


*“The attention Lucas receives at his new school
didn’t just save his ability to learn – it also saved his life.”*



The Promise
of *Special Needs*
Scholarships

CARMEN B. PINGREE SCHOOL for Children with Autism



Carson Smith attends the Carmen B. Pingree School for Children with Autism in Salt Lake City. His mother Cheryl worked for two years to pass Utah's special needs scholarship, which she says has made a "real difference for families affected by disabilities."

The Promise of Special Needs Scholarships

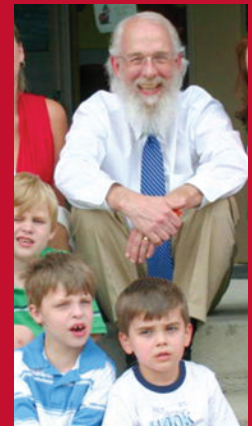
By definition, children with special needs require a customized education for them to reach their potential. Thankfully, over the last twenty years, we have seen a dramatic improvement in the education offered to children with special needs in public schools. Yet, no single public school, no matter how extraordinary its programs, can be expected to offer the best possible special education for every child. The challenge is simply too great for any single school.

Therefore, the federal government long ago recognized that some children with special needs would best be served by giving them the chance to attend a different public or private school with a program tailored for their special need. Unfortunately, the existing process for providing families with this option is often antagonistic, legalistic, drawn out, and expensive.

As a result, a growing number of states have recently decided to provide scholarships to families with special needs. Parents can then use these special needs scholarships to send their children to the public or private school with the program the parents feel will best meet their children's special needs.

This year, children in five states have access to special needs scholarships—Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Ohio, and Utah. In the years to come, more children will likely be given this option as legislators in several other states are considering creating special needs scholarships. Though these special needs scholarship programs are new, the initial research studies show extraordinarily high parental satisfaction, reductions in student harassment, and improvement in academic performance.

Still, the greatest testimony about the promise of special needs scholarships comes from the stories of the families they have transformed. We welcome this chance to share their stories with you.



Florida's John M. McKay Scholars

Lynette and Lucas



“Even though I regard my coworkers with utmost respect and admiration, I knew my school was not the best place for my son.” Lynette, a public school teacher, was torn between the school she loved and her child’s educational needs, Lynette took a chance on private education using Florida’s McKay scholarships that saved her son’s life. Lucas now attends a private school that offers assistance to his specific needs.

As a special education teacher in a Miami public school, Lynette Estrada always felt that she was on top of her two children’s academic and emotional progress. Lynette noticed that her son Lucas had autistic tendencies at a young age, prompting her to enroll Lucas at the school where she loved to work.

“I consider my school one of the best in servicing special education. Where else would I trust my son’s education?” Lynette said.

Although Lucas could already read when he entered kindergarten, he encountered problems in the classroom. Lucas was bullied by his peers and had trouble with basic exercises like writing and speaking clearly. The school’s principal placed Lucas in a self-contained classroom, but even there he was placed under restrictions that further inhibited his progress. For example, Lucas was not allowed to write with a pen or marker, despite accommodations on his Individualized Education Program. Although a simple task for other children, Lucas’s weak hand grip required these tools to write successfully. Finally, Lucas’s occupational therapist told Lynette that he had sensory processing difficulties that could not be addressed at that school. By second grade, Lucas’s instructors recommended that he be placed in the school’s emotionally handicapped classroom or find a new school. Lynette felt that the emotionally handicapped classroom was not the right place for her son, so she toured the schools recommended by her district—and was appalled by what she saw.

“The different levels of autism were all placed in one room due to funding,” Lynette recalled. “I observed one child banging his head against a wall, one little girl with self-mutilation marks on her arm, and one boy removing his clothing and trying to bite the teacher because she was trying to stop him. The higher-functioning children were left alone. This was not the setting for my son.”

When Lynette worked with her son after school, he would read at higher levels and complete his work. Lynette was encouraged by Lucas’s progress at home and strongly felt that a classroom aide would give him the attention he needed to succeed.

