



SOUTH DAKOTA
Partners in Education

Parent Handbook

A guide to the South Dakota Tax Credit Scholarship Program

Who can apply?.....	3
Two (2) Steps: Apply & Enroll.....	4
The Application Process.....	4
Committing to a School.....	5
What Does the Scholarship Pay For?.....	5
How the Scholarship Payments Are Made	6
Student Behavior Obligations	7
Moving to Another Eligible Private School.....	8
When Does a Family Re-apply?.....	9



Welcome to South Dakota Partners in Education

Thank you for your interest in this unique education option. The South Dakota Partners in Education Tax Credit Scholarship Program was created with the sole purpose of providing children from income eligible families a learning option they would otherwise not be able to afford. South Dakota Legislators passed the South Dakota Partners in Education Tax Credit bill in March 2016 and the program became law July 1st of 2016. The program depends on the contributions of Insurance companies, who receive state tax credit.

Children learn in different ways and in different environments. South Dakota Partners in Education (SDPE) wants to partner with parents so that you have the opportunity to choose the school where your child will succeed.

South Dakota Partners in Education (SDPE) is a private non-profit 501(c)(3) organization called a Scholarship Granting Organization (SGO).

Who can apply?

SDPE scholarships are available to students who meet the following requirements:

- The total household income the year before the student enters the program is no more than one hundred and fifty percent (150%) of the federally set amount for reduced-price meals in the National School Lunch Program.
- The student lives in South Dakota while receiving the scholarship.
- The student meets one of the following requirements:
 - Have attended any grade at a K-12 public school the preceding semester
 - Is entering a K-12 school in South Dakota for the first time
 - Is entering kindergarten (K) or first grade (1st) or ninth grade (9th)

Family income cannot be more than what is listed below.

Household Size	Free	Reduced	150%	Reapplying Students Only 200%
2	\$22,412	\$31,894	\$ 47,841	\$ 63,788
3	\$28,236	\$40,182	\$ 60,273	\$ 80,364
4	\$34,060	\$48,470	\$ 72,705	\$ 96,940
5	\$39,884	\$56,758	\$ 85,137	\$113,516
6	\$45,708	\$65,046	\$ 97,569	\$ 130,092
7	\$51,532	\$73,334	\$110,001	\$146,668
8	\$57,356	\$81,622	\$122,433	\$163,244
For each additional family member, add	\$5,824	\$8,288	\$12,432	\$16,576

INCOME ELIGIBILITY LIMITS

The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, 42 U.S.C. 1751, et seq.
Effective from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021

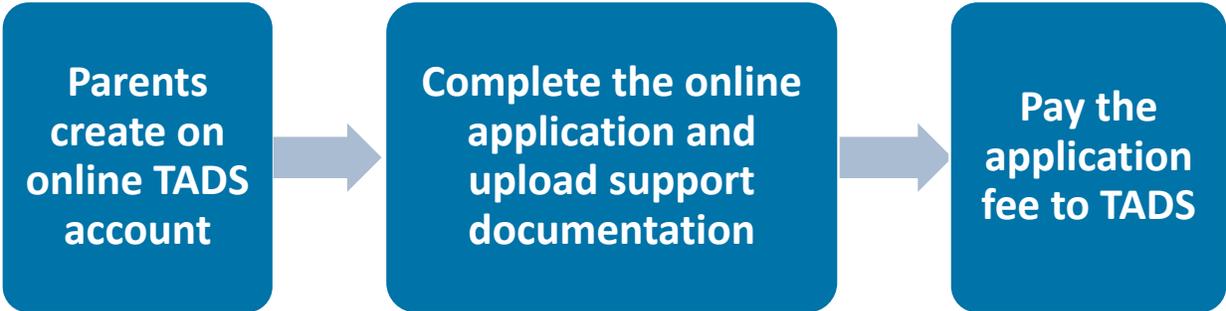
Two (2) Steps: Apply & Enroll

1. You as the parent or guardian of an eligible student must apply for the South Dakota Partners in Education scholarship. The application is available online at <http://mytads.com/fa/sdpe>. Scroll to the bottom of the page and click on the green bar. The first application deadline is July 31, 2020.
2. You as the parent or guardian must register your child at the private school you want them to attend. In most cases, you will visit the school and meet with school personnel. Note, the private school is not required to enroll your child, regardless of whether or not your child has received a scholarship award.

