



Indiana Department of Education

Choice Scholarship Program Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) 2026-2027

The information in this FAQ is accurate according to current legislation. The FAQ will be updated according to any changes in the law instituted in the 2026 legislative session. Choice Scholarship Program requirements are pursuant to IC 20-51 and 511 IAC 4.

	Question	Answer
General Questions		
1	What is the Indiana Choice Scholarship Program?	The Choice Scholarship Program provides state funding to qualifying students that is used to offset tuition costs at participating Choice schools. Students qualify if they meet the income, residency, and age requirements.
2	What are the eligibility requirements for a school to become a participating Choice school?	The school must be located in Indiana, require tuition to attend, and must be accredited by either the Indiana state board of education (SBOE) or a national or regional accreditation agency that is recognized by SBOE. They must administer the statewide assessment program and submit data to IDOE. The requirements are described in IC 20-51 and 512 IAC 4. A school must submit an application annually to apply. With the application materials, the school must report their admissions and tuition policies. A copy of the application packet is posted on the Choice Scholarship Program website.
3	What are the eligibility requirements for a student to be approved to receive a Choice Scholarship award?	In accordance with IC 20-51 and IAC 512 (4), to be eligible to receive a Choice Scholarship award, a student must satisfy each of the following requirements: • The student must have legal settlement in Indiana; • The student must be at least five (5) years of age and less than 22 years of age on or before October 1 of the school year; • The student must be a member of a household with an annual income of not more than 400% of the amount required for the individual to qualify for the federal free or reduced price lunch program. After June 30, 2026, the income requirement is removed.



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4	What are the income guidelines for Choice eligibility for the 2026-2027 school year?	<table><tr><th colspan="2">Choice Income Guidelines</th></tr><tr><th>#household members</th><th><i>400% of Free/Reduced Price Lunch Eligibility</i> Annual Household Income Limit*</th></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>\$118,104.00</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>\$160,136.00</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>\$202,168.00</td></tr><tr><td>4</td><td>\$244,200.00</td></tr><tr><td>5</td><td>\$286,232.00</td></tr><tr><td>6</td><td>\$328,264.00</td></tr><tr><td>7</td><td>\$370,296.00</td></tr><tr><td>8</td><td>\$412,328.00</td></tr><tr><td>9</td><td>\$454,360.00</td></tr><tr><td>10</td><td>\$496,392.00</td></tr><tr><td>11</td><td>\$538,424.00</td></tr><tr><td>12</td><td>\$580,456.00</td></tr><tr><td>13</td><td>\$622,488.00</td></tr><tr><td>14</td><td>\$664,520.00</td></tr><tr><td>15*</td><td>\$706,552.00</td></tr><tr><td colspan="2">*For each additional household member, add \$42,032.</td></tr><tr><td colspan="2">2026 federal poverty levels are posted at: https://aspe.hhs.gov/topics/poverty-economic-mobility/poverty-guidelines</td></tr></table>	Choice Income Guidelines		#household members	<i>400% of Free/Reduced Price Lunch Eligibility</i> Annual Household Income Limit*	1	\$118,104.00	2	\$160,136.00	3	\$202,168.00	4	\$244,200.00	5	\$286,232.00	6	\$328,264.00	7	\$370,296.00	8	\$412,328.00	9	\$454,360.00	10	\$496,392.00	11	\$538,424.00	12	\$580,456.00	13	\$622,488.00	14	\$664,520.00	15*	\$706,552.00	*For each additional household member, add \$42,032.		2026 federal poverty levels are posted at: https://aspe.hhs.gov/topics/poverty-economic-mobility/poverty-guidelines	
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5	When do the income eligibility guidelines get released each year?	The income guidelines are calculated using US poverty data. This is released by the federal government in January each year.																																						
6	Who is responsible for determining a student’s Choice Scholarship eligibility?	IDOE determines eligibility. The parent/guardian of the student must provide documentation establishing eligibility to the participating Choice school before the application is submitted. This documentation must be kept on file at the school.																																						
7	Can children be included in the household size if they are not listed on the tax forms for their household?	Yes. The household which serves as the child’s primary residence should be used for purposes of applying for a Choice Scholarship. If a child is claimed by the other parent on taxes, documentation of this agreement should be kept in the student’s file. Refer to the Choice Scholarship Program Income Verification Rules and FAQ for additional information.																																						
8	Who should be included in household size for purposes of qualifying for a Choice Scholarship award?	Every person, related and unrelated, that lives in the student’s residence at least 50% of the time are included in household size.																																						