“My son was capable of completing the work, just not in school. I knew what he truly needed was a classroom aide.”

hip for Students with Disabilities

But Lynette's attempts to secure an aide for Lucas were unsuccessful. After Lucas's doctor told Lynette her son was capable of succeeding if placed in the right educational environment, Lynette decided to withdraw Lucas from his public school and apply for the McKay scholarship.

"It was then and there I made the decision to remove my son from my school—the school I loved," Lynette said. "Even though I regard my coworkers with utmost respect and admiration I knew my school was not the best place for my son."

Lucas now attends a private school for students with disabilities through the McKay scholarship program. Here Lucas thrives in academic, art, and physical education programs designed to meet his needs, and has made many friends—all accomplishments Lynette says are a "victory" for her son.

"At this school he is now reaching his full academic and emotional potential. He gets the extra individual help he needs and is able to flourish," Lynette said.

The attention Lucas receives at his new school didn't just save his ability to learn—it also saved his life. Lynette was told in kindergarten that Lucas had an overactive bladder, which explained his insatiable thirst and frequent trips to the restroom. But his new teachers did not buy the doctor's explanation. Lucas's teachers continued to encourage Lynette to question Lucas's physician. Their dedication saved Lucas's life—a tumor was found on his pituitary gland. Lucas was diagnosed with cancer.

"Lucas missed a lot of school but was able to continue his education even though he was under chemotherapy and radiation treatments," Lynette recalled. "The doctors felt confident that he could continue because the school he attended was so attentive to his needs. It was with the help of Lucas's teachers that my son is alive."

Lynette calls the McKay scholarship a "blessing" for her son and for the thousands of other children with special needs in Florida who benefit from the program. She still works as a special education teacher in the public schools, but feels that sometimes a private

Program Facts

- To qualify for the scholarship, students must have a state-prescribed Individualized Education Program and be currently attending a public school.
- The amount of the scholarship is determined by 1) the amount the student would have received in the public school to which they are assigned, or 2) the amount of the selected private school's tuition and fees, whichever is less. In 2006-07, the scholarships ranged from \$5,039 to \$21,907, with an average scholarship amount of \$7,206.
- Scholarships may be used to attend the eligible public school or private school of the parents' choice.
- Parents do not have to re-apply for the scholarship each year. Once a McKay scholarship is awarded, a student may remain in the program until they graduate from high school or turn 22 years old, whichever comes first. Students must be five years old by the beginning of the school year to receive a scholarship.
- There is no enrollment cap for the program. The number of scholarships awarded is determined by the number of students who apply. During the 2007-08 school year, 19,439 students have been awarded scholarships totaling more than \$100 million.
- As of 2005, there were 401,834 students in Florida public schools registered as a pupil with a disability.
- Established in 1999.

school may be the best placement for a child with disabilities.

"As a society we need to stop trying to make every child fit in a circular peg when in fact they are square ones. We need to embrace our children's differences and guide them so they can succeed."

Lynette cites "autistic heroes" like Albert Einstein, Andy Warhol, Isaac Newton, and Hans Christian Anderson as inspirations for Lucas's future.

"I am at ease knowing my son has hope for the future. He will not drop out at 16. He will graduate with a real diploma. He will continue to reach his full potential!" ■

Utah's Carson Smith Special Needs Scholarship

Cheryl and Carson Smith



More than just a namesake, the Smith family made their mark on the Utah legislature to change the lives of hundreds of children with special needs in their state.

Carson Smith may never know that he is the namesake of a scholarship program that helps hundreds of other kids with special needs like him. At a young age, Carson was diagnosed with severe autism. His disorder inhibits his speech, hinders his ability to follow directions or recognize his own name, and can even put him in serious danger, as Carson cannot recognize the danger in opening the door of a moving car or jumping out of windows. Even more reason, said mom Cheryl, to stand up for her son.

