



NEWTON COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM
SPECIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
2109 NEWTON DRIVE, N.E.
P.O. BOX 1469
COVINGTON, GEORGIA 30015
Phone: (770) 787-1330 * Fax (770) 784-4947

GARY S. MATHEWS, Ph.D
Superintendent

DR. LINDA HAYDEN
*Associate Superintendent for
Curriculum, Instruction, & Technology*

April 25, 2011

RE: Georgia Special Needs Scholarship

Dear Parents/Guardians:

As the parent/guardian of a student who receives special education services in our school system, we want 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/guardians of a student who receives special education services may choose to transfer their child to another public school or private school in Georgia. Information and forms for public school choice are posted on the Newton County website, www.newtoncountyschools.org, or you can call the Special Education Department at (770) 787-1330.

In order for a student to qualify for this scholarship, 1) the parent/guardian has been a Georgia resident for at least one year and currently resides within Georgia; 2) the student meets Georgia eligibility criteria for one or more disability areas; and 3) the student has spent the prior year in attendance at a Georgia public school and shall have had an Individual Education Program (IEP) written by the school in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations.

Public School Choice Options

A parent can request a transfer to another public school within their school system as long as there is **available space at that school and the school has a program with the services agreed to in the student's existing IEP (Grades 1 – 12)**. **If the parent chooses this option, then the parent shall be responsible for transportation to the school.**

The parent may request a transfer to a school in another school system **if there is available space and the system and school has a program with the services agreed to in the student's existing IEP**. A school system must agree to accept the student, however. **If the parent chooses this option and the school system accepts the child, then the parent shall be responsible for transportation to a school in that system.**

The parent may also request a transfer to one of the state schools for the deaf and/or blind operated by the State Board of Education. Acceptance into a state school will depend if that setting is appropriate for the student's needs. **If the parent chooses this option, then the parent shall be responsible for transportation to the state school.** Please contact the Georgia Department of Education at <http://public.doe.k12.ga.us/> for more information about transferring to a State School.

Private School Choice Option

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 cost at participating private schools in the State of Georgia. For more information on the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship and the parent application process, please visit the Georgia Department of Education's website at <http://public.doe.k12.ga.us/>.

Sincerely,

Dr. Sarah West

Dr. Sarah West
Director, Special Education

**Newton County Board of Education
Special Education Department
Georgia Special Needs Scholarship – Public School Choice Option**

GUIDELINES

Georgia Special Needs Permission – School Choice

Pursuant to Senate Bill 10 (Code 20-2-2113), parents of a student with a disability who meet the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship Eligibility criteria may request to have their child attend another school within the system. The Newton County School System will make a decision regarding a parental request to transfer based on two criteria:

- A. Class size and school capacity which is defined by
 - the class-size capacity by grade and subject, based on state law (160-5-1-08)
- B. The school's ability to provide the services identified in the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Requirements

- The student has been a Georgia resident for at least the preceding 12 calendar months.
- The student has spent the entire immediate prior school year in attendance at a Georgia public school in grades K – 12. (Prior school year attendance requires that the student was enrolled and reported as a student with a disability by a school district for funding during the preceding October **OR** March Full-time Equivalency (FTE) surveys in Georgia.)
- The student must have a **current** IEP.
- Home schooled students, students enrolled in the Department of Juvenile Justice, and students in residential facilities are not eligible.
- **For the 2011-2012 school year, the Newton County School System is NOT accepting requests from parents/students who live outside of Newton County.**

Application/Deadlines

- There will be two application deadlines for students eligible for a transfer to another school.
 - For the fall semester of the school year,* parents have until **June 30th, 2011**, to request that their child attend another school in the district.
 - For the spring semester of the school year,* parents have until **November 28th, 2011**, to request that their child attend another school in the district.
- Parents may obtain forms on the website and submit the completed forms to the same department by the designated deadline date.

Transportation

The parent/guardian is **obligated** to provide transportation for their child to attend a school out of their assigned attendance area.

Changing Grade Levels

When the student changes levels (i.e. elementary to middle school, or middle to high school) the parent must reapply for the school choice option.

DEADLINE

1st semester 2011-2012
June 30th, 2011

2nd semester 2011-2012
November 28th, 2011

Newton County Board of Education
Newton County Special Education Department
Georgia Special Needs Scholarship
Public School Choice Option
770-787-1330 (office) 770-784-4947 (fax)
www.newtoncountyschools.org

2011-2012
School Year

A parent of a student with a disability **who was a Georgia resident for at least the past twelve months** and who had **an active Individualized Education Program (IEP) during the 2010-2011** school year may request to transfer their child to another school. **The Newton County School System will make the decision regarding a parental request to transfer based on class size and school capacity as well as the school's ability to provide the services identified in the student's Individual Education Program.**

***This application is for **Newton County residents only**. For the 2011-2012 school year, the Newton County School System is **not** accepting requests from parents who live outside the county.

1. Name of Student: _____ Grade _____
 (Last Name) (First Name) (Middle Name) 2011-2012

2. Name of Parent/Guardian _____
 (Last Name) (First Name) (Middle Name)

3. Address: _____
 (Street) (City) (Zip)

4. Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

5. School Zoned to Attend (2011-12) _____ School Requested: _____

6. Area of Disability: _____

Conditions of Request:

1. Residency requirements must be met and up to date.
2. ***Parent/Guardian must provide transportation to and from school each day.***
3. Should a student voluntarily request to return to his/her home school, the Special Education Department must be notified in advance. The Newton County School System will make the decision regarding a parental request to transfer based on class size and school capacity as well as the school's ability to provide the services identified in the student's Individual Education Program (IEP). All transfers back to the home school will take place at the end of a semester.
4. State policies and local guidelines limit the number of students in each classroom. Permission for a transfer is contingent upon space available in the grade level as well as availability with scheduling specific classes and the ability to implement the current IEP.

Submit form to:

Newton County Board of Education
Special Education Department
2109 Newton Drive
P.O. Box 1469
Covington, GA 30015
Attn: Georgia Special Needs Scholarship – Public School Choice Option

Date

Signature of Parent/Guardian