

## Transcript

### **ESA+ Overview: An Introduction to the Program and the Parent Agreement June 8, 2022**

0:04

Hello, everyone. Welcome.

0:07

I'm Katherine Marker, and we are here from SEAA to talk with you about the ESA Plus program.

0:15

We're going to pause for a second and let everyone come in. We're expecting a few more folks.

0:45

Welcome, if you're coming in. This is the first in our Summer Training series for ESA Plus families.

0:54

Again, we're just getting started.

0:57

I'll mention a few of the housekeeping details to get everyone situated, and then we'll be ready to start in just a minute.

1:05

So as I said, this is the first in the series. We have eight of these sessions planned.

1:11

Today is an introduction to the program itself, an overview. And we're going to talk through the parent agreement, which is the required signature from every parent who's participating in the ESA program. So the Plus program is the education student accounts for children with disabilities.

1:31

If you're not here for the ESA Plus program, you're in the wrong spot. And specifically this session is targeted to families of students who have received an award, families who will be participating. It is not about the application or the initial eligibility.

1:50

So we're using Go to Webinar today, so hopefully you've gotten situated. There are handouts.

1:57

The presentation slides are included as a PDF and as the PowerPoint, so pick one of those up, and a copy of the agreement for you to reference. It's not the one that you should sign, it's just a reference copy.

2:09

If you would like to see it as we talk about it today, there's a question function. So, type in your questions.

2:19

I have some colleagues here who are going to answer some of those questions, and, at the end, if there are some good topics that we did not address that we need to address, we'll do that.

2:28

So, we're scheduled to go from twelve until twelve thirty, and then we will end, but remain on the line for fifteen minutes.

2:37

We will end the formal presentation, will remain on the line, and available for some questions you type in the chat.

2:47

So I hope you saw the message that greeted you, You do get an e-mail tomorrow and it will include a link to the recording that you can use. All of these sessions are structured that way you can attend them live.

3:00

If you register, you will receive that e-mail even if you don't attend.

3:04

So register for all eight, if you wish, and then you get an e-mail with a link to the recording, whether you attend or not.

3:10

So hopefully this session helps you and gives you a good sense of what the program is going to look like. So, with that, we will get started. Again, I'm Kathryn Marker. I'm the director of grants training and outreach at the North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority. We are a state agency. And with me on the line today are several of my colleagues, Tiffany, Mykayla, and Michele. And together, we will try to get you oriented to the new program.

3:40

So, as I said, the Education Student Accounts for Children with Disabilities, the formal name was established by North Carolina Law in 2021. We call this program ESA Plus.

3:51

ESA Plus helps families afford non public schools. That's private and home schools.

4:00

Signing the parental agreement by the parent of the student who was awarded the ESA is a requirement.

4:08

And those of you who've been awarded, it should be everyone on this line.

4:13

Renewals and new, you have received this via DocuSign, and you're expected to sign that in order for your student to be in the program.

4:22

So the purpose of this training session today is to provide an overview of the program, how it operates. Explain the requirements that are in that parental agreement that you're going to sign.

4:32

We are taking questions via the electronic question box. I have told the team to answer the questions as they can.

4:42

If there are more questions than we can manage, which may be the case, because there's a lot of you on the line today, then please know that it's likely one of the other sessions will answer your questions.

4:53

And so we may not be answering questions if that topic is going to be addressed later in the series this summer. And, Tiffany, if someone could put in a link to the registration for those sessions, that will help everybody. If they've got a question about something specific, it's probably a topic of one of those training sessions.

5:19

All right, so we get started.

5:22

I want to be clear that North Carolina lawmakers have established the ESA Plus program. This is a state program that is funded by the state of North Carolina.

5:32

So, our agency did not initiate it, our agency didn't decide how it should work. That is established by North Carolina law.

5:42

We are a state agency and we are tasked with administering ESA Plus. We have developed program rules which govern the operations of the program, and in some cases, provide a little more detail about how the program works. Those statutes and rules are online.

