![Minnesota Department of Education logo] **DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

Pathway II Implementation Checklist: School-Based and Head Start

The purpose of this document is to provide high-level guidance to help public education programs that have been awarded with Early Learning Scholarships – Pathway II funding keep on track with awarding scholarships to children and managing allocated dollars. View the Pathway II Program Resources webpage for more detailed supports such as recorded webinars, forms and letters, and guidance documents. View the Early Learning Scholarships homepage for the most current version of the *State Early Learning Scholarships Manual.* View the Early Learning Scholarship Administration System (ELSA) homepage to log into ELSA and view the current *ELSA User Manual*.

Ongoing

☐ Ensure your Parent Aware rating is current.

- Accelerated Pathway to Rating: Within eight weeks of your Parent Aware rating expiration date, you must submit an application found on the Parent Aware website. View re-rating resources on the Pathway II resources webpage.
- Automatic Pathway (Head Start and Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK)): Your program will complete the re-rating process as part of the annual Head Start/VPK application process. MDE will provide details at the time of the application.
- Contact ParentAware.MDE@state.mn.us with questions about your rating.

☐ Ensure scholarship documents are maintained for seven years. Scholarship records contain private data, so must be securely maintained.

- This includes applications, renewal forms, proof of eligibility, attendance, award letters, justification of award amount and payment requests, and any approvals from the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE).

☐ Ensure revenue and expenses are coded in the Uniform Financial Accounting and Report Standards (UFARS) system appropriately. Contact MDE.UFARS-accounting@state.mn.us with questions.

- Code all revenues and expenditures in UFARS using finance code 337. At the end of each fiscal year, zero out your budget by making sure revenues equal expenditures.

☐ As requested by MDE, participate in the Early Learning Scholarships Program monitoring process.

Every Month

☐ Applications (step-by-step directions below)

- As needed, have families complete *Early Learning Scholarship – Pathway II Application.*
- For every newly awarded scholarship, send the *Pathway II Award Letter for Families.*

☐ Renewals (step-by-step directions below)

- As needed, have families complete *Early Learning Scholarship – Pathway II Renewal Form*. Send the form to renewing families at least 90 days before their renewal date with the *Pathway II Notice to Renew Letter for Families.*

- For each Renewal Form received, mark the "Renewal Form complete" box in the child's ELSA scholarship record prior to the renewal date.
- For every renewed scholarship, send the *Pathway II Award Letter for Families.*
- Ensure return mailing address is clear to families on applications and renewals.

☐ Enter new fiscal year awards into ELSA. Award amounts must be set based on the child's annual instructional hours or an MDE approved cost per child. If awarding based on hours (recommended), set awards at the following amounts:

- 850 or more hours at $8,500 per scholarship
- 510-849 hours at $6,000 per scholarship
- 101-509 hours at $4,000 per scholarship
- 100 or fewer hours at $2,000 per scholarship

☐ Use the Awards by Allocation Detail page in ELSA to manage awards and check that cancelled/inactive children have an award balance of $0 (step-by-step directions below).

☐ Request payment for services delivered the previous month. Check payment history on your child awards to make sure you fully billed for the previous three months, too.

☐ As children are screened, update ELSA to reflect that they've met the Early Childhood Screening requirement.

☐ Track attendance and record monthly when requesting payment.

July

☐ Access to the next fiscal year's scholarship dollars. Programs can begin awarding children on July 1 and must award 100 percent of funds by October 15.

☐ View the Pathway II implementation webinar series for school-based and Head Start programs on the [Pathway II Program Resources webpage.](#)

☐ Determine the award amount for each child based on their annual instructional hours or MDE-approved cost per child.

☐ Determine monthly amount of funds to request for payment; programs should take the child's award amount and divide it by the number of months they are serving the child.

☐ Ensure staff have appropriate roles in ELSA: Scholarship Administrator or Payment Approver. View the [MDE Data Submissions webpage](#) for instructions to assign ELSA roles in the Education Identity and Access Management (EDIAM) Security System.
Note: *At least one person in each role for each Pathway II-funded organization; dual roles not permitted.*

August and September

☐ As needed, continue to award children for the current fiscal year until 100 percent of funds are awarded by October 15.

☐ Ensure staff have appropriate roles in ELSA: Scholarship Administrator or Payment Approver.

October

☐ Confirm all fiscal year dollars have been awarded to children by **October 15**. If funds are not fully awarded, MDE will request a plan from your program and may need to reallocate those funds to another program.

☐ As needed, adjust awards for children based on whether they have left your program, have been identified for an Individualized Education Program (IEP), or are now covered by another funding stream.

November and December

- ☐ As needed, adjust awards for children based on whether they have left your program, have been identified for an IEP, or are now covered by another funding stream.

January

- ☐ Review the Pathway II Plan for Scholarship Use from your Application. If the way funds are used has changed, request an amendment with MDE by emailing MDE.PathwayII@state.mn.us.
- ☐ As needed, adjust awards for children based on whether they have left your program, have been identified for an IEP, or are now covered by another funding stream.
- ☐ Check to make sure that any cancelled awards have an Award Balance of $0.

  - See the "Using the Allocation Views in ELSA to Manage Awards" steps below to review all awards in the fiscal year.

- ☐ As needed, award new children to utilize available funds.
- ☐ Confirm all fiscal year dollars have been awarded to children.

February

- ☐ In odd years, complete the program application to receive Pathway II scholarship dollars from MDE.