At first, Carson attended public schools like the rest of his siblings. Utah had a state-funded preschool for children with autism that Carson was able to attend for his first year of schooling. But after a few months, Carson's teachers told the Smiths that he needed an even more specialized environment to be able to succeed.

"By no fault of their own, public school teachers are faced with dealing with all kinds of disabilities, let alone trying to figure out what works for my child, who is different from every other child with autism. I have other children who have prospered in public schools. Carson cannot," Cheryl said.

Carson's teachers recommended that the only school that could meet his needs was the Pingree School for Children with Autism. A local private school specially designed for children with autism like Carson, the school features individualized and intensive attention from teachers, speech therapists, and psychiatrists to

"By no fault of their own, public schools are faced with all kinds of disabilities, let alone trying to figure out what works for my child, who is different from every other child with autism."

help children with severe disabilities learn. But at \$23,000 a year, the much-needed alternative came at a price.

“Carson’s kindergarten tuition at the Pingree School was more than my [other] son’s tuition in medical school at the University of Utah. And he would never ‘graduate’ from autism,” Cheryl explained. The Smiths made many sacrifices to give their son the education he needed, but Cheryl wondered how they would continue to afford the high tuition — and how other families made ends meet. “Getting the help your child with disabilities really needs and deserves should not be based on how much money you make.”

Cheryl was determined to see what she could do to help her son and the many other children with disabilities in the state. She contacted her state legislator, told him her family’s story, and took him on a tour to see the environment at Carson’s school.

“I wasn’t asking for the moon, just some help,” Cheryl recalled. “I’m just a mom. I have no political background. But we didn’t know what we were going to do.”

Determined to succeed, Cheryl and other families pushed to get a scholarship program passed, sometimes putting in as much as 50 hours of work a week.

“We always tried to be positive. It was really trying to get past the politics and remind people: it’s about the kids,” Cheryl said. “I love having made a real difference for families affected by disabilities. People approach me all the time teary eyed and tell me ‘thank you’ for the work I did. They could not have their child in the place they need to be without the scholarship. Some were able to stay home with their other children, some to pay off that second mortgage they took out for their disabled child, some to just reinstate their phone,” Cheryl recalled.

Though autism still severely affects Carson’s development, he is making significant progress for a child with his condition. With the help of his family and dedicated teachers, Carson has been toilet-trained, has learned to put on his own socks and pants, and can even say a few words—including “love you,” a phrase that is priceless to Cheryl.

“Along with the challenges, he is also our greatest joy,” Cheryl said. “Every new thing he does is a celebration! We can’t imagine life without him.” ■

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Program Facts

- Students with special needs in both public and private schools can qualify for this scholarship program.
- The amount of the scholarship is determined by the hours of special education services the student would receive each day if attending the assigned public school. If a student would receive three or more hours of special education services, the scholarship amount is \$6,285.00. If the student would receive less than three hours of special education services, the scholarship amount is \$3,771.00.
- Scholarships may be used to attend the eligible private school of the parents’ choice.
- The scholarships are granted for three-year periods. After three years, an assessment team consisting of the student’s parents, teacher, and school and district personnel will determine whether the student is still eligible for the scholarship. The scholarship may be renewed in three-year increments until the student graduates from high school or turns 22 years old, whichever comes first.
- Scholarships are granted on a random basis, with continuing recipients receiving priority over new applicants. The state presently allocates \$2.4 million annually for the program. During the 2007-08 school year, 484 scholarships have been awarded.
- The estimated number of students with special needs in Utah ranges from 52,000 to 60,000.
- Established in 2005.

Ohio Autism Scholarship Program

Rep. Jon Peterson



Both as a parent and as a state legislator, Rep. Jon Peterson knew he had the responsibility to make a change in the education of Ohio's children with autism.

As the parent of a child with autism, Rep. Jon Peterson always felt lucky that his daughter flourished in the traditional school system despite her special needs.

“Our school district has been supportive of Hannah’s special needs and concerns,” he said. “She has made terrific progress and we are very pleased.”