5:57

If you wish to look at them, they're on our website.

6:01

When you sign the parental agreement, you agree to comply with the program statutes and program rules, as well as, instructions or policy requests, policies, or requests that might come from our agency. So, you agree to that as part of your signature on the parental agreement.

6:28

So, broadly, ESA Plus provides scholarships for expenses related to educating a child with a disability in a nonpublic school. Those funds can be used for tuition and fees, therapeutic services, ABA, speech therapy, Occupational Therapy, Tutoring and Teaching Services, curriculum, and educational Technology.

6:51

This is not a program for students in public school full-time. Students in ESA Plus are leaving the public school in order to benefit from their ESA Plus scholarship.

7:01

I would point out that charter schools are public schools.

7:05

Students in charter schools full-time cannot benefit from ESA Plus.

7:11

I want to point out, too, that there is an option.

7:14

By statute, there is an ESA Plus option for students who are in a private or a home-school, but who are co-enrolled in public school.

7:23

So that's an important point. They are co-enrolled in public school. They're not in public school full time.

7:28

They are co-enrolled between a private and a public school, or a home-school and a public school. So we'll talk about that briefly.

7:36

But, we want to be clear that students who are full-time in a public school are not ESA Plus students.

7:49

Again, SEAA, that's our agency. We're the State Agency administering ESA Plus. We will disperse the funds. and by disburse, we mean pay. We will send the money, we will disperse the funds for the tuition and fees to private schools by semester.

8:09

So enrolled in a private school, your school will receive money in late August or early September, or in January for the two semesters.

8:19

The school will receive those funds on behalf of the ESA Plus students. More about that in a minute.

8:24

But that's how the funds flow for tuition and fees at schools. For other qualifying expenses- and this is important if you're a home-school family because you don't have tuition and fee funds- for qualifying expenses other than tuition and fees will transfer to the ClassWallet platform, which parents access via an electronic account.

8:47

And again, we're going to give you an overview of how that works, but this is the gist of how the ESA Plus funding flows.

8:55

All the families will use an electronic account for their expenses, other than tuition and fees.

9:01

If 100% of your student's ESA Plus award goes to your school you will not interact with ClassWallet.

9:10

People who will interact with ClassWallet are the families who are homeschooling, or families who may have tuition and fees costs at a school but they have additional funds remaining from their award.

9:23

Perhaps their school cost of attendance is less than their award.

9:28

In order to spend that remaining money, if you have it, you will interact with ClassWallet.

9:33

The families in these situations will use this electronic account. Classwallet is a partner. As a vendor, they provide a platform to facilitate the purchase of products and to pay for services from qualified providers.

9:51

The Plus Wallet is an important part of what we do. But keep in mind that SEAA administers the program.

9:58

Class Wallet is a vendor who we use to provide you with a platform to make your purchases or pay your providers.

10:06

Again, parents do not use ClassWallet to pay schools for their tuition and fees. SEAA pays those funds, disburses those funds directly to the schools on behalf of the students.

10:19

ClassWallet is not involved with the payment of required tuition and fees.

10:25

So, we will tell you a little bit about how the school money goes.

10:30

That process happens through My Portal, the parent will have to take action in MyPortal to endorse the funds over to the school, and again, we'll talk to you a little bit about that.

10:42

But it does not involve ClassWallet.

10:44

I want to point out, though, that if a school is also a provider, meaning you go to the school for your academic tuition and fees, but you also are obtaining services from that school in addition, then in that instance, the schools, the provider, and the families, will transfer funds to the school, via ClassWallet. The school, in that case, is a provider of services.

11:13

There are schools that do not accept a direct disbursement.

11:17

There's only a handful, so the vast majority of the schools, the funds flow as I've described.

11:24

But for those students who attend schools in North Carolina that do not accept a direct disbursement from the state, those parents pay the required tuition and fees. And then they're reimbursed at the end of the semester.

