



SOUTH DAKOTA
Partners in Education

School Manual

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Empowering Parent Choice

South Dakota created the South Dakota Partners in Education tax credit scholarship program recognizing and believing in the great responsibility parents have for their child’s education. Every parents’ hope is that their child has every opportunity to succeed. The tax credit scholarship program is one more effort by the State of South Dakota to help parents achieve that goal. The program provides scholarships to income-eligible students entering kindergarten, first grade, ninth grade; switching from a public school; or starting at a K-12 school in South Dakota for the first time. Whatever school a family chooses, the State of South Dakota, in partnership with the insurance industry, has further empowered parents with that decision.

Who Runs this Program?

South Dakota Partners in Education is the SGO (Scholarship Granting Organization).

The SDPE Board plays an active role in the operations of this scholarship program. Each board member lends expertise to ensure success. Together we partner with you - the participating schools, so that the program is effective, transparent, and accountable. South Dakota Partners in Education is a South Dakota Non-Profit 501(c)3 organization.

Board Members	
Dan Fritz	Board President, Legal Counsel
Robert Satter	Board Vice President, Communications
Phyllis Heineman	Board Secretary, Legislative Effort, Annual Reporting
Tom Cink	Board Treasurer, Insurance Industry Advisor
Brian Gosch	Legislative Effort, Legal Counsel
Scott Perrenoud	Legal and Financial Counsel
Dustin Strande	Insurance Industry Advisor
Lisa Beacom	School Liaison, Database Advisor

Employee	
Katie Mellor	Administrator

Role of TADS

South Dakota Partners in Education (SDPE) have chosen to use the services of TADS in verifying the income eligibility of each applicant. This arrangement provides professional, confidential data collection from the families applying for scholarships. South Dakota Partners in Education is dedicated to awarding scholarships to students attending schools in every region of the state. Working with TADS gives SDPE a cost-effective way to use accurate verification to yield impartial results in compliance with the law. Many of the participating schools already use this third-party provider either for tuition management or financial aid application services and are therefore familiar with working with TADS.

If you are new to using TADS, you can find help in setting up a private school portal by contacting TADS directly. You will have access to the information that has been submitted by families who have selected your school. SDPE and TADS will assist you in becoming comfortable with working in the TADS online platform.

Tax Credit

Where does the money come from?

Insurance companies who do business in South Dakota are eligible to receive a 100% tax credit on their annual premium tax for contributions made to SDPE, the state recognized SGO. South Dakota law allows the program a maximum of \$2 million tax credit limit annually.

Participating School Partners

Schools are the key to helping families successfully use this program.

You are a critical partner in South Dakota Partners in Education. Please be responsive to saying “thank you” to donors; talking to local insurance agents to educate them about the program and telling the stories of the families that are being helped. You have the stories of how the scholarships make a difference in the lives of students and families who otherwise would not have this choice for their child’s education.

Qualifying Schools

To accept students receiving the South Dakota Partners in Education Scholarship, a “qualifying school” is:

- Any nonpublic school that operates within the boundaries of South Dakota
- Is accredited by the South Dakota Department of Education
- Provides education to elementary and/or secondary students
- Has notified the scholarship granting organization (SDPE) of its intention to participate in the program by completing the annual School Participation Agreement
- Complies with the program requirements outlined in this manual.

Any non-public school that receives a majority of its revenues from public funds is excluded from eligibility. For questions related to school accreditation requirements for non-public schools in South Dakota, schools must contact the South Dakota Department of Education at (605) 773-3134 or www.doe.sd.gov.

School Participation Agreement

Each year participating private schools are required to submit the SDPE School Participation Agreement. The Participation Agreement is strictly between the participating private school and South Dakota Partners in Education (SDPE) and is separate from the South Dakota Department of Education (DOE) accreditation process.

Schools are asked to attach a listing of Tuition and Fees for both Members and Non-Members when submitting the School Participation Agreement. Because schools set tuition and fee amounts on an annual basis, providing this information each year along with the SDPE School Participation Agreement is important in determining scholarship awards. Failure to submit in a timely manner may result in a delay in scholarship payments.

