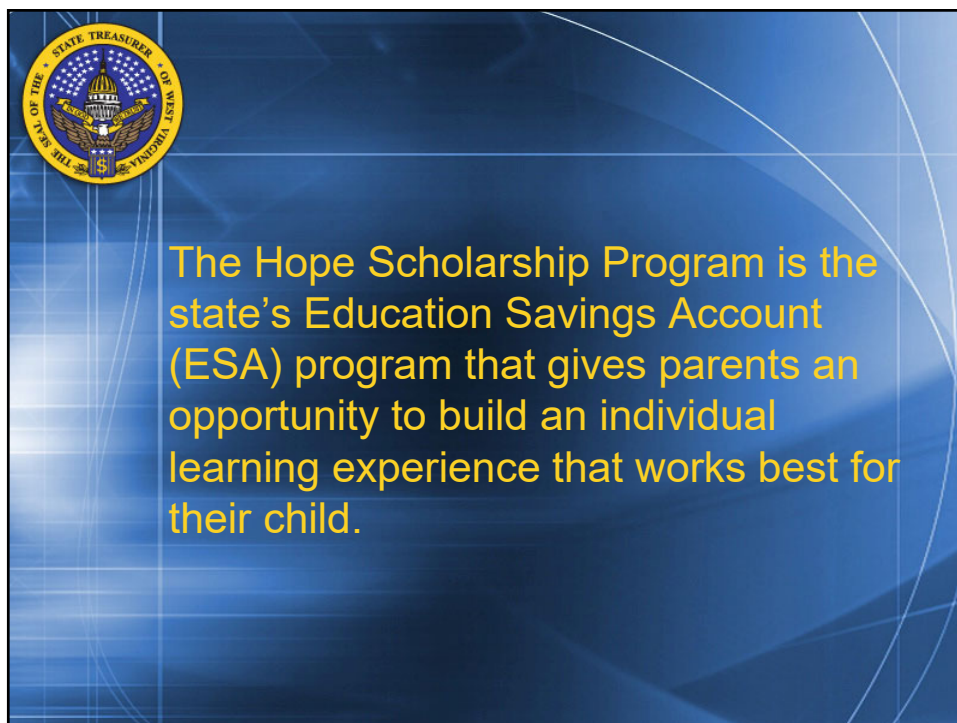





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## Eligibility Requirements

A student is eligible for the Hope Scholarship Program if the student:

- Is a resident of the State of West Virginia;
- Has not successfully completed a secondary education program;
- Is under 21 years of age;
- AND

3




## Eligibility Requirements, Continued

Meets one of the following:

- Eligible or required to be enrolled in a kindergarten program (i.e. must be 5 years old by July 1<sup>st</sup>)
- Enrolled in an elementary and secondary public school education program in WV for the entire instructional term during the academic year immediately preceding the academic year for which the student is applying to participate in Hope Scholarship.
- Be enrolled full-time and attending an elementary or secondary public-school program in the State of WV for at least 45 consecutive calendar days during an instructional term. The student must remain enrolled and attending public school until an award letter is issued by the Board.

4




## Common Eligibility Questions

Does summer school count toward the 45-day requirement?

- No, the 45 days must take place during one regular 180-day instructional term. The 45 days cannot take place over multiple instructional terms.

5




## Common Eligibility Questions

What if my child doesn't turn 5 before July 1<sup>st</sup>? Can he or she become eligible early?

- The legislative rules for the Hope Scholarship Program contain a provision that if a student who does not meet the age requirements is admitted to a public kindergarten program under the public kindergarten program's early admittance process, the student may become eligible for the Hope Scholarship Program.

6






## Common Eligibility Questions

What if my child isn't admitted to public kindergarten early and I start private kindergarten early anyway? Can my child receive the Hope Scholarship for the following year when my child should have entered kindergarten?

-No, once your child has completed a kindergarten program, they are no longer eligible for kindergarten and will be treated as an existing private school student for Hope eligibility purposes.

7



## Common Eligibility Questions

My child was enrolled in public school for the full 2020-21 school year but attended private or homeschool for the current 2021-22 school year. Is my child eligible for the Hope Scholarship?

– No. Because you are applying for the Hope Scholarship for the 2022-23 school year, your child must be enrolled the full instructional term for 2021-22 or enrolled for at least 45 days at the time of application.

8



## Application Window

- The application window for Hope Scholarship is open from March 1 to May 15 annually.
- If a student is ineligible during the application window but later becomes eligible for the Hope Scholarship Program, they can apply at any time during the academic year.
- A student who would have been eligible during the application window but who failed to apply may apply on a case-by-case basis for consideration by the Hope Scholarship Board at any time during the academic year so long as all other eligibility criteria are met.


9



## WVEIS ID# Requirement

- All applicants for Hope Scholarship must have a WVEIS ID# on their application, including the incoming kindergarten students.
- Submission of a Notice of Intent to Participate in the Hope Scholarship Program to the county board of education should trigger the creation of a WVEIS ID# for an incoming kindergarten student.


10



## WVEIS ID# Requirement

- The revised sample Notice of Intent Form should have all of the necessary data elements to create the student ID and mark the student as a Hope Scholarship student in WVEIS.
- County boards cannot ask for additional documentation for incoming kindergarten students – no shot records, birth certificate, proof of residency, etc.
- WVEIS ID#s should be issued promptly.

