

Transcript

ESA+ and Opportunity Scholarship:

Dual Enrolled Students

7/20/2022

0:21

Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you so much for joining today's webinar. We're going to give everyone a couple of more minutes to join and we'll get started.

0:34

So sit tight, and we will be back shortly.

1:51

All right, so we'll go ahead and get started. We appreciate your patience.

1:57

Again, good afternoon, and welcome to our ESA Plus and Opportunity Scholarship Dual Enrolled Students webinar.

2:07

My name is Tiffany Jatta. I am one of the K 12 program managers.

2:11

And with me today, I also have two of my colleagues that work pretty closely with the ESA Plus program, Amber and Mykayla.

2:22

They'll be helping to answer questions through today's webinar.

2:27

Just want to direct you to the handout section of the platform.

2:33

We've got copies of today's presentation available for you to take with you, both in PowerPoint slides and a PDF format.

2:44

We encourage you to download these handouts, so you'll have them after today's presentation.

2:50

And if you download the PowerPoint slides, you also have links to any of the web pages that will be referenced throughout.

3:00

And I'd also like to point out the questions section in your dashboard. If you have questions related to this webinar, feel free to type those questions in, and Amber or Mykayla will answer them as best they can.

3:16

And at the conclusion of the webinar, we'll also have a short Q&A session.

3:31

So, again, today's webinar is going to cover dual enrolled students, students that receive both the ESA Plus and Opportunity Scholarship. We are going to ask that you keep your questions limited to this specific topic. And if you have any more detailed questions as we go through the presentation, we do ask that you e-mail the program so we can better assist you.

3:59

So, with that being said, let's go ahead and get started with the webinar.

4:07

Now, the Education Student Accounts for Children and Disabilities Program was established by North Carolina Law in 2021.

4:16

The North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority administers the program, which we call ESA Plus. ESA Plus and the Opportunity Scholarship programs help families afford non public schools, private, and home schools in the state of North Carolina.

4:45

And these are some of the topics that we're going to cover today during the presentation. Again, please make sure you keep your questions limited to just the topic today.

4:55

And if you have any more detailed questions that we won't be able to answer during the presentation, feel free to e-mail us.

5:07

Now, we're having this presentation today because we know that parents of students who have a scholarship award for both programs have unique challenges. So we wanted to have this session today as a way to help discuss the timelines and how your student can benefit from both programs.

5:41

OK, so on this slide, we are showing you just the differences between the Opportunity Scholarship and the ESA Plus program. Everyone should be familiar at this point, Opportunity Scholarship is income based.

5:57

And the Education Student Account, The ESA Plus program, is based on a student having a disability.

6:09

The Opportunity Scholarship and ESA Plus Program are two separate programs with different eligibility requirements.

6:17

Families choose whether to apply for one or both programs, but they're not required to apply for both.

6:26

A student can be eligible for one or both programs.

6:30

If awarded both, families can choose to accept or decline one or the other, and vice versa.

6:55

So, we want to talk about for a minute, exactly what is a non public school? For K12 program purposes, non public schools are private schools registered with the state of North Carolina, or home schools registered with the state of North Carolina.

7:13

Then you see here what constitutes a public school and the different types of public schools that are in North Carolina.

7:25

It's important to know, and we're going to keep reiterating this throughout the course of this session, home school options are available through the ESA Plus program, but not through the Opportunity Scholarship program.

7:42

So if you're a family that has both these awards and you decide to home school your student, you will need to decline the Opportunity Scholarship.

8:10

More program differences here.

8:15

Again, as I just mentioned, if your student has an Opportunity Scholarship, they must attend a non public school.

8:24

ESA Plus students can attend a non public school or a home school.

8:34

And new for this year with the programs, with the ESA Plus program, the co enrollment option is a continuation from the previous ESA program that was administered. New for this year, also with Opportunity Scholarship co enrollment options are available.

8:53

You see here the different scenarios that could be acceptable if your student receives both these programs.

9:07

And again, just a reminder, a student cannot benefit from the Opportunity Scholarship if they are homeschooled.

9:18

It's either part-time or full-time.

9:21

If your home school, you cannot receive the opportunity scholarship.

9:44

A student's chosen school must be participating in each program for which the student has an award.

9:54

Opportunities funds only disburse to a participating school.

10:00

And also important to note, each program has different timelines and requires different documents.

10:08

Parent should review their MyPortal to do list weekly for required actions.

10:30

So let's talk a bit for a few moments about program disbursements.

10:35

Here you see the order that the award funds will be disbursed to a school, with the Opportunity being applied first.