11:34

That's a very narrow category of students.

11:38

And those students will use ClassWallet to submit the receipts to SEAA.

11:46

I'm going to pause for a minute and just remind everyone that there are handouts.

11:50

So these presentation slides are available to you right now. You can just go get them right now and download them, if you look for the handout region. And I want to point out that in the speaker notes, you'll see pretty much everything that I'm saying.

12:03

So, you would have a printed version of the presentation if you download that.

12:10

Either the PDF, which has the toggle for the speaker notes, or the PowerPoint itself, which, like all PowerPoints has notes.

12:19

Those, that information is exactly what I'm saying.

12:22

So, you can have that information for yourself, and then there will be also a recording, all of those things.

12:31

Let's talk a little bit about the award amount.

12:33

The main award level is \$9000 per year.

12:39

There are students who meet the main eligibility criteria and also have one of these specific primary or secondary disabilities on their IEP Eligibility determination. And those students may be eligible for \$17,000.

12:56

You can know what your student's award is, by knowing that the main award level is \$9000.

13:04

And further, if you look at the areas of disability here, compare it to your student's eligibility determination.

13:12

And if you have one of these as the primary or secondary disability on that public school document.

13:20

You see the list here, autism, hearing impairment, deafness, deaf blindness, intellectual disability, specifically moderate or severe orthopedic impairment, and visual impairment.

13:30

Students who have these areas of disability qualify for \$17,000 annually.

13:38

If you have questions about your specific student, you can e-mail the program. And I would further point you to the documentation of a disability on our website, and Tiffany will probably put that in the chat here in just a minute.

13:52

That is where it explains what this document is, what it looks like, there's a little screenshot of it. If you've been in the program for a while, and you're not quite sure what I'm talking about, you will know to go look for your eligibility determination to make sure that you understand your student's award, and what it is, and why it is.

14:13

We have a specific page on our website that talks about updating, if necessary, your eligibility determination.

14:24

The enrollment options.

14:27

I'll note that, in the parental agreement, number two says that the parent warrant that his or her student is exclusively attending a North Carolina nonpublic school, unless the student is enrolled part-time in a public school, and part-time in a nonpublic school.

14:44

There is no option for an ESA Plus student to be enrolled full-time in a public school.

14:50

So your enrollment options look like this.

14:53

You can enroll in a private school.

14:56

The school excepts a direct disbursement, most schools do this.

15:00

That means our agency, SEAA, our staff, sends the money to the school on behalf of your students. You're involved, but you don't use Class Wallet for that.

15:12

The other option for enrolling in a private school is the school does not accept a direct disbursement. And there are, as I said, a handful schools in North Carolina, which have made a decision not to take the money directly from the state.

15:24

In those cases, parents pay and are reimbursed. You need to be sure you understand how your school is going to get paid, because other parents cannot be reimbursed, meaning you don't have a choice. It depends on your school. You can't choose to pay or choose to have the money flow a certain way.

15:42

It depends on your school's status. One thing that might help, team, is if you would put in the chat there, that on our website is a list of the participating schools.

15:54

This means that the schools accept a direct disbursement, and you'll see there's about 500 of them. The vast majority of schools in North Carolina have agreed to accept funds directly on behalf of the ESA Plus students.

16:08

There are just a handful of others. And if you aren't sure, ask your school.

16:12

Or e-mail the program.

16:17

Because you don't have a choice. You can't pick between A and B. It depends on your school status.

16:22

And, the link that you're going to see here in a minute, is a link to the list of schools, and it shows Opportunity Scholarship, and ESA Plus.

16:35

A second option, of course, is a student enrolls in a home-school, and that home-school is registered with the Division of Nonpublic Education.

16:44

Private school, or home-school.

16:46

There are part-time enrollment options, so I'm going to talk about that next. OK, there's the link in the chat about the participating schools, these are the schools that will receive the funds directly from our agency on behalf of your student.

