

# Ohio's Scholarship Programs



Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2025



**Department of  
Education &  
Workforce**

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# Executive Summary

Ohio's five state-funded scholarship programs — Traditional EdChoice, EdChoice Expansion (income-based), Cleveland, Autism, and Jon Peterson Special Needs (JPSN) — collectively empowered the families of more than 175,000 students to select the educational setting that best met their children's needs during the 2024-2025 school year. Together, these programs demonstrate Ohio's commitment to expanding educational choice and providing families with high-quality alternatives to traditional public schools.

The **Traditional EdChoice Scholarship Program** served 42,607 students, awarded more than \$283 million in tuition support to students assigned to underperforming public schools.

The **EdChoice Expansion Program**, which bases eligibility on household income, experienced the most significant growth, serving 100,939 students and distributing nearly \$493 million in scholarships.

The **Cleveland Scholarship Program**, Ohio's longest-running choice initiative, supported 8,345 students within the Cleveland Metropolitan School District providing more than \$55 million in tuition assistance.

The **Autism Scholarship Program** provided 6,016 students with access to specialized services and educational settings tailored to their unique needs, with more than \$160 million in expenditures.

The **Jon Peterson Special Needs Scholarship Program** served 8,680 students across 494 school districts, with 530 approved providers delivering individualized services aligned with students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). Scholarship expenditures during the 2024-25 school year totaled approximately \$103 million.

Across all programs, Ohio partnered with more than 2,100 approved providers, including chartered nonpublic schools and private service organizations, to deliver high-quality instruction and support. These programs underscore Ohio's leadership in educational innovation and unwavering commitment to ensuring that every child, regardless of zip code, income, or learning needs, has access to a school that helps them achieve their potential.

# Traditional EdChoice Scholarship

## Program Summary

The Educational Choice (EdChoice) Scholarship Program was established by the Ohio General Assembly in 2005 to provide students from underperforming public schools with the opportunity to attend approved chartered nonpublic schools. The program provides state-funded scholarships that cover tuition costs for eligible students.

The Traditional EdChoice Scholarship Program is authorized under [Ohio Revised Code 3310.03](#) and [Ohio Administrative Code 3301-11](#).

The maximum scholarship award per student in grades K-8 was \$6,166, and it was \$8,408 for grades 9-12.

## Eligibility

The Traditional EdChoice Scholarship Program provides students who are entering kindergarten through 12th grade scholarship opportunities based on different eligibility criteria. The following students are eligible to apply for a Traditional EdChoice Scholarship:

- Students enrolled in and attending a district of residence-operated school that appears on the list of EdChoice eligible buildings
- Students enrolled in and attending community schools who would otherwise be assigned to EdChoice public school buildings
- Students enrolled in and attending public schools in their districts of residence who would be assigned to EdChoice public school buildings for the upcoming year
- Students enrolling in Ohio schools for the first time who would be assigned to EdChoice public school buildings
- Students whose sibling received a traditional EdChoice Scholarship in the preceding year
- Students entering grades K-12 who would be assigned to EdChoice public school buildings regardless of where they attended school the previous year
- Students who previously received an Autism or Jon Peterson Scholarship but no longer qualify because they no longer need special education services
- Students who are foster children
- Students who reside in a certified foster home
- Students placed with a guardian, legal custodian or in kinship care
- Students who reside in the same household as a student who was placed with a guardian, legal custodian or in kinship care for at least 45 consecutive days
- Students who reside in the household of another for at least 45 days and if not living there would have been homeless
- Students who reside in a household with a student who would have been homeless (see previous criteria) for at least 45 consecutive days

## DESIGNATED BUILDINGS

For the 2024-2025 school year, public schools were designated for the Traditional EdChoice Scholarship Program if they were:

- (1) Ranked in the lowest 20% in the Performance Index Rankings during the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years, and
- (2) Operated by a school district for which the average Title I formula percentage was 20% or above the last three school years (2021-2022, 2022-2023, and 2023-2024 school years).