But as a leader—not only among the disability community, but as a state representative—Rep. Peterson heard from many parents who were not as lucky.

“Unfortunately, the experience of many families is not as positive [as my family’s]. Many parents in Ohio are living in school districts that are unable or refuse to adequately serve children with autism,” Rep. Peterson explained.

After hearing from many families whose children with autism couldn’t get the education they needed, Rep. Peterson was convinced there had to be a better way to serve this population.

“The unique perspective a legislator has as a specialist in the development of public policy comes with a certain responsibility: to forge and develop new ways of serving some of our most vulnerable citizens,” he said. “A legislator who can relate to and share the particular and specific concerns of his constituents is provided with a special ability to make a difference.”

With the support of many families and determination to make a change in the education of children with special needs like his own daughter, Rep. Peterson sponsored and successfully created Ohio’s Autism Scholarship Program in 2003. The scholarship has made a difference in the lives of families who had once lost hope that their child would reach his or her full potential.

“The scholarship has given them hope as they see the significant progress their

Program Facts

- To qualify for the scholarship, students must be identified as autistic by their assigned public school district and learn under an Individualized Education Program.
- The amount of the scholarship is 1) the fee charged for the child by the selected provider or 2) \$20,000 per school year to provide special education and/or related services that implement the child's Individualized Education Program, whichever is less.
- Scholarships may be used to attend the eligible public school or private school of the parents' choice.
- Children may receive scholarships for preschool special education as early as three years old.
- Scholarships may be used until the student graduates from high school or turns 22 years old, whichever comes first.
- Parents must re-apply for the scholarship every year.
- There is no enrollment cap for the program. The number of scholarships awarded is determined by the number of students who apply. In the 2007-08 school year, the state estimated that 950 students are enrolled in the Autism Scholarship Program.
- As of 2006, 5,406 students in Ohio public school districts were identified as children with autism.
- Established in 2003.

children have made after moving from a traditional educational environment to a provider of educational services that specifically tailors educational services to the needs of their child," Rep. Peterson explained.

The program not only helps families who choose to participate, but it also helps families like the Petersons who choose to stay in the traditional public school setting.

"When school districts see competitive alternative educational providers successfully serving our

children with autism, they are forced to redesign their curriculums if they are serious about serving this population," Rep. Peterson explained. "Competition is forcing them to reevaluate the manner in which they are delivering these services."

His advice to parents and legislators interested in expanding education options for children with special needs is simple:

"Never give up, no matter how hot the heat in the kitchen gets," he said. "You have the opportunity to make a difference for your children and your constituents." ■



Arizona Scholarship for Pupils with Disabilities

Andrea and Lexie Weck



By age five, Lexie Weck had already attended a preschool program at her public school designed for children with special needs. But even in a specialized program, Lexie made little progress and was in a classroom with an ever-growing student-to-teacher ratio. Diagnosed with cerebral palsy, autism, and mild mental retardation at a young age, Lexie could not speak simple words like “yes” or “no” and could not interact with her peers or family members.

It was then that Lexie’s mom, Andrea, knew she had to make a change in her daughter’s education. A single mom of three, Andrea could not homeschool Lexie and knew she would have trouble paying tuition at a private school—until the Arizona Scholarship for Pupils with Disabilities was passed by the legislature. The scholarship enabled Andrea to send Lexie to the Chrysalis Academy, which specializes in education for children with autism. At Chrysalis, there is one teacher for every two children. In the past year, Lexie has already learned some basic sign language, how to feed herself, and how to verbalize sounds.