17:06

I mentioned earlier, part-time enrollment. So, there is funding from ESA Plus for students who enroll into schools.

17:13

So it can be that a student enrolls into private schools for various reasons. It's not I suppose common, but I know that there are reasons why that benefits students to be co enrolled in two private schools. That does not change the award amount.

17:32

It does involve a little extra attention to your student's record, so you may want to ask for some advice about how to make sure that you have your student's school choice accurately recorded in MyPortal.

17:45

If your student is going to be co enrolled in two schools, you would want to reach out, explain, and ask for some advice to make sure all as well.

17:55

A student could co enroll in a private school and home-school.



17:58

So, two days a week or half days, and a private school receives the funding for the tuition and fees.

18:05

Then a homeschool. That does not change the award amount.

18:10

A student could be co enrolled in a private school, and a public school, in which case, the student receives half of the award amount, so either half of \$9000, or half of \$17,000.

18:26

We will be requiring the private schools to confirm enrollment, but it may also help, in fact, I would recommend that you would also let staff know via e-mail how your student will be enrolled and we can make sure things are accurately listed in My Portal.

18:53

And I note again, there is no funding for students full-time in a public school, there is no funding, no ESA Plus funding for those students.

19:03

This is just a real quick slide on how the schools get paid. We have an entire presentation, one week from today, that will walk you through what that looks like.

19:14

So I urge you to attend that, if this is confusing, which it may well be. I would understand if you're new it's a lot to take in.

19:17

Schools which accept a direct payment from SEAA, the ones on the list Mykayla posted for you just now, they certify in August, so they tell us that your student is attending there, and how much their costs are.

19:35

Then, we have a process called Endorsement. The school endorses and the parent Endorses.

19:39

It's like having a paper check that is written to the school and the parent jointly, and then both have to endorse it on the back.

19:50

Now, we don't do paper checks, it's all electronic.

19:54

So there is an electronic endorsement. It's the school's stamp of approval. This is the right amount.

19:59

The parent has the responsibility to say this is the right amount by endorsing, "Yes, this is correct."

20:08

So, we will talk more about that next week.

20:10

There are schools which do not accept a direct payment, as I've said to you, I don't have a list of those schools.

20:17

Because those schools simply have to be registered with North Carolina, operating legally in the state.

20:23

And they have decided not to participate in our program.

20:27

So, if there is a school that is registered legally with the Division of Nonpublic Education, but is not on our list, you could presumably assume that they would be in this category. I would talk to the school official.

20:43

Reach out to program staff if you're not sure. Only those parents can seek reimbursement. No one else can get reimbursed for tuition and fees. I would not want you to walk away from this presentation thinking that's an option. It is not.

20:53

It's a very limited pool of students. It's not a choice of parents.

21:00

It's a factor of the school's decision.

21:06

So, be sure to understand which category you're in. And by far, the majority of you will be in this category on the left.

21:18

So we disburse the funds directly to the majority of North Carolina schools on behalf of the students, the ESA Plus, or the Opportunity Scholarship students. Those payments will be made in late August, or early September for the fall, then again in January for the spring.

21:36

There is also a special training I mentioned, the one that's a week from today, that talks about schools that would address the situation on the left.

21:47

There is also a session in a few weeks for the schools that do not accept direct payments. So you could come to that and understand what that training looks like and what you would need to do, what the school needs to do.

22:00

Make sure you have all your details.

22:06

Early this fall, just after the start of school, we will require parents to sign a waiver of public school services.

22:12

Only parents of ESA Plus students who attend private or home-school full-time will sign the waiver. If you are a part-time public school student, you will not find this waiver.

22:23

This waiver is your attestation that you are releasing the public school from serving your students for this year.

22:33

As long as you receive ESA Plus funds, the public school does not have an obligation to serve your student, or provide IEP services.

