



Southwest Georgia

S.T.E.M. Charter School

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SOWEGA STEM Charter
Re: Georgia Special Needs Scholarship Act
September 1, 2021

Dear Parents,

As the parent of a student who receives special education services or accommodations under Section 504, I wanted to let you know about your options to exercise public and private school choice. Under a state law passed by the Georgia State Legislature in 2007 and updated in 2021 to include students protected under Section 504, parents may choose to transfer their child to another public school or private school in Georgia. Please read the information below and/or visit the Special Needs Scholarship Act at: <https://www.gadoe.org/External-Affairs-and-Policy/Policy/Pages/Special-Needs-Scholarship-Program.aspx>

Public School Choice Options

A parent can request a transfer to another public school within the resident school system which has available space and which has a program with the services agreed to in the student's existing Individualized Education Program or Section 504 Plan. If the parent chooses this option, then the parent shall be responsible for transportation to such school. The student may attend such public school pursuant to this paragraph until the student completes all grades of the school, graduates, or reaches the age of 21, whichever occurs first, in accordance with federal and state requirements for disabled students;

The parent may apply and enroll the student in and transport the student to a public school outside of the student's resident school system which has available space and which has a program with the services agreed to in the student's existing Individual Education Program or Section 504 Plan. The nonresident public school system may accept the student, and if it does, such system shall report the student for purposes of funding to the department;

The parent may choose for the student to attend one of the state schools for the deaf and blind operated by the State Board of Education, if appropriate for the student's needs. Funding for such shall be provided in accordance with Code Section 20-2-302; or

Private School Choice Option

The parent may request and receive from the Georgia Department of Education a scholarship for the student to enroll in and attend a participating private school in accordance with the GA article. These scholarships provide funding that can be used to offset tuition costs at participating private schools in the state of Georgia. To qualify, students must meet specific qualifications outlined in [the article](#).

For more information on the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship Act and the parent application process, please visit the Georgia Department of Education website at www.gadoe.org.

Sincerely,
Natalie Zajac
504 Coordinator