K12 Program Expectations

Information for School Administrators
August 2020

NCSEAA
North Carolina State Education
Assistance Authority

Opportunity Scholarship • Disabilities Grant • Education Savings Account

Agenda

- **Overview of program timelines**
- **Responsibilities of K12 Program stakeholders**
- **SEAA's Expectations for Schools**
- **Best Practices and Compliance**
  - **Annual Program Requirements**
  - **Certification and Endorsement**
  - **Withdrawal Policy**

February: New Student Applications. *It is advantageous in all three programs to apply in February before the priority deadline.*
March 1: Priority deadline (Opportunity)
March 15: Deadline to apply for the Disabilities Grant and ESA
April: Awards expected. Parents of awarded students must respond to the award offer: Accept or Decline
May and June: Verification (income or prior enrollment) in May / June
August: Endorsement (fall)
October 1: Final deadline to confirm school choice and submit documentation to complete verification
January: Endorsement (spring)
Late January: Renewal offers become available for eligible students

Families should sign on to MyPortal once a week as long as their students are connected to any K12 Program.

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The priority deadline for DGrants and ESA is March 15. The DGrants and ESA applications will close at this time as well.

Schools must endorse first, then families can endorse.

There is a separate webinar (recording) available which addresses parent requirements and timelines in more detail.

January 1 – June 15: New schools register to participate

April: Pending Awards lists of new and renewal students become available

July 15: Deadline to submit:
- standardized test results *and*
- graduation data *from the previous year,*
- tuition and fee schedule *for the upcoming school year*

August: Certification and Endorsement (fall)

December 31: Deadline for existing schools to add a K12 Program

January: Endorsement (spring)

Schools should sign on to MyPortal once a week as long as their school is connected to any K12 Program.
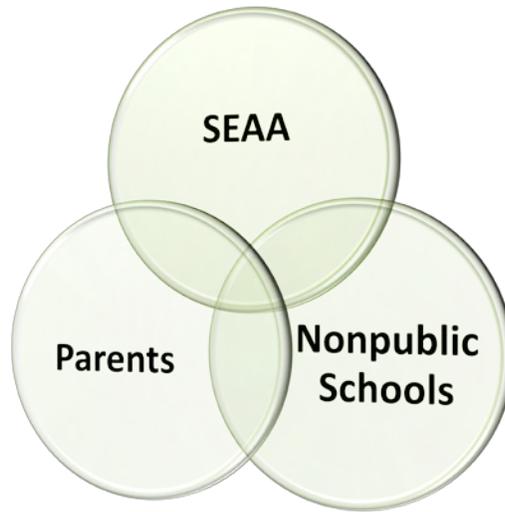
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Reminder to schools:
Certification is where schools report tuition and fees for each student.
Then, SEAA calculates the award and creates the Endorsement.
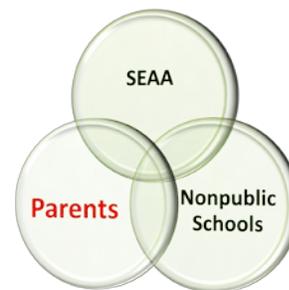
Responsibilities

SEAA Responsibilities

- Administers the K12 Programs in accordance with the program statutes
- Manages student applications and new school registration
- Maintains student and school records
- Disburses funding to schools on behalf of students
- Collects required documents from schools and families
- Ensures compliance with program policies
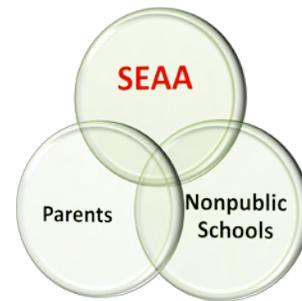
Parent Responsibilities

- Applies or renews
- Manages *all processes* related to the student record in MyPortal
- Accepts award

- Submits verification documents
- Works directly with school to enroll students

- Endorses award twice per school year

School Responsibilities

- Manages program rosters and advises SEAA of missing students
- Certifies students (attending or not)
- Endorses student funds
- Applies funds to student accounts
- Reconciles accounts
- Notifies SEAA of student withdrawals
- Administers standardized tests
- Adheres to SEAA deadlines

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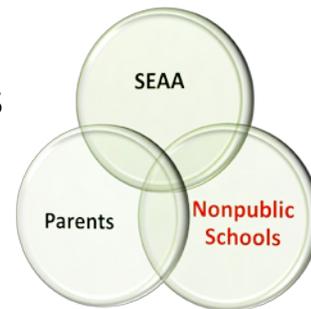
Note the financial review is also required of large schools (schools receiving $300,000 or more per school year from any one of the programs).

Responsibilities

Under no circumstances should a school:
- Create a MyPortal account on behalf of a family
- Access a MyPortal account using a family's credentials
- Complete program processes on behalf of a family

These things represent a conflict of interest.

Schools also cannot email the programs to request a correction be made to a student's application, reinstatement of an award offer, or a change in school choice. This must be initiated by the parent via email.

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The success of these programs lies in a partnership between SEAA, families and schools, not just in how well individual stakeholders carry out their program responsibilities.

The responsibilities of each type of stakeholder go hand in hand with one another, however it is important to recognize when helping becomes overstepping.

How Schools Can Help

- Give parents access to a school computer for them to log into their MyPortal account
- Provide translation services to parents
- Help parents understand their program responsibilities
- Connect new parents with other K12 Program families who have experience with the programs
- Connect parents with the appropriate resource! Provide parents with the contact information for their program or our Login Help team and direct them to reach out to us for assistance.