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	Question	Answer
9	We live with a family member that does not contribute to the student's costs, do they count in household size and the calculation of household income?	Yes, every person who lives in the residence is included in the household size. The income of every person who lives in the residence makes up the total household income. No person's income may be excluded.
10	How is the amount of the Choice Scholarship award determined?	The first period Choice Scholarship award amount is the lesser of: 1. Tuition and fees reported on the Choice student's application at the Choice school; or 2. 90% of the state per student tuition support funding allocation, based on the student's school corporation of residence. The second period Choice Scholarship award amounts are one-half of the period 1 Choice Scholarship award amounts.
11	Where can I review the Choice Scholarship award amounts?	The award amounts for each school corporation are available on the Choice Scholarship Program website. The per student tuition support funding is calculated using data that is reported later in the school year, the initial Choice Scholarship award amount is an estimated amount. This amount can increase, decrease, or remain the same when the final award amounts are calculated. Final Choice Scholarship award amounts will be posted on the Choice Scholarship Program website upon availability.
12	How will families be notified of the Choice Scholarship awarded to their child?	The school will print the award letter or denial letter at the time the application is submitted. The initial award letter is an estimated award amount; actual award amounts are calculated using information that is not available until later in the school year. A letter with the final award amounts will be available to the Choice school when the public tuition support payment amounts are final. Families should retain copies of all forms and letters.
13	Can a parent/guardian of a student apply for a Choice Scholarship at multiple schools?	A student can only have one application for a given application period. If a student Choice Scholarship application has been submitted and a parent/guardian wishes to apply at a different school, the parent/guardian must withdraw the student's application at the original Choice school and then they may submit an application at the preferred Choice school.



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	Question	Answer
14	Can a student who has been withdrawn from their Choice school return to the same Choice school later in the school year and continue to receive his/her Choice Scholarship award?	At the time a student is withdrawn from the Choice school, the parent/guardian forfeits the remaining portion of the student's Choice Scholarship award. If the student enrolls at another school and chooses to return to the original school, the student may apply for a second period application at their original school during the period 2 Choice application period.
15	If the Choice student moves out of state, what happens to the Choice Scholarship?	The student is no longer eligible to receive the Choice award effective immediately upon the change of residence. The award will be prorated to the amount of time the student was enrolled in the school before the move.
Tuition and Fees		
16	Will the Choice school receive additional funding if a student receives special education services?	The parent or guardian of an eligible special education student will designate either the Choice school or the public-school corporation as the special education service provider. If the Choice school is selected as the service provider during the first student Choice application period, the Choice school will be eligible to receive the state special education funding allocated for that student. This funding is to be used to provide special education services for the eligible student. If the Choice school is selected as the service provider during the second application period, the Choice school will not be eligible to receive the state special education funding allocated for that student.
17	What should be included in the tuition and fees policy for the Choice school application?	The tuition and fees policy should include descriptions and amounts for all tuition, fees, and discounts used by the applying Choice school. The policy must be finalized for the 2026-2027 school year prior to the submission of the school application. The policy and amounts must be applied uniformly among Choice and non-Choice students.
18	Can optional or non-educational fees be included in the tuition on the student's Choice application?	No, the optional and non-educational fees cannot be included in the reported tuition and fees on the student's Choice application. However, the Choice school can charge optional and non-educational fees separate from the tuition reported on the Choice student's application.
Awards, Payments, Refunds		



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	Question	Answer
19	How does the Choice Scholarship payment process work?	Choice payments are made for students who have: 1. An approved Choice Scholarship 2. A current enrollment record 3. A membership record coded accurately at the Choice school 4. A signed Endorsement Form (EF) signed by the parent/guardian and the school official and the school has uploaded this to IDOE by the posted deadline. Payments are paid directly to the Choice school; Choice payments are not paid to the parent/guardian. The EF instructs the state to provide payment to the school on the student's behalf. Without the completed EF, a Choice payment will not be made.
20	Can a student receive a Choice Scholarship after the school year has already begun?	To be awarded a Choice Scholarship in period one, a complete application must be submitted for the student on or before September 1. If the student enrolls before the census date, the student's period 1 Choice Scholarship award is valid, even if the student begins school after the beginning of the school year. If the student does not have a period 1 Choice Scholarship award at the school, a period 2 Choice Scholarship can be submitted for the student between November 1 and January 15 of the school year.
21	Is there anything I (the parent/guardian) need to do once school starts?	The parent/guardian plays a very important role in the payment process. The Choice Scholarship award is designated by the parent/guardian to be paid directly to the participating Choice school on the student's behalf. At the time of the application, the Choice school will download and print a Choice Scholarship Endorsement Form. The Endorsement Form must be signed and dated by the parent/guardian. Without the completed Endorsement Form, the state will not make payment for the student.