If you are a new school interested in participating in the SDPE scholarship program, please contact the SDPE Administrator at sdpartnersinedu@gmail.com. You will need the School Participation Agreement form and a copy of this School Manual. Both items are available on the SDPE website or the SDPE Administrator can email them to you. We are happy to answer any questions you may have about the program.

The Participation Agreement Process

1. Schools can obtain the SDPE School Participation Agreement form along with the updated SDPE School Manual from www.sdpartnersinedu.org or by contacting the program Administrator.
2. The primary administrator for the school completes the form – certifying the school is accredited by the South Dakota Department of Education, they have read the School Manual, and will abide by the SDPE policies.
3. If the primary administrator has delegated scholarship coordinator duties to someone else at the school, the local scholarship coordinator must also sign the form.
4. Mail the completed original form to SDPE.
5. Include a copy of your school’s tuition and fees schedule with the form you mail to SDPE.



Scholarship Awards

Scholarship Funding

The South Dakota Partners in Education Scholarship award amount changes from one year to the next, based upon the following two things:

- South Dakota’s per-student-allocation for public school students – SDPE scholarships cannot exceed 82.5% of the state’s share paid out to public schools for each individual public-school student. ([SD Codified Law 13-65-1](#))
- The amount of funds donated to the South Dakota Partners in Education tax credit scholarship program. The funds can come from both tax credit dollars from insurance companies and from private donations.

Tuition Rates

Schools that participate in the scholarship program may not charge a different rate for scholarship students. The same published tuition schedule must apply to all students, whether they are attending through scholarships or paying privately. The scholarship cannot be used for any fees that are not included on the published tuition and fee schedule provided to prospective parents.

Award Notification

When a student is approved for a scholarship, the school will be notified by SDPE. The family will be notified either by the school or by SDPE email. There will be ONE scholarship check issued within the first semester which represents the full scholarship amount given for the current school year. Should the program receive additional funding later in the school year, SDPE may issue additional dollars to scholarship recipients.

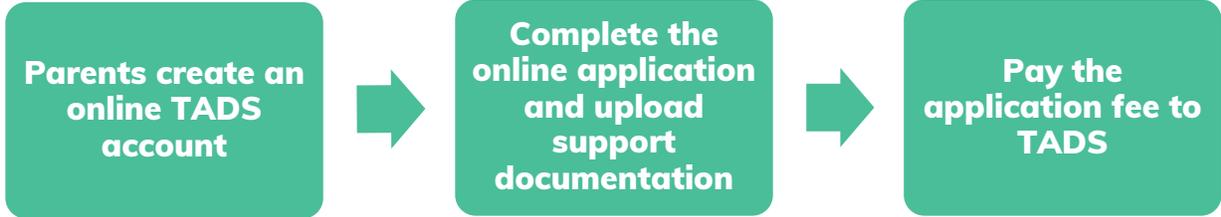
The scholarship funds may be used towards the following private school fees and are allocated in the order below until the maximum award is reached, or until all fees are satisfied:

	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.

Knowing the Application Process

Each school should know the application process thoroughly. As helpful as scholarship money can be, it is the relationship between school and family that creates the student success that we hope to achieve. The support for a family often begins with the guidance and care given by the school as they help the family complete the SDPE Application. Sometimes it is helping a family know what documents are required to verify income and sometimes it is finding an interpreter who can help a non-English speaker understand the process. We have tried to streamline as much as possible. For those schools that use TADS for their internal financial aid process, it is as simple as checking the SDPE box on the online application. It takes one application and one fee to apply for financial aid and to SDPE at the same time. For others it requires completing the SDPE application separate from the local school financial aid. Either way, it is the exact same online application. As school personnel become familiar with the process, don't hesitate to contact TADS directly through their help



line or contact SDPE directly.

Student / Family Application

All applications for South Dakota Partners in Education scholarships will be completed electronically at www.TADS.com. NOTE: A valid email address is required to complete an application. Schools are encouraged to assist families wherever possible, particularly in cases where the family would need to use a computer and/or the Internet at the school.

