

**Cleveland Scholarship
Tutoring Program
2009-2010
Policy Manual**



Ohio

**Department
of Education**

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Contents

Overview

Section 1 – Scholarship Program

| | |
|--|--------|
| Application for Program Participation | 1.1 |
| First-Year Participation | 1.1.1 |
| Participation in Subsequent Years | 1.1.2 |
| Application Deadlines | 1.1.3 |
| Student Eligibility | 1.2 |
| Responsibility for Determining Eligibility | 1.2.1 |
| First-Year Eligibility | 1.2.2 |
| Income Verification | 1.2.2a |
| Family Income Limits | 1.2.2b |
| Residency Requirements | 1.2.2c |
| Proof of Legal Guardianship | 1.2.2d |
| Age | 1.2.2e |
| Grade | 1.2.2f |
| Eligibility in Subsequent Years | 1.2.3 |
| Income Verification | 1.2.3a |
| Residency Requirements | 1.2.3b |
| Methods of Verification | 1.2.3c |
| Suspension Policy | 1.2.3d |
| Enrollment at Designated School | 1.2.4 |
| Scholarships | 1.3 |
| Application Deadline | 1.3.1 |
| Number of Scholarships | 1.3.2 |
| New Students | 1.3.3 |
| Procedures | 1.3.4 |
| Scholarship Awards | 1.3.5 |
| Notification Procedures | 1.4 |
| Contacting Students | 1.4.1 |
| Inability to Contact Parent/Guardian | 1.4.2 |
| Revocation of Scholarship Awards | 1.5 |
| Failure to Enroll/Non-Attendance | 1.5.1 |
| Request for Withdrawal | 1.5.2 |
| Ineligible School | 1.5.3 |
| Ineligible Student | 1.5.4 |
| Income | 1.5.4a |
| Residency | 1.5.4b |
| Falsification of Documents | 1.5.5 |
| Reinstatement of Scholarship | 1.5.6 |
| Notice of Revocation | 1.5.7 |
| Exit Interviews | 1.5.8 |
| Filling Available Scholarship Slots | 1.5.9 |

Section 2 – Tutorial Assistance Grants

| | |
|--|--------|
| Student Eligibility | 2.1 |
| Responsibility for Determining Eligibility | 2.1.1 |
| Family Income | 2.1.1a |
| Residency..... | 2.1.1b |
| Grade Requirements | 2.1.1c |
| Income Verification | 2.1.1d |
| Applying for Program Participation | 2.2 |
| Application Deadline..... | 2.2.1 |
| First-Year Participation | 2.2.2 |
| Eligibility in Subsequent Years | 2.2.3 |
| Award of Grants | 2.3 |
| Number of Grants | 2.3.1 |
| Award Process..... | 2.3.2 |
| Award Calculation | 2.3.3 |
| Notification Procedures | 2.4 |
| Selection and Assignment of Tutors..... | 2.5 |
| Application to Tutor | 2.5.1 |
| Eligibility to Tutor..... | 2.5.2 |
| Criminal Background Check..... | 2.5.2a |
| Assignments | 2.5.3 |
| Tutoring Sites | 2.6 |
| Participation Process | 2.6.1 |
| Site Responsibilities..... | 2.6.2 |
| Status Reports | 2.6.3 |
| CSTP Tutoring Program Coordinator | 2.7 |

Section 3 – Recordkeeping Requirements

| | |
|--|-------|
| File Documentation | 3.1 |
| Recordkeeping Requirements – Scholarship Program | 3.1.1 |
| Recordkeeping Requirements – Tutoring Program..... | 3.1.2 |
| Exceptions to Standard Rules | 3.2 |
| Records Retention Policy | 3.3 |

Section 4 – Transportation

Section 5 – Student Mobility

| | |
|--|-----|
| Transfers During the School Year | 5.1 |
| Transfers Between School Years..... | 5.2 |

Section 6 –Costs and Payment Methods

| | |
|---|-------|
| Payments Made Under the Scholarship Program | 6.1 |
| Payment Schedule..... | 6.1.1 |
| Tuition Amounts | 6.1.2 |
| Disbursement Process..... | 6.1.3 |

| | |
|--|--------|
| Enrollment/Attendance Verification..... | 6.1.3a |
| Generating Payment..... | 6.1.3b |
| Distribution of Tuition Payments | 6.1.3c |
| Adjustments to Scholarship Amounts | 6.1.4 |
| Prorating Tuition Payments | 6.1.4a |
| Overpayments | 6.1.4b |
| Returned Warrants and Refund Checks..... | 6.1.4c |
| Payments Made Under the Tutorial Program | 6.2 |
| Payments to Tutors..... | 6.2.1 |
| Tutorial Time Sheets | 6.2.1a |
| Tutoring Site Status Reports | 6.2.1b |
| Verification of Tutorial Students and Tutors | 6.2.2 |
| Disbursement..... | 6.2.3 |
| Generating Payments..... | 6.2.3a |
| Distribution of Payments..... | 6.2.3b |
| Confirmation of Tutorial Services Provided..... | 6.2.4 |
| Overpayments..... | 6.2.5 |
| Transportation Costs | 6.3 |
| Allowable Costs | 6.3.1 |

Section 7 –School Reviews

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-------|
| School Program Acceptance..... | 7.1 |
| School Reviews..... | 7.2 |
| Non Compliance Follow up. | 7.2.1 |
| Assurance of Compliance | 7.3 |
| Payments to Registered Schools | 7.4 |
| School Concerns..... | 7.5 |

Glossary

Overview

The Cleveland Scholarship and Tutoring Program (CSTP) was created by the Ohio Department of Education. Ohio Revised Code Section 3313.975 gives the State Superintendent of Public Instruction the authority to create a voucher program in those districts that by federal court order were required to have “supervision or operational management of the district by the State Superintendent.”

The CSTP provides scholarships for students residing in the district to attend private alternative schools and public schools in adjacent school districts. Tutorial assistance grants are also available to those students who choose to attend Cleveland Municipal Schools. Students must submit applications and meet specific criteria prior to and upon receipt of a scholarship or grant. For both scholarships and tutorial grants, priority is given to students from low-income families.

This manual identifies administrative policies and procedures of CSTP. The information is divided into the following sections.

1. Scholarship Program
2. Tutorial Assistance Grants
3. Recordkeeping Requirements
4. Transportation
5. Student Mobility
6. Allowable Costs and Method of Payment
7. School Review & Participation

A glossary of terms is provided for reference. Up-to-date forms and applications are maintained in a separate volume.

Ohio Revised Code sections are referenced to identify authority for an identified action or to reference statutory mandates. The sections referenced apply to program administration and Baker’s Ohio School Law Guide, where necessary.

All revisions to this manual are to be reviewed and approved by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Legal References

Ohio Revised Code 3313.974 – 3313.979

Ohio Revised Code Sections Specific to the Program

Amended Substitute House Bill Number 215, Section 50.45

Ohio School Law Section 7.05.1

Ohio Administrative Code Section 113-1-01

Ohio Revised Code 3313.39

Scholarship Program

Scholarship awards are based on a school's tuition cost, with no single award to exceed legislated limits.¹ Students whose household income is below 200 percent of poverty level qualify for 90 percent of the tuition amount. Students whose household income is above 200 percent of poverty level qualify for 75 percent of the tuition amount. Families are responsible for paying the remaining 10 percent or 25 percent of the tuition costs directly to the school. No low income family whose child is in grades kindergarten to 8 may be charged more than 10 percent of the legislated scholarship amount.²

Students who wish to participate must apply by the established deadline.³

1.1 Application for Program Participation

An extensive first-year application process is used to determine several levels of student eligibility. The re-enrollment process for subsequent years is used primarily to identify both continued residency within the Cleveland Municipal School District (CMSD) and interest in participation, as well as to determine the amount of scholarship award for which the student may be eligible.

1.1.1 First-Year Participation

Children in the CMSD who will enter approved grades in the upcoming school year are eligible to apply for a scholarship. The *Application for Cleveland Scholarship and Tutoring Program* must be submitted to the CSTP office.

