

# EdChoice Scholarship Program Fact Sheet

## WHAT IS OHIO'S EDUCATIONAL CHOICE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM?

The EdChoice Scholarship Program provides up to 60,000 state-funded scholarships to students who attend low-performing public school buildings. The scholarship must be used to attend private schools that meet requirements for program participation.

## WHEN WILL EDCHOICE APPLICATIONS BE ACCEPTED?

The application period begins Feb. 1, 2015. Families must contact the participating private school/provider and complete the enrollment/admission process for that school. Once students have been accepted for enrollment at a participating private school/provider for fall 2015, they can then apply for an EdChoice Scholarship through the participating private school/provider. Participating private schools/providers can enter scholarship applications for students through the secure online application system.

## WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR EDCHOICE?

The following students are eligible to apply for an EdChoice scholarship:

- Students currently attending a designated public school in their resident district;
- Students attending a public school in their resident district who will be assigned to one of the designated public schools for the upcoming school year;
- Students currently attending a charter/community school whose assigned home school is a designated public school building;
- Students eligible to enter kindergarten for fall 2015 (and who will be age 5 by 1/1/2016) who would be assigned to one of the designated public schools; or
- Students enrolling in an Ohio school for the first time who would be assigned to one of the designated public schools for the upcoming school year.

Students who DO NOT meet any of the preceding eligibility criteria may still be eligible for the EdChoice "expansion" scholarship if they meet the following criteria:

- Student is eligible to enter kindergarten, first grade or second grade for fall 2015;
- Student does not live in the Cleveland Municipal School District; and
- Family household income is at or below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.

## WHAT IS THE VALUE OF THE SCHOLARSHIP?

The EdChoice scholarship amount is currently \$4250 for grades K-8 and \$5000 for grades 9-12. EdChoice will pay either the scholarship amount or the private school's actual tuition amount, whichever is less.

## **WILL PARENTS/GUARDIANS HAVE TO PAY ANY AMOUNT OF MONEY?**

The scholarship amount covers tuition ONLY. Parents and guardians still may have to pay registration fees, material fees and other similar types of fees. Families who qualify for low income status do not have to pay any tuition that is not covered by the scholarship. However, if the private school's tuition is higher than the EdChoice Scholarship amount and if the family does not qualify for low income status, the family may have to pay the difference.

## **CAN THE EDCHOICE SCHOLARSHIP BE RENEWED?**

Yes, the scholarship can be renewed each year through grade 12 as long as the student:

1. Does not move to another public school district, unless the student would be assigned to an EdChoice-designated public school in the student's new district;
2. Takes all required state achievement tests; and
3. Does not have more than 20 unexcused absences for the school year.

NOTE: In addition to meeting the testing and attendance requirements, EdChoice expansion students can renew their scholarships if they continue living in Ohio and meeting the income requirements.

## **SHOULD PARENTS AND STUDENTS APPLY FOR AN EDCHOICE SCHOLARSHIP FIRST OR APPLY FOR ADMISSION TO A PRIVATE SCHOOL FIRST?**

Parents and students should first apply for admission at the participating private school. Once the student has been accepted for enrollment at the private school/ provider, the private school/provider will submit a scholarship application for the student through the secure online application system.

## **WHAT INFORMATION IS NEEDED TO APPLY FOR THE SCHOLARSHIP?**

Parents must provide the private school/provider with a copy of the student's birth certificate, a copy of current proof of address and the Scholarship Request Form to apply for the scholarship. Parents renewing their child's scholarship must provide a copy of current proof of address and the Scholarship Renewal Form.

## **ARE FAMILIES REQUIRED TO HAVE THEIR INCOME VERIFIED TO APPLY FOR THE SCHOLARSHIP?**

**Yes.** The expansion scholarship is income-based. Families applying for the EdChoice "expansion" scholarship **MUST** have their income verified; it is not optional.

NOTE: Income verification is not required to apply for a traditional EdChoice scholarship. However, families cannot qualify for low-income status unless they have their income verified by the EdChoice Scholarship Program.

## **WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?**

Visit the EdChoice Web page at [education.ohio.gov/edchoice](http://education.ohio.gov/edchoice) or send email to [edchoice@education.ohio.gov](mailto:edchoice@education.ohio.gov).

The Cleveland Scholarship and Tutoring Program is still available for residents of the Cleveland Municipal School District. For more information about the Cleveland program, please visit: <http://cstp.education.ohio.gov/>.