10:46

ESA Plus applied second.

10:54

The disbursement order is to the family's advantage.

10:59

Opportunity Scholarship funds can only pay tuition and fees at an eligible participating non public school.

11:09

ESA Plus funds, on the other hand, can pay tuition and fees at an eligible school, as well as qualified expenses if there are funds left after tuition and fees are paid.

11:37

School transfers.

11:46

K 12 funds are disbursed to the school on behalf of the student at the beginning of each semester.

11:57

If you need to make a school transfer, the ideal time is to do it at the end of the semester.

12:05

For instance, in December after the fall semester has ended.

12:14

K 12 program staff will collect the withdrawal form from the school and a refund, if appropriate, from the previous school.

12:25

A new school choice can't be updated in My Portal until the first school has submitted a withdrawal.

12:36

And it's important to note, with this slide, I'm at the top, we mentioned that award funds from the K 12 programs can be sent to a maximum of two schools per semester.

12:50

K 12 funds won't cover the cost if a student changes schools for a third time in the same semester.

12:58

So that's something you'll want to keep in mind, if you have to make a school change.

13:23

OK, so let's talk about some of the complications that can occur if your student has both awards.

13:43

And, again, we keep driving this point home, if your student starts the school year in a participating, non public school, and you decide to switch to home school, please keep in mind the Opportunity Scholarship will be canceled.

14:02

Students cannot benefit from Opportunity Scholarship funds if they are homeschooled.

14:14

And we also want you to make sure you keep in mind that with the ESA Plus award, if you have funds that go to ClassWallet, and you transfer your student to another school, you will not have ESA funds for that semester to apply to the new school.

14:37

So for this reason, we ask families to contact us before transferring a student.

14:45

If you feel like it's not working out with the school your student is enrolled in, please reach out before you make that move.

14:54

Our staff can help you work through the effects that school transfers can have on funding.

15:02

And you can also go back and review the June 29th school choices and changes training if you consider a school transfer.

15:26

OK, so this was a really short presentation today. As a reminder, you can always find information on our website.

15:37

We have forms and resources, how to use our platforms, My Portal, and ClassWallet.

15:43

You can always go to www.ncseaa.edu.

15:57

Amber, Mykayla, what kind of questions do we have today that we can address?

16:10

[Amber] We have a question from a parent asking if they have their student enrolled in two of our participating private schools how is tuition going to be paid if it's still owed.

16:22

They're wondering how tuition is paid if they're enrolled in two of the participating schools.

16:36

[Tiffany] OK, that's a good question.

16:37

If your student is co enrolled in two participating private schools, our system is set up and our program is set up, we can only pay one school at a time.

16:49

So whatever school is listed in your My Portal account is the school that funds will be disbursed to.

17:01

And if there is a remaining balance . . . so with ESA Plus, because like I said at the beginning of the presentation, the disbursement order is Opportunity is applied first, ESA Plus applied second.

17:19

So, in a case where a student is enrolled in two private schools, the school that's listed in My Portal would get disbursed all the money, or tuition for Opportunity first.

17:35

If there's a balance left, ESA can come pick up the difference. As far as the second school with ESA Plus, that school could be considered a provider, and you could pay for supplemental teaching services by getting an invoice and paying the school through ClassWallet.

18:07

I hope that answered that question.

18:11

See any more that we can answer?

18:14

Specific to this topic? Amber, did you see any questions we can answer specific to this topic today?

18:23

[Amber] I don't see any specific to our topic today.

18:31

They're more personal ones, so I would just suggest that some of those parents e-mail us.

18:38

[Tiffany] OK, I'm looking here. I see questions about products.

18:44

We do ask that you e-mail the program to get some more specific information on questions about products.

18:51

I saw a question about what qualifies a student for the \$17,000. We can go ahead and answer that here.

19:02

The area of disability on a student's eligibility determination determines if a student can get the \$17,000. Amber of Mykayla, if you could drop in the link to the program requirements, that has a list of the areas of disability on it that will allow a student to receive \$17,000.

19:49

OK, I'm looking at a question here based on what was just shared.

19:52

“Does this mean tuition will be paid automatically from ESA Plus based on the amount the school has put in the system as our tuition after Opportunity Scholarship funds are gone?” If I'm understanding your question, yes, that's correct.

20:10

The ESA Plus program for tuition payments, families will no longer have to be invoiced by the school and pay through the ClassWallet platform.

20:23

We'll be making that tuition payment directly to the school.