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Schools often serve as a familiar face for families, and families may be more likely to seek assistance from their school than they are from SEAA. In order to help families who may be struggling to carry out their program responsibilities, whether this is due to limited access to technology, a language barrier, or other circumstance, schools have certain things they can do that are within program compliance.

If a buddy or partnering system is used to pair new parents with experienced ones, the new parent is still responsible for the application, and program processes.

Best Practices

Policies

Schools should have written policies for:

- tuition payments (amounts & timing)
- what happens if a parent does not endorse the funds
- student withdrawals

Schools should communicate those policies to parents clearly and before the school year begins.

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SEAA hears from parents who feel misled. Many of these parents are unaware of school policies.

SEAA encourages schools to work with parents. For example, parents may not have understood a contract they signed with your school, or feel they are not receiving services they expected to receive for their students. SEAA cannot provide assistance in these matters and parents are strongly encouraged to contact their school directly for assistance.

Training and Communication

TRAINING: Ensure that more than one of your school officials attends K12 Program webinars.

EMAIL: Respond to SEAA requests for information in a timely manner.
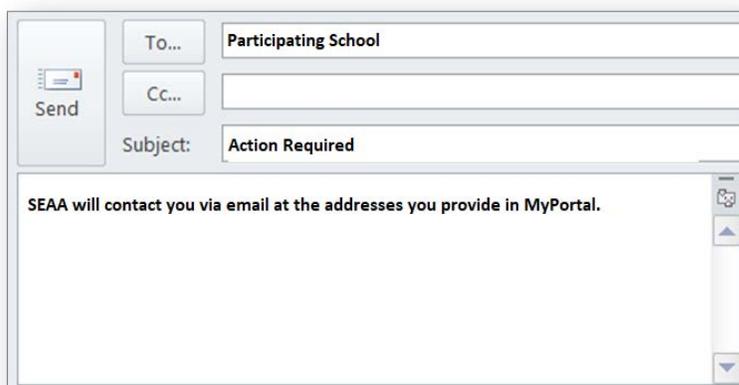
Send	To...	Participating School
	Cc...	
	Subject:	Action Required

SEAA will contact you via email at the addresses you provide in MyPortal.

Compliance with the NC K12 Programs

This is not an exhaustive list of all compliance issues. See the participation agreement, for example.

SEAA is presenting several highlights.

Certification and Endorsement

Schools are expected to certify all students on their roster, even if that student is not attending.

There should be a direct correlation between the standard cost a school certifies and the costs listed on the tuition and fee schedule submitted to SEAA.

Schools are expected to provide SEAA with a response to all students on their rosters.

Under no circumstances should a school endorse funding for a student who is not enrolled.

Endorsing "No" is not a substitute for a withdrawal form.

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There is an option to report a student is not attending during the certification process. By completing this, your school is confirming to us that the student is not attending your school and if done early enough in the fall term, allows us to work with the family to update school choice information before SEAA's deadline. This topic is covered in greater detail in the Certification and Endorsement webinar.

Schools are expected to leave no students outstanding on the certification roster, with the understanding that some schools may see new students appear on their rosters after certification due to a transfer or completion of verification. Please be aware of this if a student transfers to your school.

Withdrawals

Schools must submit a withdrawal form within 10 days after a student stops attending or withdraws.

The withdrawal form is a program requirement. Schools cannot withhold a withdrawal form due to a dispute with the family.

If a refund is owed, SEAA must receive the funds no later than 30 days from the student's last day of attendance.

- Withdrawal forms are required *whether or not* funds must be returned.
- If a school certifies a student as attending, then SEAA expects a withdrawal form if the student does not attend, stops attending, or withdraws.

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Schools may have policies about withholding grades or other materials until financial matters are resolved with a family. Schools cannot withhold the K12 program withdrawal form.

Some students may stop attending without completing withdrawal processes, SEAA still requires a withdrawal form be submitted in these cases. If a student has not attended your school for 10 or more consecutive days without communication from the parent, you should consider that student withdrawn.

Schools are out of compliance if Scholarship or Grant recipients withdraw or stop attending and SEAA does not receive a withdrawal form.

Students Repeating a Grade Level

The K12 Programs will permit a student to use program funding if they are repeating a grade level.

This is only permissible when a student is having to repeat the grade level for academic reasons. Students may not use program funding if they are repeating a grade level for reasons that are not related to their academic performance.

Schools should be aware there is an age requirement for the programs. Students cannot benefit from program funding upon reaching the age of 22.

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Reconcile student accounts

Schools must apply Scholarship or Grant funds to student accounts within 10 days of disbursement.

You should be able to identify the student recipients at your school. Reconcile your student accounts and ask about funds not disbursed in a timely manner.

- Families may be unaware that Scholarship program requirements are incomplete. When schools ask for funds from the family months or as long as a year after the start of the academic year, student Scholarships and Grants are at risk.
- Schools cannot receive funds from SEAA near the end of the fiscal year. Schools risk losing funds.

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SEAA cannot fix family errors months or a year later. These families are understandably upset. The problems caused by their errors could have been avoided if schools had reconciled student accounts in a timely manner.

Non-Compliance

Failure to comply with SEAA policies and deadlines may result in:

- Limited access to MyPortal functions (*delayed payments*)
- A hold on the school's account, preventing disbursements from SEAA (*no payments*)
- Deactivation of the school's MyPortal account
- School placed on a probationary period for additional monitoring
- School's participation with the K12 Programs revoked

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Schools which are removed from participation in the K12 Programs must wait one academic year before re-applying for participation as a new school.

Additional Information

www.ncseaa.edu

NPS@ncseaa.edu (for school use only)

919-635-8471 (for school use only)

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For general questions, please contact OpportunityScholarships@ncseaa.edu