When applications are received:

- Applications and documentation are date stamped as evidence of compliance with submission deadlines and then reviewed for completeness. (See Section 1.3.1 for additional information on application deadlines.)
- Each application with incomplete information or documentation is returned with a letter indicating what is needed to complete the application.
- Information from properly completed applications is logged in the student application database. The date the information is entered into the database is also entered.
- Documentation of income and residency must be received and verified before a scholarship award can take place. Students with incomplete applications are

¹ As established by Ohio Revised Code Section 3313.978(C), CSTP pays a percentage of tuition up to a maximum allowable tuition amount. See also ORC Section 3313.978(A).

² Pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Section 3313.97.8(C).

³ Application deadlines are set by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction in concert with the CSTP program director. The method of application and the selection criteria are also prescribed by the State Superintendent.

ineligible for scholarship consideration and are not entered into the student application database.

1.1.2 Participation in Subsequent Years

Students who were enrolled in the program during the previous school year are not required to submit an application. An *Affidavit* is prepared by the CSTP office based on information in the student enrollment database. The affidavits are mailed to the parents/guardians, who must verify the accuracy of all information. Refer to Section 1.2.3 for procedures to verify continued eligibility for program participation.

Re-enrolling students (those who have left the program and wish to return) must reapply.

1.1.3 Application Deadlines

Scholarship applications are accepted January through July of each calendar year. To be included in the first selection of awards, applications must be received on or before the last business day of February.⁴ Incomplete applications are not kept by CSTP and returned for completion. When incomplete information is received, the program director may determine whether additional measures to contact the parent/guardian are necessary. Complete applications received after the first selection deadline are retained for selections held through July. Applications received after the deadline are not retained.

Current scholarship recipients do not reapply. Instead, an affidavit and related documentation must be received by the CSTP office by the designated deadline prior to school beginning in the fall for re-enrollment. When deemed appropriate, CSTP personnel may work with school personnel to obtain the necessary information. See the verification procedures in Section 1.2.3.

All requested information must be received by the last business day of July. If all efforts fail to obtain the information noted in this section, the parent/guardian will be notified that the student is not eligible to receive a scholarship.

⁴ The application deadline may be changed by the program director after determining whether doing so would provide significant benefit to the program. All revised dates must be reported to and approved by the State Superintendent.

1.2 Student Eligibility

Parents or guardians of all student participants must provide evidence of the student's eligibility. While eligibility is verified in all years, the procedures performed by the CSTP personnel vary depending upon whether the student is a new program participant or has participated in the program during a previous year.

1.2.1 Responsibility for Determining Eligibility

CSTP personnel are solely responsible for verifying student eligibility. School personnel may be used as a secondary means of verification to ensure the student enrollment information is current. In addition, school personnel may be used as a last resort to gain verification information to prevent students from being withdrawn.

1.2.2 First-Year Eligibility

Preliminary eligibility verification is determined at the time of application by proof of annual income and residence.

1.2.2a Income Verification

The student application must include verification of income. Documentation of total gross income and assistance must be submitted for all caretaker(s) who support the minor children. The following types of documentation are required and considered as applicable:

- W2 Form(s)
- ADC, SSI, BWC, etc.
- 1099 forms (for private contractors)
- Signed federal tax return with all schedules
- Unemployment benefits
- Alimony
- Child support
- Retirement
- *Military subsistence allowances*
- Veterans benefits

If the above documentation is not available, the applicant must complete an *Affidavit for Alternative Verification*, have it notarized, and attach applicable supporting documentation. The program director will review the documentation and determine the acceptability of the information. If it is sufficient, the alternative verification form will be signed and dated by the program director.

1.2.2b Family Income Limits

Preference is given to students from low-income families. Family income, therefore, is a key eligibility criteria and is used to determine the percentage of scholarship award offered to each student.

Students from families with income levels:

- less than 200 percent of the national poverty level qualify for 90 percent of the tuition amount, not to exceed any maximum legislated amount.⁵
- greater than 200 percent of the poverty level qualify for 75 percent of the scholarship amount, not to exceed maximum legislated amount.

The most recent annual income figures of household members are used to determine caretaker income. Federal poverty guidelines are used to determine the scholarship percentage to be awarded.

Generally, the income of all individuals in the household is considered. The following special circumstances may alter the method of verification and the individuals whose income must be verified:

Foster care/Adopted Special Needs – Household income does not need to be verified for students who are under foster care, since the income of foster/special needs parents is not used as family income. The foster/special needs parents must provide documentation of the foster care/special needs arrangement.

Homelessness – If a student is homeless and there is no family income, the program director must document this for inclusion in the student's file. If the parent/guardian was employed during the year for which income is being verified, the program director must document the employment history and contact the prior employer(s) for income verification information.

Children placed with family members – If a child has been placed with a family member due to extenuating circumstances e.g. neglect, deceased parent, the income of that family member will not be considered in determining the scholarship award.

In addition to the above, there may be extenuating circumstances that result in the decision to include only the income of certain individuals in the household. An example of such an extenuating circumstance is an individual who temporarily resides with the parent/guardian, but has no legal requirement to share in the student's expenses. The program director will review all such extenuating circumstances to determine the individuals whose income should be included in the calculation. Documentation of the evaluation and the resulting decision are to be included in the student's file.

⁵ Pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Section 3313.978(A).

Once scholarship award percentages have been identified, the program director (or another staff person identified by the program director) reviews and approves all scholarship designations to verify the accuracy of the award percentages.

Designations of the amounts to be awarded are made upon the completion of verification. Awards are adjusted only if there is a change in the student's tuition or school verification efforts show changes in caretaker income.

1.2.2c Residency Requirements

All students who receive scholarship awards must reside in the CMSD.⁶ Scholarship recipients must prove their residency by submitting two recently dated (within two months) types of documentation displaying the parent(s)/guardian(s) name and current address on them:

- Electric
- Gas
- Telephone
- Water
- Cable
- Sewer
- Signed lease or rental agreement
- Mortgage Statement
- Recent Aide to Dependent Children (ADC) letter
- Recent Social Security Insurance (SSI) letter

The inability to prove residency does not prohibit a student from being enrolled in school.⁷ In the event of homelessness, the program director must document the family residential situation. If the student resides in a shelter, the program director may contact the shelter to verify residency. Other procedures may include contacting the school the student most recently attended to obtain necessary documentation.

1.2.2d Proof of Legal Guardianship

In the event that a question arises as to the student's relationship with the individual enrolling the student, the CSTP office may require evidence of legal guardianship. Acceptable forms of documentation include:

- Divorce decree, child support order, legal separation, or legal custody papers
- Birth certificate
- Documentation of the foster parent arrangement

⁶ Pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Section 3313.975(A).

⁷ In accordance with the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act.

- Adoption papers

In addition, the CSTP office may receive social service agency documentation from parents and guardians. The documentation must identify the parents/guardians and the children who receive assistance.

When legal documentation is not available, an *Affidavit for Alternative Verification* may be required.

All evidence of guardianship is maintained in the students' files, and may be checked against verification efforts of the schools.

1.2.2e Age

Parents may only apply for students entering kindergarten through grade 8. Birth certificates are required for all applicants. Applications for students entering any other grade will not be accepted.

1.2.2f Grade

Initial scholarships may be awarded only to students in designated grades.⁸

⁸ The grades covered by the program, as identified by Ohio Revised Code Sections 3313.975(C)(1) and House Bill 282, Section 50.435. Initial scholarships may be awarded to students entering other grades only if statutory guidance provides for such.

1.2.3 Eligibility in Subsequent Years

Income and residency must be provided each school year for students previously enrolled in the program. CSTP must obtain detailed supporting documentation of income and residency at least every two years. This information establishes continued eligibility for a scholarship and income establishes the amount of the scholarship.

1.2.3a Income Verification

Household income is verified in subsequent years because variation may affect the percentage of scholarship award. If the household income increases and exceeds 200 percent of the poverty guidelines, the scholarship award must be adjusted, but the scholarship is not to be revoked.⁹ The parents/guardians and the school are to be notified as soon as possible of any decrease in the scholarship to be awarded.

If the household income decreases and becomes less than 200 percent of the poverty guidelines, the scholarship award is to be increased appropriately. If household income is greater than 200 percent and the parent feels the household income will remain greater than 200 percent they must indicate this in writing and the reverification of income is not required. As in the previous instance, the parents/guardians and the school are to be notified of the revised scholarship award upon completing the verification process.

1.2.3b Residency Requirements

A student who no longer resides in the CMSD is ineligible for scholarship. See scholarship revocation, Section 1.5.

