



Educational Scholarship Accounts (ESA)

GUIDANCE FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS



MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

Guidance for Public Schools

1. Who is eligible to receive the Mississippi Educational Scholarship?

- a. Children who reside in Mississippi, and
- b. Children who have an active Individualized Education Program (IEP) within three (3) years from the date of application. An active IEP is an IEP developed by a public school district where the student was enrolled and received special education or related services outlined in the IEP.

2. Are students receiving the Mississippi Educational Scholarship eligible for equitable access to services (service plan) through IDEA private school proportionate share funded activities?

- a. Yes, if the student is attending a non-profit private school that meets the definition of elementary or secondary school, the student must be considered for receiving services as part of the district's meaningful consultation with the private school.
- b. The Child Find requirements for locating, identifying, and evaluating (including reevaluating) children are fully applicable to children enrolled by their parents in private schools including those who receive an ESA.
- c. Children with disabilities enrolled by their parents in private schools who participate in the scholarship program and receive equitable services must be included in the annual child count. The total number of parentally placed private school students eligible for equitable services is used to determine the proportionate share of IDEA Part B funds that the school district must spend on providing special education and related services to children with disabilities enrolled by their parents in private schools located in the school district.
- d. If the district and private school determine through meaningful consultation that the student will receive equitable services, those services will be documented through a service plan. A parent of a child parentally placed in a private school may decline the equitable services offered by the public school district.

3. What are the responsibilities of the parent/guardian?

- a. Parents must sign an agreement to abide by the following responsibilities:
 - Provide an organized, appropriate educational program with measurable annual goals and provide an education for the child in at least the subjects of reading, grammar, mathematics, social studies and science;
 - Participate in the reevaluation of the child with the public school district and provide documentation of the child's disability;
 - Not enroll the participating child in a public school and to acknowledge that the eligible school has provided clear notice that the child has no individual



entitlement to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) from the home school district, including special education and related services, for as long as the child is participating in the ESA program;

- Not to file for the participating child a certificate of enrollment indicating participation in a home instruction program under §37-13-19, Mississippi Code of 1972;
- Not to participate in the Mississippi Dyslexia Therapy Scholarship for Students with Dyslexia Program or the Mississippi Speech-Language Therapy Scholarship for Students with Speech-Language Impairments Program while participating in the ESA program;
- Notify the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) immediately upon a change in status that causes one or more of the above items to no longer be met;
- Provide the OSE, ESA division pre- and post-assessments by June of the awarded school year; and
- Participate and share the pre-and post-assessments administered by the school the student is attending.

4. How can parents apply for the Mississippi Educational Scholarship?

- a. The public school district must make an application available to the parent/guardian upon request.
- b. Applications are available on the Mississippi Department of Education website: www.mdek12.org/OSE/ESA. Applications will be accepted via United States Postal Service and online Portal (currently under development).

