

# How does **EdChoice** work today?

Nonpublic Educational Options

## 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 Senate Bill 120.

### 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**. Because availability is limited, the Department strongly encourages early submission during the priority period. A second application period begins July 1, 2020, and will remain open as the Department of Education will continue to award scholarships after the priority application period closes, 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 can enter scholarship applications for students through the secure online application system, which will open at **8 a.m. on Wednesday, April 1 and close on Saturday, May 30, 2020, at 11:59 p.m.**

### WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR EDCHOICE?

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

- Those enrolled in and attending [EdChoice public school buildings](#) in their districts of residence;
- Students enrolled in and attending community schools who would otherwise be assigned to EdChoice public school buildings;
- Students enrolled in and attending public schools in their districts of residence who would be assigned to EdChoice public school buildings for the upcoming year;
- Home-schooled and new resident students enrolling in Ohio schools for the first time who would be assigned to EdChoice public school buildings;
- Students eligible to enter kindergarten in the fall of 2020 (and who will be 5 years old by January 1, 2021) who would be assigned to EdChoice public school buildings; or
- Students who completed grades 8, 9, 10 or 11 and are enrolled in or would be assigned to EdChoice public school building that serves any grades 9-12. This criterion covers all public school; chartered nonpublic (private) school; non-chartered, non-tax-supported school; and home-schooled students.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>This list is a summary of the eligibility provisions in Ohio Revised Code section 3310.03 and is provided for convenience only. Eligibility is determined based on the criteria listed in Ohio Revised Code section 3310.03. To review these criteria, please [click here](#).

## SHOULD PARENTS AND STUDENTS APPLY FOR EDCHOICE SCHOLARSHIPS FIRST OR APPLY FOR ADDMISION TO PRIVATE SCHOOLS FIRST?

Parents and students should first apply for admission at the participating private schools. 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 of 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](#) to apply for the scholarship. A parent renewing his or her child'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 and 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 ensure eligibility. Please note that the eligibility decision may not be made within 30 days of application submission.

## HOW WILL SCHOLARSHIPS BE AWARDED?

EdChoice Scholarships will be awarded from one of three groups:

- Students who are renewing a scholarship and meet the renewal requirements. While the Department cannot guarantee an award for any student, the Department anticipates that renewal students are likely to receive awards for the 2020-2021 school year.
- New applicants who are eligible for the first time for the 2020-2021 application period. Based on the requirements of recent legislation<sup>2</sup>, awards to these newly eligible students are limited and will be issued to eligible applicants based on the order in which the Department receives applications (not by lottery) and to the extent that dedicated funds remain available. Completed applications are submitted in the Department's application system and will receive a date and time stamp when submitted electronically by the private school. The date and time stamp identify the order of priority. (Note: this does not guarantee an award, as eligibility still must be determined.)
- New applicants who were eligible during the 2019-2020 application period and remain eligible for the current application period. Low-income status in this group will be prioritized in the event the Department must conduct a lottery.

## HOW WILL APPLICANTS BE NOTIFIED OF AWARD DECISIONS?

Applicants will be notified of award decisions by U.S. Mail. Parents also are able to get access to their children's scholarship applications if they have [OH|D accounts](#).

<sup>2</sup>Senate Bill 120, 133rd General Assembly

## 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. Takes all required assessments; and
3. 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 more applications (for those eligible students who are not newly eligible) are received than 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 webpage at [education.ohio.gov/edchoice](https://education.ohio.gov/edchoice) or send an email to [edchoice@education.ohio.gov](mailto: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.*

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