1.2.3c Methods of Verification

All verification efforts are overseen by the CSTP office. Parents/guardians are the primary source of verification. Schools serve in a secondary verification capacity. Specifics on each type of verification follow.

⁹ There is no statutory basis to do so.

Parent Verification

- *Affidavit*

Parents/guardians of students who participated in the scholarship program, during the immediately preceding school year, must complete and submit an affidavit to show that they wish to participate in the program in the upcoming school year. The affidavit identifies parent/guardian/child information, which is downloaded from the student enrollment database. Parents/guardians must review the information and make necessary revisions. The parents/guardians are also required to provide evidence of annual household income and residency. The affidavits are used not only to update student information, but also to identify the number of available scholarships to be awarded to new students. All affidavits must be received by the designated deadline. If a parent fails to submit the affidavit to the CSTP office, the student may be ineligible to receive a scholarship. See Section 1.1.3 for application deadlines.

1.2.3d Suspension Policy

For students to remain in the CSTP, parents must conform with state law, which includes providing all required verification noted in previous sections. Parents may receive a *Scholarship Suspension Notice* indicating that additional documentation is needed.

School personnel may also be contacted to assist in the verification process if the CSTP personnel have exhausted all efforts to obtain documentation. If the student is allowed to attend school while verification procedures are implemented, the program director will inform the school principal/administrator that payment for the days of school attended is contingent on results of the verification process.

1.2.4 Enrollment at Designated School

Each participating school defines its own enrollment criteria, which may not conflict with ORC 3313. Participating schools must notify the CSTP office of each scholarship student's enrollment.

Failure to meet the student eligibility criteria identified in Section 1.2, or to submit adequate documentation in the student's first or subsequent years of enrollment will result in denial or revocation of the scholarship award.

1.3 Scholarships

1.3.1 Application Deadline

To be eligible for scholarship award, students must submit applications and all required documentation by the designated deadline (see Section 1.1.3).

Applications for students applying after the deadline will not be considered and will not be entered in the database.

1.3.2 Number of Scholarships

The total number of scholarships to be awarded, equal those which can be funded given the amount of funding appropriated for the program. The State Superintendent determines the number, and communicates that figure to CSTP.

1.3.3 New Students

The number of new students to participate in the program is calculated by subtracting the number of scholarships to be awarded to continuing students from the total number of scholarships available for that school year.

Example:

The program director is informed that 6,500 scholarships will be available in school year 2006-2007. If there are 5,000 students enrolled in the program in 2005-2006, then the number of new scholarships to be awarded is 1,000, which is the difference between the total available scholarships and the number of scholarships reserved for current program participants.

1.3.4 Procedures

Before any scholarship awards can be made, CSTP personnel check that no student has multiple applications and that the total number of applications received equals the total number of applicants listed in the database.

All applications are then sorted into the following pools.

- **School type (public or nonpublic)**. ORC Section 3313.975b requires that no more than 50% of all scholarships shall go to students who were enrolled in non-public schools in the school year preceding the scholarship award year.
- **Income level**. Students from low-income families have priority. Scholarships may be awarded to students from families with income levels exceeding 200 percent of national poverty guidelines only after all low-income students with applications received by July 31 have been considered for placement and Superintendent of Public Instruction has authorized awards.

Priority is given to applicants with a household income less than 200 percent of the poverty level.

1.3.5 Scholarship Awards

If the number of scholarships to be awarded exceeds the number of eligible applications, then scholarships may be awarded to all low-income applicants and the selection process does not apply. The program director must provide documentation of this.

If the number of scholarships is less than the number of applicants, the program director works with the Auditor of State to outline an objective, random selection (ORS) method to assure a fair and equitable process. In the event that an ORS is required, selections must be performed separately for each pool. This method must be documented and kept on file and available for audit in the CSTP office.

After scholarship recipients have been identified, a waiting list of applicants is to be developed based on receipt date of students' applications and noting public/non-public enrollment and income level. Students from this list will be contacted in the event students identified during the award process decline their scholarship. If slots still remain after this process, scholarships are to be made available on a first-come, first-served basis.

1.4 Notification Procedures

Students are only scholarship recipients when they have received written notice from the CSTP office, and when all confirmation efforts have been performed, including receipt of all information on the enrollment in a participating school.

1.4.1 Contacting Students

Parents/guardians are informed of scholarship awards by letter. Enclosed with the letter are:

- a listing of schools that participate in the program, and tips for enrolling students. CSTP personnel assist with placement efforts by maintaining information on the available seats at each participating school. Parents/guardians are informed of this information on an as-needed basis.
- a *Student Enrollment Form*. Once a student has been accepted for enrollment into a participating school, the parent/guardian and principal are to complete a *Student Enrollment Form* and submit it to the CSTP office.
- Scholarship will not be in effect and no payment will be processed until *Student Enrollment Form* is received in the CSTP office.

Each participating school may admit students based on ORC 3313.976.

1.4.2 Inability to Contact Parent/Guardian

If numerous efforts have failed to contact a parent/guardian to inform him/her of the scholarship award, the scholarship slot is to be deemed vacant. Procedures are to be implemented to fill the position with a student on the waiting list.

1.5 Revocation of Scholarship Awards

Scholarship revocation notices are sent in writing by a return-receipt method and/or United States Postal Service's standard mail.

1.5.1 Failure to Enroll/Non-Attendance

Scholarship recipients are given ample time to utilize their awards. Students must actually enroll and attend their school of choice by said date, otherwise reapply for the coming year. Applicants who are on the wait list are given the same opportunity. If given a chance to move off the wait list, the opportunity must be used for that given school year. If that does not take place then the parent/guardian must reapply for the next school year. Since the wait list is only good for the school year in which the applicant has applied, they must submit a new application each year until a scholarship has been awarded.

1.5.2 Request for Withdrawal

If a parent/guardian informs the CSTP office that a student wishes to withdraw from the program after having been enrolled, and 1) the request is not a result of health and/or safety issues or documented extenuating circumstances, and 2) a transfer to another school is not requested, the student's scholarship award is to be revoked.

1.5.3 Ineligible School

All schools that participate in the program must be approved by the State Superintendent. If the State Superintendent denies continued program participation by a school, the parents/guardians are to be informed of the change. Information is to be provided about other schools the students may be able to attend. If a parent/guardian decides the child will not attend one of the identified schools, the scholarship award is to be revoked.

1.5.4 Ineligible Student

Failure to meet the eligibility criteria (see Section 1.2) may result in revocation of a scholarship award, depending on the criteria being evaluated.

1.5.4.a Income

The poverty line⁹ is used as one means of identifying students who qualify for scholarships. An increase in income may result in a revision to the scholarship amount, but is not to result in withdrawal from the program.¹⁰ If a student was previously enrolled in the program and met the low-income guidelines, a percentage of the scholarship award may be reduced.

By October 31 of each school year, the CSTP office must notify the State Superintendent of the number of students with family income levels in excess of 200 percent of the national poverty guidelines.

1.5.4.b Residency

All scholarship students must reside in the CMSD. If a student is found to be a resident of another district, and the new residence is not due to homelessness, foster care, or other temporary placement measures, the scholarship is to be revoked. The student is no longer eligible to receive a scholarship from the program.

1.5.5 Falsification of Documents

Intentional falsification of income or residency documents to obtain an award will result in revocation of the scholarship. The program director will review all cases in which falsification is revealed, and will determine whether revocation of the award is necessary.

1.5.6 Reinstatement of Scholarship

Circumstances may arise that cause a student to withdraw from the program. The program director may elect to re-admit a student to the program within the same school year if the original withdrawal was due to health and/or safety issues or documented extenuating circumstances, and if there is an available scholarship to be awarded. If such a reinstatement occurs, the program director must include documentation of the occurrence in the student's file. If the withdrawal from the program did not involve health and/or safety issues or documented extenuating circumstances, the student is ineligible for reinstatement. The parent/guardian may apply for a scholarship in the next school year.

⁹ Established by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget, as revised by the Director of the Office of Community Services

¹⁰ There is no statutory authority for such action.

1.5.7 Notice of Revocation

If a scholarship is revoked, the parents/guardians will be mailed notice of the revocation which clearly outlines the circumstances.

Whenever a scholarship is revoked, the student enrollment database will be immediately updated to ensure the student's program participation is appropriately noted, and to prevent scholarship payment's from being made in error. CSTP office will inform the school of the last day the student is eligible for scholarship.

