

## **Welcome Scholarship Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Who qualifies for the Welcome Scholarship?**

Eligible applicants are incoming students for the 2015-16 school year who did not attend a Catholic school in the Diocese of Grand Rapids at any point during the 2014-15 school year and who do not currently have a sibling enrolled in a Catholic school in the diocese. To qualify, students (or their families) must be registered members at a parish in the Diocese of Grand Rapids.

### **Is there a deadline to apply?**

There is no formal deadline to apply. However, there are a limited amount of Welcome Scholarships available so we encourage you to complete an application as soon as you've decided to enroll. Awards are given on a first-come, first-serve basis.

### **Does receiving the Welcome Scholarship prevent my family from receiving additional scholarships?**

No, you may still be eligible for additional need- or merit-based scholarships. Visit [www.CatholicSchools4U.org](http://www.CatholicSchools4U.org) to learn more about the Bishop's Scholarship Fund, or contact your local school to see what additional scholarship options are available.

### **Is the Welcome Scholarship per student or per family?**

It is per student. Therefore, a family enrolling four children for the first time would potentially be eligible for four welcome scholarships if the students are enrolling in preschool through 11<sup>th</sup> grades.

If the new student has a sibling currently enrolled in one of our Catholic schools, then the new student is not eligible (e.g. a new kindergarten student who has an older sibling currently attending 2<sup>nd</sup> grade in one of our schools).

### **We have three children we are hoping to enroll in a Diocese of Grand Rapids Catholic school next year (for the first time). Are all children eligible, or only the eldest?**

All three children are eligible. However, please complete a separate form for each child. The Welcome Scholarship is a student-by-student award, not a family award.

### **I am a school staff member, volunteer, parent or supporter. How can I market or discuss this scholarship opportunity with a prospective family/student?**

We appreciate your willingness to spread the news about the Welcome Scholarship. It was created in the spirit of making Catholic school education accessible for all. While we do have a number of other need- and merit-based scholarships, the Welcome Scholarship targets area Catholic students who haven't had the benefit of experiencing (or perhaps have forgotten) the Catholic school difference.

You can certainly discuss the Welcome Scholarship along with the overall value and benefits of a Catholic school education. Furthermore, you can talk specifically about the academic excellence and faith-based community the school you support offers. However, you cannot use the Welcome Scholarship as a vehicle to encourage a student to transfer schools based on athletic programs or opportunities.

If you feel uncertain about the specific information you can (or cannot share), direct the prospective family to the school principal to ensure they receive the most accurate information possible.

**My family has been in a Diocese of Grand Rapids Catholic school for several years. We've invested heavily in not only our children's education, but also through other foundations and the parish. Yet this scholarship targets families who haven't made any investment to date regardless of need. Does that make sense?**

We appreciate the investment your family has made in Catholic school education. The Welcome Scholarship is only a small portion of the total funds the diocese and local parishes/schools offer as a form of tuition assistance for families.

During the 2014-15 school year, over \$4 million was given to families who demonstrated financial need. We are able to make sure current families receive the majority of scholarships and that the needs of current families are being met.

The Welcome Scholarship is a targeted, one-time award and there are a limited number of awards available. We feel it's important to use programs like the Welcome Scholarship to invite new families to consider enrolling in a Catholic school in order to grow our schools so they'll be here for your grandchildren and beyond.

It should also be noted that families receiving the Welcome Scholarship must be registered members of a diocesan parish, meaning they are also contributing to many of the same causes as you.

**My child enrolled in a Diocese of Grand Rapids Catholic school in January 2015. Is he/she eligible since they did not attend for the whole 2014-2015 school year?**

No, they are not eligible, as any student who attended a Diocese of Grand Rapids school for any amount of time during the 2014-15 school year is not considered a "new student" for the 2015-16 school year.

However, a student who attended in the 2013-2014 school year and left after that school year, and is now returning for the 2015-2016 school year is eligible.

**My family just moved from out of state. Our children attended Catholic school there and are hoping to attend a Diocese of Grand Rapids Catholic school. Do we still qualify for the Welcome Scholarship even though we've attended Catholic school before?**

Yes, your children do qualify. While they've attended Catholic school previously, they have not attended a Catholic school in the Diocese of Grand Rapids.

**My child is currently in a 4-year-old Preschool program. Can my child qualify for his or her entry into Kindergarten?**

If your child was enrolled in a Diocese of Grand Rapids parish preschool program as a Catholic school student: No, your child does not qualify for the Welcome Scholarship since he/she was enrolled in a Diocese of Grand Rapids Catholic school during the 2014-15 school year.

If your child was attending a Diocese of Grand Rapids preschool program through the Head Start or Great Start program: Yes, your child qualifies for the Welcome Scholarship because your child is enrolling as a Catholic school student for the first time.

**My child attended a Great Start (or Head Start) Preschool program during the 2014-2015 school year that was located at a Catholic school. Does he/she qualify for the award?**

Yes, your child does qualify for the Welcome Scholarship since he/she was not enrolled as a Catholic school student in a Diocese of Grand Rapids Catholic school program during the 2014-15 school year. Great Start (or Head Start) programs contract with schools in the diocese to provide families with preschool programming financially supported through state and federal funding. Since the students in Great Start or Head Start are not currently Catholic school students, they are eligible for the scholarship if enrolling for the first time as a Catholic school student.

You are also eligible for additional scholarships. Visit [www.CatholicSchools4U.org](http://www.CatholicSchools4U.org) to learn more about the Bishop's Scholarship Fund, or contact your local school to see what additional scholarship options they have available.

**My child is currently in a toddler or child care program and is going to enroll for the first time in a school program. Does that qualify my child for the Welcome Scholarship?**

Yes, students currently enrolled in a toddler or child care program who are going to enroll in a preschool through 11<sup>th</sup> grade program as a Catholic school student for the first time qualify.

**I am going to enroll my child in the toddler (2-year old) program. Does my child qualify for a Welcome Scholarship?**

No, the Welcome Scholarship is for new students in preschool through 11<sup>th</sup> grade. When your child moves into the 3-year old preschool program as a Catholic school student, your child is eligible to apply for a Welcome Scholarship.