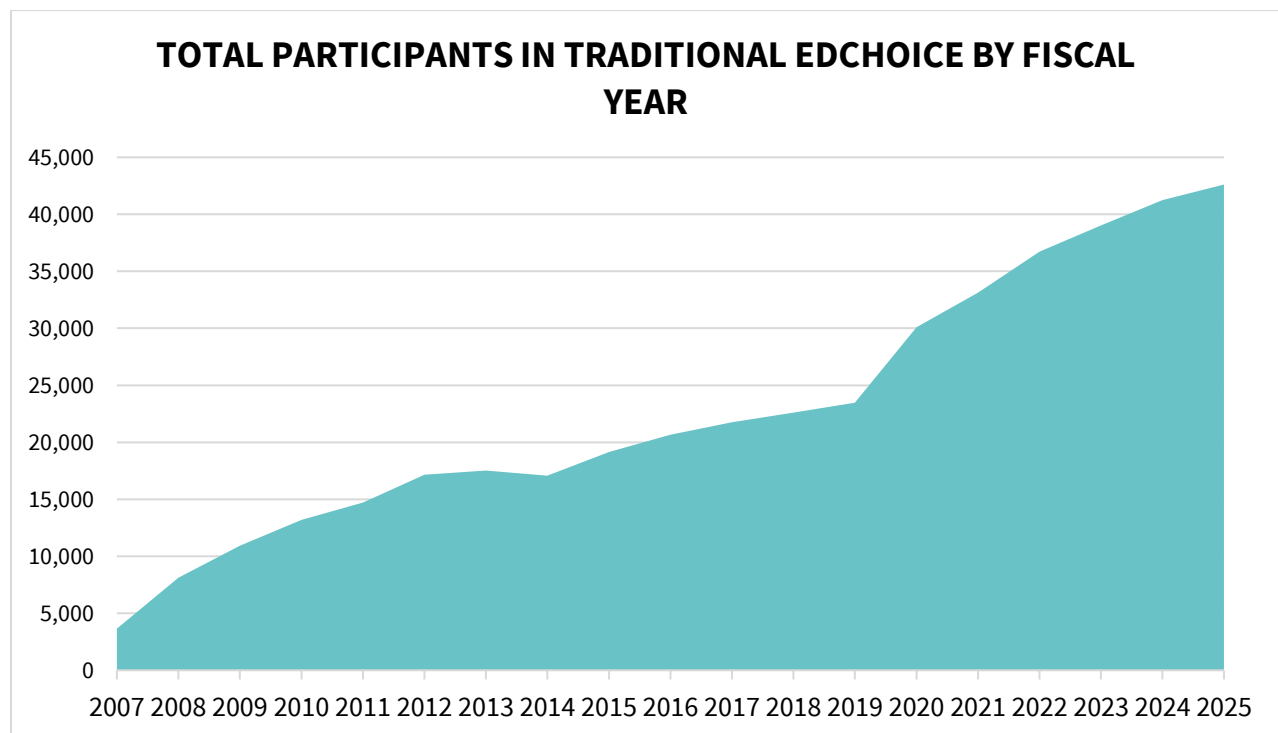
School buildings are also designated if they were operated by a school district that was under the oversight of an Academic Distress Commission.

Find the [list of designated buildings](#) on the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce's website.

## Program Participation and Expenditures

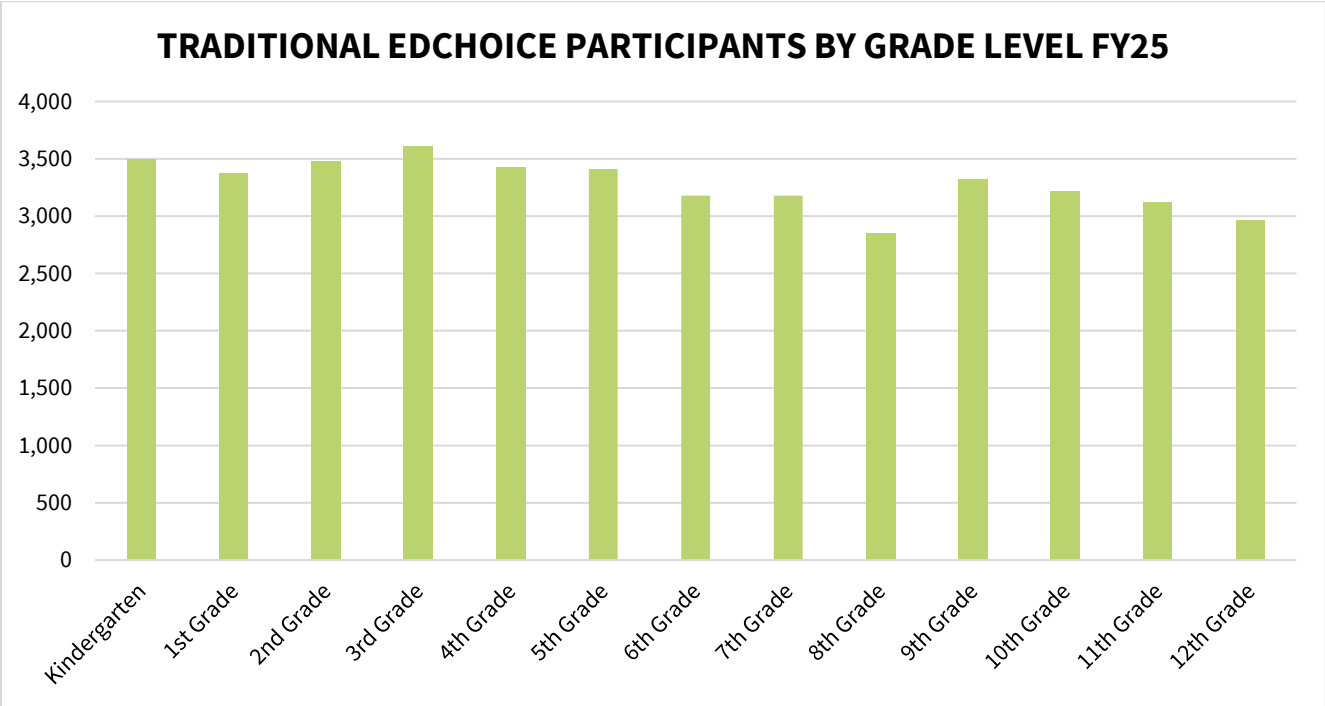
### 2024-2025 STUDENT PARTICIPATION

During the 2024-2025 school year, **42,607 students** utilized the Traditional EdChoice Scholarship Program. Participation in the EdChoice program has grown substantially since 2007, with the greatest increase beginning after 2020. Below is a display of student participants by fiscal year.



## STATEWIDE EXPENDITURES

During the 2024-2025 school year, the Traditional EdChoice Scholarship Program expenditures for tuition for eligible students totaled \$283,149,735.14. The average award per participant was \$6,808.75. Below is a display of participants by grade level.