In addition, CSTP will immediately inform the Transportation Director for Cleveland Municipal Schools of necessary revisions to transportation arrangements.

1.5.8 Exit Interviews

Parents/guardians of students leaving the program are asked to complete an *Exit Interview Survey*. This form is used to identify the circumstances that resulted in withdrawal. These forms are kept for program administration purposes.

1.5.9 Filling Available Scholarship Slots

The procedures to fill available slots, including those which become available because of revocation, are to be consistent with procedures outlined in this manual.

Tutorial Assistance Grants

Each year the CSTP office awards a limited number of tutorial assistance grants to students in designated grades in the CSMD. The number of tutorial grants cannot exceed the number of scholarships awarded for the same year.¹⁰ Tutorial Assistance Grants are based on legislated requirements.

The Tutorial Program is designed to provide extra help for children in the areas of reading, mathematics, writing, science, and social studies. Emphasis is placed on 1) improving reading skills and 2) helping students pass the achievement test.

2.1 Student Eligibility

Students enrolled in CMSD grades kindergarten through twelve are eligible for tutorial assistance grants.

2.1.1 Responsibility for Determining Eligibility

CSTP personnel are responsible for oversight of the verification process and for supporting the site supervisor's determination of student eligibility. Student eligibility is determined by criteria in the following categories.

2.1.1a Family Income

As with the Scholarship Program, preference for tutorial assistance grants is given to students from low-income families. Pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Section 3313.978(B), whether a student receives 75 percent or 90 percent of the award is dependent on total household income.

Special circumstances that may alter the method of verification and the individuals whose income must be verified, are as follows:

Foster care/Adopted Special Needs – It is not required that household income be verified for students who are under foster care, since the income of the foster parents will not be used as family income. Foster parents are required to provide documentation evidencing the foster care arrangement.

Homelessness – If a student is homeless and there is no family income, the program director is to document the situation for inclusion in the student's file.

Children placed with family members – If a child has been placed with a family member due to extenuating circumstances, e.g. neglect, deceased parent, the income of that family member will not be considered in determining the scholarship award.

In addition to the above, there may be extenuating circumstances that result in the decision to include the income of only certain individuals in the household. An example of such an extenuating circumstance is an individual who temporarily resides with the parent/guardian, but has no legal requirement to share in the student's expenses. The program director is to review such circumstances and determine the individuals whose income should be

¹⁰ Ohio Revised Code Section 3313.978 (B)

included in the calculation. The student's file must include documentation regarding the evaluation and the resulting decision.

2.1.1b Residency

Students who receive tutorial grants must be enrolled in the Cleveland Municipal School District.¹¹ Before grants are awarded, CSTP personnel will verify that all applicants are currently enrolled in the CMSD.

2.1.1c Grade Requirements

Tutoring grants are awarded only to students in grades covered by the scholarship program.¹²

2.1.1d Income Verification

Income must be verified via the following documentation:

- W2 Form(s)
- ADC, SSI, BWC, etc.
- 1099 forms (for private contractors)
- Signed federal tax return with all schedules
- Unemployment benefits
- Alimony
- Child support
- Retirement
- *Military subsistence allowances*
- Veterans benefits

If the above documentation is not available, the applicant must complete an *Affidavit for Alternative Verification* and have it notarized. The program director reviews the documentation provided and determines the acceptability of the information. If the documentation is found to be sufficient, the program director signs the form as evidence of acceptability and includes the information in the student's file. If the documentation is found to be insufficient, the basis for the decision is documented and the documentation is included in the student's file. Tutoring applications received without proper income documentation will be entered. However, the student will be placed at 25% responsibility until annual household income is accurately documented.

2.2 Applying for Program Participation

CSTP mails an *Application for Cleveland Scholarship and Tutoring Program* to all students entering eligible grades in the CMSD.¹³ Following the application deadline, CSTP mails the *Application for Tutoring* to student homes. The latter application focuses solely on the tutorial program.

¹¹ Ohio Revised Code Section 3313.978(B)

¹² Ohio Revised Code Section 3313.978

¹³ Addresses are obtained from the Cleveland Municipal School District. For more information on the application process and deadline, see Section 1.1.3.

Once students are enrolled in the program, continued eligibility is based on an annual verification process.

2.2.1 Application Deadline

Applications are accepted during designated periods. Tutoring grants are awarded on a first come, first served basis. During the school year, principals or site supervisors may identify students who could benefit from tutorial assistance grants.

2.2.2 First-Year Participation

Preference for tutorial grant awards is given to children from low-income families who will enter approved grades. Students must attend the Cleveland Municipal School District to receive tutoring. CSTP staff verifies that the student is enrolled in CMSD.

A student who declines acceptance of a scholarship and enrolls in Cleveland Municipal School District is eligible for a tutorial assistance grant, upon completing an application for tutoring.

2.2.3 Eligibility in Subsequent Years

Once students receive a grant, they remain eligible in the grades covered by the program as long as they continue to attend CMSD. CSTP must annually verify their enrollment in the CMSD.

2.3 Award of Grants

2.3.1 Number of Grants

In any school year, the State Superintendent awards tutorial grants to a number of students equal to the number of students who receive scholarships under the program.¹⁴

2.3.2 Award Process

All tutoring grants are to be awarded through a process identified by the program director. The program director must document the method of award and maintain the documentation on file.

¹⁴ Ohio Revised Code Section 3313.978(B)

2.3.3 Award Calculation

The tutorial grant amount is based on legislated amounts and is not to exceed the lesser of:

- The tutor's actual charge for services, or
- A percentage established by the State Superintendent not to exceed legislated amount.¹⁵ The State Superintendent establishes the tutorial grant award.¹⁶

The hourly rate is based on household income. Students whose family income is determined to be above 200 percent of the poverty level receive 75 percent of the hourly rate and parent/guardian pays 25 percent. Students whose family income is below 200 percent of the poverty level qualify for 90 percent of the hourly rate parent/guardian pays 10 percent.

2.4 Notification Procedures

It is the responsibility of the participating schools and community sites to notify the students of the availability of tutorial sessions and assigned tutors.

2.5 Selection and Assignment of Tutors

Before anyone may be authorized to assist students in the tutoring program, the CSTP office must authorize the potential tutors.¹⁷

2.5.1 Application to Tutor

Individuals interested in providing tutoring services are required annually to complete an application or sign an affidavit. To facilitate the placement process, applicants are asked to identify location preferences. Applicants must sign an agreement to adhere to program guidelines acknowledging their awareness of program requirements and compensation.

Each applicant must meet the established eligibility criteria¹⁸ before being authorized to tutor a student enrolled in the program. When the application is received, CSTP reviews adherence to eligibility requirements and notifies the tutor site when tutoring can begin.

Once eligibility requirements have been met, the applicant is notified of eligibility, available tutoring sites, and contact persons. The school principal or tutoring site coordinator identifies those tutors who meet their educational requirements.

2.5.2 Eligibility to Tutor

Applicants must be at least 18 years old and demonstrate the ability to tutor students effectively. Eligible tutors may include current or retired teachers, college students, individuals with bachelor or associate degrees, and non teaching CMSD staff.

¹⁵ Ohio Revised Code Section 3313.978(C)(3)

¹⁶ Ohio Revised Code 3313.978(A)

¹⁷ Ohio Revised Code 3313.976 (D). The Cleveland Scholarship and Tutoring Office serves as the authorizing agent on behalf of the State Superintendent to approve tutorial providers who appear capable of furnishing instructional services.

¹⁸ See Section 2.5.2.

2.5.2a Criminal Background Check

Persons permitted to work with children via CSTP must undergo a mandatory criminal background check.¹⁹ The program's policy requires criminal background checks (BCI) for participating individuals.

Upon receipt of a tutor application, CSTP will notify the tutor candidate that a BCI must be conducted and the location(s) of the contracted company where this may be done. Once CSTP has been informed of the results of said BCI, the applicant will be notified. If the individual has successfully passed the BCI, s/he will be informed of how to proceed.

When a criminal background BCI has noted a criminal offense CSTP will request disposition of offense if not noted on the BCI. When disposition of the offense notes a criminal conviction this documentation will be referred to the office of Professional Conduct for further review and determination of whether applicant can become a tutor.

2.5.3 Assignments

Once they have met all requirements, applicants receive a letter notifying them of their approval. It is the responsibility of tutors and tutorial sites to initiate contact regarding tutorial sessions. Teachers may tutor in the school in which they are employed if the school participates as a site, as well as other approved participating sites.