22:41

Now that isn't to say that you can't get re-evaluated by the public school. It just means that they aren't providing services and you understand that you are not getting public school services.

22:56

And I should mention that the private schools are not obligated to provide services either.

23:02

That's up to you as a parent as you choose your school to determine that the private school provides what you need them to provide.

23:12

I wanted to mention while I'm on this slide that when you signed your parental agreement, it's already been sent to you. You may have already signed it and if you haven't, you will soon, I'm sure. We also ask you to sign a W9.

23:25

I wanted to point out that the reason we ask everyone to sign a W9 is because there may be tax implications for the funding that you receive.

23:41

We have a document on our website, forms and resources, a handy page for you to bookmark.

23:47

But on that section of our website, forms and resources, there is a one pager that explains the potential tax implications.

23:56

So I would urge you to go look at that, so that you aren't surprised.

24:01

And a lot depends on your individual situation.

24:05

The one pager is pretty clear. I would encourage you to look at that. That's why you sign a W9.

24:12

I'm going to talk just very briefly about using funds for other expenses, other than tuition and fees.

24:19

We talked about how the schools get paid.

24:21

Now, let's give an overview of the other expenses that ESA Plus funds can be used for.

24:28

We have a session for this topic as well, so we can't answer the questions you might have now in detail.

24:36

There just isn't time. But I'm going to talk to you a little bit about it.

24:39

If you look at the parental agreement, you'll see that number four, number five, number six, several of these points, on the agreement that you sign refer to how you spend this money.

24:54

So you agree to use these funds to provide an education to the eligible students in at least the subjects of English language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science. You agree to use the funds only for qualifying educational expenses.

25:10

And you agree not to use the funds for things that are not qualifying educational expenses.

25:17

And we have some specific information to help you with that, and we will make sure that you have what you need to know.

25:27

Here's an overview.

25:28

These are some expenses other than tuition and fees, which you could use your ESA Plus funds for, if you're nonpublic school requires you to purchase textbooks, Educational Technology, which is a great big category, includes computers, you know, a laptop.

25:45

It includes an iPad or tablet.

25:47

It includes software, assistive devices, helpful for students with disabilities, curricula, which supports an academic subject.

25:58

Those are probably two, the technology and the curricula, which are two of the most frequently used categories.

26:08

The program can pay for fees for nationally standardized tests. That's not common, but it's available to you. Tutoring, and Teaching Services, and Educational therapy, those are two other big categories.

26:19

Student transportation has to be a service that provides transportation. It can't pay for individual gas money.

26:29

What's coming up soon on this? There is a training session specifically designed around helping you understand what's available on ClassWallet, and how you would shop and find things.

26:42

We also have a session that will be available soon, and it's not one of the eight that we're providing now, but it will be available separately, about providers because the people who tutor and teach and provide the therapies have to be credentialed.

26:58

And we do that through a process, where they register with us, and we approve them. There's a list of approved providers online now, and we have several really good enhancements planned for this process.

27:11

And over the summer, it'll be a much easier process for your providers to use. So those of you who've been around for a while, thank you for your patience.

27:19

We've gotten a lot done.

27:21

And we're just excited about making the process a little easier for all concerned.

27:26

That's coming soon. In the notes I've got links to technology and other information that would be helpful to you in the short-term.

27:35

So I want to introduce you formally to ClassWallet.

27:38

They are a separate company, they partner with us to provide an electronic account for you, a platform that allows us to efficiently approve your requests and for you to spend your money.

27:50

Note that you cannot just spend money and be reimbursed. Reimbursement is not an option in ESA Plus. You must use ClassWallet to make purchases and to pay your providers.

28:01

There is no other option for paying for services or for purchasing items.

28:07

But again, we've got a lot of good upgrades planned that are going to make this even easier. And it's already a pretty friendly process.

28:15

Once you learn how to use it, there's a lot there.

28:18

I remind you again, that SEAA administers the program. ClassWallet is a vendor providing an account and electronic platform to help us.