## Traditional EdChoice Providers

Traditional EdChoice had 631 approved providers in the 2024-2025 school year. Organizations that are represented in the program only include chartered nonpublic schools. [A list of providers and their contact information](#) can be accessed on the Department’s website.

## SPOTLIGHT

### Bishop Watterson High School

Bishop Watterson High School, the largest co-educational Catholic high school in Columbus, Ohio, exemplifies the mission of the EdChoice Scholarship Program by delivering exceptional academic and character-based education to students in grades 9-12 across Franklin County. Since 1954, the school has prepared students to be engaged, service-minded citizens through a rigorous curriculum that includes 153 courses — 19 Advanced Placement and 12 honors — and a faculty where 70% hold advanced degrees. Recent graduating classes have earned tens of millions in college scholarships, with high rates of National Merit recognition and ACT excellence.

Beyond academics, students contribute more than 21,000 hours of community service annually and participate in award-winning arts and athletics programs, including four state championships in 2024-25. Bishop Watterson's success underscores the value of school choice in Ohio, offering families access to high-quality, values-driven education that supports both individual achievement and community enrichment.



# EdChoice (Income-Based) Expansion Scholarship

## Program Summary

Launched in 2013, the EdChoice Expansion Scholarship Program extends the benefits of school choice to families based on income rather than school performance. This income-based initiative allows eligible students from low- to moderate-income households to attend participating chartered nonpublic schools using state-funded scholarships.

The EdChoice Expansion Program is authorized under [Ohio Revised Code 3310.032](#) and [Ohio Administrative Code 3301-11](#).

The maximum scholarship award for students in grades K-8 was \$6,166, and it was \$8,408 for grades 9-12. Awards are adjusted on a sliding scale based on household income.

## Eligibility

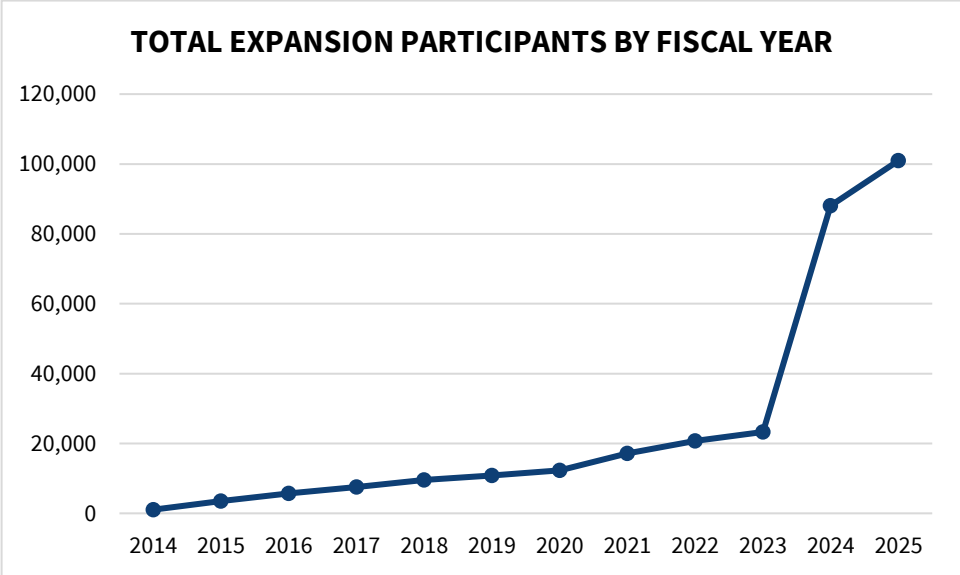
Eligibility is determined by household income relative to the federal poverty level. The program supports equitable access to nonpublic school settings by ensuring that financial limitations do not hinder access to quality education. Scholarships are renewable annually, contingent on continued eligibility and compliance with program requirements. If a family’s household income is at or below 450% of the Federal Poverty Level, they are awarded the maximum scholarship amount. If a family’s household income is at or above 451% of the Federal Poverty Level, the student’s scholarship award is prorated based on the chart below. All families, regardless of income, receive at least 10% of the maximum scholarship amount.

Federal Poverty Levels with Gross Annual Amounts								
Number in Family/ Household	200%	450%	500%	550%	600%	650%	700%	750%
1	\$30,120	\$67,770	\$75,300	\$82,830	\$90,360	\$97,890	\$105,420	\$112,950
2	\$40,880	\$91,980	\$102,200	\$112,420	\$122,640	\$132,860	\$143,080	\$153,300
3	\$51,640	\$116,190	\$129,100	\$142,010	\$154,920	\$167,830	\$180,740	\$193,650
4	\$62,400	\$140,400	\$156,000	\$171,600	\$187,200	\$202,800	\$218,400	\$234,000
5	\$73,160	\$164,610	\$182,900	\$201,190	\$219,480	\$237,770	\$256,060	\$274,350
6	\$83,920	\$188,820	\$209,800	\$230,780	\$251,760	\$272,740	\$293,720	\$314,700
7	\$94,680	\$213,030	\$236,700	\$260,370	\$284,040	\$307,710	\$331,380	\$355,050
8	\$105,440	\$237,240	\$263,600	\$289,960	\$316,320	\$342,680	\$369,040	\$395,400
For each additional person add:	\$10,760	\$24,210	\$26,900	\$29,590	\$32,280	\$34,970	\$37,660	\$40,350