11




## Notice of Intent

Parents are required to submit a Notice of Intent to Participate in the Hope Scholarship Program to the county board of education. Parents of incoming kindergarten students were advised to send the NOI prior to application to obtain the WVEIS ID# but parents of current K-12 students were advised to wait until their Hope applications were approved.

12






## Notice of Intent

Counties boards of education will continue to receive Notice of Intent forms even though the Hope application window for 2022-23 ended on May 16<sup>th</sup>. County boards of education should continue to process those requests.


13



## Scholarship Funding

The Hope Scholarship amount will vary annually depending on the amount of state aid funding per pupil provided to county boards of education for public school students. The scholarship amount for the 2022-23 year will be \$4,298.60.


14



## Funding of Scholarship Accounts

- Funds will be placed in the student's account in the WVSTO's online portal. Half of the annual scholarship amount will be deposited by August 15<sup>th</sup> with the second half by January 15<sup>th</sup>.
- For students awarded during the academic year, the amount will be prorated based on the portion of the instructional term that have elapsed since the beginning of the instructional term in the county of residence.

15




## Funding of Scholarship Accounts, Continued

- All Hope Scholarship transactions will be completed electronically using the online portal. All payments will be made directly to Education Service Providers through the portal. Education service providers must agree that any refunds will be credited directly back to the student's Hope account. Funds cannot be refunded directly to the parent.
- Reimbursements will only be considered on a case-by-case basis due to extenuating circumstances and require approval of the Board.
- Each Hope Scholarship student will have a separate account, regardless of how many students reside in the same household or share an account holder. An account holder may only use funds in an account for the individual Hope Scholarship student to whom the funds were allocated.

16






## Hope Data Submission Requirements

By no later than June 8<sup>th</sup> annually:

- For students with an Individualized Instructional Program (IIP), the parent must annually submit either nationally normed standardized achievement test results or an annual certified teacher's review of the student's academic work to the superintendent of the county of residence.
- For students attending a participating non-public school, the participating school must annually submit a list of Hope Scholarship students attending their school to the county superintendent of the student's county of residence.

17




## Hope Data Submission Requirements, Continued

Per West Virginia Code §18-31-8:

- County boards of education must indicate in WVEIS by no later than June 15<sup>th</sup> annually whether the data submission requirements have been met for each Hope Scholarship student.
- By no later than July 1<sup>st</sup> annually, the WVDE will verify the information regarding each Hope Scholarship student with the Hope Scholarship Board.


18



## Hope Data Submission Requirements, Continued

The WVSTO will confirm with the WVDE annually what Hope Scholarship students have graduated from high school. There were multiple Hope Scholarship applicants for next year who indicated they were currently in 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Because they technically met the eligibility criteria at the time of application, they were approved for the scholarship but will not be funded if they graduate with their high school diploma.


19



## Hope Data Submission Requirements, Continued

The WVSTO and WVDE are working on the process to compare the total list of approved Hope Scholarship students with the students who have submitted NOI forms and been flagged with the Hope attribute in WVEIS. More information will be forthcoming regarding how that process will work and how parents will be notified if they have a missing NOI form.


20



## Hope Scholarship Students Returning to Public School

If a student account is closed due to the student returning to public school full-time after October 1 of the academic year, upon request of the county board of education of the county in which the public school is located, the funds remaining in the student's Hope Scholarship account shall be transferred to the county board to fund the cost of the student's education for the remainder of the school year.

21




## Public School Services to Hope Scholarship Students

Included in the statutory list of qualified expenses for the program is "Ongoing services provided by a public school district pursuant to §18-31-8(f) of this code, including without limitation, individual classes and extracurricular activities and programs."

22





## Public School Services to Hope Scholarship Students

§18-31-8(f) states that “The board, in consultation with the Department of Education, shall ensure that any public school or school district providing such services receives the appropriate pro rata share of a student’s Hope Scholarship funds based on the percentage of total instruction provided to the student by the public school or school district. County boards shall charge tuition to Hope Scholarship students who enroll for services in a public school within the county. Hope Scholarship students who enroll for services part-time in public school shall not be included in net enrollment for state aid funding purposes under §18-9A-2 of this code.”

23



## ESP Registration

- County Boards of Education will need to register as Education Service Providers (ESPs) under the Hope Scholarship Program.
- The timing of this ESP registration process is uncertain. The initial plan was to hold a webinar in early June using the same process used for the nonpublic schools. However, that process has been very difficult, and it may be better to wait until the full roll-out to all ESPs in late June so there is more time to resolve the existing implementation issues.


24



## ESP Registration

- The ESP registration process will require counties to enter certain basic information in the Education Market Assistant (EMA) system. Counties will also have to enter their tuition rates in the system along with banking information so that EMA can send tuition payments via ACH.


25



## Tuition Rates

Based on the statutory language from §18-31-8(f), the recommended tuition rates for Hope Scholarship students would be based on the annual scholarship amount (which is based on the statewide average state aid per pupil). That would essentially establish the maximum amount a county should charge for a course to result in the prorated amount contemplated in the statutory language.

26



**QUESTIONS?**

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