“Lexie can sign words like “yes” and “music.” She even wants to be around her family and friends now, and I know her new school will help her learn to speak someday,” said Andrea. “Being able to use this scholarship to attend Chrysalis has changed our lives—this school brings out a different child in Lexie.” ■

Program Facts

- To qualify for the scholarship, students must learn under an Individualized Education Program and be currently attending a public school.
- The amount of the scholarship is for either 1) the cost of the chosen school’s tuition and fees or actual per-pupil cost, whichever is greater, or 2) the amount prescribed for the particular student by the state of Arizona.
- Scholarships may be used to attend the eligible public school or private school of the parents’ choice.
 - The number of scholarships awarded is determined by the number of students who apply. Scholarships are granted on a first-come, first-serve basis. The state allocates \$2.5 million annually for the program. In the 2007-08 school year, 158 scholarships have been awarded.
- Parents do not have to re-apply for the scholarship each year; however, parents must register their child as a participant every year.
- As of 2006, there were approximately 124,500 students in Arizona public schools who qualified as a pupil with a disability.
- **Established in 2006.**



Georgia Special Needs Scholarship

Rachael and Wilson Barron



Wilson Barron was diagnosed with cerebral palsy when he was two years old. His developmental delays, coupled with significant health issues affecting his heart, made it difficult for Wilson to learn in a typical classroom. At first, Wilson attended preschool with the help of a paraprofessional, but his new public school mandated that Wilson enroll in a self-contained special education preschool room—something mom Rachael described as a “disaster.” Wilson was in and out of public school for the next three years until Rachael began homeschooling. Now Wilson attends a private school. Rachael says the

difference has been “amazing.”

“It was a regular challenge to find teachers and support personnel who believed that my child could accomplish great things. Most everyone we met in public school didn’t really believe that he could learn and really accomplish much, therefore they treated him that way,” Rachael recalled.

After two months in his new school, Rachael was overjoyed to hear that Wilson could read over 80 new words and was described by his teachers as “extremely bright.”

“People misinterpret Wilson’s disability, cerebral palsy, as a real lack of intelligence,” Rachael said. “What they seem to miss is what they would find if they focused on his ability.”

After seeing the difference the right educational environment made in Wilson’s life, Rachael decided to help other families like hers. When the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship Program was introduced in the state legislature, Rachael did all she could to help the bill pass.

“I want to give families a little more control over the way their tax dollars are spent on their children. I hope special schools develop that will focus on key areas so kids can get the resources and specific attention they need. The Georgia Special Needs Scholarship will give students a real opportunity at an independent life.” ■

Program Facts

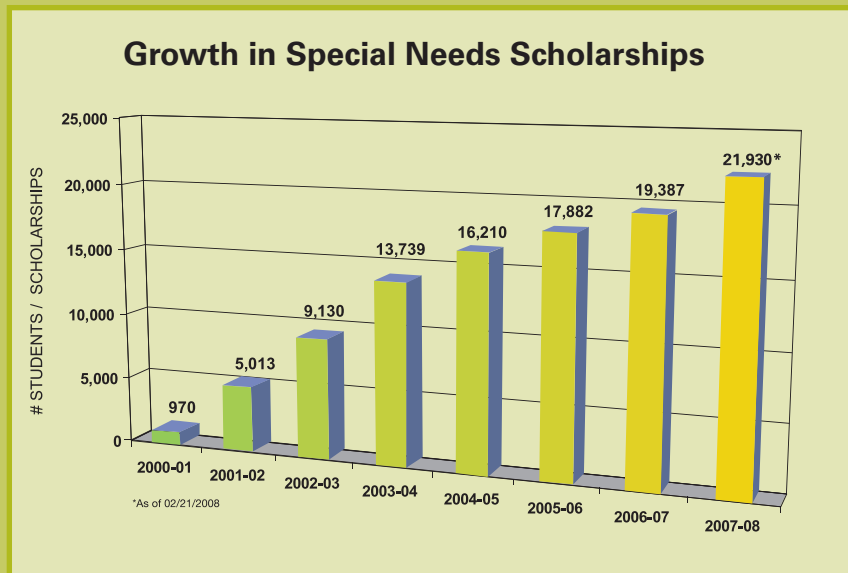
- To qualify for the scholarship, students must learn under an Individualized Education Program and be currently attending a public school.
- The amount of the scholarship is determined by 1) the amount the student would have received in the public school to which they are assigned, or 2) the amount of the selected private school’s tuition and fees, whichever is less.
- Scholarships may be used to attend the eligible public school or private school of the parents’ choice.
- Parents do not have to re-apply for the scholarship each year. Once a scholarship is awarded, a student may remain in the program until they graduate from high school or turn 22 years old, whichever comes first.
- There is no enrollment cap for the program. The number of scholarships awarded is determined by the number of students who apply. In the 2007-08 school year, 899 scholarships have been awarded. The average scholarship is \$6,273 and the state has allocated more than \$5.6 million for the program.
- As of 2006, there were approximately 186,272 students in Georgia public schools who qualified as a pupil with a disability.
- **Established in 2007.**