The Application Process

The best way to apply for a scholarship is to visit our website, <http://www.sdpartnersinedu.org>. The SDPE website explains the program and gives you a link to the online application. The online application is available through TADS, an Internet service provider. You will be asked to create a TADS account, upload income documentation, and pay a fee to apply.

If at any time you feel you need assistance with filling out the scholarship application, you will be able to contact the TADS Help Center by calling Toll-free: 800-477-8237; or Email: <mailto:support@tads.com>. If you have decided on a school, we also encourage you to seek help from someone at the school in filling out the scholarship application. If needed, the school can also assist with a computer and internet access so that you can apply.



Each family is required to document household income to see if your household qualifies. In reviewing your application, South Dakota Partners in Education will consider all the people who live in your household and all the income that is derived from the people who live in the household. Income sources include monthly gross income from pay checks, cash wages, unemployment, Social Security Income/Disability for every household member (including children), child support, and other income. Completing this process is the responsibility of the parent/guardian, not the school. Once a student has been approved for the program, you will be emailed a [Conditional Notification](#). If you are applying for more than one child, each child will receive a [Conditional Notification](#).

Committing to a School

The next step is to formally select a participating private school. Scholarships are not awarded to the private schools; scholarships are awarded to students. However, a scholarship check can only be cashed in conjunction with a participating school. A list of the SDPE member private schools can be found on the SDPE website.

[\(http://www.sdpartnersinedu.org/list-of-participating-schools/\)](http://www.sdpartnersinedu.org/list-of-participating-schools/) If you enroll your child before your application has been completed and income eligibility determined, you may find yourself responsible for any tuition and/or fees that are due.

What Does the Scholarship Pay For?

The law places restrictions on the amount of the student scholarship. Member schools report their tuition and fees to SDPE so that the scholarship award can be accurate and not exceed the amount permitted. For students switching to a new school after the beginning of the school year, the actual amount of the scholarship award will be **pro-rated** based on the child’s actual start date at the private school.

The scholarship funds may be used towards the following private school fees and are allocated in the order below until the maximum award is reached or until all fees are satisfied:

	Tuition
	Books sold through the school (e.g. textbooks, workbooks, etc.)
	Registration
	Testing (e.g. standardized or entrance testing)
	Other fees (e.g. graduation fees, yearbook fees, field trips, etc.)
After - school care services are NOT included.	

Different schools have different rates for tuition and fees. The same published tuition schedule must apply to all students, whether they are on scholarships or paying privately. The scholarship cannot be used for any fees that are not included on the published fee schedule provided to prospective parents.

In some cases, private schools may decide to provide scholarship students with supplemental financial assistance to cover the additional cost. You must talk with the school your child will be attending to see if there are local financial aid funds available. In most cases, parents will be required to pay the difference between the scholarship and the full tuition and fees. Every family must pay the difference between the school’s tuition and fees and the amount provided by the South Dakota Partners in Education Scholarship and financial assistance the school may provide. There are no exceptions to this rule. Students may lose the South Dakota Partners in Education scholarship for if they fail to pay what is owed to the school.

How the Scholarship Payments Are Made

The scholarship checks are made payable to the parents or guardians listed on the application. However, the check is sent directly to the private school. The parent or guardian listed on the check must personally sign the check at the private school. The school then deposits the check and applies the amount to your child’s tuition/fee bill. There are no exceptions to this rule. Failure of the parent/guardian to sign the check within the time specified by the private school could result in the loss of your scholarship. In some extreme cases, a limited power of attorney may be accepted in place of the parent signature.

There will be one scholarship check which will be sent to the school during the first semester. Should SDPE receive additional contributions later in the school year, your child may receive an additional check for more scholarship money. SDPE is committed to providing the most amount of money available to the eligible students who apply.