It is the tutor's responsibility to contact parents/guardians regarding the times that tutoring sessions will take place.

Tutors are allowed to tutor only one student per session at a maximum of one hour per session per day. Tutors may tutor at multiple sites.

2.6 Tutoring Sites

Tutoring sites are located in a Cleveland Municipal School or a community facility. The sites provide a place for tutors and students to hold sessions. Community sites must undergo an evaluation to ensure the facility is a safe learning environment for students before approval may be given. CSTP must give sites approval before sites may begin operating and conducting tutorial sessions.

2.6.1 Participation Process

All sites that wish to participate in the program must annually submit a *Tutoring Site Proposal* to the CSTP office. The proposal must identify the name of the organization, site supervisor, initial starting date of the sessions, as well as days and hours the site will operate.

The tutoring site supervisor is responsible for informing parents of the tutoring opportunities for their child, also for assigning the child to a tutor. The site supervisor determines which tutors will work at the site.

¹⁹ Ohio Revised Code 3319.39

2.6.2 Site Responsibilities

Responsibilities of both school-based sites and community-based sites include:

- Identification of a tutoring site supervisor
- Assignment of both tutors and students
- Preparation of tutorial time sheets accounting for each tutor's time

Functions to be performed by the tutoring sites are very similar, with the exception that school-based sites are more involved in identifying the students who should participate in the program. It is the responsibility of the CSTP office, however, to verify each student's eligibility before awarding a tutorial grant.

2.7 CSTP Tutoring Site Supervisor

The CSTP Tutoring Site Supervisor is responsible for administering the tutoring program at the assigned site. The site supervisor is not directly involved in student placement. Specific responsibilities are outlined in the *Tutoring Site Supervisor Application*. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Successfully pass a mandatory criminal background check paid for by the State
- Work cooperatively with CSTP staff
- Ensure only students approved by CSTP are tutored
- Ensure that students are only tutored the number of hours allowed
- Attend mandatory tutoring site supervisor meetings
- Assisting with the recruitment and screening of students and tutor candidates
- Serving as liaison between tutors, principals, parents and the tutoring program
- Permitting tutoring to commence only when approval has been received from the CSTP office
- Ensuring appropriate communication between tutoring office, tutor, parent and classroom teacher
- Ensuring that a professional and safe atmosphere exists for tutoring
- Submitting all required documents to the tutoring office in a timely manner
- Ensuring that tutors are not providing service via CSTP to any student who is a relative (tutors will not be paid)

Recordkeeping Requirements

CSTP recordkeeping requirements vary according to area of focus. In some instances, documentation required for the Scholarship Program differs from that required for the Tutoring Program.

3.1 File Documentation

Appropriate records must be maintained of all student scholarship, tutoring, and school enrollment information.

3.1.1 Recordkeeping Requirements – Scholarship Program

All student applications to the scholarship program must be kept on file. For those students awarded scholarships, complete participation records must be maintained. Information in the files should include the following:

- Scholarship application
- Affidavit, if student actually participated for more than one school year
- Income/residency/guardianship documentation provided by the parent/guardian
- Changes in enrollment status
- Changes in program participation
- Exit Interview Survey (if received)

Exit interview surveys are used for program administration purposes.

In addition, the following is to be maintained on all schools that participate or apply to participate as scholarship schools:

- All documentation submitted by or to a school regarding the school's participation in the program
- Tuition to be charged and tuition paid
- Student enrollment and attendance data

Documentation authorizing a school to participate in the program must be maintained on file indefinitely. Schools are required to submit an *Assurance of Compliance* each year for continual program participation.

3.1.2 Recordkeeping Requirements – Tutoring Program

All information collected and used to award grants and make payments for the Tutoring Program is to be kept on file at the CSTP office or appropriate storage facility. The student, tutor and tutoring site files are to contain the following:

Students

- Application for tutoring
- Tutoring Affidavits
- Income/residency/guardianship documentation provided by the parent/guardian

Tutors

- Application to work as a tutor
- Documentation of background check and its results
- Timesheets

Sites

- Site Status Reports
- Site Proposal Form

The payment report generated to authorize payment of tutorial services is to be kept on file to document payments made to tutors.

3.2 Exceptions to Standard Rules

Some circumstances may require a deviation from the procedures outlined in Section 3.1. For example, the parent/guardian's inability to provide required documentation may cause a deviation in the records to be kept. Information submitted in a non-standard format is to be maintained in the student's file.

3.3 Records Retention Policy

All documents generated and files prepared by personnel in the CSTP office are governed by the records retention policy of the Ohio Department of Education. No documents are to be removed from the premises or destroyed unless those documents are identified on the retention schedule, and the storage site and method of destruction have been approved by the appropriate agencies.

Transportation

Transportation and its arrangement are the responsibility of the Cleveland Municipal School District. CSTP communicates with the district to facilitate transportation assignments and changes on behalf of scholarship parents.

Student Mobility

Circumstances may arise that result in a student's having to transfer schools. Students are not prohibited from transferring during the school year. Two requirements, however, must be met. First, the students must transfer to a participating school. Second, the school must have space available for the scholarship student. If a space is not available, the scholarship may have to be revoked. See Section 1.5 for more information on the revocation of scholarship awards.

5.1 Transfers During the School Year

Student mobility during the course of the school year is tracked via the *Student Status Form*. Schools use this form to document transfers between schools and withdrawals from the program. Students must maintain continuous, consecutive enrollment among participating schools in order to retain scholarship awards. Enrollment into a nonparticipating school automatically revokes a student's scholarship. Transfers between participating schools must occur within 30 days, in order to prevent a scholarship from being revoked. (I.e. If a student transfers from school A to attend school B it must occur within 30 days, otherwise the scholarship is revoked.) CSTP will notify parents/guardians of the revocation for any student that does not transfer within the allotted timeframe.

The *Student Status Form* is distributed to all participating schools. Schools are instructed to submit the form to the CSTP office as changes in enrollment occur, thus providing an ongoing record of student mobility. Schools must submit the form immediately upon learning the student's enrollment status since student mobility generally affects the amount of tuition to be paid to a participating school. Section 6 provides additional information on the payment process.

When a form is received, personnel in the CSTP office review the information and update the student enrollment database to reflect changes in student status. The CSTP transportation coordinator is to be immediately notified of changes in enrollment status due to the potential effect of such changes on transportation assignments.

5.2 Transfers Between School Years

Student mobility between school years is tracked through information each parent/guardian includes on the *Affidavit*. The use of this form enables CSTP personnel to track changes in enrollment for all students who participated in the program during the prior school year. See Sections 1.1.2 and 1.2.3c for more information on the use of *Affidavits*.

Allowable Costs and Method of Payment

The CSTP office has the authority to issue payments for both scholarship tuition and tutorial grant assistance. This section deals solely with the allowable costs and method of payment for the programmatic segments of the CSTP office. This section does not address operational expenses of the office.

6.1 Payments Made Under the Scholarship Program

Payments may be made to cover a portion of the tuition costs for each student participating in the Scholarship Program. Payments are only released on behalf of those students found to be eligible to participate in the Scholarship Program.²⁰

6.1.1 Payment Schedule

To identify the tuition to be charged for the upcoming school year, each school participating in the Scholarship Program must annually complete and submit a *Tuition Verification Form*²¹ The form, which is distributed to all registered schools preceding the effective school year, provides evidence of the school's tuition schedule for the specified school year. The form must be signed, dated, and submitted to the CSTP office. Payments are not made to any school that fails to comply with the requirement to submit the *Tuition Verification Form*.

6.1.2 Tuition Amounts

Scholarships are provided in two payments. Each payment is processed as soon as authorized enrollment reports are received in the CSTP office.

Warrants are made payable to the parents/guardians as soon as all required documents are received.

²⁰ See Section 1.2 for eligibility criteria.

²¹ Ohio Revised Code Section 3313.79.8(C)(1) states that scholarship amounts shall not exceed the lesser of the tuition or the amounts identified by the State Superintendent.

6.1.3 Disbursement Process

Before any payments may be made, CSTP personnel verify student enrollment and attendance. Additional processes that involve other divisions of the Department of Education are then implemented so that payments may be issued as specified in Sections 6.1.4b and 6.1.4c.