# Program Participation and Expenditures

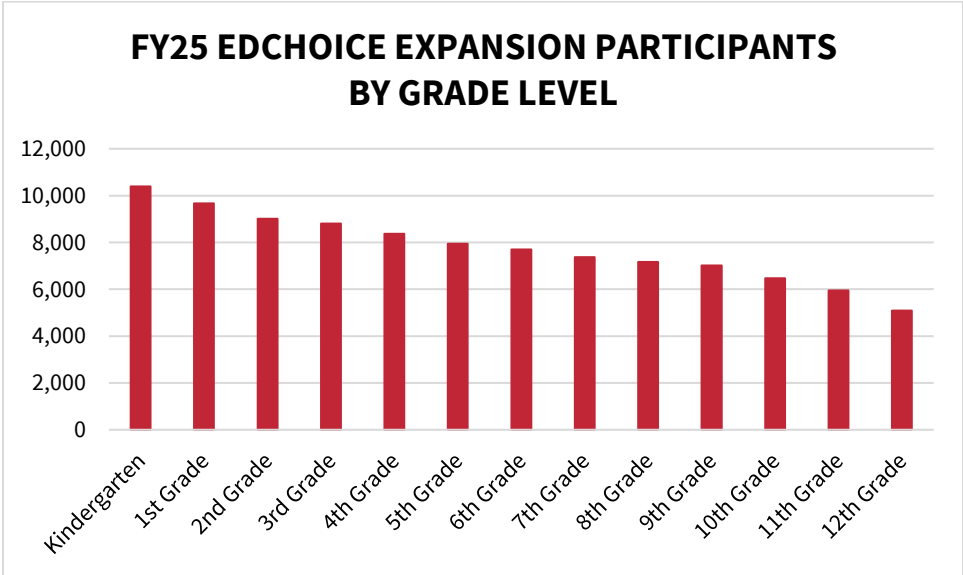
## 2024-2025 STUDENT PARTICIPATION

During the 2024-2025 school year, **100,939 students** utilized the EdChoice Expansion Scholarship Program. Participation in the EdChoice Expansion program has grown steadily since 2014, with the largest increase beginning in 2023 through adoption of House Bill 33 of the 135<sup>th</sup> General Assembly. Below is a chart illustrating participation per fiscal year.



## STATEWIDE EXPENDITURES

During the 2024-2025 school year, the EdChoice Expansion Scholarship Program expenditures totaled \$492,867,235.98. The average tuition awarded per participant was \$4,958.41. Below is a chart illustrating the number of participants by grade level.



## EdChoice Expansion Providers

The EdChoice Expansion Program had 631 approved providers in the 2024-2025 school year. Participating providers are limited to approved chartered nonpublic schools. [A list of providers and their contact information](#) is available on the Department's website.

# Cleveland Scholarship

## Program Summary

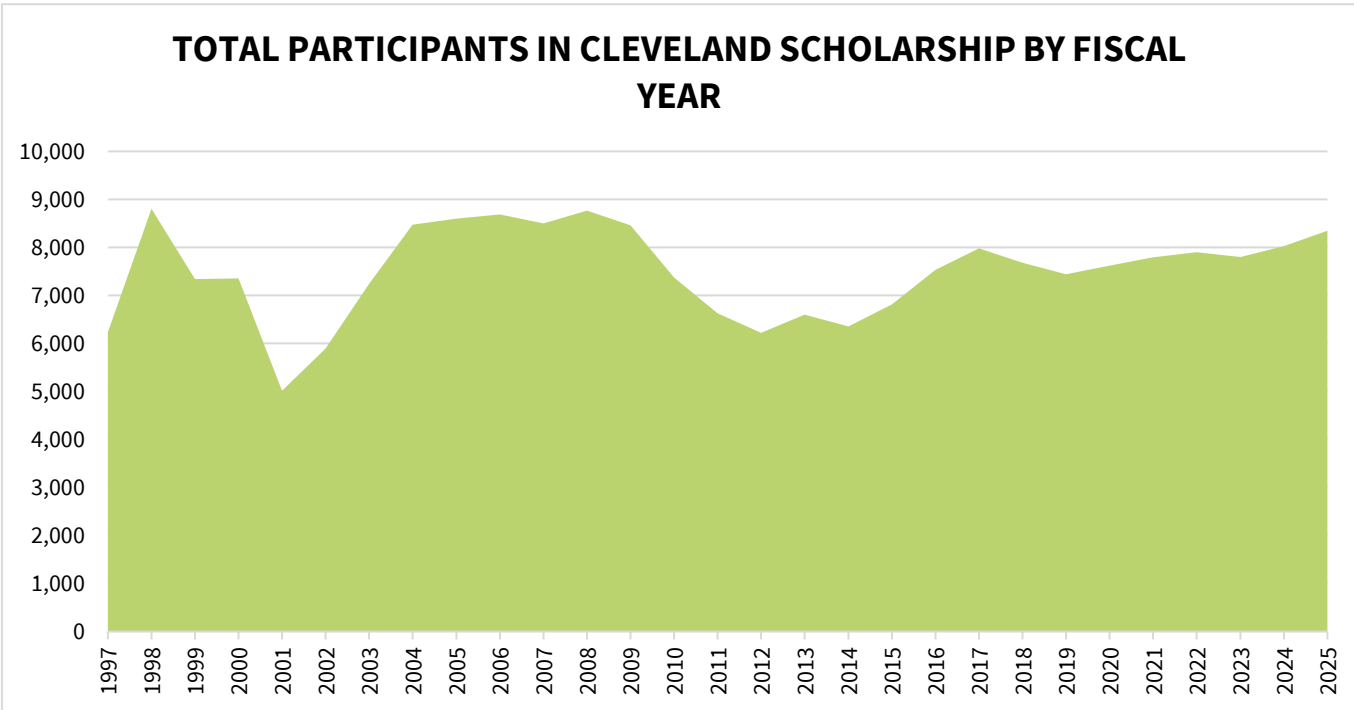
The Cleveland Scholarship Program was created in 1995 as a pilot initiative to provide students residing within the Cleveland Metropolitan School District with access to alternative educational opportunities. The program offers scholarships to attend participating chartered nonpublic schools, giving families greater flexibility to select the best educational setting for their children.

