



GEORGIA PROMISE — SCHOLARSHIP —

A C C E S S . A C H I E V E . S U C C E E D .



Georgia Promise Scholarship Program

Family Handbook

Introduction

Introduction

This guide has been assembled to support Georgia's eligible students and families with the Georgia Promise Scholarship, the State's new education savings account program.

Signed into law in 2024 through Senate Bill 233, the Georgia Promise Scholarship Program is aimed to empower families to pursue exceptional educational programs through nonpublic schooling, including **private school and home study**. Should eligible families choose to leave public school (or forgo attending as a new kindergartener) to participate, the Georgia Promise Scholarship **will allow families to use funds for private school tuition and fees, required textbooks, tutoring services, curriculum, physician/therapist services, transportation services, and other approved expenses**. The accompanying handbook will provide more information about the Promise Scholarship's structure, eligibility requirements, and timeline for the 2025-2026 school year.

Thank you for your interest and support of the Georgia Promise Scholarship Program.

Mitch Seabaugh
Senior Vice President
Georgia Promise Scholarship

What is the Georgia Education Savings Authority (GESA)?

GESA was created as part of SB 233 to administer the Promise Scholarship. GESA is a companion entity to the Georgia Student Finance Commission (GSFC), which helps students access higher education by providing financial aid options & programs.

Contact the Georgia Education Savings Authority

Questions? Please contact the Georgia Education Savings Authority:



Website

MyGeorgiaPromise.org



Phone

1 (877) 454-3788
1 (877) HLP-4-EDU



Email

Promise.Scholarship@gsfc.org

Georgia Promise Scholarship Program

The launch of the Georgia Promise Scholarship Program is approaching! Get up to speed on the program's design, eligibility guidelines, spending options, and timeline so that you may make informed educational choices.



What is it?

- The Georgia Promise Scholarship provides funding for eligible educational expenses to participating students at either **participating private schools or home study** to cover eligible educational expenses
- Eligible expenses for the 2025-2026 school year include **private school tuition and fees, curriculum, and tutoring services, among others** (see p.7 for more information on eligible expenses)



Who is eligible?

- For the 2025-2026 school year, students are eligible if:
 - Enrolled in a Georgia public school for the 2024-2025 school year* **OR** entering kindergarten **AND**
 - Residing in an attendance zone of a school on the list of lower performing schools **AND**
 - Parent has resided in Georgia for 1+ year*

**Exception for active-duty military*



How much is it?

- For the 2025-2026 school year, eligible families are entitled to a maximum award of **\$6,500** per student (up to 5% may be withheld for admin fees)
- **Student accounts will be funded quarterly** by GESA; families can then direct these funds for payment to private schools, service providers, or vendors for approved items/services





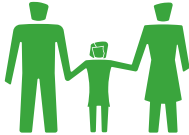
When can I apply?

- Student applications for the 2025-2026 school year will "go live" in early 2025
 - Students can apply at any time during the application window
- Prior to applying, families should:
 - Confirm program eligibility
 - Explore application processes for participating private schools (initial list to be released by late 2024) or home study opportunities

For more information, go to MyGeorgiaPromise.org

Eligibility Requirements and Documentation Checklist

Interested in applying to receive Georgia Promise Scholarship funds? Eligible children **must live in Georgia** and meet **any** of the following criteria in **all three** of the categories to qualify:

		Student Eligibility Criteria <i>Must meet <u>ONE</u> of the following for each category</i>
 <p>Student Type</p>	<p>Enrolled in a Georgia public school for the 2024-2025 school year* OR</p>	
	<p>Entering kindergarten</p>	
 <p>Attendance Zone</p>	<p>Residing in an attendance zone of a public school included on the list of lower performing public schools (to be released by December 1) <i>See p.5 for more information on attendance zone eligibility</i></p>	
 <p>1 Year+ Residency</p>	<p>Parent has resided in Georgia for 1+ year*</p>	

**Exception for active-duty military*

A list of documentation that families will need to provide for each eligibility criteria will be shared prior to the release of the application

When are Students No Longer Eligible?