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	Question	Answer
22	What happens to the Choice Scholarship payment if the student is withdrawn before the school year is over?	When a student is withdrawn from the participating school, the Choice Scholarship amount is prorated down to the number of days that the student was enrolled at the Choice School providing that the student was claimed in the school's Membership data and a signed Endorsement Form (EF) was uploaded for the student. This process is repeated for the second period census date, with the exception that the EF is only required to be submitted for students with period 2 Choice Scholarship awards. Individual school policies vary and may require that tuition and fee costs be paid for the full month for which the student withdraws or even for the full semester. In accordance with the school's policy, the family may be responsible for any unpaid tuition resulting from the state's process of prorating payments.
23	How often will state payments for Choice Scholarships be made?	At a minimum, Choice Scholarship payments will be made at least twice per semester.
24	Do Choice schools receive state funded payment for curricular material assistance?	There is no longer separate curricular material assistance available to schools. Instead, funding for curricular materials assistance has been added into the statewide formula for per pupil funding.
25	Do Choice schools receive state funded payment for summer school?	All state-accredited school types are eligible to receive reimbursement for second and third grade reading programs.
26	How and when will the special education payment for students with disabilities be made to the Choice school?	IDOE will make a February distribution of special education funds for eligible Choice Scholarship students with first period applications. Prior to the payment, the parent or guardian of an eligible special education student will be required to complete a special education endorsement form (SF).
27	How does the special education payment process work?	In order for a Choice school to be eligible to receive a special education payment for a Choice student: 1. The student's parent/guardian must have selected the Choice school as the special education service provider and the Choice school must indicate the selection on the student's Choice application; and 2. The student must be enrolled at the school and have an enrollment record on the special education census day; and 3. The student must be included in the Choice school's special education data submissions; and 4. The SF has been signed and uploaded to IDOE by the posted deadline.



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	Question	Answer
28	How can my Choice school use my overpaid funds?	At the end of each calendar year, IDOE recalculates the tuition support amounts for every public school corporation based on updated Membership counts and per student funding. Due to the potential change in funding amounts and Choice awards being calculated at 90% of these amounts, individual Choice student awards have the possibility of increasing, decreasing, or staying at the same amount. If after calculating the difference of the estimated award amount and the final award, it is found a student's family has overpaid, the Choice school must refund the difference to the family. Overpaid funds cannot be used to credit a student's account without the express, written consent of the family.
School Policies		
29	Does my participating school need to remove its religion classes and/or religious affiliation to qualify?	No. Participation in the Choice Scholarship Program does not require schools to remove religion classes or alter their religious affiliation.
30	How would the Choice Scholarship Program affect my school's admissions policy?	A participating Choice school may not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or national origin. The school must have a written admissions policy. This policy is required to be submitted as part of the school's application to participate in the Choice Scholarship Program. Admission standards for Choice Scholarship students may not be different from the standards used for non-Choice eligible students.
31	Are teachers required to be licensed?	Indiana law does not require a teaching license for teachers at non-public schools.
32	Will my school be required to do teacher evaluations?	Yes. Pursuant to IC 20-28-11.5-4, eligible Choice schools are required to develop a plan for annual performance evaluations for each certified employee.
33	What are the requirements regarding background checks?	Pursuant to IC 20-26-5-10, participating Choice schools are required to adopt a policy for criminal background checks. The background checks are required for any employee who may have ongoing or direct contact with students.
34	Can the school change its tuition and fees policy at any time throughout the school year?	No. The tuition and fees policy that was submitted with the school's Choice application when the school was approved to participate in the Choice Scholarship Program for the school year is final for that school year.
Accreditation/Accountability		