Students eligible for 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 or a student that has not previously applied. 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 [National Free and 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 funding for at least one day during the previous academic year. Income verification for scholarships is student specific. A qualifying returning student does not have to submit a TADS application until they are beginning their 4th year in the

program. The family must apply each subsequent year a sibling applies for a scholarship.

3. **A Reapplying student** is a student that has received the 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 reduced-price lunch. Once approved of income eligibility, the student is again able to receive the scholarship for another three (3) years.

To qualify for the scholarship, the following requirements must be met:

- Any student transferring from a South Dakota public school to a participating private school.
- The eligible student must be starting at a participating private K-12 school in South Dakota for the first time, or is entering kindergarten, first grade or ninth grade.
- If a homeschool student has never attended a K-12 school in South Dakota, they are eligible regardless of the grade they are entering. If they had previously attended a K-12 school in South Dakota, public or private, they would not be eligible unless they fit the grade criteria.
- The eligible student resides in South Dakota.
- If a student is entering kindergarten s/he must be five (5) years old on or before September 1st of the academic year being applied for.
- If a student is entering first grade s/he must be six (6) years old on or before September 1st of the academic year being applied for.
- All families, regardless of student type, must meet the income guidelines found on the Partners in Education website.

Income Eligibility and Award Amounts

SDPE awards scholarship amounts based on three-tiered income brackets. We use the current year's Income Eligibility Limits of The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act. The largest award goes to those families qualifying for Free Lunch, the next award amount goes to families qualifying for Reduced Lunch. The law allows us to award scholarships to families who earn no more than 150% of the Reduced Lunch income limit. (The law allows reapplying students to retain eligibility with a family income of 200%.)

- In 2019-2020 Free level students received \$2,500, with high school students receiving \$2,800.
- Reduced level students received \$2,000, with high school students receiving \$2,300.
- Students at 150% or 200% level received \$1,400, with high school students receiving \$1,700.

- Students attending schools where the tuition & fees were less than the designated scholarship amount received less. Awards cannot exceed the school’s published tuition and fee amounts.

Please note – The annual income guidelines published by the Food and Nutrition Service of the US Department of Agriculture Free & Reduced Lunch Program are published in March for the upcoming school year. Typically, the income amounts have a small increase from year to year. Even though the SDPE application opens in January using the previous year’s income limits, SDPE uses only the current year income limits when determining income eligibility.

Household Size	Free	Reduced	150%	<i>Reapplying Students Only</i> 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

TADS Application Fee

Is there a fee or not?

- If TADS is used by the participating school to process local school financial aid, families will have the option to check a box to apply for the SDPE Scholarship. No additional fee will be charged beyond the cost of applying for the local school.
- If a family chooses to apply for just the SDPE Scholarship (separate from any financial assistance from the private school of their choice), the family will be asked to select the school they wish to attend. The family will be asked to pay the application fee to submit the application. The fee is set by TADS.

Someone must pay the application fee. If the family does not have the ability to pay, the school may choose to cover the cost for the family. That is a school by school decision. If the school is not paying the application fee, the school may contact SDPE and inquire about alternate options. On occasion, SDPE receives private donations and can cover the cost. If SDPE pays the fee, SDPE will issue the school a fee waiver number. There is no money transaction with the family or the school. TADS will bill SDPE for any application fee that had a waiver code.

Transfer Students

The South Dakota Partners in Education scholarship may be transferred to another participating private school at any time throughout the academic year.

To transfer the scholarship, the current participating 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. If you have questions about how to do this, please contact the SDPE Administrator.

Funding for students transferring will be determined for each school based on the student's funding start date and the actual days the student attended the school. The total may not exceed the student's maximum funding amount for that academic year.

Please note that if a student has an outstanding balance with the previous school, the student will not be able to transfer the scholarship to the new school until a payment arrangement is made with the previous school or the balance is paid in full. SDPE will issue a new Award Notification to the new school.