Participating students residing in Georgia remain eligible for the Promise Scholarship, including in future years, until the student **meets one of the following criteria**:

-  Enrolls in public school
-  Graduates high school
-  Reaches the age of 20 (21 for special education students)
-  Moves out of Georgia

Participating families will be required to adhere to Georgia Promise Scholarship Program guidelines, including compliance with program expense eligibility requirements.

Attendance Zone Eligibility

Attendance Zone Eligibility Overview



Eligible students must reside in the attendance zone of ANY public school included on Governor’s Office of Student Achievement (GOSA) published list of lower performing schools.

Steps for Parents to Check Attendance Zone Eligibility

1

Review list of lower performing schools to be published by GOSA by December 1. Upon its release, families may refer to [MyGeorgiaPromise.org](https://www.mygeorgiapromise.org) for more information.

2

Check for ANY schools in the attendance zone you reside in (i.e., the elementary, middle, and high school). Note that a student does NOT need to be actively attending the school to be eligible.

If you reside in the attendance zone of at least one school on the list, you meet the attendance zone requirement.

Prioritization Process

If more students apply for the Georgia Promise Scholarship than capacity is available, students will be prioritized accordingly:

Year 1



- **Students whose family income is under 400% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL)** will receive priority consideration among applicants in Year 1
- **“Once you’re in, you’re in!”:** Once students are accepted to the program, they will remain in and will not need to re-apply; however, they may be asked to complete a brief re-verification process annually

Year 2 and Beyond

When making a scholarship award, if the number of participating students and new eligible program applicants exceeds the number of available scholarship accounts, student applications will be selected as follows:

1 Returning students

- Once accepted, participating students shall always receive first consideration and remain in the program unless they become ineligible due to age, exiting the program, returning to public school, or leaving the State of Georgia

2 Siblings

- Siblings of current participating students

3 New students under 400% FPL

- Students who have never participated in the program and whose family income does not exceed 400 percent of the Federal Poverty Level

4 Previously participating students

- Students who formerly participated in the program, exited, and are now reapplying

5 New students over 400% FPL

- Students who have never participated in the program and whose family income exceeds 400 percent of the Federal Poverty Level

All eligible applicants will be processed after the close of the application period.

Expense Eligibility and Process

Eligible Expenses

For the 2025-2026 school year, eligible education expenses may include:



Educational services/materials

- Tuition and fees at approved private schools, post-secondary institutions, or non-public online learning programs (as well as required textbooks for CTAE/core courses)
- Tutoring services provided by an educator certified by the Professional Standards Commission
- Curriculum, including required supplemental materials



Specialized support services*

- Occupational therapy
- Speech-language therapy
- Physical therapy
- Other services provided by certified physicians or licensed therapists