28:29

In your parental agreement, there are five or six items here that are very important for you to recognize. They are listed formally in the notes.

28:39

I sort of translated them to a user friendly space here on the slide. You can only spend funds on behalf of the student who was awarded ESA Plus. You cannot spend funds on other students or the family at large.

28:51

You should notify SEAA immediately if you enroll your student in a public school.

28:56

You must be prepared to submit documentation about expenses.

29:00

You have to return funds if you spend something accidentally on a qualifying expense. That should not happen because all of your expenses are routed through our approval process, but if it should happen, you're obligated to return those funds.

29:14

You cannot request or accept a refund from the school, the provider, or any other entity. Refunds from the schools come back to us directly or refunds from your purchases or your providers go back to ClassWallet.

29:27

We can talk more about that when we talk about purchases later in the session. But it's important that you cannot accept a refund of your money once you've made a purchase.

29:37

You should not give anyone your parent login credentials for ClassWallet.

29:43

Standardized testing is a requirement and number 13 on our parental agreement states that you agreed to allow your child to be tested.

30:00

There is zero tolerance for the misuse of funds. Those obligations I talked about a minute ago, those are rules for you to follow in terms of, if you aren't following those, you may be mispending this money.

30:20

It's important that our MyPortal record, which is our system of record, reflects what your student's enrollment is.

30:27

If you move your student, we have to know that because that's part of using the funds correctly is that we always know where your student is enrolled.

30:37

I point out, too, that if you make an error in some way you should self report, notify us immediately. We have the option to freeze or close your ClassWallet account if there's discrepancies or other issues.

30:55

There's more information in the notes about misuse of funds.

30:58

There's also a document on the forms and resources section of our website.

31:06

Parent of Record. So, the parent is defined in number 19 on the parental agreement. Who is a parent, who can be a parent? I'm not going to go into that now because you are all here and as part of the application process, you were presented with the definition of a parent, but it is also in the agreement and it's in the notes of this slide.

31:27

The parent of record must be a parent with whom the child lives.

31:41

I want to point out that in our MyPortal system, we can only list one parent.

31:46

So in order to make this easy for you, to make this work for you, the parent listed in MyPortal should be the parent who's basically managing the ClassWallet account, and the business of ESA Plus.

31:57

If someone else applied, if you have two parents, one applied, but someone else is really going to manage everything, you should e-mail us and request to change the parent of record. It'll just be easier.

Whoever is managing the business of approving things and submitting invoices, that person should be listed in MyPortal.

32:16

And a tip to you is that e-mail is the best way to request information. We will share information about the record in response to the e-mail address on file.

32:25

So, if you want to e-mail in for information, and you don't want to e-mail from your work e-mail, if you used your home e-mail, that's our security protocol, and that we don't know who you are on the other end of the e-mail unless we can verify that is the e-mail address on file.

You should update your e-mail address to be your most preferred e-mail address, and you can do that in MyPortal in the My Contact Information.

32:52

Real quickly, funding year over year.

32:55

Students who receive a \$9000 award may not accumulate any funds. Remaining funds do not roll over to the next year.

33:02

So, if you use \$8000, you don't keep the one thousand towards the next year.

33:09

This begins with ESA Plus, begins this fall. I'm not speaking to the previous programs, and those rules, if you have questions about that, and your renewal, you can e-mail us.

33:18

But this is, I'm talking about year over year, as in 22, 23.

33:24

Rolling forward to 2324.

33:28

This slide addresses this next year, rolling to the year after that. Second bullet point. Students who receive a \$17,000 award may roll over some funding, but there's a maximum.

33:39

Then there's an overall maximum account limit.

33:45

There is a session later on where we talk about using funds for summer expenses, so if you think your student will not need to use your full annual award for school year expenses, plan to come to that session, where we can explain a little bit how you can plan to use your funds for a summer academic camp, for example.