Do not accept a student without a notification from SDPE - unless the School is willing to assume full responsibility for the student's tuition.

Scholarship Recipient Obligations – Student Attendance

Students must abide by the attendance policy of the participating private school in which they are enrolled. Failure to do so may result in a loss of scholarship. Should extenuating circumstances exist that cause a student to be absent for an excessive amount of days, please contact South Dakota Partners in Education for additional guidance.

Scholarship Recipient Obligations – Discipline

Students and families must abide by the behavioral and disciplinary policies of the participating private school in which the student is enrolled. Failure to do so may result in loss of the scholarship. A participating private school reserves the right to suspend or expel students if its published policies are not followed.

If a student, over the course of his/her academic career as a South Dakota Partners in Education scholarship recipient, is expelled from a participating private school(s) three (3) times, he/she will lose the scholarship permanently; with no option to renew.

The school must notify SDPE.

(This will not affect the scholarship of any siblings.)

Access to SDPE Documents

Staying informed and up to date is important. The South Dakota Partners in Education web site www.sdpartnersinedu.org is designed to give information to:

- **Families** interested in knowing more about the scholarship program and how to apply
- Anyone interested in **Parent Choice** issues and solutions for South Dakota
- **Insurance companies** interested in learning more about the program and how they can contribute
- **Schools** interested in staying informed and up to date

Questions and assistance with procedures can be directed to the SDPE Administrator.

Call: (605) 679-0112 Email: sdpartnersinedu@gmail.com

Student Verification

Required Student Verification

SDPE will contact each school individually announcing those applicants that after preliminary review meet the requirements to receive a scholarship. SDPE is reliant upon each school to review and authorize the student information, verifying that the information is correct. SDPE does issue Conditional Notifications as early as possible. However, no scholarship checks are made out until the contributions have been deposited. When SDPE contacts the school and the family about a scholarship award, the funds are available. Prior to checks being issued, SDPE needs a verification from the school insuring that the scholarship recipient is in fact registered and attending your school.

The Student Verification Process



Verification Forms

Schools fill out Student Verification for each student.

1. **New students** need confirmation that they meet all the requirements for the scholarship. This information is part of the accountability requirements and becomes part of SDPE’s required annual reporting.

Sample Verification Forms

New Student	Grade	Scholarship Received	Enrolled & Lives in SD	Entering K, 1st or 9th Grade	Attended SD Public School the semester before transferring	Public School transferred from:	New to K-12 school in SD
Student Name	█	\$█.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Name of Public School	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

2. **Returning students** are those students that have received a SDPE scholarship in the previous year. They have met the necessary requirements and are eligible for three (3) consecutive years. The school needs to confirm that the student is enrolled and attending.

Returning Student	Grade	Scholarship Received	Enrolled & Lives in SD	Entering 1st or 9th Grade	Attended SD Public School the semester before transferring	Public School transferred from:	New to K-12 school in SD
Student Name	█	\$█.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	----	----	----	----

3. **Reapplying students** are returning students. The school needs to confirm that the student is enrolled and attending.

Reapplying Student	Grade	Scholarship Received	Enrolled & Lives in SD	Entering 1st or 9th Grade	Attended SD Public School the semester before transferring	Public School transferred from:	New to K-12 school in SD
Student Name	█	\$█.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	----	----	----	----

More About Reapplying Students

Reapplying students are students that have qualified and received a SDPE scholarship for three (3) years. In the fourth (4th) year the family must reapply by submitting a TADS application to determine income eligibility. At this stage, the family is income eligible if their income is at or below 200% of a Reduced Lunch Income Level. SDPE is responsible for screening the income eligibility and will notify the school if the student qualifies. The law permits a high school student to complete the entirety of their high school education without having to reapply for eligibility.

Scholarship Distribution

Scholarship payments are mailed to the school’s physical address that is reported on the School Participation Agreement. If the checks need to be sent to a different address, please notify the SDPE Administrator.

