

Towns County School District
67 Lakeview Circle, Suite C
Hiawassee, GA 30546
May 10, 2010

RE: Georgia Special Needs Scholarship

Dear Parent:

As the parent of a student who receives special education services in our school district, we would like to inform you about your option to exercise public and private school choice. Under a state law passed by the Georgia State Legislature in 2007, parents of students who receive special education services may request to transfer their child to another public or private school in Georgia provided that their child has an IEP and has been enrolled for a full academic year in a Georgia public school. Three options are described below.

Private School Choice Option

Parents who are interested in transferring their child to a private school in Georgia may be able to take advantage of a Georgia Special Needs Scholarship. These scholarships provide funding that can be used to offset tuition costs at participating private schools in the state of Georgia. If the private school choice option is used, the student must apply and be enrolled in an approved private school prior to August 25, 2010. For more information on the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship and the application process, please visit the Georgia Department of Education's website at <http://gadoe.org/sb10.aspx>.

Other Public School Districts Option

Parents may request a transfer to a school in another school district if there is available space and the system/school has the program with the services in the student's existing individualized education program (IEP). However, the school district must agree to accept the student. If the parent chooses this option and the school district accepts the child, then the parent shall be responsible for transportation. If you are interested in your child attending a school in another system, please contact that system directly.

A 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 on whether the setting is appropriate for the student's needs. If the parent chooses this option, then the parent shall be responsible for transportation. Please contact the Georgia Department of Education for more information about transferring to a State School.

Public School Choice / Intra-School Transfer Option

A parent can request for their child to transfer to another public school within their school district as long as there is available space at that school and the school has a program with the services that are in the student's existing IEP. In addition, the specific program within the school must also have available space.

If you are interested in any applicable options, please visit the Georgia Department of Education's website at <http://gadoe.org/sb10.aspx> for further directions.

We continue to look forward to serving the needs of your student.

Sincerely,

Michelle Pyrlík
Director of Special Education