**Approved services will be included in the marketplace*



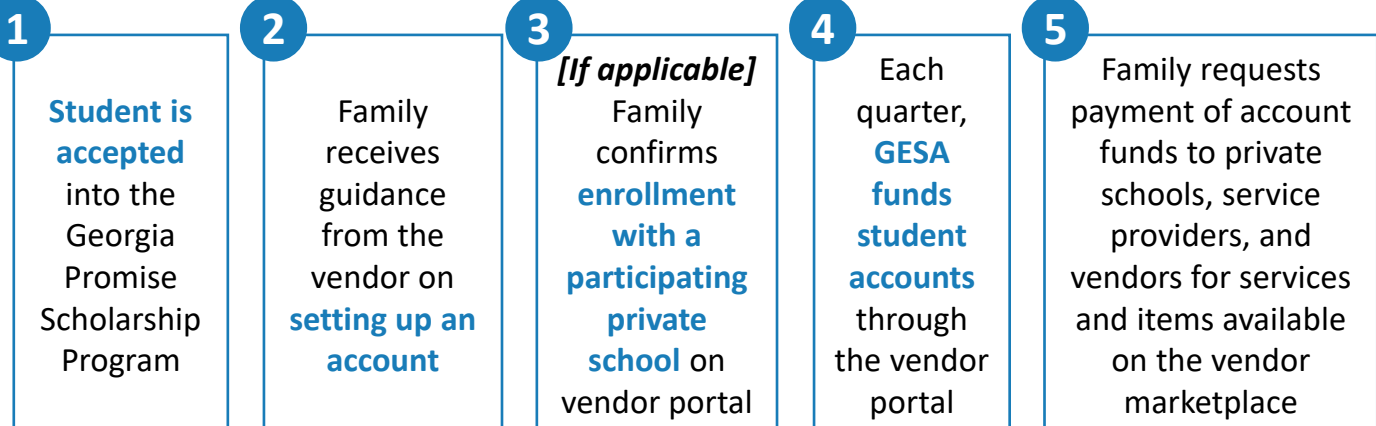
Transportation

- Up to \$500 per year for transportation to and from approved private schools or service providers

- Other education expenses may be authorized by the Georgia Education Savings Authority
- All private schools, service providers, and marketplace items are subject to GESA approval
- Expenses for services or products billed by family members are not eligible

Expense Process

To facilitate efficient transfer of funds, GESA will contract with a platform vendor that will assist parents in paying for services. The process for receiving funds and paying for eligible expenses is generally outlined below:



Testing Requirements

All participating students are required to annually complete a nationally norm-referenced test **OR** state-wide assessment, measuring academic progress in math and language arts

Information for Participating Students Enrolled in Participating Private Schools

- Participating private schools will administer these tests and report results to GESA

Information for All Other Participating Students

- Students not enrolled at participating private schools, including home study participants, **will also be responsible for meeting testing / reporting requirements**
- If choosing to complete a state-wide assessment, parents / service providers may:
 - Request the resident school system make the state-wide assessment available (if the student is enrolled in a grade where a test is administered); and
 - Inform their resident school system in writing of their intent to participate in state-wide assessments
- If choosing to complete nationally, norm-referenced test, see below:

Nationally Norm-Referenced Tests Approved for Use by Participating Students

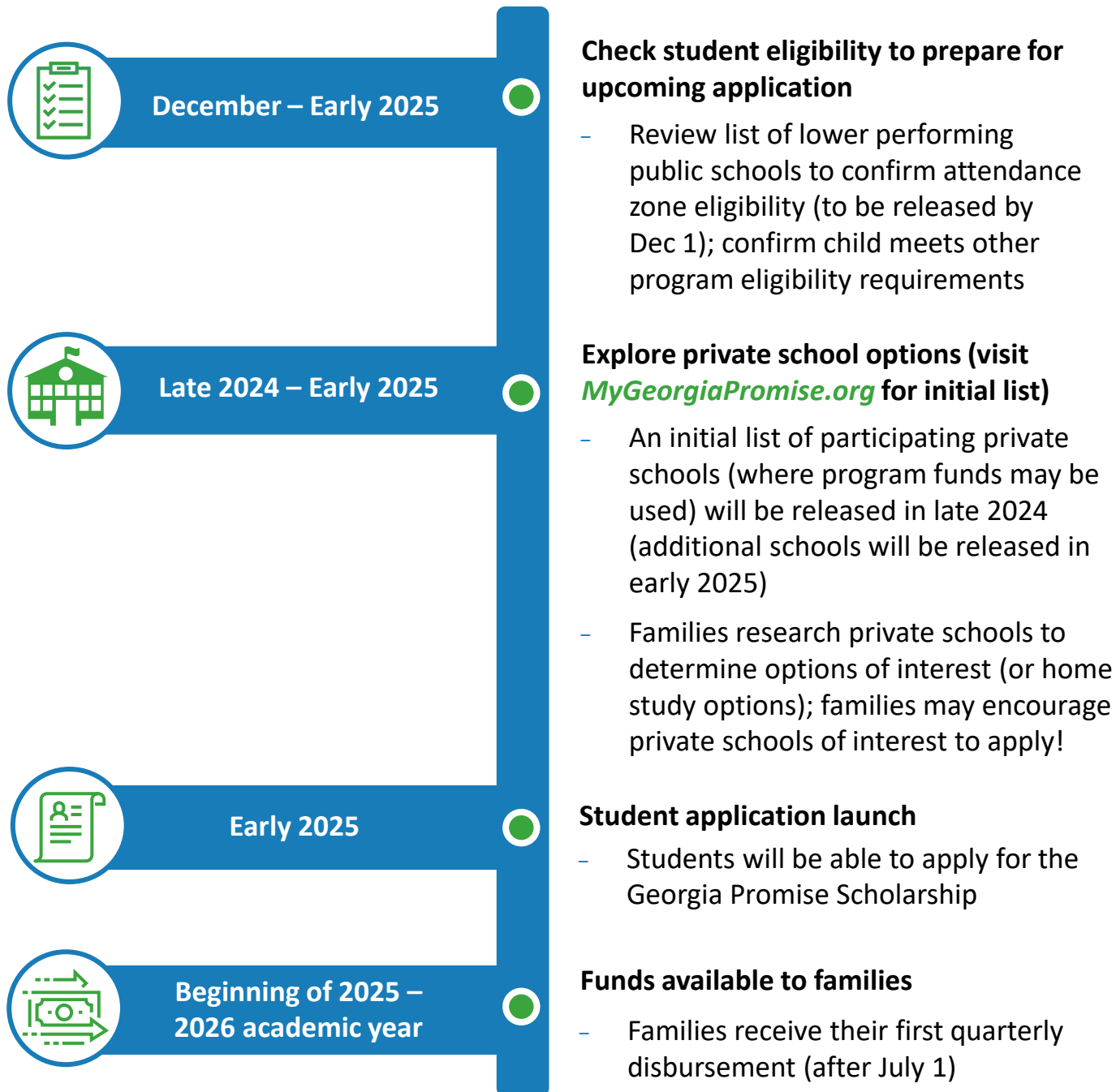
The following is a selection of approved providers / tests for families to choose from:

