

How does EdChoice work today?

2020-2021 Traditional EdChoice Scholarship Program

WHAT IS OHIO'S EDUCATIONAL CHOICE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM?

The Traditional EdChoice Scholarship Program provides up to 60,000 state-funded scholarships to students who attend EdChoice-designated public school buildings. The scholarship is used by students to attend private schools that meet requirements for program participation. This document provides a summary of the Traditional EdChoice Scholarship application process and reflects the requirements established by the 133rd General Assembly in House Bill 197,¹ which became effective March 27, 2020.

WHEN WILL EDCHOICE APPLICATIONS BE ACCEPTED?

The priority application period for the **Traditional EdChoice Scholarship Program** begins on **April 1 and ends May 30, 2020 at 11:59 p.m.** The Ohio Department of Education strongly encourages early application submission during the priority period. A second application period begins July 1, 2020, and remains open through June 30, 2021. Families should first contact a participating private school and complete the enrollment/admission process for that school. Once a student has been accepted for enrollment at a participating private school for fall 2020, the participating private school will apply for an EdChoice Scholarship on the student's behalf. Participating private schools enter scholarship applications for students through the secure online application system.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR EDCHOICE?

Recent changes enacted by the General Assembly established four groups for Traditional EdChoice Scholarships:

- Eligible students who received scholarships in 2019-2020;
- Students who meet both of the following: (1) did not receive scholarships for the 2019-2020 school year; and (2) are newly enrolled (or would be newly enrolled) in eligible buildings on both the [2019-2020](#) and [2020-2021](#) lists;
- Students who were eligible in the 2019-2020 school year and remain eligible in the 2020-2021 school year;
- Students who meet all three of the following: (1) had siblings who received Traditional EdChoice Scholarships in the 2019-2020 school year; (2) were (or would be) enrolled in kindergarten through 12th grade in eligible buildings on the [2019-2020](#) list; and (3) were enrolled in public or nonpublic schools or home-schooled in the 2019-2020 school year or will be enrolled in kindergarten or start home-schooling for the equivalent of kindergarten in the 2020-2021 school year.

Official verification of student eligibility is completed by the student's resident public school district.

ARE STUDENTS CURRENTLY ENROLLED IN PRIVATE SCHOOLS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

A student enrolled in a private school during the 2019-2020 school year is eligible to apply if:

- The student is entering ninth through 12th grade and would be assigned to a designated building on the [2019-2020](#) and [2020-2021](#) lists; OR
- The student has a sibling who attended a private school on a Traditional EdChoice Scholarship during the 2019-2020 school year and the student would be assigned to a designated building on the [2019-2020](#) list.

¹ Section 31(A), House Bill 197, 133rd General Assembly.

ARE STUDENTS CURRENTLY HOME-SCHOOLED ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

A student who is home-schooled during the 2019-2020 school year is eligible to apply if:

- The student is entering ninth through 12th grade and would be assigned to a designated building on the [2019-2020](#) and [2020-2021](#) lists; OR
- The student is entering an Ohio school for the first time in any grade and would be assigned to a designated building on the [2019-2020](#) and [2020-2021](#) lists; OR
- The student has a sibling who attended a private school on a Traditional EdChoice Scholarship during the 2019-2020 school year and the student would be assigned to a designated building on the [2019-2020](#) list.

SHOULD PARENTS AND STUDENTS APPLY FOR THE 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, the private school will submit a scholarship application for the student through the secure online application system.

WHAT INFORMATION IS NEEDED TO APPLY FOR THE SCHOLARSHIP?

To ensure the private school has all the documents necessary to submit an application, the Department encourages parents to provide the private school with a copy of the student's birth certificate, a copy of current proof of address and the [Scholarship Request Form](#). Parents renewing a student's scholarship must provide the private school with a copy of current proof of address and the [Scholarship Renewal Form](#).

WHO REVIEWS APPLICATIONS FOR ELIGIBILITY?

Once a private school submits a completed application for a student, the public school district has 30 days to review the student's eligibility during which it may request additional information from the private school. If the initial review is not completed within 30 days, the Department of Education will review the application and information to determine eligibility. Please note the eligibility decision may not be made within 30 days of application submission.

HOW WILL SCHOLARSHIPS BE AWARDED?

Ohio law limits the number of Traditional EdChoice Scholarships awarded to 60,000 statewide. If the total number of eligible new and renewal applications exceeds 60,000, priority will be given to:

- Eligible renewal students, then
- Eligible new EdChoice applicants with family income at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines, then
- Eligible new EdChoice applicants with family income above the aforementioned threshold or those who have not had family income verified.

It is important to note the Department cannot guarantee a scholarship award for any student.

HOW WILL APPLICANTS BE NOTIFIED OF AWARD DECISIONS?

Applicants will be notified of award decisions by U.S. Mail. A parent also can access the child's scholarship application with an [OHID account](#).

WHAT IS THE VALUE OF THE SCHOLARSHIP?

The EdChoice Scholarship amount currently is \$4,650 for grades K-8 and \$6,000 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 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 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 if 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; and
2. Does not have more than 20 unexcused absences for the school year.

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

Income verification is not required to complete the application for a Traditional EdChoice Scholarship. However, low-income status is a factor in the event of a lottery. A lottery may be conducted if there are more applications received than the number of available scholarship awards. Families with low-income status are not required to pay tuition above the scholarship award amount.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

Visit the EdChoice Web page at education.ohio.gov/edchoice or send an email to edchoice@education.ohio.gov.

The Ohio Department of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, gender, nationality, age, disability or ethnic background.

Visit the EdChoice website at education.ohio.gov/edchoice.