A few weeks before a check is sent, each private school is provided a report with your child’s name and scholarship amount. We ask each school to confirm your child’s ongoing attendance.

Parents, please note that when you sign the scholarship check, the back of the check should read “For Deposit Only” and the location of that deposit should be the school’s account.



Student Behavior Obligations

Scholarship students must follow all academic and discipline policies of the private school they attend. Private schools have the right to expel or suspend students if their published policies are not followed. We recommend that you carefully review those policies and procedures when you enroll your child. South Dakota Partners in Education does not govern private school policies regarding the retention or dismissal of students due to academic or discipline failures.

The third time a student is expelled from an eligible private school, he or she will lose the scholarship permanently, with no option to renew. Should a student be expelled due to a violent event, the student's scholarship will be revoked immediately. (This will not affect the scholarship of any siblings.)

We have found that some students need help in making the adjustment to a new private school environment. The courses may be more advanced and difficult. There may be more homework. The private school may have tougher enforcement of rules, stricter discipline procedures and less tolerance for unruly or disrespectful behavior. We urge parents to remain in constant contact with the private school, its administrators, counselors, and teachers. If needed, use tutoring or mentoring services that might be available.

Scholarship students are also expected to maintain regular school attendance and be in good standing with the private school's existing attendance policy. If you plan to withdraw your student during the school year, please notify the private school before you withdraw your child so the school can notify South Dakota Partners in Education.

Moving to Another Eligible Private School

One of the benefits of this scholarship program is that if you are not satisfied with a private school, you can always go to another one - if there is another private school in your area. You may transfer your child at any time to another eligible, participating private school. However, to transfer any remaining scholarship money, you cannot have outstanding financial accounts at the private school you are leaving.

If you plan to withdraw your student during the school year, please notify your current private school prior to withdrawal. To transfer the scholarship, the private school must first withdraw the student by notifying the SDPE administrator. Once the withdraw has been reported, the new school will need to complete the SDPE Student Verification Form for the newly enrolled student. South Dakota Partners in Education will not transfer a scholarship to the new private school until it has confirmation from the school your child is leaving and that you have no outstanding balances due or have agreed to a payment plan.

The new private school you choose must contact South Dakota Partners in Education to transfer what remains of your child's scholarship to the new school. A new check will be issued for the remainder of your child's scholarship. The check will be mailed to the new private school.

When Does a Family Re-apply?

Students who receive the scholarship will fall into one of the following categories:

1. **A New student** is a student who was not funded by the scholarship program the previous year. The student is a member of a household whose total annual income, did not exceed one hundred fifty percent (150%) of the income standard used to qualify for a reduced-price lunch under the [Federal Free & Reduced-Price Lunch Program](#). New qualifying students remain eligible for three (3) years or if the student is entering high school, until the student graduates high school.
2. **A Returning Student** is a student who attended a participating private school and received SDPE Scholarship funding during the previous academic year. Income verification for scholarships is student specific. A qualifying renewal student does not have to submit a TADS application until they are beginning their 4th year in the program. The family must apply each year a new sibling becomes eligible to apply for a scholarship.
3. **A Reapplying student** is a student that has received the South Dakota Partners in Education Scholarship for three (3) years at which time the family must reapply for income eligibility purposes to continue to receive a scholarship. A reapplying student remains eligible if the student is a member of a household whose total annual income in the prior year did not exceed two hundred percent (200%) of the income standard used to qualify for a free or reduced-price lunch. Once approved of income eligibility, the student is again able to receive the scholarship for another three (3) years.

We hope this educational opportunity will be a good experience for you and your child. South Dakota Partners in Education is committed to making the application process as simple as possible.

The scholarship amounts awarded to income eligible students are contingent on the amount of contributions the program receives in any given year. Scholarship amounts may change from year-to-year.

More Information on the Program

(605) 679-0112

<mailto:sdpartnersinedu@gmail.com>

South Dakota Partners in Education

PO Box 886

Sioux Falls, SD 57104

www.sdpartnersinedu.org

Apply Today