Test Provider	Approved Tests
American College Testing (ACT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ACT - Pre-ACT
Classic Learning Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Classic Learning Test 10 (CLT10)
Curriculum Associates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - i-Ready Assessments
Data Recognition Corporation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TerraNova, Third Edition (TerraNova 3) - TerraNova NEXT
Educational Records Bureau (ERB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comprehensive Testing Program (CTP)
Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)
Pearson Assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stanford Achievement Test, Tenth Edition (Stanford 10)
Renaissance Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - STAR Assessments
Riverside Insights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Iowa Assessments
The College Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) - Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) / - National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMSQT)

More information about testing and reporting guidelines for families will be available prior to the 2025-2026 academic year.

Georgia Promise Scholarship Key Dates

There are several upcoming key dates that impact students and families interested in participating in the Georgia Promise Scholarship Program. More specific information on timing will be released as soon as possible:



Updates will be available on our website: MyGeorgiaPromise.org

Student Eligibility

1 What students are eligible?

A student may qualify for a Promise Scholarship if the student is:

- Enrolled in a Georgia public school during the 2024-2025 school year* or entering kindergarten in the 2025-2026 school year, **and**
- Residing in a school district on the published list of lower performing public schools **and**
- Parents must have been a Georgia resident for at least one year*

*Exception for active-duty military

[See p.4-5 for more information on student eligibility.]

2 Can my child participate while remaining in public school?

No. While a student must have been enrolled in a Georgia public school for the 2024-2025 school year or entering kindergarten in the 2025-2026 school year, a student must leave the public school system to receive Promise Scholarship funds.

3 If my child's resident attendance zone is not on the list of lower performing schools in future years, are they still eligible?

Yes. Upon acceptance into the program, participating families will remain in the program until they exit the program due to returning to public school, graduating high school, or moving out of the state.

4 How does the Georgia Promise Scholarship overlap with the GOAL (tax-credit) and Georgia Special Needs Scholarship Program (GSNSP)?

Students are unable to stack Promise Scholarship funds with Georgia Student Scholarship Organization (SSO) scholarships (such as the [Georgia GOAL Scholarship](#)) or the [Georgia Special Needs Scholarship](#). Families may explore information on these other programs at the provided links.