Progress of Special Needs Scholarship Programs

In 1999, Florida became the first state to provide scholarships to children with special needs so that they could attend the public or private school that best met their educational needs. Originally created as a pilot project with only two students participating in the first year, the McKay Scholarship program serving 19,439 students in the 2007-08 school year. As the oldest special needs scholarship program in the nation, the McKay Scholarship program remains the nation's largest program.

As the Florida program has grown and its promise has been confirmed, other states have begun to create or consider special needs scholarship programs. In 2003, Ohio created the Autism Scholarship Program, and today it serves at least 10 percent of the state's students identified with autism. In 2005, Utah enacted the Carson Smith Special Needs Scholarship Program to serve the state's students with disabilities. In 2006, Arizona passed the Scholarship for Pupils with Disabilities Program. The momentum for adopting special needs scholarship programs continued into 2007 with Georgia enacting a special needs scholarship program and more than a dozen other states considering the possibility.

The number of states considering the creation of special needs scholarship programs continues to increase as serious academic studies confirm the promise of the idea. In a 2003 study of the Florida program, scholars Jay P. Greene and Greg Forster found that an amazing 92.7 percent of the parents with children in the program were satisfied with the results. The rave reviews from parents aren't all that surprising given the impressive results the study's authors found for participating special needs students including smaller class sizes, less student harassment, fewer student assaults, and reduced behavioral problems.

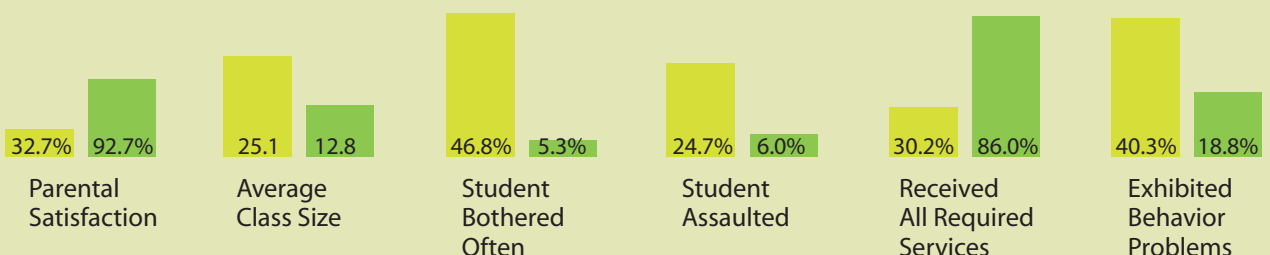


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Research Confirms the Promise of Special Scholarships

Florida Public Schools
McKay Scholarship Schools

Vouchers for Special Education Students: An Evaluation of Florida's McKay Scholarship Program by Jay P. Greene and Greg Forster, for the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research. June 2003.



Frequently Asked Questions

How can our family qualify for a special needs scholarship program?

If you live in Florida, Arizona, Utah, Ohio, or Georgia, your family gets to decide whether your child's educational needs are being met by his or her current public school or whether your child should be transferred to another public or private school. In these states, it is usually required that your child was prescribed an Individualized Education Program. Some scholarship programs may require that your child is currently enrolled in public school, while Utah's program allows students with special needs who already attend a private school to apply.