The Cleveland Scholarship Program is authorized under [Ohio Revised Code 3313.974–3313.979](#).

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2025, the maximum scholarship award per student in grades K-8 was \$6,166, and it was \$8,408 for grades 9-12.

## Eligibility

Students who currently reside in the Cleveland Municipal School District and will be in grades K-12 for the school year in which they plan to participate are eligible for this program. Cleveland Scholarship families who qualify for low-income status (at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines) and have a student in grades K-8 do not have to pay tuition that is not covered by the scholarship. Families with students in grades 9-12 are responsible for the tuition that is not covered by the scholarship. The scholarship can only be used to pay tuition. Parents and/or guardians may have to pay registration fees, material fees, and other similar types of fees.



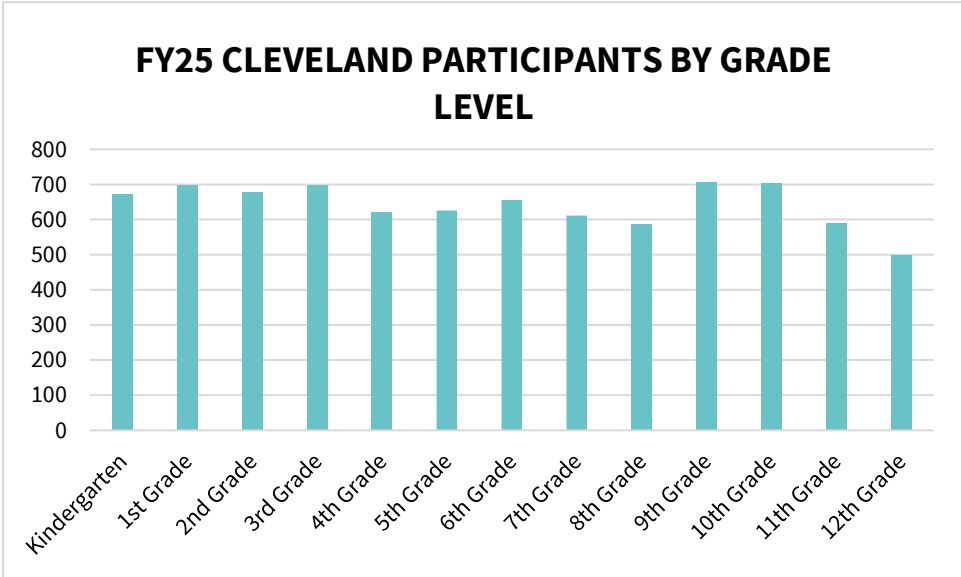
# Program Participation and Expenditures

## 2024-2025 STUDENT PARTICIPATION

During the 2024-2025 school year, **8,345 students** utilized the Cleveland Scholarship Program. Participation in the Cleveland program has mostly remained steady with slight growth over time.

## STATEWIDE EXPENDITURES

During the 2024-2025 school year, the Cleveland Scholarship Program expenditures totaled \$55,155,295.70. The average tuition awarded per participant was \$6,836.35. Below is a chart illustrating the number of participants by grade level.



## Cleveland Providers

The Cleveland program included 92 approved providers in the 2024-2025 school year. Only approved chartered nonpublic schools can participate in the program. [A list of providers and their contact information](#) is available on the Department’s website.

## SPOTLIGHT

### Padua Franciscan High School

Padua Franciscan High School, a Cleveland Scholarship provider, exemplifies the transformative impact of school choice by offering students a values-based, career-focused education rooted in the Franciscan tradition. Through its nationally recognized **MedTrack**® and **MyTrack**® programs, Padua prepares students for careers in health care, business, law, engineering, and the arts, blending rigorous academics with real-world exploration. In the 2024-2025 school year, 229 students completed 470 Advanced Placement exams with a 74% passage rate, and 82% of students earned Honor Roll distinction.

The school's commitment to service is equally strong, with students contributing more than 16,000 volunteer hours in 2024-25 and earning the Cleveland Food Bank's Volunteer Group of the Year award. Signature initiatives like **Christmas For Others**, the largest student-run fundraiser in Northeast Ohio, reflect Padua's deep community engagement. With a mission to form compassionate, capable leaders, Padua Franciscan stands as a model of excellence and opportunity within Ohio's scholarship landscape.



# Autism Scholarship

## Program Summary

Established in 2003, the Autism Scholarship Program provides funding for children ages 3 through 21 who have been diagnosed as on the autism spectrum and have an IEP from their public school district or a private diagnosis of autism from a physician or licensed psychologist. The program allows parents to use scholarship funds to access specialized services and educational settings tailored to their child's unique needs.

