Mississippi Department of Education

Office of Special Education

Questions Regarding the FY14 Speech-Language Therapy Scholarship (Nate Rogers)

1. **Who is eligible?**
   1. Students in kindergarten through Grade 6 or its equivalent (age 11) who have been properly evaluated and received a primary eligibility ruling of speech-language impairment shall be eligible to receive scholarship assistance.
2. **Can the Speech-Language Therapy Scholarship be used for students in grades 8 and above?**
   1. No, the scholarship applies only to students in kindergarten through Grade 6 or its equivalent (age 11 by September 1).
3. **Can all students who have an eligibility ruling according to IDEA receive a Speech-Language Therapy Scholarship?**
   1. No, only students who have a primary eligibility ruling of speech-language impairment can receive the Speech-Language Scholarship.
4. **What students are not eligible for the speech-language therapy scholarship?**
   1. Students enrolled in a school that provides educational services to youth in the Department of Juvenile Justice commitment programs;
   2. Students who are participating in a home-school education;
   3. Students who are participating in a virtual school who take three (3) or more courses per school year, correspondence school or distance learning programs that receive state funding; and
   4. Students that do not have direct and regular contact with his or her private school teachers at the school’s physical location.
5. **Does the student have to participate in the program for the whole school year?**
   1. Yes. Any student participating in the Mississippi Speech-Language Therapy Scholarship must remain in attendance throughout the school year unless excused by the school for illness or other good cause.
6. **Who will receive the tuition reimbursement?**
   1. The Mississippi State Department of Education shall make payments to the approved and accredited nonpublic schools for each student at the nonpublic school equal to the State’s share of the adequate education program payments for each student in average daily attendance at the school district from which the student(s) transferred.
7. **How are the Speech-Language Therapy Scholarship funds allocated?**
   1. Funds are allocated based on student base cost as appropriated.
8. **Can private schools apply?**
   1. Yes, those private schools that are state accredited nonpublic special purpose schools that are organized to provide and emphasizes instruction in speech-language therapy and intervention as the primary purpose of the school.
9. **Can a 504 student receive a scholarship?**
   1. Yes, if those students have a primary eligibility ruling of speech-language impairment as defined by IDEA and state regulations.
10. **If a student fails the speech-language screener, does the school district have to conduct a comprehensive speech evaluation?**
    1. No, the school district, at its discretion, may conduct a comprehensive speech evaluation.
11. **Can students who are participating in the Educable Child Program also receive the scholarship?**
    1. Yes, they would have to apply for Educable Child funds and submit the necessary documentation for approval**.**
12. **How will funding be determined for students who are already attending nonpublic schools?**
    1. There were no funds appropriated for this category of students. The nonpublic school will have to request a deficit appropriation funding.
13. **Can a public school district place students at the nonpublic school and receive the scholarship for those students?**
    1. No, the scholarship is an option offered to parents or legal guardians of students with an eligibility ruling of speech-language impairment to attend a nonpublic school of choice that is organized to provide and emphasizes instruction in speech-language therapy and intervention as its primary purpose.
14. **What are the licensing requirements for the speech language pathologists?**
    1. The speech language pathologist must have a 215 license.
15. **Do students who attend the nonpublic school require an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or service plan?**
    1. No, these students are parent placed and therefore do not fall under the protection of IDEA.
16. **What exactly is the criterion for receiving the scholarship?**
    1. Students who have a primary eligibility ruling of speech-language impairment and

students who are in Grades Kindergarten through Grade 6 or its equivalent (Age 11 by September 1) are eligible for the scholarship.

1. **Will those disabilities with an inherent language issue such as autism, hearing impairment, etc., meet the criteria or must a student have speech-language eligibility?**
   1. No, the student’s primary disability must be speech-language impairment.
2. **Can Speech Language therapist funded by IDEA funds conduct mass speech-language screening as far as funding? Or does this need to be funded by district funds?**
   1. No, the requirement for screening students for speech-language disorders is a state mandate which must be funded with local state or district funds. The use of IDEA funds would be supplanting.
3. **Can you use IDEA funds to pay for a 215 to mentor a 216?**
   1. No, IDEA funds are for the excess cost of providing education or services to students with disabilities. A 215 is required by legislation.
4. **Is there a way to make the speech-language screener and the dyslexia screener be incorporated together-administer one screener to all 1st grade students?**
   1. We are not aware of any such screener. Multiple screeners would be needed.

1. **Can a 216 complete a screener for language, voice, and fluency?**
   1. No, they can screen for articulation only.