34:03

Paying for therapy or tutoring in the summer is only possible, of course, if your school year expenses are less than the award amount. There's no additional funding for summer specifically.

34:13

Also want to point out that students who don't benefit at all from any ESA Plus funds, like if you accept the award, and somehow don't spend any money, you will not continue in the program.

34:24

So, the ESA Plus program assumes that if you don't spend any money, you don't need the program. We would want that money to not be reserved for you.

34:31

So, if, for some reason, you don't have expenses, you wouldn't continue in the program.

34:36

I hope that makes sense, and is logical to you.

34:40

We tried to alert people in the spring who may, for some reason, not have spent any money.

34:49

Continuing eligibility, there's a session about this, as well.

34:52

So, just very quickly, I refer you to the website there, I've listed at the bottom, and I think it was plugged into the chat earlier. The date by which renewing students must have an updated documentation is January one.



35:09

Right now, if your student's evaluation date is older than 2020, any month or any day, but if the year is older than 2020, you're going to need to get an update this fall.

35:20

You would want to do that by January first, 2023.

35:23

So if yours is 2019, then it's not going to be good after January first.

35:31

Students with evaluations dated 2020, 2021, 2022, you don't need to update this fall.

35:38

There are two ways for renewing students. This is, for ongoing students.

35:44

It's not an initial eligibility that you had to present to apply, but once 2 or 3 years rolls around and it's time to update, there are two ways to do that.

35:54

Now I've listed those there.

35:57

If you need more information now, there's our website, and again, we have a session coming up end of June, I think, beginning of July and we will talk more about this.

36:11

I did go a little over, it's 12:36, but we have about 10 minutes that we will talk before I end the formal presentation in terms of the recording.

36:21

I wanted to point out the rest of the sessions you can attend live or watch recordings.

36:26

Our e-mail is here. There is no plus on our e-mail, it's just ESA at NC dot edu. And there's the phone number for customer service and you can see there's some extended hours Monday through Thursday to six and Friday goes to five.

36:46

I also want to remind you that you can always find information, forms, resources, trainings, recordings, MyPortal, ClassWallet. It's all on our website.

36:55

WWW dot NCSEAA dot edu.

37:00

I urge you to really familiarize yourself with the website. It's got a lot on it, and more coming soon.

37:05

We're trying to provide all the information that you will need for managing your student's participation in the program.

37:16

We're so happy that you're here and we're happy to be serving your students. So help us help you by contacting us with your questions.

37:26

Please come to the sessions for the basic content so that we can help you efficiently and we will all be ready by the time school starts this fall.

37:37

Oh, I will say that we are ending now in terms of the presentation. If you're ready to go, thank you for sticking around a few minutes, past 12:30. We appreciate it. However, I will turn to the questions and see if there are any basic misunderstandings that I can clarify for anyone.

38:07

I see a lot of questions that will be answered by these various sessions. Continuing eligibility, for example, please come to that session. If you're looking to update, you've got plenty of time.

38:17

And come to the session or watch the recording, and you'll get your questions answered. It will be a lot easier to just really focus on that continuing eligibility challenge.

38:40

I wanted to clarify there may be some confusion when we talk about non public school. In our vocabulary, a non public school is either a private school, or a home-school.

38:52

So, a home-school is a non public school, so hopefully that helps.

38:57

ESA Plus can definitely serve families of home-school students. If you home-school full-time and you have ESA Plus you're in good shape because it can really serve your students. You can buy curriculum, technology, pay for tutoring, therapies.

39:11

There's a lot that you will want to do, and we believe that the session in a few weeks or a month about shopping on ClassWallet, about providers, that will be so helpful to you home-school families.

39:24

Because your interaction will be primarily with ClassWallet in terms of making your purchases.

39:32

And, you know, we've got some ideas on making that easier for you.

39:36

You can start planning.

39:38

You won't have your funding in July anyway, so use this time to get prepared and that session will be most helpful.