Families may choose from a range of approved providers, including chartered nonpublic schools and private service organizations. The program supports individualized learning and therapeutic interventions, helping students with autism reach their full potential.

The Autism Scholarship Program is authorized under [Ohio Revised Code 3310.41](#) and [Ohio Administrative Code 3301-103](#).

The maximum scholarship award per student was \$32,455 in FY 2025.

## Eligibility

A student may qualify for the Autism Scholarship Program if they meet at least one of the following criteria:

- 1) The student has been identified by their district as a child with autism and the district has created an IEP for the student. The student must have a current IEP from the district of residence that is finalized and all parties, including the parent, must be in agreement with the IEP.
- 2) The student receives a private diagnosis of autism and reflects this in their IEP or in an autism education plan (AEP) developed by the district of residence.

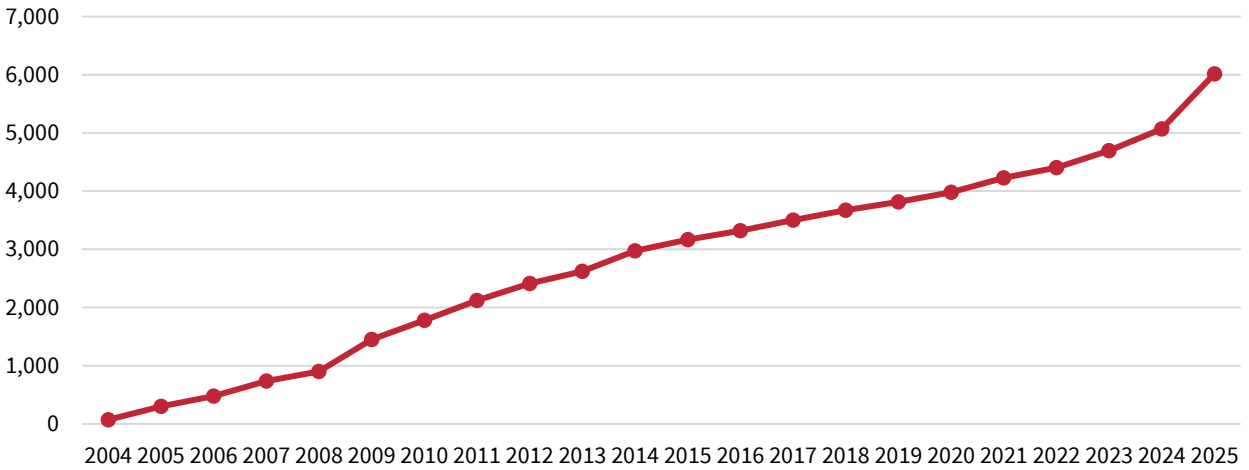
A child is eligible to apply to participate in the program when the child turns three.

## Program Participation and Expenditures

### 2024-2025 STUDENT PARTICIPATION

During the 2024-2025 school year, **6,016 students** utilized the Autism Scholarship Program. Participation in the program has grown steadily over time.

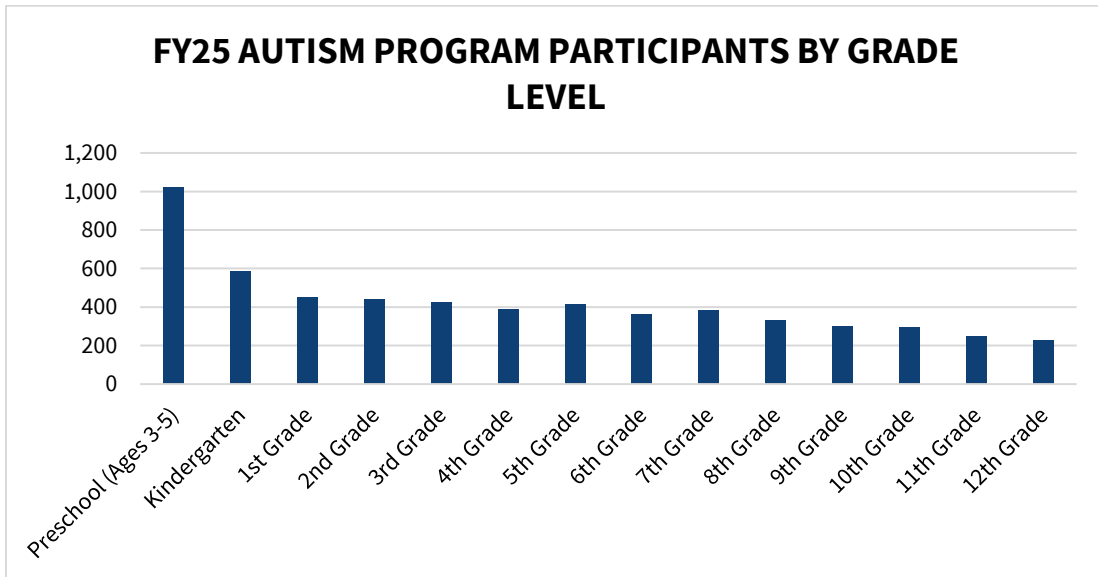
## TOTAL PARTICIPANTS IN AUTISM SCHOLARSHIP BY FISCAL YEAR



## STATEWIDE EXPENDITURES

During the 2024-2025 school year, the Autism Scholarship Program expenditures totaled \$160,018,883.30. The average tuition awarded per participant was \$26,598.88. Below is a chart illustrating the number of participants by grade level.