6.1.3a Enrollment/Attendance Verification

At the beginning of the school year, and before the first payment is made, an *Enrollment Report* is created and distributed to each school for verification of student enrollment. School personnel must review the information for accuracy and make necessary revisions on an Enrollment Change form that may include changes in student data. The revised report is then forwarded to the CSTP office, and the enrollment database is updated as necessary.

Scholarship Payment Reports are generated based on the information in the updated student enrollment database. These reports, which are prepared for each school, are generated and submitted to each school before payments are issued. School personnel must review the information for accuracy and make the necessary revisions.

CSTP updates the student enrollment database to reflect the revisions identified by each school. A revised *Payment Report* showing needed adjustments is then printed and submitted to each school. School personnel are required to review the reports and verify the accuracy of the information. If additional revisions are noted at this time, the process will continue until the report is deemed accurate.

Schools are also required to provide evidence of each student's attendance. Each school must complete the *Attendance Form* on a monthly basis and forward the attendance records to the CSTP office by the 15th of the next month. Each school must certify the accuracy of the information provided. This information is used to verify each student's continued enrollment in the program and the appropriateness of tuition payments to be made. The enrollment and payment databases are updated as necessary.

6.1.3b Generating Payment

Once all revisions to the payment database have been made, and all school personnel verify the accuracy of the *Payment Reports* provided, the information is forwarded to the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) for payment processing. The information is then processed for payment and warrants are created by the Auditor of State's Office. The warrants generated via OAKS and forwarded directly to the participating schools for parents'/guardians' signatures.

6.1.3c Distribution of Tuition Payments

The warrants are sent directly to participating schools and a *Payment Report* is forwarded from CSTP upon notification that payments have been processed through OAKS/CPS.

Because warrants are payable to the parents/guardians, each school is responsible for contacting the parents/guardians to inform them that the warrants have been received, and to make arrangements for the warrants to be endorsed. If a parent/guardian has paid the tuition balance, the check is given to the parent/guardian.

6.1.4 Adjustments to Scholarship Amounts

Sometimes tuition payments may need to be adjusted, warrants may need to be sent to CSTP, or refund checks may need to be issued by the school. Such adjustments are most likely the result of changes in enrollment status during the school year.

6.1.4a Prorating Tuition Payments

Payments to an individual school are to be proportionately reduced for those instances when a student is not enrolled in the school for the entire period covered by the scheduled scholarship payment. Records are to be maintained to evidence all adjustments to annual scholarship amounts paid, and the basis for the adjustments.

6.1.4b Overpayments

When a payment is sent to a school prior to the end of the payment period covered, CSTP personnel must review all subsequent attendance reports for the designated time period to ensure that the amounts disbursed were earned by each school.

Overpayments may also occur when funds are advanced to the schools and a student withdraws from the program prior to the end of the payment period. If a student withdraws from the program after funds are disbursed to a school on his/her behalf, the school must submit a refund CSTP for amount of tuition not earned. All refunds are to be made payable to the Treasurer State of Ohio. In addition, a *Student Status Form* must accompany the refund and mail to the CSTP office as evidence of the student's withdrawal along with payment.

6.1.4c Returned Warrants and Refund Checks

CSTP personnel must maintain accurate records of all returned warrants and refund checks. Returned warrants and refunds are entered in the refund database noting the parent/guardian name, school, dollar amount received of warrant/check and warrant/check number.

Returned warrants and refund checks must be safeguarded until they are forwarded to the ODE, for redeposit of funds to the CSTP line item. CSTP office policy requires that returned warrants and checks be sent to ODE at least twice weekly, in accordance with Ohio Administrative Code Section 113-1-01.

6.2 Payments Made Under the Tutorial Program

The State Superintendent pays for tutorial costs upon receipt of a statement from the tutor specifying the services provided and the costs of those services.²² Total payments must not exceed the grant amount awarded to the student.

6.2.1 Payments to Tutors/Tutorial Time Sheets

All tutors are required to submit documentation of tutoring sessions conducted during the designated time period. Tutors are to submit the *Tutorial Time Sheet* to the CSTP office within the payment time schedule established by the CSTP office. The tutor must initial times for each session performed. The site supervisor must also sign the time sheet to certify the accuracy of the information.

Time sheets are the official record for payment. Only the original time sheet is accepted for payment; time sheets submitted in any other format are not considered for payment. CSTP personnel will immediately return to the tutoring site any time sheets that are inaccurately submitted.

6.2.2 Verification of Tutorial Students and Tutors

The CSTP office uses verification procedures to prevent the erroneous payment of tutorial assistance grants. *Tutorial Time Sheets* are submitted. Before time sheets enter the payment process, CSTP personnel verify that all students and tutors have been approved to participate. Timesheets are reviewed for accuracy to ensure students have not exceeded allotted hours and that students received one on one service of not more than one hour per session.

Once this process is complete, CSTP notifies tutoring sites of any ineligible students and any inconsistencies with timesheets. Incomplete or inaccurate time sheets are returned to the tutoring sites for correction.

6.2.3 Disbursement

Disbursement of funds for the Tutorial Program involves the tracking of tutoring sessions. Additional processes that involve other divisions of the ODE are then implemented so that payments may be issued.

²² Ohio Revised Code Section 3313.979(C)

6.2.3a Generating Payments

Payments are made to tutors according to legislated limits based on time sheets completed by the tutoring site.

Once all time sheets have been entered, a *Payment Report* is created. The completed report is checked for accuracy and payments are processed. Upon receipt of the warrants, CSTP distributes them to all tutoring sites. Each warrant is made payable to the tutor.

6.2.3b Distribution of Payments

Warrants are grouped by site, as identified on the *Payment Report*, and distributed by overnight mail to each tutoring site. The site is responsible for distributing the warrants to the appropriate tutor.

Tutors are responsible for collecting the parent's/guardian's share of the tutoring costs (either 10 percent or 25 percent). Each tutor has the discretion to waive the parent/guardian share of the payment.

6.2.4 Confirmation of Tutorial Services Provided

After tutorial grant payments are released, CSTP sends all serviced parents/guardians a *Confirmation Letter* asking them to substantiate tutorial services provided. Each parent/guardian must identify the tutor providing the service and the number of hours the child was tutored. Parents/guardians are urged to submit the *Confirmation Letters* to the CSTP office immediately.

If overpayments or improper payments are found during this process, the parent concern process is initiated. See Section 6.2.5 for overpayment procedures.

6.2.5 Overpayments

In the event that an improper payment or overpayment is made, the following takes place.

- The tutor is notified to submit a certified check for the amount identified. The individual has the opportunity to respond to the discrepancy in overpayment. The CSTP program director must review the documentation and render a decision.
- In the event amounts are to be reimbursed, checks are to be made payable to the Treasurer of State, State of Ohio, and sent to the CSTP office.
- The CSTP office makes a copy of the check; date stamps the copy, and places the copy in the tutor's and student's file. The check is then forwarded to the ODE deposit into the State treasury to the CSTP line item. Overpayments are to be documented in the student and tutor files.

6.3 Transportation Costs

The CSTP office makes no direct payments for transportation costs.

6.3.1 Monitoring

CSTP personnel review enrollment status, student attendance records, and residency on an ongoing basis and keep the CMSD Transportation Department informed on necessary revisions to transportation assignments. To ensure the accuracy of transportation payments, CSTP must inform the CMSD Transportation Department of all enrollment revisions that affect transportation assignments.

School Review and Participation

7.1 School Program Acceptance

In order for a school to participate in the Cleveland Scholarship & Tutoring Program (CSTP), there must first be written notification of interest from a school. The notice should be submitted to the CSTP Director from the school's chief administrator and/or a member of its governing authority, if one exists. This will initiate the process for CSTP to conduct a school review verifying compliance with State Operating Standards. The following must take place:

- A. CSTP must obtain notice in writing from the prospective school.
- B. CSTP will schedule a *School Review* (checking compliance with State Operating Standards).
- C. The prospective school must show proof that all school staff have obtained proper background clearance from the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation.
- D. School's chief administrator and/or member of governing authority must sign the *Assurance of Compliance* after a successfully completed school review.

