Carson Smith Special Needs Scholarship Program

USEAM
September 15, 2011

Authority & Purpose

Authority

- Utah Code 53A-707 Board shall make rules
- Board Rule – R277-602. Special Needs Scholarships

CSS- 2011-2012

- 747 Students funded
- 43 Eligible private schools
- 0 Unfunded applicants
  - (August 2011 lottery)
- 8 Pending renewals
  (Reevaluations)
- 7 Holding for assessments from LEAs
  - (September lottery)

Purpose

- Provide choice for parents of special needs students who choose to have their children served in private schools
- Outline responsibilities for parents/students/public schools
- Provide accountability for the citizenry in the administration and distribution of the scholarship funds

Enforcement & Penalties

53A-1a-708 Utah Code

- The board shall require private schools to submit signed affidavits assuring the private school will comply with requirements of CSS
- may investigate complaints and convene administrative hearings for alleged violations
- upon a finding, the board may:
  - deny permission to enroll scholarship students
  - interrupt disbursement of or withhold scholarship payments or
  - issue an order for repayment of scholarship payments fraudulently obtained

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

R277-602-3

- If the student is enrolled in a public school or was enrolled in the year previous to the year in which the scholarship is sought, the parent/guardian shall submit an **application to the school district or charter school within which the parent/guardian resides.**

- If the student was not enrolled in a public school in the year previous to the year in which the scholarship is sought, the parent/guardian shall submit an application **to the school district in which the private school is geographically located** (school district or charter school responsible for child find under IDEA, Sec. 612 (a) 3(3)).

- Document that the student
  - Utah residency
  - Student age at least 5 yrs old before Sept 2
  - Not more than 21 years of age
  - Has not graduated from high school and
  - Has an official acceptance and enrollment at an eligible private school

Parent signature acknowledgments and refusal to consent to services on the application form

- (Any intentional falsification, misinformation, or incomplete information provided on the application may result in the cancellation of the scholarship to the student and non-payment to the private school)

The parent shall participate in an assessment team meeting to determine if a student would qualify for special education services and the level of services for which the student would be eligible if enrolled in a public school.

School District or Charter School Responsibilities R277-602-4 A-C

The school district or charter school that receives the student's scholarship application from students/parents shall;

- Forward applications to Special Education Department % Barbara Bickmore/Peggy Milligan no more than 10 days following receipt of the application.

- Do not send a copy of the student's IEP
- Verify enrollment of the student seeking a scholarship in previous school year
- Verify existence of the student's IEP and level of service

- Provide personnel to participate on an assessment team to determine likelihood of eligibility if in a public school
  - If a student who was previously enrolled in a private school that has previously served students with disabilities would qualify for special education services if enrolled in a public school and

- Cooperate with the USOE in cross-checking special needs scholarship student enrollment information
  - Not dual enroll special needs scholarship students or
  - provide extracurricular activities

- the appropriate level of special education services which would be provided were the child enrolled in a public school for purposes of determining the scholarship amount

- Notify parents of students with IEPs of the following:
  - Written notice to parents or guardians of students who have an IEP, of the availability of a scholarship to attend a private school through the Special Needs Scholarship Program

- Provide choice for parents of special needs students who choose to have their children served in private schools
- Outline responsibilities for parents/students/public schools
- Provide accountability for the citizenry in the administration and distribution of the scholarship funds

Include the statement "*School districts and charter schools are required by Utah law, 53A1a-704(10), to inform parents of students with IEPs enrolled in public schools, of the availability of a scholarship to attend a private school through the Carson Smith Scholarship Program*".

- No later than 30 days after the student initially qualifies for an IEP
- Annually, no later than February 1 to all students who have IEPs
- Include the address of the Internet website maintained by the USOE that provides prospective applicants and their parents with program information and application forms for CSS Program (http://www.schools.utah.gov.sars/Quick-Links/Carson Smith Scholarship.aspx
- And post the CSS Internet website on the school district's, charter school's or school's website

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities cont.

The parent shall notify the Board/USOE/Barbara in writing within five days if:

- The student does not continue to be enrolled for any reason including parent/student choice, suspension or expulsion of the student;
- The student misses more than 10 consecutive days at which point the board may modify the payment to the private school
- .

