



## NEW JERSEY ASSOCIATION OF **SPECIAL EDUCATION PARTNER SCHOOLS**

### **The *Connections for Success* Scholarship**

The goal of the Connections for Success scholarship is to provide financial support and recognize students with disabilities graduating from an NJASEPS member school as they pursue post-secondary education, training, or other opportunities. The scholarship criteria aim to foster continued education and training, promote increased independence and goal-setting, and support community integration through the use of local resources.

#### **The scholarship will:**

- Provide direct financial support to students with disabilities, enabling them to pursue postsecondary education, training, or other career-advancing opportunities.
- Encourage students and their families to identify local, community-based resources that will support the student's success beyond graduation.
- Assist students leaving NJASEPS schools in pursuing opportunities in the least restrictive environment.
- Promote goal-setting and future planning for students with disabilities.
- Encourage goal setting and planning for the future.

#### **Eligibility Criteria**

- NJASEPS members may submit one application per eligible campus. For example, if a school operates two campuses, each with students graduating in 2025, they may submit two applications (one from each campus).
- The student must be currently enrolled in an NJASEPS member school and scheduled to graduate within the current school year.
- The student or designee must demonstrate that the funds will be used for post-secondary education, internships, apprenticeships, or vocational training programs. This may include, but is not limited to, programs in art, recreation, music, 2- or 4-year colleges, trade/vocational schools, or adult day programs. Funds may also be used for related transportation costs.
- The student or designee must provide proof of acceptance into a post-secondary program or commitment to an internship, externship, or mentoring opportunity.



## NEW JERSEY ASSOCIATION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PARTNER SCHOOLS

- The student or designee must show consideration for any disability-related accommodations, supports, or services required for success in their post-secondary pursuits, and outline how these needs will be addressed.
- If applicable, the student or designee must specify any assistive technology needs (e.g., environmental control units, augmentative communication devices, or computer modifications).
- The student or designee must identify community-based resources (e.g., mentors, volunteer opportunities, libraries, clubs, or civic activities) that can help achieve their post-secondary goals.
- **The student must submit at least two letters of support, one of which must be from an administrator of an NJASEPS member school.**

### Examples:

- **A student planning to pursue animal care training** could volunteer at a local veterinarian's office, pet grooming shop, or offer dog walking and pet-sitting services. This could help build relevant experience for post-secondary education or vocational training in animal care.
- **A student aspiring to become a writer** might volunteer at a local library, read to children or seniors, or seek an internship at a local newspaper or publishing company to gain practical experience.
- **A student intending to pursue landscaping** could volunteer with local government or schools to assist with grounds or park maintenance, or seek an internship or mentoring opportunity with a local landscaping company.
- **A student pursuing a 4-year degree in Ecology** might volunteer at a local watershed, participate in environmental conservation activities, or lead children's environmental programs at a local park to gain field experience relevant to their future degree.
- **A student interested in coaching gymnastics or teaching karate** could use scholarship funds to pay for advanced training or certifications in gymnastics or karate, gaining the skills necessary to pursue a career in coaching or instruction.

### Selection Criteria

Initial screening will be completed by NJASEPS staff.



## NEW JERSEY ASSOCIATION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PARTNER SCHOOLS

Applications will be reviewed by a 5-member committee comprised of: various staff members from NJASEPS member schools.

*Applications will be reviewed for:*

- Completeness
- Eligibility criteria
- Appropriate use of funds
- Compatibility with the goals of the scholarship

*Consideration will be given to:*

- Student achievements and accomplishments
- Student goals and the appropriateness of post-secondary program in meeting those goals
- Community supports identified by the student as resources

### **Distribution and Use of Funds**

Funds can be used to support the student's post-secondary goals as they relate to education, training or vocational opportunities.

Appropriate use of scholarship funds includes but is not limited to:

- Tuition or course work payments
- Transportation costs (where none is otherwise available)
- Tutoring services (when appropriate)
- Stipends for unpaid internships
- Assistive technology

**Disclaimer: Funds cannot be used to pay for services or supports that otherwise would be provided at no cost, or to release any individual, company (public or private), state agency or organization from fiscal responsibility to provide accommodations or supports otherwise required by law.**

Up to 10 scholarships will be awarded this year, in the amount of up to \$1,000 per student.

**Application must be submitted online by March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2026.**

[Online Application](#)