As a condition of acceptance and continuation in the Program, the school will be required to complete an *Assurance of Compliance*, initially, to indicate its commitment to adhere to State Operating Standards, applicable laws and program requirements. The *Assurance of Compliance* must be signed by the school's chief administrator and/or a member of its governing authority, along with the CSTP Director. Upon receipt of the initial *Assurance of Compliance* with the ODE's Superintendent of Public Instruction's signature, CSTP will then add the school to its list of participating schools from which scholarship recipients may choose to attend. Each school year subsequent to a school's

entrance into CSTP, an *Assurance of Compliance* must be completed ensuring that program expectations continue to be met.

7.2 School Reviews

CSTP has a responsibility to monitor program schools for compliance with State Operating Standards, applicable laws, and program requirements to ensure a safe and healthy environment and to facilitate quality education for all scholarship students. Document reviews will be done annually. On-site reviews will be completed at a select number of participating schools each year.

The purpose of these site visits is to ensure that the CSTP schools are complying with the Operating Standards for Ohio Schools and with the requirements of the CSTP. Items to be reviewed by CSTP staff during site visits include, but are not limited to the following:

- * Files and documentation for CSTP students;
- * Teacher and staff certification;

All teaching staff at participating chartered nonpublic schools must be appropriately licensed or certified. During site visits, CSTP staff will review school employee files for documentation of certification or licensure. Each teacher providing instruction at a participating chartered nonpublic school must be licensed through rules adopted in accordance with ORC 3319.22 or certified in accordance with ORC 3301.071, certification of teachers and administrators in nontax supported schools. Verification of certification or licensure must be maintained in the teacher's personnel file at the chartered nonpublic school. If a CSTP school is unable to provide documentation of teacher licensure or certification during the site visit, the school will have 90 days from ODE notification to provide documentation of the teacher's licensure or certification to ODE.

- * Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation background check documentation;

Staff Background Checks

All teachers and staff members of schools participating in the CSTP must undergo a mandatory criminal background check. ORC 3319.39 requires public and chartered nonpublic schools to conduct criminal background checks on individuals applying for any position that maintains care, custody or control of a child. In addition, ORC 3319.31 requires the State Board of Education to conduct criminal background checks on any individual applying for teacher certification or licensure.

Criminal background checks are performed by the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation and Identification (BCI). The Ohio Department of Education has a list of locations that school staff members can go in their area to conduct background checks.

Participating schools must ensure that criminal background checks have been conducted for all employees. In addition, volunteers who work with children or youth are subject to criminal background check requirements. If a CSTP school is unable to provide documentation of a background check on a teacher or staff member during the site visit, the school will have 90 days from ODE notification to provide documentation of a completed background check to ODE.

It is the policy of the CSTP that participating schools ensure that criminal background checks are conducted for all staff members as prescribed within the Ohio Revised Code. Criminal background checks are the financial responsibility of the school or the individual employee; ODE does not provide funding for the purposes of conducting or updating background checks at CSTP schools.

All criminal background checks should be maintained on file at the participating nonpublic school. If the school is part of an organizational hierarchy and files are maintained at a central location, the school shall notify ODE of its filing system and allow ODE to review files for CSTP schools at the central location. Background checks that note any criminal offenses must be forwarded to the CSTP staff at ODE. CSTP staff will consult with the ODE Office of Professional Conduct to review the information and make the final determination as to whether or not the staff member can be employed by the chartered nonpublic school.

Please note that staff employed through a public school district or educational service center that are located at a chartered nonpublic school through Auxiliary Services, Title 1 or other state or federal program must have background checks documented through their district employer. In such instances, ODE CSTP staff may request the school to provide a list of such employees. If requested by ODE, such list should include the employee name and date of birth, the public school district of employment, and the program through which the employee is funded.

- * Documentation for required health and safety inspections;

Required Health and Safety Inspections and Emergency Procedures

Participating schools must maintain school facilities that are safe and healthy environments. To that end, ODE will verify that emergency procedures are properly implemented and that health and safety inspections are up-to-date. Procedures and inspections to be reviewed during the site visit include:

The most recent fire inspection report by the fire marshal per ORC 3737.22;
Records of fire and tornado drills completed per ORC 3737.73 and OAC 1301:7-7-04;
Emergency procedures posted in classrooms per ORC 3737.73, 3313.536 and OAC 3301-35-06(l) (2) (c) (v);
School safety plan adopted per ORC 3313.536 and OAC 3301-35-06(l)(2)(c)(vi) ..
Kitchen range hood suppression unit inspection in compliance with OAC 1301:7-7-06(J)[M], 4101:1-904.2.1;

Current food service operation per ORC 3313.81, license per ORC 3717.41, and inspection per ORC 3717.47 and hair restraints and gloves per OAC 3717-1-02.3 (C), 3717-1-02.2; Pest control license per OAC 3717-1-07.1; Maintenance, Furnace/Boilers and School Environment per ORC 3707.03, 3707.26, and OAC 3301-3506 and boiler certification per OAC 1301:3-5-05;

- * School handbook and related policies per OAC 3301-11-11 (A)(12)(b); and
- * School curriculum per ORC 3301.07, 3313.60 and 3313.602.

In most instances, selected private schools will be notified at least ten days prior to a site visit. However, ODE reserves the right to visit schools without prior notification.

7.2.1 Non Compliance Follow-up

CSTP will assist schools by suggesting corrective actions to address issues and concerns revealed during the review process. Procedures that will be followed for all noncompliance issues include:

- CSTP representatives, at the onsite school review, will conduct an exit interview with school's chief administrator and discuss all noncompliance issues that are known at the time of the school visit. The administrator will be asked to sign all exit interview sheets to acknowledge discussion. If the administrator refuses to sign, reviewers should note the refusal and sign the exit interview sheet.
- School administrator will be notified in writing of noncompliance issues found during document reviews in the CSTP office after the review visit.

Non Compliance Notification and Response Process (90 days)

- The principal of the chartered nonpublic school must sign and return a statement indicating that all noted areas of noncompliance have been addressed within 90 days of the notification and the principal must provide documentation of compliance when requested. In some cases, scheduled and/or unscheduled follow-up visits by ODE staff may be conducted to ensure that deficiencies are being addressed. If areas of noncompliance are not addressed within 90 days, ODE will require the principal of the chartered nonpublic school to submit a corrective action plan, as outlined below. If deficiencies persist, ODE may remove the school from participation in the CSTP.
- CSTP will evaluate response and monitor corrections.

In cases involving continued school review noncompliance issues, the following additional steps will be taken.

Corrective Action Plan Process (30 days)

If a chartered nonpublic school fails to address areas of noncompliance identified by CSTP staff within 90 days, the CSTP Director will require the school to create and institute a corrective action plan. The CSTP Director shall notify the principal of the necessity to institute a corrective action plan and the date by which the plan must be drafted and delivered to ODE. Such plan shall be completed and signed by the principal of the chartered nonpublic school and delivered to ODE by the date established by the CSTP Director. The corrective action plan must specify the actions to be implemented to rectify all areas of noncompliance noted by the CSTP staff, the date by which each action will be implemented, and the documentation that will be submitted to ODE as verification. The corrective action plan and any subsequent amendments to the plan must be approved by the CSTP Director and must satisfactorily address all deficiencies noted by ODE.

If CSTP staff note persistent and unresolved deficiencies that place the school out of compliance with the Operating Standards for Ohio's Schools per OAC 3301-35, the CSTP staff shall notify the appropriate ODE office charged with chartering nonpublic schools.

Review of the chartered nonpublic school's compliance with the Operating Standards for Ohio's Schools by the ODE office charged with chartering nonpublic schools may proceed simultaneously with the review of the school by the CSTP. In such cases, the corrective action plan implemented for the purposes of correcting deficiencies noted by CSTP staff may also serve as the corrective action plan or remediation plan to be implemented to resolve issues regarding compliance with the Operating Standards.

If the school participates in other ODE-funded programs, such as the EdChoice, then the appropriate ODE oversight offices must also approve the corrective action plan. If the school has a corrective action plan in process to rectify deficiencies noted by another ODE office or program, such as EdChoice, then that plan may also serve as the corrective plan for the CSTP if the plan addresses all issues identified by the CSTP staff. All ODE offices involved with approval and/or funding of programs at the school may coordinate review efforts to ensure that all deficiencies are resolved in accordance with the approved corrective action plan. If additional deficiencies are noted by other ODE offices during the corrective action process, then the school principal shall amend the corrective action plan to address the additional deficiencies noted. CSTP staff shall maintain close contact with the school's principal to ensure that the approved corrective action plan is implemented in accordance with the approved timeline.