20:33

And that payment amount will depend on what the school will report as the student's tuition cost.

20:47

Can ESA funds be used to pay for additional programs offered by the non public school?

21:03

Yes, ESA funds can be used to pay for additional services if the school is not charging all students at a particular grade level.

21:26

And that may be getting to a more specific scenario, so parent, you may want to e-mail the program with that question.

21:44

Like we say about products, we encourage you to review the presentation that we had on shopping.

22:06

See any more questions?

22:09

[Amber] Can a home school student use a private school as a provider and pay through Class Wallet?

22:17

[Tiffany] Can a home-school student use a provider?

22:21

Yes, that is permissible.

22:28

Home-school students can use private schools as teaching service providers and pay them through ClassWallet. Yes, that's permissible.

22:44

So tuition is not a qualified expense for ESA Plus?

22:53

That is correct.

22:54

If the school participates in the ESA Plus program, we will send a direct disbursement to it.

23:07

Now there can be some exceptions to that, and we've touched on that in some previous trainings, depending on what the particular scenario is with that case.

23:19

But for ESA Plus, if the school participates in the program, tuition payments will be sent directly to the school.

23:31

Which is going to be more efficient, and the school is going to get payments in a timelier manner, versus having you wait for an invoice from the school, have to load it into ClassWallet.

23:48

It has to go in a queue.

23:51

And then our staff have to review it and approve it.

23:55

So we're eliminating all those in-between processes by paying the school directly.

24:16

Ladies, do you see any more questions we can answer on this topic today?

24:34

Can I do half day, home-school, half day in school and still be able to receive the funds?

24:43

If you mean, can your student be co enrolled in home-school and in public school?

24:52

Let's go back to the slide about part-time enrollment.

25:10

OK, so on this slide, we have the different types of co enrollment scenarios a student could be in and still receive funding.

25:21

So if your student is going to two private schools they'll be eligible to receive the Opportunity Scholarship and the ESA Plus.

25:34

If they're going to be going to a private school and public school, they will receive half the amount of the Opportunity Scholarship and half of the ESA Plus.

25:54

If they're going to be co enrolled in a private school and home-school, they can only get the ESA Plus award.

26:04

So this is the instance where private school and home school are allowable, but it's going to cancel out the Opportunity Scholarship.

26:24

And so, I think an important bullet point to take note of here: it is permissible for students to be co enrolled in private school and public school, but just know you're only going to get half of each award.

26:52

See any more questions that we can answer today?

27:16

[Amber] I think we've answered pretty much the standard ones pertaining to this particular webinar.

27:30

[Tiffany] OK, yes, if you've got some specific questions about co enrollment in two private schools, yes, please e-mail the program and we'll take a look at it and get an answer to things as we can.

27:49

Does our school tell us how much Opportunity we received?

27:57

Yes, they should tell you. And in a previous training talking about payments, you will know how much Opportunity Scholarship money, and ESA Plus for that matter, how much money is going to be disbursed. But before you endorse, take a look at the award amount carefully.

28:21

That's how much will be disbursed to the school.

28:25

By you endorsing that, you're saying that amount is correct and you agree with that amount being disbursed to the school.

28:48

I see a question. My child has a disability and will attend a private school. She was only awarded ESA Plus. Can she receive the Opportunity Scholarship?

29:00

Yes, she can, if she meets the Opportunity Scholarship program eligibility requirements.

29:11

As I mentioned earlier, these are two separate programs with two sets of program requirements specific to each program.

29:21

So, in order to receive funding from each program, as your students have if you're on this call, they met the program requirements for each program and were offered funding.

29:50

Looking to see if there are any more questions specific to this topic that we could answer today.

30:20

OK, if offered an ESA Plus award, can you appeal it? I'm not sure I understand that question.

30:31

Perhaps, you mean, can you decline it?

30:37

[Amber] I'm assuming, because based off the previous question asked by this parent maybe they're talking about the award amount. If they were offered maybe the 9000, and they're trying to see if they would qualify for the 17,000. I'm assuming they might want to ask what are the steps to get the \$17,000. I believe that's what she's asking.

31:00

[Tiffany] OK, e-mail the program, and we can talk to you specifically about how any award amount adjustments for ESA Plus could be made.

31:14

All right, I think that's all the questions for this session today.

31:25

We have one more session, the final session for the series next week, on planning for summer 2023 expenses.

31:36

That'll be a good session. Typically for everyone, but in particular, for our home school families.

31:49

So, if there are no more questions, I am going to end this session for today. Thank you so much for joining, and have a good day.