## FY25 AUTISM PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS BY GRADE LEVEL



## Autism Providers

The program had 361 approved providers during the 2024-2025 school year. Organizations that are represented in the program include both chartered nonpublic schools and private providers. [A list of providers and their contact information](#) is available on the Department’s website.

## SPOTLIGHT

### Flying Trees Academy

Flying Trees Academy, an Autism Scholarship provider located in Youngstown, Ohio, is redefining what it means to prepare students for the future. Founded by developmental psychologist Dr. Jaelyn Farris, the school blends evidence-based instruction with a deep commitment to personal growth, creativity, and community engagement.

Through a unique blended learning model, students engage in real-world, project-based experiences that connect classroom learning to their families and communities. This approach fosters critical thinking, adaptability, and confidence — skills essential for success in college and beyond. Flying Trees Academy’s mission to help students “develop their roots and wings” aligns closely with Ohio’s vision for educational choice, ensuring that every child has access to a learning environment where they can thrive academically and personally.



# Jon Peterson Special Needs Scholarship

## Program Summary

Named for former Ohio State Representative and special education advocate Jon Peterson, the Jon Peterson Special Needs (JPSN) Scholarship was created in 2012 by the Ohio General Assembly. The program awards scholarships to parents of eligible children in kindergarten through grade 12 who have been identified as having a specific disability. Students are evaluated, an Evaluation Team Report (ETR) is created, and an IEP is developed, which details the required special education and/or related services for the student.

This scholarship allows a parent to choose the school or educational setting that best meets their child's needs. Parents may select from several types of approved program providers. Children may attend a chartered nonpublic school, receive services from a private business or organization, or attend a public district that is not their public school district of residence. Once eligible students are awarded a scholarship, they must meet the assessment requirements per their grade level to renew the scholarship annually.

The JPSN program is authorized under [Ohio Revised Code 3310.51](#) and [Ohio Administrative Code 3301-101](#).

## Scholarship Award Categories

The Jon Peterson Special Needs Scholarship provides students with scholarships based on each student's disability category. Thirteen disability categories recognized by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) are organized into six funding levels. Maximum funding levels for each category of disability and calculations are included in [Section 3317.022](#) of the Ohio Revised Code. Scholarship funds may be used for tuition or related support services.

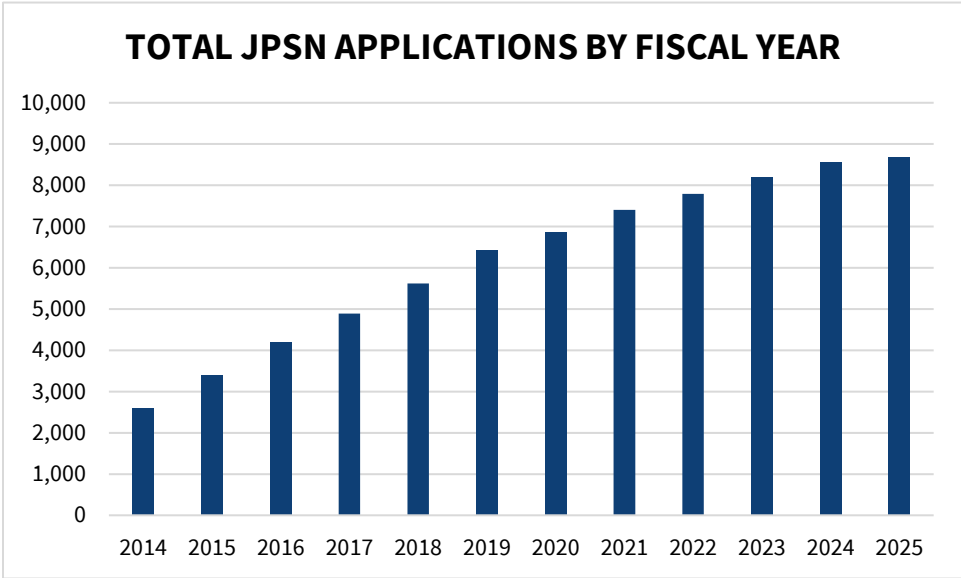
### FY 2025 (JULY 1, 2024-JUNE 30, 2025)

#	Category Name	Maximum Dollar Amount per Year
1	Speech or Language Impairment*	\$9,585
2	Specific Learning Disability, Intellectual Disability, or OHI-minor	\$12,470
3	Hearing Impaired or Emotional Disturbance	\$19,150
4	Vision Impaired or OHI-major	\$22,977
5	Orthopedic Impairment or Multi-Handicapped	\$28,387
6	Autism, Traumatic Brain Injury, or Hearing and Vision Impaired	\$32,445

\*Category 1 (Speech or Language Impairment) students may only utilize their scholarship to pay for related and therapy services.