Intent to Remove from Program/Section 119 Hearing Process

If a school fails to submit a corrective action plan by the date established by the CSTP Director, CSTP finds that submitted corrective action plan does not adequately and fully address all identified areas of noncompliance, or if the school fails to complete the implementation of each action in an approved corrective action plan in accordance with the approved timeline, ODE shall notify the principal of the chartered nonpublic school of ODE's intent to remove the school from participation in the CSTP. Such notice to the school's principal shall inform the principal of the right to a hearing in accordance with section 119 of the Ohio Revised Code. Notice shall be given by registered mail, return receipt requested, and shall include the reasons for the proposed removal from CSTP participation. The principal of the chartered nonpublic school shall have 30 days from the time of the mailing of the notice to request such hearing. Such notice shall meet all requirements of ORC 119.07.

If the principal of the school requests a hearing, then ODE shall immediately set the date, time, and place for the hearing and notify the principal. The hearing shall be within 15 days, but not earlier than 7 days, after the principal has requested the hearing.

If the principal of the school does not request a hearing, or if the recommendation of the referee or examiner is that the school be removed from participation in the CSTP for the reasons cited by ODE, then the CSTP Director shall order the school removed from the list of schools approved to participate in the CSTP for a period of time to be specified in such order or until such time as all areas of noncompliance have been satisfactorily addressed. Such order shall be served by return receipt requested, to the principal of the school. CSTP scholarship students attending such school shall be notified of the necessity to transfer to another CSTP school to maintain scholarship awards.

Should a CSTP school be removed from program participation, ODE shall cease all CSTP payments for students attending such school until such time as the student transfers to another CSTP school.

7.3 Assurance of Compliance

Each school year, all participating schools will be expected to complete a new *Assurance of Compliance* form. The form specifies areas of compliance to which each school must adhere, related to State Operating Standards and program requirements. The school's chief administrator and/or a member of the governing authority must sign attesting to compliance with said requirements.

7.4 Payments to Registered Schools

No private school may receive scholarship payments from parents until the chief administrator of the school registers the school with the Superintendent of Public Instruction.²³ To be eligible to participate in the Scholarship Program, each school must complete and submit an *Assurance of Compliance* form to the State Superintendent. The principal must sign the form to attest to the assurances listed. The forms are then forwarded to the State Superintendent for review and approval. The State Superintendent informs the CSTP Director of all approved schools by returning a copy of the *Assurance of Compliance* with the required signatures.

Before any payments may be authorized, the CSTP Director must ensure that each school has completed and submitted an *Assurance of Compliance* form to the program office. The CSTP office must have documentation on file that the school is properly registered with the State.

CSTP may identify safety hazards, curriculum issues, or other areas that pose concern and affect a school's ability to continue in the Scholarship Program. The CSTP Director will be informed of all findings and concerns that may affect a school's continued participation. When the CSTP Director is notified of a school's ineligibility status, efforts are to be made to move the scholarship students of the affected school to another participating school. Enrollment data is to be updated to reflect changes in enrollment status that may affect the tuition amounts to be paid, if any.

7.5 Parent/School Concerns

CSTP has formulated a parent/school concerns procedure as one way to safeguard stakeholder interests by mediating concerns and facilitating communication between program schools and parents/guardians. All stakeholders (i.e. parents/guardians, administrators) may initiate the process by completing CSTP's *Parent/School Concern Form*. CSTP will mediate in the following manner:

Minor Concerns – Upon receiving a concern form from the originating party, CSTP will contact the other party by telephone or mail, to obtain additional information. CSTP suggests ways to reconcile issues and document the outcome.

Major Concerns – Issues involving the health, safety or quality of education of a student may have serious or long-term consequences. Upon receipt of a concern form, CSTP will send written notification to the originating party. Additionally, the other party will be notified detailing the matters surrounding the concern. The notice requests additional information and seeks suggestions for solutions to the problem. CSTP will continue to facilitate communication between the parties until the matter is resolved. In cases where major concerns are not able to be resolved, they will be immediately reported to the Ohio Department of Education's Associate Superintendent for follow-up.

²³ Ohio Revised Code Section 3313.976(A)

Glossary

Awards – A process of randomly selecting scholarship winners by subset/pool from all complete applications received by the established deadline.

Background Check – A review performed by a contracted agency to verify that individuals qualify to work with children. Background checks are performed for individuals who apply to provide tutoring services. Statute Reference: Baker's Ohio School Law Guide, Section 7.05.1.

Contracted Agency – A company hired to conduct the criminal background checks that are required for each person applying to participate as a tutor in the Tutoring Program.

Date of Original Check – The date the background check was performed. This date identifies the time period for which the check is valid.

Disenrolled Student – A student who previously had a scholarship and attended an approved private, alternative school but has elected to discontinue participation in the Scholarship Program.

Enrolled Student – A student who has received a scholarship from the Cleveland Scholarship and Tutoring Program and has been accepted at an approved private, alternative school.

Household Income – The annual income of all individuals living in the same household.

Scholarship Winner – A student who has been chosen through the established selection process to receive a scholarship. Identification as a winner does not guarantee the child will be enrolled in the school of choice.

Low-Income Family – A family whose collective income is below the level established by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. This level has been established at 200 percent of the poverty levels established by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget, and revised by the Director of the Office of Community Services. Statute Reference: Ohio Revised Code Section 3313.974 (D).

Non-Tax Certificate – A teaching certificate for a non-tax supported school.

Parent – The residential parent as designated by the court, or either parent if a shared parenting agreement exists, or the legal custodian identified by court order. Statute Reference: Ohio Revised Code Section 3313.98.

Pools – Groupings sorted by eligible grade levels and established categories that identify the categories from which award winners will be pulled.

Poverty Level/Line – A minimum income level below which a person is considered to be without the basic material goods. The director of the U.S. Office of Management and Budget establishes the poverty level. Revisions are made annually by the Director of the Office of Community Services. Statute Reference: Ohio Revised Code Section 3313.98(A) (7).

Private Alternative School – A non-public school within the Cleveland Municipal Schools district that the State Superintendent of Public Instruction has identified as being eligible to participate in the Scholarship Program. Statute Reference: Ohio Revised Code Section 3313.974(G).

Ranking – Computer-generated random numbers assigned from the number one to the last student to establish an order for applicants in each designated pool. Ranking is performed after the scholarship awards are made for all applicants who were not scholarship winners.

Registered School – A private, alternative school that has applied for and been approved by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction as being eligible to participate in the Scholarship Program.

Scholarship – An award to cover the costs of a student's annual tuition. The award is not to exceed the lesser of the annual tuition, or 75 percent or 90 percent of the scholarship award, as determined by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

State Superintendent of Public Instruction – The individual appointed by the State of Ohio Board of Education to be the administrative officer of the board. The Superintendent administers educational matters placed under his/her management and control; carries out all educational policies, orders, directives and administrative functions of the board; and directs the work of all personnel employed in the department. Statute Reference: Ohio Revised Code Section 3301.11 and Baker's Ohio School Law Guide, Section 4.10.

Student Master File – A report obtained from Cleveland Municipal Schools' identifying all children enrolled in the school district in the grades requested by CSTP.

Transportation Reimbursement – Reimbursement of travel costs established by the CMSD for those parents/guardians deemed eligible by CMSD. To be eligible, the students must not have been assigned transportation and the student and parents/guardians must live at least two miles away from the school of enrollment.

Tutoring Site – A Tutoring Program established in a public school, church, community site, or other community-based service agency under the guidance of the Cleveland Scholarship and Tutoring Program.

Tutoring Assistance – Instructional services provided to a student outside the regular school hours by individuals approved by the State Superintendent.

Tutorial Assistance Grant – An award of 75 percent or 90 percent of the costs of tutoring sessions provided at a tutoring site to eligible students enrolled in Cleveland Municipal Schools.

Tutoring Site Supervisor – An individual designated at the tutoring site to coordinate the site's tutoring sessions. The individual is also responsible for identifying tutors and for notifying the CSTP office of all students attending the site.

Tutorial Program Year – The program operates on a yearly basis beginning in September and ending on August 31.

Verification – A process to determine whether students meet the specified criteria to participate in the Scholarship or Tutoring Program.

Walker – A student designated by the CMSD Transportation Department as ineligible to receive a transportation assignment.