39:55

(Tiffany) Hi Kathryn, this is Tiffany. We're looking through the questions. As you stated, most of the questions will be answered in future sessions, but a lot of the questions are really specific. So we've asked the parents to e-mail the program so we can assist.

40:13

(Kathryn) That makes sense. If you have a very specific question, very specific to your situation, it's probably easiest to e-mail.

40:21

If you've been around with us through the last 4 or 5 months, you knew we were overwhelmed in March and April getting some folks onboarded for last year.

40:33

You know, the school year now ending, and also helping prospective new families, it was daunting. And we appreciate so much the patience everyone showed us. It's much better now.

40:46

We've got, you know, some things in place that make it easier for us to help, and a lot of folks got, of course, situated for the school year.

40:55

And if you e-mail us, you should hear back from us within a few days. It won't take us 10 days to get back to you.

41:04

And I would urge you to do that.

41:07

ESA Plus is a wonderful program that offers so much to so many different scenarios. That makes it also very complicated.

41:15

And so we all just know that, and it may be that one of these sessions is perfect for you. But it may also be that your question doesn't quite fit in one of these trainings, and you'll just need to e-mail us and let us help you.

41:29

I did see a question about the ESA Plus rolling over automatically, and that's a common question. So, you received the ESA Plus this year, maybe you're going into your very first year.

41:40

The following year, you get first consideration.

41:45

You will need to maintain your eligibility in the sense of, you still have to go to a school. You can't, for example, transfer, just go out of state.

41:55

That would not be an eligible situation. You could not do that.

41:58

You would also need to update your evaluation if your date has passed its three year mark.

42:04

So if you never do that, then again, that would make you ineligible. But other than that, you are considered first.

42:10

So assuming North Carolina continues to fund the program, which there's every reason to believe that there's a firm commitment from our state, then you would count on continuing year after year. I mean, it's worth pointing out this is a state funded program. It is true that at any point, our state could decide they don't want to do this anymore.

42:30

So there's not an ironclad guarantee forever, but I will tell you that everything I see, all of the information we have from our legislature is that they are very firmly in support of this program.

42:43

So, I don't think it's controversial, but, again, it's worth stating that it's a state program, and states can make different decisions at times.

42:55

I'll scroll through real quickly and see if I see anything.

42:59

I hope you found this helpful.

43:09

I see a couple of questions, I won't mention them here, just to not confuse anyone. That may be things we have to work out.

43:17

You know, there were a number of changes to the statute that passed in November of 2021, and there were some things that we've had to work through. How are we going to do that? What does the Legislature mean by that? So hang in there with us.

43:32

If you e-mail us and we said we're going to have to research it, we will do the best we can to make sure we are doing what the legislature wants us to do and can fix things for you.

43:43

And not, certainly, we don't want to require something of you that you can't provide.

43:47

We will work on that. I see a few questions about providing something that might be tricky, based on the way our various systems and agencies work.

44:03

I do see a question about the Disabilities Grant.

44:06

So I will say that the previous programs were the Disabilities Grant and the ESA.

44:13

The former ESA.

44:15

Those two programs have ended.

44:18

They have now been replaced by the ESA Plus. All of the eligible students who received funding last year benefited from funding this past year and now ending. Those students were able to renew into the new ESA Plus. The Disabilities Grant is no more.

44:34

The former ESA has been replaced now by ESA Plus.

44:38

So those are retired.

44:41

Now it's June. We are finishing the school year with students in those two programs, so that we can all be forgiven for a little confusion on that.

44:50

I didn't want to mention those two programs in the presentation, because it could further confuse folks who don't have a connection to the old programs.

45:00

Alright, team, it's 12:45. I think we are good.

45:05

I'm going to firmly conclude now, since I think we are, we are over.

45:15

I appreciate your attendance. Appreciate the team being here. I hope it was helpful, and we will see you next week. Thank you, everyone.