5 Are homeschool students eligible to apply for the program and receive funds?

To qualify for the 2025-2026 school year, students must be enrolled in a Georgia public school for the 2024-2025 school year or entering kindergarten. However, those students who are eligible because they are coming from public school may elect to homeschool rather than apply to an eligible / participating private school.

Student Eligibility (cont.)

6 How are students verified to be eligible?

To confirm eligibility, GESA will verify information submitted for students when applying for the program in early 2025. This will be done through a platform vendor.

Expense Eligibility and Funding Process

7 What expenses are eligible?

Scholarship funds may be used for the following qualified education expenses:

- Tuition, fees, and required textbooks for eligible core courses at participating private schools
- Qualifying curriculum and supplemental materials
- Tutoring services provided by an educator certified by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission
- Eligible services from a physician or licensed therapist for occupational, behavioral, physical, or speech-language therapies
- Transportation from/to a service provider (up to \$500 per year)
- Other authorized expenses as approved by GESA

Approved items/services will be available for purchase through an online marketplace. *[See p.7 for more information on expense eligibility.]*

8 How are payments disbursed?

The initial funding of approved student accounts will be at the beginning of the 2025-2026 academic year. Funds will be made available to families in quarterly installments, which can then be directed to private schools and service providers for payment of eligible educational expenses. This process will be done through a platform vendor, via an electronic portal. *[See p.7 for more information on the expense process.]*

9 When will parents know if they have been accepted into the program?

Parents will be notified of acceptance into the program and funding amounts following completion of the student application window (timing to be determined but expected in early 2025).

Expense Eligibility and Funding Process (cont.)

10 Will unused Promise Scholarship funds roll-over from the 2025-2026 school year into the 2026-2027 school year?

Up to 50% of funds deposited into a student account for the current school year may roll over to the following school year. If the account has been inactive for two consecutive school years or the student graduates from high school, the account will be closed, and the funds will be returned to the state general fund.

11 How long are students eligible to receive funding?

Students in the program remain eligible to receive funds until returning to a public school, graduating from high school, moving out of Georgia, or reaching the age of 20. Special education students may stay in the program until age 21.

12 Will funding amounts change each year?

Funding amounts may change each year. While the maximum per student funding amount is \$6,500 this year (subject to up to 5% in administrative fees), that may increase or decrease slightly in future years based on the state's education funding formula.

Family Responsibilities

13 What are the testing requirements for participating students?

Participating students are required to annually complete a nationally norm-referenced test approved by GESA or a state-wide assessment.

- Participating private schools will be required to provide annual testing to participating students and report test results to GESA.
- Promise Scholarship students that are not attending participating private schools must also test annually and report test results to GESA.

More detailed information about testing, as well as the GESA-facilitated reporting process, will be made available in Winter 2025.

[See p.8 for a list of approved tests.]

14 For individual families completing the testing requirements via state administered tests, who is responsible for the associated costs?

School districts cannot charge participating students who do not attend private school for testing materials for statewide assessments (i.e., test books and answer sheets) or for the costs of ordering and shipping test materials.

However, school districts may charge for specific costs associated with providing special accommodations for 1:1 test administration (i.e., materials other than test books and answer sheets, personnel costs).

Family Responsibilities (cont.)**15 Do participating students need to re-apply annually?**

No. Families may be asked to complete a brief re-verification process each year to confirm their continued participation in the program, but do not need to undergo the full application process; however, a student who participates in the program for any length of time and returns to public school will need to submit a new application for an account in order to participate in the program for a second or subsequent time.

Other FAQs**16 What private schools are eligible?**

GESA will share a list of approved, participating private schools as soon as possible. Schools will have to apply and meet eligibility requirements as established by the program rules and regulations, including being accredited, offering an approved test to participating students, and complying with Georgia private school law.

17 When will the list of lower performing schools be released?

By December 1 of each year, GOSA will publish a list of applicable school zones to determine eligibility for new program applicants. Upon its release, the list will be available through [MyGeorgiaPromise.org](https://www.mygeorgiapromise.org).