

# Pursuing the Jon Peterson Scholarship as Ohio Homeschoolers - a Primer

As a homeschooler who is using the Jon Peterson Scholarship, you'll want to be educated on Ohio Homeschooling regulations, as well as IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Act). You need to be familiar with both, because you'll have one foot in the homeschool world, and you'll have one foot in the special education world.

This document will lead you step by step through the entire notification JP process and includes links you can use. We are happy to help answer any questions you have, but please FIRST start here!

*Please note, this information should not be taken as legal advice; we encourage everyone to become personally familiar with the applicable regulations.*

Here is the link to the Ohio Revised Code which governs the Jon Peterson Scholarship: <https://codes.ohio.gov/ohio-revised-code/section-3310.52>

## Quick, Step by Step Instructions to Apply for the JPS:

Start by reading through this Quick Step section, and then see the following section for more details about each step.

1. Notify to homeschool. Follow the steps outlined by Ohio Homeschooling Parents ([OhioHomeschoolingParents.com](http://OhioHomeschoolingParents.com)) to make sure you have notified properly and used law- aligned forms. Do not use school-provided forms for homeschooling notification.
2. Secure the documentation required (an ETR/IEP) from your district of residence. (If this is already established, go to #3.)
3. Research possible JP providers.
4. Contact providers and ask questions to determine if their program is right for your child.
5. Your JP provider will send an application form and ask for proof of address.
6. Receive your funding award and set up your services schedule with your provider!

7. Keep legal documents such as the IEP/ETR current to continue with the JP Scholarship.
8. Attend state testing in the spring, which should be proctored by your JP provider. This does NOT take the place of your homeschooling annual assessment – you must do both if the student is 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and up.
9. Choose and complete an annual homeschooling assessment and send that in with your next (annual) notification of intent to homeschool.
10. Notify your local district superintendent of your continued intent to homeschool (and include your completed homeschooling assessment) in June.
11. Work with your JP provider to renew your JP scholarship for the next school year!

### Detailed Step-by-Step Information to Apply for the JPS:

#### **1. Notify to homeschool**

Notification to homeschool details are found here:

<https://ohiohomeschoolingparents.com/the-primer>

The step by step information here includes examples to follow and strictly law-aligned forms. Do not use school-provided forms for homeschooling notification as they are usually not accurate.

Those who are notifying mid-year can also apply for the Jon Peterson Scholarship at the same time, but the Scholarship will not be approved until the district office has received your complete notification and marked the student as “homeschooled”.

#### **2. Secure the documentation required (and ETR/IEP) from your district of residence. (If an ETR/IEP is already established, go to #3.)**

Those who are removing a child from school, who already has an active IEP from public school, will have the IEP already in place and it will remain active -- IF the child is awarded a scholarship. A new IEP does NOT need to be written.

If no ETR/IEP is currently established, the homeschool parent will email the school of residence to formally request an evaluation. The best contacts at your local school district are the special education coordinator, or the school psychologist. These can usually be found on your local district's website, under Departments, Pupil Services, or Special Education.

You must formally request in writing (email is acceptable as "in writing") for a comprehensive Evaluation Team Report (ETR). The results of that evaluation will determine if the student qualifies for special education services such as the Jon Peterson Scholarship.

In this request you'd state your reasons why you believe your child would qualify, much in the same way you'd build a case for your student to receive any type of scholarship. A case must be built to show eligibility for the funding. If you have a diagnosis or additional testing on the student, it is helpful to bring or share documentation. The school has 60 days to conduct testing and write the team report if the student is eligible. After that, the district has 30 days to write the IEP. More details (including a sample email you can use) on this topic can found on the [Ohio Homeschooling and JP Scholarship Q and A document](#).

Some school districts will resist testing a homeschooled student, so it's wise to know your rights and kindly inform the district that it IS required by law (IDEA) that they provide testing in the form of an ETR. In some instances, the district resists testing because time and resources are used on students who do not attend the district, but your district should treat you in a kind and professional manner. Testing will include evaluations in different areas of development by more than on staff member to determine eligibility. Your school district is responsible for the testing and the composition of the IEP. Your school district is NOT responsible for providing services for homeschooled children.

The following linked website outlines your rights as a parent of a child who has special learning needs: <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/>

Detailed information on what steps to take if your district is refusing to respond is also available on the [Q and A document](#).

### **3. Research available Providers**

All providers are listed and can be search by county here:

<https://scholarship.ode.state.oh.us/Provider>

After going to the above page, click on “Provider Search Page” to expand the search box, and select your county from the County drop-down list. You can also change the default number of results to show. Then click the Search button.