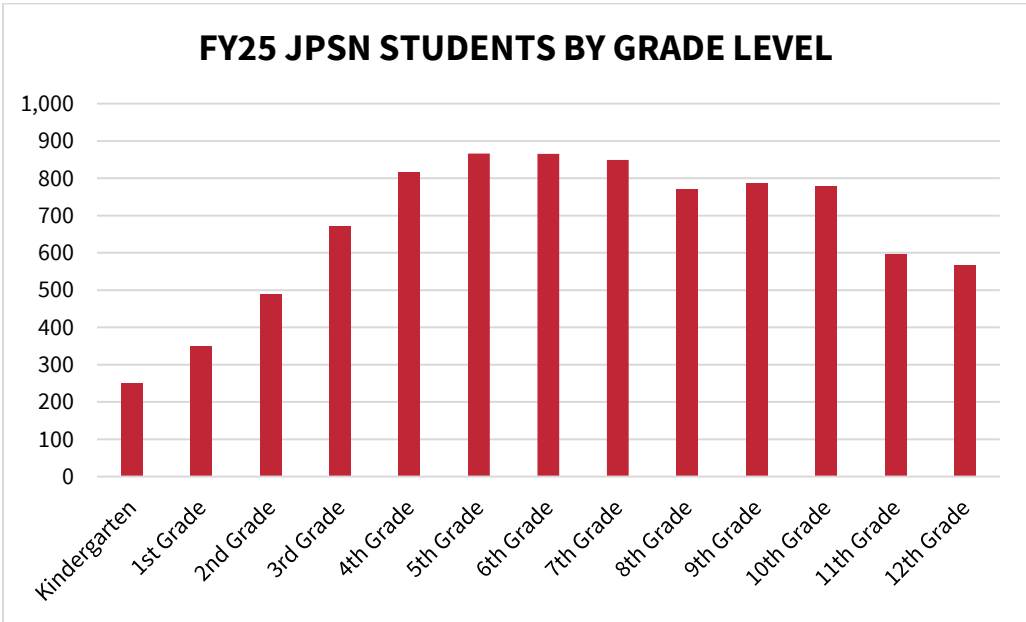
# Program Participation and Expenditures

Participation in the Jon Peterson Special Needs Scholarship Program has grown in recent years, with the number of applications received for the program steadily increasing over the most recent 10-year period.

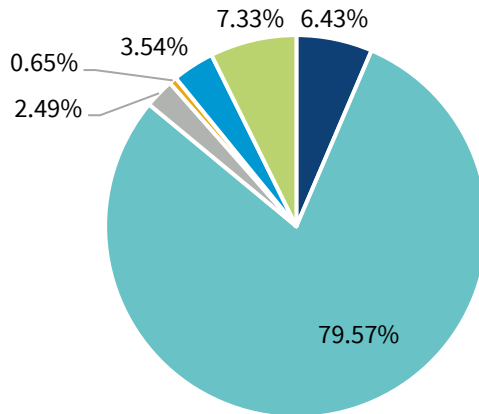


## 2024-2025 STUDENT PARTICIPATION

During the 2024-2025 school year, **8,680 students** received services from 530 approved providers through the Jon Peterson Special Needs Scholarship Program. Below are displays of student participation by grade level and students per disability category.



### PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS PER DISABILITY CATEGORY

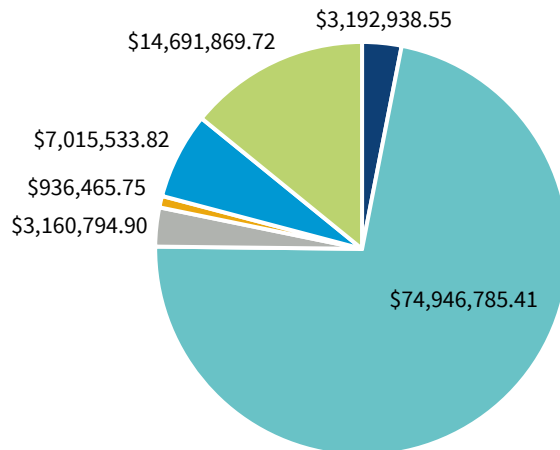


- JPSN Category 1 ■ JPSN Category 2 ■ JPSN Category 3
- JPSN Category 4 ■ JPSN Category 5 ■ JPSN Category 6

#### DISTRICT OF RESIDENCE

Students enrolled in the JPSN Scholarship Program during the 2024-2025 school year represented 494 school districts, covering over 80% of Ohio’s school districts. A breakdown of students per school district utilizing JPSN is available [here](#).

### FY 2025 FUNDS SPENT PER DISABILITY CATEGORY



- JPSN Category 1 ■ JPSN Category 2 ■ JPSN Category 3
- JPSN Category 4 ■ JPSN Category 5 ■ JPSN Category 6

## Jon Peterson Special Needs Program Providers

The JPSN program had 530 approved providers in the 2024-2025 school year. Organizations that are represented in the program include chartered nonpublic schools and private providers. [A list of providers and their contact information](#) is available on the Department's website.

The number of students providers serve in a given school year varies. View the [breakdown of how many scholarship recipients](#) each provider worked with in the 2024-2025 school year.

## SPOTLIGHT

### Schaefer Education Solutions

Schaefer Education Solutions, based in southwest Ohio, is a dedicated provider of both the Autism and Jon Peterson Special Needs Scholarships, offering individualized, student-centered services to children with diverse learning needs. Founded in 2011 by Leyane Schaefer, whose personal experience as a parent of a child with profound autism inspired the agency, Schaefer has grown into a trusted partner for families seeking flexible, high-quality educational support. Services include intervention, speech-language and occupational therapy, ABA and music therapy, mental health counseling, and social skills groups, delivered in 1:1 settings across homes, private schools, co-ops, and virtual platforms.

With a strong emphasis on collaboration, Schaefer works closely with homeschooling families and private schools throughout Greater Cincinnati and Dayton to implement IEP goals. The agency's upcoming expansion into a new facility in Mason (projected for fall 2026) reflects its continued growth and commitment to meeting the needs of Ohio families through the state's school choice programs.