The school will receive one scholarship check per verified student. As in previous years, SDPE still advises schools to apply half of the scholarship amount to the first semester and half to the second semester through the school’s internal bookkeeping. Should SDPE receive additional contributions after award checks have been issued, the scholarship granting organization may issue additional scholarship payments to the eligible scholarship recipients. Parents and schools must abide by the South Dakota Partners in Education Check Cashing Policy.

The check distribution process consists of only one check per year.



Scholarship Payments

Checks are distributed to the participating private school during the first semester. The parent or guardian listed on the check must endorse the check upon notification by the participating private school as soon as the check is available. Failure to endorse a scholarship check in a timely manner could result in the loss of the scholarship and/or an outstanding balance at the participating private school.

If the parent is unable to come to the school and endorse the scholarship check, they may assign a relative or friend to sign for them as the Limited Power of Attorney. The parent must fill out the LPOA form. The participating private school or any entity related to it may not be assigned as a Limited Power of Attorney (LPOA) for any purpose related to a South

Dakota Partners in Education scholarship. However, South Dakota Partners in Education may accept a properly executed Limited Power of Attorney for the purposes of signing scholarship checks. The LPOA document must be sent to South Dakota Partners in Education.

Depositing Scholarship Checks

It is the school's obligation to deposit signed checks within a reasonable amount of time. If there is a delay in getting a parent to come to school to sign a check, please do not hold back on depositing any other signed scholarship checks. Every effort should be made to deposit all issued scholarship checks within a four (4) week timeframe. SDPE is prepared to - stop payment – on checks that are not deposited in a timely fashion.

Financial Obligation

If the cost to attend the participating private school is more than the student's funding amount for that academic year, the parent is responsible for the difference. If a student withdraws from a school and has an outstanding balance, the must notify SDPE of the student's status. If the amount owed is a family balance, then SDPE advises that the school divide the balance by the number of children from that household that attend your school. Priority can be given to the outstanding balance due for the individual student that has withdrawn. SDPE will not transfer scholarship money to a new school until it is determined that the debt has been paid or an acceptable payment arrangement is reached with the school.

If the family does not keep up with the payment arrangement but has already transferred to another school, we will not revoke the student's scholarship. Please keep this in mind and only make payment arrangement with those families who you are confident will keep up with the arrangement. The school must notify South Dakota Partners in Education immediately once that balance is paid. If a student has an outstanding balance from a previous academic year, South Dakota Partners in Education reserves the right to award the student depending on the individual circumstances. Please contact South Dakota Partners in Education with any questions regarding financial obligations.

Scholarship Check Distribution Policy / Procedure

POLICY: South Dakota Partners in Education scholarship checks, made payable to the parent applicant, on behalf of the scholarship student, will be distributed to eligible, participating schools. Each scholarship student will receive one check. The schools will be informed of the check distribution schedule.

PROCEDURE: Scholarship Verification

Student verification is required. Each eligible, participating school will complete a SDPE Student Verification Form listing every qualifying student receiving a scholarship. Questions related to the student's eligibility must be answered and the report submitted to South Dakota Partners in Education for scholarship payments to be processed. Should additional funds be available allowing SDPE to increase the amount of the scholarship, student verification is required for every additional scholarship payment. If the student withdraws during the school year, the school is required to notify SDPE.

Scholarship Check Distribution

Scholarship payments will be processed in the form of checks and mailed to those eligible, participating schools that have verified student eligibility. All the scholarship checks for all verified students will be mailed in a single package to the school's physical address which is on file with the SDPE.

The package will contain one scholarship check for each verified student.

- If, when completing the verification report, an indication is made that a student is no longer attending the school, and the school has notified SDPE, an adjustment will be made in the scholarship payment to reflect the exact number of days the student attended that school. The scholarship check included in the packet will reflect the adjustment.
- In the event a South Dakota Partners in Education scholarship check must be returned it should be mailed back to SDPE.

The South Dakota Partners in Education scholarship was created to ensure that parents, regardless of means, may exercise and enjoy their basic right to the education of their children as they see fit. For this reason, the scholarship checks are made payable to the parent and are signed over to the eligible, participating private school of the parent's choosing as payment for tuition and fees.

