Deadline to Apply – August 21, 2020)

Under the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship (GSNS) law passed in 2007 (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2113), parent(s)/guardian(s) whose child meets the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship eligibility criteria now have the right to request a public school transfer to:

- Another public school within their district of residence; or
- Another public school district outside their district of residence; or
- One of the three state schools for the blind or deaf; or
- A private school authorized to participate in the GSNS Program. Funds received through the GSNS Program can only be used to pay for tuition and fees at a private school authorized by the State Board of Education to participate in the program.

This form must be completed and sent directly to the school system you want your child to attend. Parent(s)/guardian(s) should contact the school system's office to find out to whom the form should be sent and any deadlines involved in making the request.

2020-2021 Georgia Special Needs Student Scholarship Eligibility Criteria

The Georgia Special Needs Scholarship (GSNS) Program is a parental choice program for special needs students attending Georgia public schools who are served under an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The following provides information regarding eligibility and the different choice options available under the GSNS Program. The GSNS web page <http://www.gadoe.org/External-Affairs-and-Policy/Policy/Pages/Special-NeedsScholarship-Program.aspx> also has important information regarding the GSNS Program.

Parents of students continuing in the private school choice option must read the Continuing Participation document posted on the web page for the requirements of continuing eligibility in the private school choice option.

In order to qualify for the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship Program a student must meet the following requirements:

- Student Eligibility Criteria 1- A student must have a parent/guardian who currently lives in Georgia and has been a resident for at least one calendar year.
- Student Eligibility Criteria 2- A student was enrolled and completed the entire school year in a Georgia public school in grades kindergarten through twelfth prior to transfer of private school
- Student Eligibility Criteria 3- A student was reported attending a Georgia public school by a school district(s) during mandatory student counts conducted in October and March of the qualifying year.
- Student Eligibility Criteria 4 - A student does not need to have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for the entire school year to qualify for the GSNS Program. A student must have received special education services at some point during the school year through an IEP. A student must be reported by a school district(s) in either the October OR March student counts OR in final student record as a student receiving special education services by the end of the school year.

Transfers Within A School System

A school system considering a transfer between schools must evaluate the request based on capacity at a requested school(s) and the availability of a program at a requested school(s) which is aligned with the student's IEP. Capacity is defined in two ways:

- Capacity of the school building based on established health and safety provisions; and
- Class-size capacity by grade and subject, based on state law and rule.

Transfers Out of a School System

A school system considering a request for a transfer into its school system has the authority to approve or deny a public school transfer request for any reason. A school system considering a transfer can deny a request even if there is capacity and a program available that is aligned to the student's IEP within its system. If a request is approved, a school system can charge parent(s)/guardian(s) for the costs of educating a student from outside its school system.

Important

Transportation under this public school choice option is the responsibility of a parent. Funds received through the Special Needs Scholarship Program cannot be used to offset the costs of out of district tuition, charter schools, or other options available under public school choice.

Once a transfer request has been approved by a school system, the student must be allowed to complete all grades at a school. The school system can report the student for FTE purposes.

If you have questions, please feel free to contact me at 706-965-4052.

Sincerely,

Becky Conner

Becky Conner
Special Education Director

Catoosa County Public Schools

Student Information

Date _____

Student's Name _____

Grade _____ Date of birth _____ Age _____

Name of parent/guardian/other requesting transfer _____

Home Address: Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip code _____

Phone () _____ E-Mail _____

If applicable, name of public school system student attended during 2019-2020 school year:

If applicable, name of public school student attended during 2019-2020 school year:

If applicable, name of private school student attended during 2019-2020 school year:

Request for transfer:

I, _____ am requesting a transfer for
Name of Parent/Guardian/Other

_____ to attend _____

Student's Name _____ Name of Public or State School

in the _____
Name of School System

Signature Parent/Guardian/Other _____

Date _____

Notifications will be mailed to parents during the week of July 1, 2020