

April 23, 2010

RE: Georgia Special Needs Scholarship Program

Dear Parent/Guardian:

As the parent of a student who receives special education services in our school system, we wanted to inform you about your options to exercise public and private school choice. Under a new state law passed by the Georgia State Legislature in 2007, parents of students who receive special education services may choose to transfer their child to another public school or private school in Georgia. This law requires that their child have an active IEP and have been enrolled for a full academic year in a Georgia public school.

Public School Choice. As a parent, you may request a transfer to another public school system in Georgia provided there is available space and the school has a program which provides the services agreed to in your child's existing IEP. The other system must agree to accept your child. If all these conditions are met, you are responsible for transportation to the school in the new school system. If you are interested in attending a school in another system, please contact that system directly.

You may also seek a transfer to one of the state schools for the deaf and/or blind operated by the State Board of Education. Acceptance into a state school is premised upon the proper setting and appropriateness for your child's needs. If your child is accepted, you are responsible for the transportation to the state school.

Private School Choice. The new legislation provides for a Special Needs Scholarship concerning a limited number of qualifying private schools. These scholarships provide funding that can be utilized to offset tuition costs at qualifying private schools in the State of Georgia. Parents who accept the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship waive all their federal rights under IDEA and again, you would be responsible for transportation to the private school. For more information on the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship, parent application process, and participating schools please see the Georgia Department of Education's website at <http://public.doe.K12.ga.us/>.

For more information regarding Georgia's Special Needs Scholarship Program or the public school choice options please visit the website listed above or contact the Georgia Department of Education.

Sincerely,

Denise Swanson
Director of Special Education
Buford City Schools