

K12 Programs

2021 State Budget Update

Information for School Administrators



Put on your seatbelt ... many changes coming soon!

Additional new students in all three programs will be awarded in December or January with funding ***for the current school year.***

Significant changes to the **Opportunity Scholarship**, **Disabilities Grant**, and **ESA** will be effective with the 2022-23 school year (with the application cycle starting this February).

Opportunity Scholarship: Current Year Awards



- Students who were in a North Carolina public school in the fall 2019 semester who applied for the 2021-22 school year will meet the prior public school enrollment requirement for the current year (2021-22).
- Students must meet all other current eligibility requirements.
- Students currently ineligible solely as a result of the prior public school requirement are being re-evaluated.
- New students can continue to apply this month: the application remains open through December 31.

Additional funding has been allocated for both DGrants and ESA, for the current year.

Eligible students on applications received in the February – March 2021 application cycle, who were not awarded, may receive awards that begin with the spring 2022 semester.

The application is closed and will not re-open for the current year. Students who haven't previously applied should plan to apply in the 2022-23 new student application cycle.



Timing of the current year awards for all 3 programs

- Identifying / notifying students is underway
- To receive funds for **fall 2021**, a student had to have been enrolled and attending your school **by October 1, 2021**. (**Opportunity Scholarship**)
- Students who enrolled after October 1, or who transfer to start with the spring semester, can receive an award starting with spring.
- For awards that start with **spring 2022**, students need to be enrolled and attending no later than **by March 1, 2022**. (**Disabilities Grant / ESA; spring Opportunity**)
- Payments for fall and spring will be disbursed simultaneously for full year students. Funds will disburse beginning in January.

Changes for 2022-23

ELIGIBILITY CHANGES (age)

- Students who turned 4 on or before April 16 in the spring before the scholarship year may be eligible.
- Students must be certified by the school administrator as ready to enroll in kindergarten.



ELIGIBILITY CHANGES (changes to the prior public requirement):

- In addition to rising Kindergarten and 1st grade students, **rising 2nd grade students** do not need to meet the prior public school requirement.
- In addition to students whose parents are on active duty, students whose parents received an **honorable discharge** within 12 months prior to the new student application do not need to meet the prior public school requirement.
- Students who were enrolled in a NPS in the spring semester prior to the scholarship year **AND** who were enrolled the entire school year immediately prior to that in a NC public school will meet the prior public requirement.

ELIGIBILITY CHANGES (income)

- The upper limit to household income will increase. For example, a household of 4 which makes less than \$49,025 will receive a full award (*no change*) but a household which makes more than \$49,025, but less than \$85,794 (*increased amount*) will be eligible for a 90% award.
(Note that these amounts are examples based on 2021-22 income guidelines.)
- Students in foster care, as defined in statute, are automatically eligible regardless of the household income of their foster family

AWARD AMOUNT CHANGES

- The annual award amount will be tied to a formula based on the state's per pupil expense for public schools. The annual award amount will change each year.
- The award amount will continue to be divided in half, for two equal semester funding amounts.
- For 2022-23, we expect the annual amount to be approximately \$5,000. We expect to publish the next school year's award amount each year in January.

PART-TIME ENROLLMENT

- Students who are enrolled part time in a public school and part time in your nonpublic school can be eligible and receive half the funding.

The Disabilities Grant and current ESA will merge and become one program:

Education Student Accounts
(ESA+)

- Families apply for *one* program which has *two* potential award amounts.
- The areas of disability that determine which award amount are consistent for the most part with the areas of disability which previously indicated whether or not a student could receive both the old ESA and Disabilities Grant Programs simultaneously.
- Full-time students receive either \$17,000 or \$9,000.
- Awards are by semester.
- Documentation of a disability is a public school IEP.
- There is no prior public school requirement.
- As with Opportunity, students who are 4 as of April 16 in the spring prior to the scholarship year may be eligible for kindergarten.

ESA+ : Advantages to Schools

- Consistency and predictability in payment processing
- Easier to reconcile; one system (MyPortal) to reference
- No payment processing fee for tuition / fees
- More straightforward explanations to parents about eligibility and program operations



SEAA will disburse school payments directly to schools on behalf of the student recipients.

We will ask schools to sign a participation agreement for the new ESA+ program in early 2022.

families and their other qualified expenses

- Families can use ESA+ funds for educational therapies, tutoring, and technology in addition to paying required tuition and fees at a participating school. Home school families can also purchase curriculum.
- Funds other than for tuition and fees at your schools will go to ClassWallet for the parents to use for purchases or to pay for services.



- Current students will renew beginning in February.
- The new student application will open on March 1 at the earliest.
- We will offer 2022-23 new student awards in May or June.
- Trainings, publicity, and a new ncseaa.edu page for ESA+ will be available later this winter and through the spring and summer.
 - We are evaluating the certification, endorsement, and disbursement timelines for this August.



1. Certification (confirm enrolled / not enrolled, provide costs if enrolled)

- *Once per year per student*
- *Students who are not attending your school still need to be certified as not attending*

2. Correcting Errors

- *Schools cannot make corrections in MyPortal for students after Endorsement*

3. Endorsement (verify the funding amount)

- *Twice per year per student (fall and spring)*
- *Schools endorse before parent can endorse*

4. CSV Upload Option

- *Useful for large schools*
- *For both Certification and Endorsement*

5. Disbursement

- *Funds disbursed to schools after Certification / Endorsement*

We strongly urge you to attend next week's training regarding payment processing.

Certify correctly the first time and funds will disburse efficiently!

Reminder: You can reach us via the separate email address and phone number provided for schools. Please do not share this contact information with families.

NPS@ncseaa.edu

919-695-8742 (only for school officials)
855-330-3955 (for parents)



- Numerous eligibility changes to the Opportunity Scholarship, including income threshold guidelines (effective for 2022-23)
- Opportunity Scholarship award amount increases for 2022-23
- DG/ESA will consolidate to one program: ESA+
- Current year awards to Opportunity Scholarship (some may be full-year awards, others start with spring 2022)
- Current year awards to Disabilities Grant and ESA (start with spring 2022)