Do we have to go through any legal or administrative process before our child can participate?

Parents do not have to file any administrative complaints or legal actions before they can elect to use a special needs scholarship at the school of their choice. Parents simply must complete an application to the program by the stated deadline and meet any program requirements.

Will I lose my rights under the IDEA legislation?

No, but those rights do not apply in a private school you select. IDEA rights apply only to schools receiving federal funds under the IDEA. The special education scholarship programs enable you as a parent to exercise the same right to opt out of the public school system that wealthier parents have always had. Once you have left the public system, the IDEA does not apply to the relationship between you and the non-public school you have selected, just as it does not apply to parents who use their own funds to opt-out. You are free at any time to return your child to the public school system where the IDEA applies.

Do these programs hinder the progress the special needs community has made to mainstream students into the typical classroom?

The special needs community has made great progress in establishing

the right for a children with disabilities to participate in the mainstream of education. Of course, public and private schools can offer typical classroom settings for students with special needs. Special needs scholarships offer parents even more options to serve their children's needs by giving the choice of private providers as well. These programs allow parents who are not satisfied with their child's present education to transfer their students to a better provider instead of incurring attorney fees to sue the school districts to leave the public school. (As a result, public schools would not have to pay attorneys to defend themselves in courts.)

In some cases, children may be better off in a specialized setting rather than a typical classroom. In fact, a few years in a specialized environment can generate enough progress in a child with special needs that they are able to return to the traditional classroom for the remainder of their education, or participate in more incorporated activities with the student. In the end, parents should have the right to choose the best education for their child.

Is transportation provided for special needs scholarship students?

Different states have different policies, but in most cases, the parent is responsible for the transportation of their special needs scholarship student. Sometimes, participating private schools have a transportation program for their students.

How are private schools or providers regulated? Do special needs scholarship students have to take any standardized tests?

Special needs scholarship programs allow parents — the person with the greatest interest in the child's progress — to evaluate their child's growth in the classroom. Legislation requires participating schools to give regular reports to parents, and parents may request that their child be given statewide standardized assessments to monitor their child's progress. Testing is not required. Parents may request a transfer or return to their traditional public school if they feel that their child is not progressing.

Private schools, including those eligible to participate in school choice programs, are already regulated under state law. Private schools are bound by non-discrimination laws and must also meet the same legal requirements as public schools when it comes to the safety of their students. Many scholarship programs have additional requirements for participating private schools, such as a background in educating students with special needs or a thorough evaluation before admittance to the program.

Doesn't the program hurt public schools by taking away money?

No. Students are funded by a combination of federal, state, and local money. Special needs scholarships only use state funds, so the remaining federal and local funds are often left behind for use in the public school. Evaluations of general school choice programs in Milwaukee, Cleveland, and Florida actually show that per pupil spending increased in the public school districts after choice programs were installed.

Scholarship programs actually allow for better spending of education money, as specialized private providers can often offer special needs services at a lower cost than a traditional public school. Transferring students with special needs from the traditional public schools also has the helpful effect of reducing the financial incentive for resident school districts to over-identify students with special needs, which diverts money and resources from the traditional classroom.

Can parents use the scholarships at private religious schools? Is that constitutional?

Yes, scholarships can be used at private religious schools. In 2002, the United States Supreme Court affirmed the constitutionality of school choice programs that make both religious and non-religious schools eligible in *Zelman v. Simmons-Harris*. While most states have religious establishment provisions that are more explicit than the First Amendment, many state courts have construed such programs to allow school choice programs because they aid students, not schools. For more information on the legality of school choice, visit the Institute for Justice at <http://www.ij.org>.

