



North Carolina State Education  
Assistance Authority

# ESA+ Overview:

*An Introduction to the Program and the Parent Agreement*





# Statutes and Rules

North Carolina lawmakers have established the ESA+ Program.

ESA+ is funded by the State of North Carolina.

The State Education Assistance Authority (SEAA) is charged with administering ESA+. There are Rules which govern the operations of the Program.

**STATUTES and RULES:** <https://www.ncseaa.edu/psr/k12-programs/>



# Overview of ESA+

ESA+ provides scholarships for expenses related to educating a child with a disability in a nonpublic (private or home) school. Funds can be used for:

- Tuition and fees at participating schools
- Therapeutic services (such as ABA, speech), tutoring, curriculum, and educational technology



# Overview of ESA+

- SEAA will disburse funds for required tuition / fees to participating private schools, by semester.
- Funds for qualifying expenses, other than for tuition and fees at schools, will transfer to the ClassWallet platform for the parents to access via an electronic account.





# ESA+ Award Amounts

**The main award level is \$9,000 per year.**

Students who meet the main eligibility criteria, **and** have one of the following designated as the primary or secondary disability on the IEP Eligibility Determination may be eligible for \$17,000.

**These areas of disability may qualify the student for the higher award amount. Terms listed as they appear on the Eligibility Determination.**

- Autism
- Hearing Impairment, Deafness, Deaf-Blindness
- Intellectual Disability, Moderate or Severe
- Orthopedic Impairment
- Visual Impairment

# Enrollment Options

1. Student enrolls in a private school.
  - a. School accepts a direct disbursement (most schools do this)
  - b. School does not accept a direct disbursement (parents are reimbursed)
  
2. Student enrolls in a home school.

There are part-time enrollment options.



# Funding for students who enroll in two schools

Students who co-enroll in ... will receive ...

- two private schools: regular award
  - private school and home school: regular award
  - private school and public school: 50% of the award
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- **Students enrolled full time in a public school (including charter schools) may not benefit from any ESA+ funds.**



# School Payments

Schools which **accept** direct payment from SEAA

- Schools certify in August (1x per year)
- Schools and parents endorse (each semester)
- Payment to schools (each semester)

Schools which **do not accept** a direct payment

- Schools must be registered with the NC Division of Non-Public Education (DNPE)
- Parents of ESA+ students will seek **reimbursement** for the cost of tuition and fees.
- *Parents of students at schools which accept Opportunity Scholarship direct payments **may not** be reimbursed for tuition and fees if that school chooses not to accept direct payments for ESA+.*





# Waiver of Public School Services

In September, SEAA will require parents to sign a Waiver of Public School Services. Only parents of ESA+ students attending a nonpublic (private or home) school full time will sign the waiver.

**RELEASE OF LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY AND WAIVER OF CERTAIN RIGHTS**

1. I am a Parent or guardian of a student who has been awarded a scholarship ("Scholarship"), consisting of State funds, from the Education Student Accounts for Children with Disabilities Program (the "Program"). I understand that the Scholarship



# Using ESA+ funds: QUALIFYING EDUCATIONAL EXPENSES

# Expenses other than tuition and fees

## Textbooks

- Required by the participating nonpublic school

## Educational Technology

## Curricula

- Supports an academic subject

## Fees for Nationally Standardized Tests

- Available for homeschool families only; contact ESA in advance
- Not available for students enrolled in participating nonpublic schools

## Tutoring and Teaching Services

- In academic subjects

## Educational Therapies

- Ex. ABA, Speech, OT, and PT

## Student Transportation

- To and from educational services or activities

***NOTE about providers of these services:***

- 1. Must be registered with AND approved by NCSEAA*
- 2. Cannot be member of student's family*



# ClassWallet

## *ClassWallet is:*

- a separate company that partners with SEAA.
- an online platform that hosts the **electronic account** on behalf of the ESA+ Program.
- where ESA+ families use remaining funds (after tuition has been disbursed to school) to:
  - make a payment to a service provider.
  - purchase products that are ESA+ Qualifying Expenses.



# Parent Obligations

1. Spend funds only on behalf of the student who was awarded ESA+.
2. Notify SEAA immediately if you enroll your student in a public school.
3. Be prepared to submit documentation about expenses.
4. Return ESA+ funds spent on an item or service that is not a qualifying expense.
5. Do not request or accept a refund or rebate of funds from a school, provider, or any other entity.
6. Do not give schools or providers your parent ClassWallet login credentials.





# Testing

Standardized testing for third grade and higher is a school responsibility. You are required to allow your student to be tested annually.

Home Schools are not required to submit test scores.





# Misuse of Funds

SEAA has zero tolerance for misuse of ESA+ funds. Examples of misspent funds include:

- Using funds for anything other than Qualifying Education Expenses
- Using funds on behalf of someone other than the student awarded an ESA+ scholarship
- Using funds when the ESA+ recipient is enrolled full time in a public school (*The MyPortal record must always accurately reflect the student's enrollment.*)

A parent who has made an error in spending should self report and notify SEAA immediately. [ESA@ncseaa.edu](mailto:ESA@ncseaa.edu) or (855) 330-3955

# Parent of Record (in MyPortal)

- Note the definition of “parent” in the ESA+ Parental Agreement.
- The parent of record must be a parent with whom the child lives.
- Only one parent can be listed in the MyPortal record.

Is the parent who primarily manages the ClassWallet account and other ESA+ business not the parent who is listed in MyPortal? *Email program staff and request to change the parent of record.*



**Tip:** Email is the best way to request information about your student’s record. Note that staff can only share information in response to the email address on file in MyPortal.

*(You can update your email address. In MyPortal, go to My Contact Information.)*





# Funding year-over-year

- Students who receive a **\$9,000 award** may not accumulate any funds in the ESA+ account year over year. Remaining funds do not roll over to the next year.
- Students who receive a **\$17,000 award** may roll over a maximum of \$4,500 per year from any remaining funds.
- The overall maximum account limit is \$30,000.



# Continuing Eligibility: *update every 3 years*

The date by which renewing students must have an updated documentation of a disability is January 1.

If your student's evaluation date in MyPortal is **older than 2020** ... you'll need to seek an update this fall (by January 1, 2023). *Students with evaluations dated 2020 and more recent don't need to update this fall.*

Two ways to update the evaluation date:

1. Review from a licensed psychologist or psychiatrist, **OR**
2. Updated Eligibility Determination from an NC public school.

**More info:** <https://www.ncseaa.edu/k12/esa/documentation-of-a-disability/>

<https://www.ncseaa.edu/events>

- Wednesdays at noon
- Attend live or watch recordings

**June 15** How do Schools get Paid? When are ESA+ Funds Sent to ClassWallet?

**June 22** ESA+ Students at Schools Not Paid Directly by SEAA

**June 29** Choosing or Changing Your School

**July 6** ESA+ Continuing Eligibility

**July 13** Qualified Expenses and Shopping on ClassWallet

**July 20** Dual Enrolled Students (ESA+ and Opportunity Scholarship)

**July 27** Planning for Summer 2023 Expenses

[ESA@ncseaa.edu](mailto:ESA@ncseaa.edu)

**855-330-3955**

**Monday- Thursday 8am-6pm**

**Friday- 8am-5pm**