- The parent shall cooperate and respond within 10 days to an enrollment cross-checking request from the USOE
- The parent shall notify the Board in writing by July 1 in the second and third year to indicate the student's continued enrollment

Payment Provisions

R277-602-3-(C)

The parent of a special needs scholarship student whose application is received on or before July 1 shall be eligible for quarterly scholarship payments equal to no more than the amount established in Section 53A-1a-706 (2), with payments beginning on September 1.

Payment Provisions cont.

If received after July 1 but on or before September 1 shall be eligible for quarterly scholarship payments equal to no more than three-fourths of the amount, with payments beginning on November 1

If received after September 1 but before November 1 shall be eligible for quarterly payments to no more than one-half the amount, with payments beginning on Feb 1

If received on or before February 15 shall be eligible for no more than one-fourth the amount, with payments beginning on April 15

Payment Provisions cont.

A special needs scholarship shall be effective for three years subject to renewal

The parent shall, endorse the warrant (check) received by the private school from the USOE no more than 15 school days after the private school's receipt of the warrant.

State Board of Education Responsibilities

R277-602-5

The Board shall

- Provide applications, for parents seeking a special needs scholarship online, at the board offices, at school district or charter school offices, and at charter schools no later than April 1 prior to the school year in which admission is sought

- Provide determination that a new private school meets the eligibility requirements of an eligible private school within 30 days of application to the USOE

If an annual legislative appropriation is inadequate to cover all scholarship applicants and documented levels of service, the Board shall establish by rule, a lottery system for determining the scholarship recipients, with preference provided for under Section 53A-1a-706(1)(C)(i).

The Board shall verify and cross-check student enrollment information.

- Provide reasonable timelines to meet requirements, issue letters of warning, take corrective action, suspend school from CSS program or impose such other penalties as appropriate
- Establish appropriate consequences or penalties for private schools that
  - Fail to participate and meet compliance on the mid-year review / self assessment /verification visit

Responsibilities of Private Schools that Receive Special Needs Scholarships

R277-602-6

Private Schools shall

- Submit applications by May prior to the school year in which it intends to enroll scholarship students on forms designated by the USOE
- Satisfy criminal background check requirements for employees and volunteers

- Initiate the assessment team meetings in concert with the parent seeking a scholarship
  - Schedule meetings at convenient times and locations
  - Designate private school personnel to work with public school personnel
  - Maintain documentation of meetings and decisions made for the student

- Maintain confidentiality of documents except the information shall be provided to the USOE for purposes of determining student scholarship eligibility or verification of compliance
- Provide complete student records in a timely manner to other private schools or public schools requesting student records if parents have transferred students

Private schools shall notify the board within five days if:

- Student does not continue enrollment for any reason including parent/student choice, suspension or expulsion or
- If the student misses more than 10 consecutive days of school
- By notifying us, funds are freed up for another child to receive a CSS.

Mid Year Review Revised 2012

Annual mid-year review of private schools eligible to enroll Carson Smith Special Needs Scholarship (CSS) Recipients

- Safety/Health Laws
  - Building, fire and food establishment inspection reports
- Emergency preparedness response plans
  - Documented training of staff and parents

- Personnel provisions
  - Document teachers hold baccalaureate or high degree; or who have at least three years teaching experience in public or private schools; or who have special skills, knowledge, or expertise that qualifies them to provide instruction in the subjects taught and to the special needs students taught.
  - Satisfy criminal background checks of employees and volunteers
    - Document of assessment team meetings and the decisions made.

- Disclosure Provisions
  - Disclose to parents what services they will provide – signed and dated
- Relevant credentials of teachers
  - document that parent received notification

- Disclose to parents
  - what assessment will be administered,
  - that it was administered,
  - and results reported to parents.
    - Signed documentation that schools notify parents of assessment
- Documentation of assessment team meetings and decisions made for students

Special Needs Scholarship Appeals

R277-602-7

A parent or legal guardian may appeal only the following actions:

- Alleged USOE violations of Utah Code or
- Alleged USOE violations of required timeline

An appeal shall be submitted in writing to the USOE Special Needs Scholarship Coordinator at: USOE 250 East 500 South, P.O. Box 144200, Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200

Compliance/Non Compliance

- Schools are deemed to be
  - In compliance
  - Partial Compliance
  - Not in compliance

Schools deemed to be in partial compliance or not in compliance have until May 31 of that year to show evidence of compliance or they will be removed from the Eligible Private Schools List for the following year and will no longer be able to accept Carson Smith Special Needs Scholarships.

The End

- Thank You