March and April

- ☐ Begin to have families complete *Early Learning Scholarship – Pathway II Application* for the next fiscal year at open houses and enrollment opportunities.
- ☐ As needed, adjust awards for children based on whether they have left your program, have been identified for an IEP, or are now covered by another funding stream.
- ☐ As needed, award new children to utilize available funds.
- ☐ Confirm all fiscal year dollars have been awarded to children.

May

- ☐ As needed, adjust awards for children based on whether they have left your program, have been identified for an IEP, or are now covered by another funding stream.
- ☐ As needed, award new children to utilize available funds.
- ☐ Confirm all fiscal year dollars have been awarded to children.
- ☐ Confirm that the program is on track to award and spend 100 percent of the fiscal year dollars.
- ☐ Continue to have families complete the *Early Learning Scholarship – Pathway II Application* for the next fiscal year at open houses and enrollment opportunities.

June

- ☐ As needed, adjust awards for children based on whether they have left your program, have been identified for an IEP, or are now covered by another funding stream.
- ☐ As needed, award new children to utilize available funds.
- ☐ Confirm all fiscal year dollars have been awarded to children.
- ☐ Check to make sure that all children have an award balance of $0 and have fully expended their awards after you submit your final payment request for the year.

  - See the "Using the Allocation Views in ELSA to Manage Awards" steps below to review all awards in the fiscal year.

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Important Processes

View the "Applications and Letters" section of the [Pathway II Program Resources webpage](#) for copies of the *Pathway II Application, Pathway II Renewal Form, Award Letter to Families,* and *Notice to Renew Letter for Families.*

Processing a New Application

☐ Confirm the parent/guardian has completed all required fields.
☐ Confirm the parent/guardian has signed and dated the application.
☐ Confirm a program representative has signed and dated the application.
☐ Confirm the proof of eligibility is valid, dated within six months, or is valid at the time of the award (i.e., Free and Reduced-Price Lunch or Head Start).

- Option 1: Proof demonstrates current participation in the public assistance or publicly funded program.
- Option 2: Income documentation that proves the family qualifies by income and matches the information provided on the income page of the application.

☐ Create the award in ELSA:

- Search to determine whether this child already has a scholarship record. Only proceed if (a) the child has no record or (b) the child record match found is available to select for new awarding.
- Enter details exactly as they appear on the application (full legal names, date of birth, race, ethnicity, eligibility, optional consent, etc.).
- Assign the award date: The award date must be on or after the parent signature date and the date program staff completed verification of eligibility.
- **Note:** Detailed steps for creating an award in ELSA can be found in the "Quick Reference Steps for Scholarship/Area Administrators in ELSA" section of the [*ELSA User Manual*](#).

☐ Write the award date on the application.
☐ Send the *Pathway II Award Letter for Families*.
☐ Keep the application, attendance, eligibility documentation, award letter, and invoices (if applicable) on file for seven years.

Processing a Renewal Application

☐ Send the *Pathway II Notice to Renew Letter* and *Renewal Form* to families at least 90 days before their renewal date.
☐ Follow up with families as needed to make sure the signed *Renewal Form* is submitted prior to their renewal date.

- **Note:** Families do not need to submit eligibility documentation with the Renewal Form.

☐ Confirm the parent/guardian has completed all required fields, the parent/guardian has signed and dated the form, and the program representative has signed and dated the form.
☐ Once the completed *Renewal Form* is on file, mark the "Check if Renewal Form is complete" box in the child's ELSA record.
☐ Write the new award date on the form.
☐ Send the *Pathway II Award Letter for Families.*

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Using the Allocations Views in ELSA to Manage Awards

For additional information and more detailed guidance, view the "Funding in ELSA – Fiscal Year Allocations" section of the *Early Learning Scholarship Administration System (ELSA) User Manual* on the ELSA system homepage.

☐ 1) Follow the View Allocations link in the left-side menu. 2) Select the fiscal year and 3) click Submit. 4) Click your program name to open the Awards by Allocation Detail page and view the awards from the selected fiscal year.

Left-Side Menu	ELSA Allocations Page	Pathway II Allocation Section
FY 2024 Funds Allocation: $25,500.00 Awarded: $0.00 Available: $25,500.00 1 View Allocations	2 * Fiscal Year: 2024 ⌄ 3 Submit	**Program** A.C.G.C. PUBLIC SCHOOL 4 DISTRICT - PRE- KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

☐ **Cancelled awards:** Check that all *Cancelled* status awards have an Award Balance of $0.

- If there is a balance, request payment for any final services provided.
- Decrease the Award Amount to equal the Expended amount.
- The child's award should now have an Award Balance of $0.

☐ **Children have left your program:** Check that all awards in *Awarded* status are for children still attending your program. If a child has left your program, was identified for an IEP that covers all services, or is now wholly funded by another source, cancel the award.

- Request payment for any final services provided.
- Cancel the award.

  - Enter the last day of service as Award End Date
  - Decrease the Award Amount to equal the Expended amount.

- The child's award should now have an Award Balance of $0.

☐ **Payment requests are up-to-date:** Check that all awards in *Awarded* status have a "Last Paid Date" within the last 30 days or no more than 105 days, and that the Expended amount or Award Balance is what you expect it to be.

- Under Available Reports, use the Program Payment History Report to view prior payment requests.
- If you missed a payment request within the last 105 days, submit the request.
- If you missed a payment request farther back than 105 days, email MDE.ELSA@state.mn.us for guidance. Submission of late payment requests is subject to MDE approval.
- If no payment requests are needed because the child has left the program or is no longer receiving a scholarship, cancel the award as described in the section above.