Neighboring counties can also be searched, as most providers provide services in the surrounding counties of their main office.

### **4. Contact a provider to determine if their program is right for your child**

Each Jon Peterson provider is a privately-owned business. Therefore, there will be differences in services, location, and hours available. Some providers focus on intensive therapies such as occupational therapy, physical therapy, and speech and language therapy, while others focus on academic goals such as reading and math intervention. In addition, some have “in-person” services, “in the home” services, and online services. Some provide a combination of these.

It’s important to ask good questions to make sure you are clear on the process, and that the provider is the best fit for your child!

#### **Questions to ask providers:**

- Which special education services do you offer? Services can include Intervention Specialist (a teacher specifically for students with special needs), any Reading specialists, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Speech and Language therapists.
- Where is your location?
- Do you offer online tutoring?
- Do you have any other important policies to be aware of?

- Are there any additional fees that the scholarship will not cover?

## **5. Your JP provider will send an application form and ask for proof of address**

The application contains the information the provider needs to start the scholarship process. Be sure to sign and date the second page, and include the correct name of your provider. There is a document on this group that lists acceptable documents to use for the proof of address called “Acceptable Forms of Address Proof”.

It is linked here:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2954840698178803/posts/2959148234414716/>

## **6. Receive your funding award and set up your services schedule with your provider**

Your chosen JP provider will help you set up services based on your funding level. There is a document on the group (“FY <YEAR> JPSN Category Award Amounts”) that lists the amounts awarded per the disability category that is listed on your ETR/IEP. The amounts listed on that document are for the full scholarship and funding is pro-rated as the school year moves forward.

It is linked here:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2954840698178803/posts/3043925772603628/>

Please be a courteous JP family to your provider. He or she wants to see your child get the services they need to be successful in reaching the outlined goals, but they need you as the parent to provide paperwork in a timely matter, and to know and follow the policies for their business so that tutoring or therapy services can run as smoothly as possible.

## **7. Keep legal documents such as the IEP/ETR current to continue with the JP Scholarship**

Your district of residence is responsible for updating the IEP document and testing. An IEP renews one time per year, and the ETR renews every three years. If you have a JP provider who has been providing special education services prior to the IEP's expiration date, it is common practice for the provider to send the present level of functioning and suggested goals to you and to the person of contact at your school district.

This information is provided to update the paperwork. Most schools copy/paste this information onto the updated paperwork. Other schools will request that you, as the homeschool parent, provide additional information.

It is not mandatory that the JP provider attend IEP meetings.

## **8. Attend state testing in the spring to continue the following year**

All Jon Peterson Scholarship recipients 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and older, due to being soft-enrolled in the district, must attend State testing in the spring. If the student does not participate in the required state testing, they will not be awarded the scholarship the following school year. Providers are required to offer the state testing. It is important to note that there is no mandated minimum score, and the testing result in no way affects your home education rights. The only requirement is that the JP student sits and attempts the test, to the best of their ability. If you have more questions about this, your provider would be the best place to ask, as providers also vary in this area. State testing is a requirement to continue with the JP scholarship the subsequent year.

This state testing is NOT the same thing as the homeschooling annual assessment and doesn't take the place of the annual homeschooling assessment. You must do both (because again, you have one foot in each world).

**9. Choose and complete an annual homeschooling assessment**

Annual homeschooling assessment is not included in Jon Peterson funding so the parent must choose and pay for this annual assessment just as every homeschooler in Ohio must do. For more information on homeschooling annual assessment options, see the Ohio Homeschooling Parents website's FAQ page questions #7, #10, and #14, linked here:

<https://ohiohomeschoolingparents.com/ohio-fags>

The homeschooling assessment of your choosing is included with your next notification of intent to homeschool.

**10. If you wish to continue JP services for the next school year, send in your completed annual homeschooling assessment with your next ("subsequent") notification to homeschool in June**

Typically, it is recommended to send in a notification of intent to homeschool (along with your completed assessment) in the first two weeks of August each year. This is the recommendation you will read most places, including Ohio Homeschooling Parents! This is usually the best practice for the reasons mentioned by OHP; however, for JP students, it's best to notify as early as possible in June so that all homeschool paperwork is received and the student is marked as a homeschooled student in the system and the funding application can begin. At the very latest, have your notification sent by June 30, but earlier is better.

**11. To continue services, fill out a new application and send a recent proof of residence for the next fiscal year**

Your Provider should help you complete the process of renewing your scholarship and services. You will need to fill out a new application and send a recent proof of residence (see step 5 above) for the provider to use for the next fiscal year, which runs from July 1 to June 30.