Local Organizations and Resources

Arizona's Scholarship for Pupils with Disabilities Program

Arizona Department of Education

1535 W. Jefferson St., Bin 25
Phoenix, AZ 85007
Phone: (602) 542-4013, or toll-free at 1-800-352-4558
<http://www.ade.state.az.us/hb2676/>

AZSchoolChoice.org

Information Hotline: (602) 393-9653,
or toll-free at 1-877- 970-2400
<http://www.azschoolchoice.com>

Florida's John M. McKay Scholarship for Students with Disabilities Program

Florida Department of Education Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice

325 W. Gaines St., Suite 522
Tallahassee, FL 32399
Phone: 1-800-447-1636
Fax: (850) 245-0868
<http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/Information/McKay/>

McKayScholarship.com

– Search a database of participating private schools

P.O. Box 497
Crystal Beach, FL 34681-0497
Email: info@mckayscholarship.com
<http://www.mckayscholarship.com>

Step Up for Students

P.O. Box 1670
Tampa, FL 33601
Phone: (813) 258-2700
Fax: (813) 251-2127
Email: stepup@stepupforstudents.com
<http://www.stepupforstudents.com>

Georgia's Special Needs Scholarship

Georgia Department of Education

2053 Twin Towers East
205 Jesse Hill Jr. Drive SE
Atlanta, GA 30334
Associate Superintendent for Policy:
Cassandra P. Herring, Ph.D.,
Phone: (404) 657-2965
Fax: (404) 657-6978
Email: policy@doe.k12.ga.us
<http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/sb10.aspx>

Utah's Carson Smith Special Needs Scholarship Program

Utah State Office of Education

250 East 500 South, P.O. Box 14420
Salt Lake City, UT 84114-4200
Administrator: Travis Rawlings
Phone: (801) 538-7601
Email: travis.rawlings@schools.utah.gov
<http://www.schools.utah.gov/admin/specialneeds.htm>

Parents for Choice in Education Foundation

8 E. Broadway, Suite 730
Salt Lake City, UT 84111
Program Specialist: Kristi Saunders
Phone: (801) 557-6507
Fax: (801) 532-1448
Email: kristi@choiceineducation.org
<http://www.choiceineducation.org/>

Ohio's Autism Scholarship Program

Ohio Department of Education Office for Exceptional Children

25 South Front Street
Mail Stop #203
Columbus, Ohio 43215-4183
Phone: (614) 466-2650
<http://www.ode.state.oh.us> (Select "School Options"
from the left menu bar. Then click on "Students With
Disabilities," then "Autism Scholarship Program.")

School Choice Ohio, Inc.

Fifth Third Center
21 East State Street, Suite 900
Columbus, Ohio 43215
Phone: (614) 223-1555
Fax: (614) 223-1565
<http://www.schoio.org>

Alliance for School Choice

Alliance for School Choice

1660 L Street, N.W., Suite 1000
Washington, D.C. 20036
Phone: (202) 280-1990
Fax: (202) 280-1989
Email: info@allianceforschoolchoice.org
www.AllianceForSchoolChoice.org

Research Resources

Publications and Reports

The Alliance for School Choice collects and posts research and resources regarding school choice programs, including programs for students with special needs.

To download reports, visit the Alliance for School Choice Web site at www.AllianceForSchoolChoice.org and click on *Research and Resources*.

You can also register to receive the *School Choice Digest*, a quarterly research journal that summarizes key research issues, and the *School Choice Activist*, our quarterly newsmagazine. Parents can sign up to become School Choice Advocates on the site, as well.



Model Legislation

If you are interested in advancing school choice legislation in your state, you can download fact sheets, state information, and other resources from the Policymakers section of our Web site. In addition, legislators interested in drafting legislation to support school choice should review model legislation approved by the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) and supported by the Alliance for School Choice and the Milton and Rose D. Friedman Foundation. The following two pieces of model legislation, which are downloadable from our Web site, are specifically designed for special needs scholarship programs:

The Special Needs Scholarship Program Act

The Special Needs Scholarship Program provides special needs students with the option to attend the public or private school of their parents' choice.

Autism Scholarship Act

The Autism Scholarship Program provides students with autism the option to attend the public or private school of their parents' choice.





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