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35	If my school is not accredited by the State Board of Education (SBOE), what national/regional accrediting entities are recognized by SBOE?	The following organizations are recognized by the SBOE: • Accrediting Association of Seventh-day Adventist Schools, Colleges, and Universities (AASDAS) • American Association of Christian Schools (AACCS) • American Montessori Society (AMS) • Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) • Christian Schools International (CSI) • Independent Schools Association of the Central States (ISACS) • International Christian Accrediting Association (ICAA) • Lumen Accreditation from the Catholic University of America • National Lutheran Schools Accreditation (NLSA) • Cognia/AdvancED • Accrediting Commission for Schools Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACSWASC) • Association of Classical and Christian Schools (ACCS) • Middle States Association (MSA) Additional information can be found on the SBOE webpage for recognized accrediting organizations.
36	Are schools that are doing a “seeking accreditation” year eligible for the Choice Scholarship Program?	No. Schools that are “seeking accreditation” are not eligible to participate in the Choice Scholarship Program, unless they are accredited also by a recognized third party accrediting agency. Schools with immediate accreditation are eligible to participate in the Choice Scholarship Program.
37	Does provisional accreditation satisfy the requirement for a school to participate in the Choice Scholarship Program?	A school may be accredited by a SBOE recognized third party accrediting agency with provisional accreditation if that accrediting agency has been approved by SBOE to offer provisional accreditation. Third-party SBOE recognized organizations that offer provisional or “foundational” accreditation are: • Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) • Christian Schools International (CSI)
Assessment		
38	Will my school be responsible for the cost of state mandated tests?	No. Indiana provides state-mandated assessments to Choice schools with no fees.



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39	What assessments are Choice schools required to administer?	Depending on the grades served, Indiana statewide assessments must be administered as part of a school's participation in the Choice Scholarship Program. All enrolled students who are in tested grades must complete the required assessments. Refer to IDOE's Office of Student Assessment website for information on specific assessments and 2026-2027 testing windows.
40	Is the test administrator (TA) required to be a licensed teacher?	Statewide assessment TAs must have an IDOE-issued license (instructional, administrative, or school services). TAs must be employed or contracted by the corporation to administer tests. See the 2026-2027 Indiana Assessments Policy Manual (Section 4) for details; this document is posted on the IDOE's Office of Student Assessment website .
41	Is the Corporation Test Coordinator (CTC) required to have an Indiana educator's license?	A Corporation Test Coordinator (CTC) is required to be reported every school year by July 1 and updated with any changes that occur throughout the year. The CTC information is updated in DOE Online. The CTC and TA do not need to be the same person. The CTC is not required to hold an IDOE-issued license unless also serving as the TA. The CTC must be employed by the corporation they represent and is responsible for completing required training.
42	How will parents/guardians be notified of test results?	The school will provide student results to parents in a secure manner to protect student data. As per IC 20-32-5.1-13, school corporations, charter schools, and accredited non-public schools must promptly provide parents with information to access their child's test results.
43	Are schools responsible for managing the ILEARN rescore request process?	Yes. The school must communicate details of the rescore request process to all parents/guardians of students who participated in ILEARN testing ahead of the defined rescore window. As per IC 20-32-5.1-139(d), parents/guardians must have the opportunity to request resources for eligible, open-ended ILEARN test items. Schools must manage this process locally for any interested parents/guardians.
44	Our school does not have access to technology for all our students. Are we required to participate in tests online?	Schools are required to participate in online testing to the extent possible. A school does not need to be 1:1 to participate in online testing. Testing can be administered using a stationary computer lab, mobile computer lab, or Bring Your Own Device (BYOD). A Nonstandard Assessment Accommodation Request to the Office of Student Assessment must be made for paper testing approval. In some cases, only partial approval may be granted. Approvals will be determined on a case-by-case basis.



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45	Can students take a state assessment remotely if they are remote learners?	State assessments currently may not be administered remotely to students. For additional guidance and support on this topic, please contact the Office of Assessments at INassessments@doe.in.gov .
46	What is the process for ensuring alternate testers are noted, along with accommodations, in the Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE) when Indiana Special Programs is not utilized?	Student information regarding alternate testing that is not submitted through a certified SIS/DEX vendor for students with a CSEP must be communicated to Alyson Traficante, Accessibility and Accommodations Specialist, at atraficante@doe.in.gov or 317-234-0658.

If further enrollment and application information is needed, questions should be directed to the Choice school in which you are interested in having your student attend. For additional information about the Choice Scholarship Program, contact ChoiceSchool@doe.in.gov or call (317) 233-2200.