Scholarship Check Cashing Policy / Procedures

POLICY: Upon receipt of the South Dakota Partners in Education scholarship check, the parent/s to whom the scholarship check is made payable must restrictively endorse the check to the private school for deposit into the account of the private school. The parent may not designate any entity or individual associated with the participating private school as the parent's attorney in fact to endorse a scholarship check. A participant who fails to comply with this paragraph forfeits the scholarship.

PROCEDURE: **Scholarship Check Endorsement – Parent**

Each South Dakota Partners in Education scholarship check must be endorsed by the payee named on the check.

- If more than one parent or guardian is named as the payee on the scholarship check, at least one of them must sign the check. The names will be shown as follows: primary parent/guardian name OR secondary parent/guardian.
- If the parent or guardian named as the payee on the scholarship check is not available to sign a scholarship check and has authorized another individual (not related to the private school in any way) as their Limited Power of Attorney, after submitting copies of the Limited Power of Attorney to South Dakota Partners in Education, that individual may sign the scholarship check.
- All scholarship checks must be endorsed by the named payee/s or their designee before being deposited into the private school's account. The parent's endorsement should be above or below the school's stamped endorsement.
- South Dakota Partners in Education may conduct routine, random audits of the parent or guardian's endorsement on scholarship checks. The school will be notified in the event of a finding related to the endorsement. Repeated findings could result in loss of participation privileges.

Scholarship Check Endorsement – School

Each South Dakota Partners in Education scholarship check must be endorsed by the private school named on the check.

- The scholarship check must be endorsed using a stamp with the following information or the information is handwritten by a school official:

FOR DEPOSIT ONLY

Name of School

Name of Bank / Account #

- Once received, the school is responsible for the security of the scholarship checks. The parent should be notified that scholarship check(s) requiring their signature are at the school. The school should make every effort to provide a time and place at the school for the parent to sign the scholarship check(s).
- Checks are not to be sent to the parent(s) off campus for any reason. The check(s) must be in the school's possession at all times.

LIMITED POWER OF ATTORNEY



I, _____,
whose address is _____, do hereby make, constitute, and
appoint _____ whose address is
_____, my true and lawful attorney-in fact for me
and in my name, place, and stead, and on my behalf, and for my use and benefit:

1. For the limited purpose of endorsing check number _____ issued by South Dakota Partners in Education to me as payee, for payment to the following South Dakota school _____, for credit to my child’s tuition or other amounts owed such school for my child’s attendance, and which may be lawfully paid for by a Scholarship Granting Organization under SDCL ch. 13-65.
2. I grant to my attorney-in-fact full power and authority to do, take, and perform each and every act and thing whatsoever required, proper, or necessary to be done, in the exercise of any of the limited rights and powers herein granted, as fully to all intents and purposes as I might or could do if personally present, hereby ratifying and confirming all that the attorney-in-fact shall lawfully do or cause to be done by virtue of this power of attorney and the rights and powers herein granted.
3. This instrument is a limited power of attorney and shall be construed accordingly.
4. The rights, powers, and authority of my attorney-in-fact appointed herein shall commence from the date hereof and shall continue and be in full force and effect until the earliest to occur of the following: (i) my attorney-in-fact has completed his limited rights and powers granted hereunder; and (ii) this power of attorney is revoked by me or terminated by operation of law.
5. This instrument may be executed in one or more duplicate originals, and my original signature upon a facsimile or other copy of this power of attorney shall

qualify as an original. A copy of my and/or my notary public's handwritten or electronic signature upon a copy of this power of attorney may also serve as an original.

Dated this ____ day of _____, 20____.

(Name)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT (optional)

STATE OF _____)

:SS

COUNTY OF _____)

On this ____ day of _____, 20____,
appeared _____, known to me or satisfactorily proved to be the person whose name is subscribed to the within instrument and acknowledged that he/she executed the same for the purposes therein contained.

In witness whereof I hereunto set my hand and official seal.

Notary Public – State of _____

My commission expires: _____

(SEAL)