

**Special Needs Scholarship Program
Public School Choice
2020-2021 School Year**

Parental Right to Choice

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 system outside their district of residence; or
- To one of the three state schools for the blind or deaf (**Only students with the primary exceptionality of visual and/or individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing may request a transfer to a State School**).

The authority to allow or deny transfer requests belongs to a school system. School systems can create their own forms and set deadlines for transfer requests. Parents/guardians must contact a school system directly regarding the process the school system uses for public school transfer requests available through the GSNS Program. A parent can link to any school system from the Georgia Department of Education's home page at www.gadoe.org

This form is provided for parents/guardians whose school system does not provide a form for school choice available through the GSNS Program. It must be completed and sent directly to the school system you want your child to attend. **Do not send it to the Georgia Department of Education.** A parent/guardian should contact a school system's office to find out to whom the form should be sent and any deadlines involved in making the request. Only a school system has the authority to approve or deny a public school transfer request.

2020 – 2021 Georgia Special Needs Student Scholarship Eligibility Criteria

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

- **Student Eligibility Criteria 1-** A student have must 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 2019 – 2020 school year in a Georgia public school in grades kindergarten through twelfth.
- **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 2019 **and** March 2020.
- **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 2019 – 2020 school year through an IEP. A student must be reported by a school district(s) in either the October 2019 **OR** March 2020 student counts **OR** in final student record as a student receiving special education services by the end of the 2019 – 2020 school year.

Note: If a student attended a private school through the Special Needs Scholarship Program during the 2019- 2020 school year, a parent/guardian is eligible for public school choice options for the 2020 – 2021 school year.

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TRANSFERS WITHIN A SCHOOL SYSTEM (e.g. transfer from one public school in a county to another in the same county)

A school system reviewing a transfer request must evaluate the request based on availability of space and/or the availability of a special education program at the requested public school that can meet the services outlined in a student's IEP. If there is no space available and/or if the public school requested by a parent/guardian cannot provide the special education services outlined in a student's IEP, then the school system can deny the transfer request.

TRANSFERS OUTSIDE OF A SCHOOL SYSTEM (e.g. transfer from a public school in Cobb County to a public school in Cherokee County)

A school system reviewing a transfer request to its school system from another school system can deny a request for any reason even if there is space and the availability of a special education program at a requested public school. **Note:** It is allowable for a school system to have a policy not to accept students that reside outside of the school system.

If a school system approves an out of system transfer request, it can charge a parent/guardian for the costs of educating a student; also known as out of district tuition. Funds received through the GSNS Program cannot be used to offset the costs of out of district tuition.

IMPORTANT

If a transfer request is granted by a school system, the student must be allowed to complete all grades at a school. For example, if a student is granted a transfer request to a middle school that serves grades 6 - 8, the transfer request would apply to the student's attendance through grade 8. The parent would need to file another transfer request if the parent wished to send the student to a different high school.

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SCHOOL CHOICE FORM

Student's Name _____

Current 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 the 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 _____

Submit Application to Special Education Department, c/o Melanie Cooksey – 200 Double Springs Church Rd., Monroe, GA 30656

Application must be received no later than June 30, 2020. Decisions will be made and Approval/Denial letters will be sent to parents by July 17, 2020.