



NEWTON COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM
SPECIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
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SAMANTHA M. FUHREY, Ed.S.
Superintendent

BROOKE RAMSEY
Director, Special Education

May 1, 2019

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/> - the NCSS has no information concerning this process.

Sincerely,

Brooke Ramsey

Brooke Ramsey
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

In order to qualify for the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship Program for the 2019-2020 school year a student must meet **ALL** of the following requirements:

- A student and the parent/guardian must currently live in Georgia and have been a resident for at least the preceding 12 calendar months.
- A student was reported as attending a Georgia public school by a school district(s) during mandatory student counts (FTE) conducted in October 2018 **and** March 2019.
- A student does not need to have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for the entire school year to qualify for the SB10 Program – however, they must have a current IEP. A student must have received special education services at some point during the 2018 – 2019 school year through an IEP. A student **must** be reported by a school district(s) in either the October 2018 OR March 2019 student counts OR in final student record as a student receiving special education services by the end of the 2018 – 2019 school year.
- Home schooled students, students enrolled in the Department of Juvenile Justice, and students in residential facilities are not eligible.
- **For the 2019-2020 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 **July 1st, 2019**, to request that their child attend another school in the district.
 - For the spring semester of the school year*, parents have until **December 2nd, 2019**, to request that their child attend another school in the district.
- Parents may obtain forms on the Newton County Schools website and submit the completed forms to the Special Education 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.

