



2023-2024 EDCHOICE SCHOLARSHIP – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is an EdChoice Scholarship?

The EdChoice program is a state-funded scholarship granted to every K-12 student in Ohio. There are 2 types:

1. **EdChoice “Traditional”** – awarded to families who live in a qualifying school district.
2. **EdChoice “Expansion”** – any family that does not live in a qualifying school district is eligible for an expansion Scholarship based on a sliding scale. Everyone now qualifies for the “expansion” scholarship, even if they could still qualify under the “traditional” method.

Am I eligible?

Yes, EVERY family is guaranteed to receive some level of award. You can reference the [23-24 ELIGIBILITY AWARD CHART HERE](#). Awards can only be applied toward TUITION, not fees (i.e. tech fees, registration, aftercare etc.)

When / How can I apply?

Now! Apply by following [THE INSTRUCTIONS](#) posted on the [IHM School Website](#). Although the state’s deadline is **October 14th**, we are encouraging families to complete their application ASAP, preferably by **August 31st**

How much does it cost for a family to apply?

There is no fee to submit an EdChoice Scholarship.

When / How will this impact our school?

Effective this upcoming 23-24 school year. It will lower family tuition obligations by capturing more scholarship money, increase teacher compensation and enhance the overall Catholic educational value we offer our students.

What is the maximum award?

\$6,165/child per year! If a family’s household income is at or below 450% of the Federal Poverty Level, they will be awarded the MAX scholarship. Previously this level was at or below 250%. Anything above 450% will be prorated accordingly, with the minimum award being \$650/child.

Will my tuition obligation increase?

No. Our goal is for every family to pay LESS than their current tuition commitment. We are optimistic these scholarships will substantially reduce the total parent commitment for tuition, and in some cases cover the full cost of tuition. **No family will owe more tuition than they do today at IHM, after this process. Everyone will benefit!** As we receive approvals of your family’s EdChoice scholarship award level, and upon further review of all available scholarships, we plan to present each family with a “before/after” scenario of their total tuition commitment. We hope to do this as quickly as possible to avoid any additional FACTS overpayments.

What if my family only qualifies for the minimum award?

We recognize those who do not qualify for the full award amount should not be unjustly burdened by a large gap between their award amount and their remaining balance. We will continue to use all available resources in order to keep parent commitment at an affordable rate for every family (like we have historically) through our parish subsidy, fundraising, charitable giving, and Angel Scholarship Fund etc. These amounts will be determined at the time of the approved EdChoice scholarship award and prior to updating any FACTS tuition balances.

Should I keep paying my current tuition bill?

Yes, please continue to pay your tuition as scheduled. Once your EdChoice scholarship has been approved and finalized, your FACTS tuition agreement will be adjusted accordingly, and any overpayments will be refunded as quickly as possible. We hope to issue refunds within 90 days of your approved award(s)/adjusted tuition amount.

What about Diocesan Tuition Assistance, Fr. McIntyre and Angel Fund Scholarships?

These monies are still very important to help us maximize scholarship income. Once our families complete the EdChoice application process we can determine which families may no longer need their existing financial aid award(s) or may qualify for additional scholarships. We will closely evaluate and redistribute those funds to other families to lessen the overall parent tuition commitment. The Diocese of Cleveland is giving us extra time to sort out where our scholarship dollars from DTA applications are most needed. If an award is not needed or cannot be redistributed, it will be returned for use next year.

What does it cost to currently educate a child at IHM? Do we provide a subsidy?

IHM's per pupil cost for 22-23 was approximately **\$6,800** and we charged **\$5,020** (\$5,796 for Non-Parishioners). Prior to EdChoice, most of the schools in the Diocese have never charged their full per-pupil cost to educate. On average, the amount of tuition has been less than 70% of the actual cost. To keep Catholic education affordable, we have always offered multi-child discounts, parishioner discounts (parish subsidy), and other forms of financial aid, substantially decreasing the amount of receivable tuition for the benefit of our parents and school families. School fundraisers, like the car raffle, helped close the gap. Unfortunately, participation and overall operational fundraising dollars have decreased over the years.

What will the new tuition rate be?

The State of Ohio has allowed schools a one-time opportunity to revise their published tuition rate for the 23-24 school year to a more accurate amount to access additional resources. We are still navigating the changes and reviewing scenarios with our finance council to determine the best rate for IHM and its financial sustainability. We will have this calculated by the Aug 24th meeting. Please know that we will continue to provide a large investment in Catholic education and in our teachers. While keeping the parent commitment low, we will strategically steward available resources and continue to provide direct support through parish subsidy and other available scholarships.

Will IHM become less Catholic?

No. Our admission policy will strongly focus on "Catholics First". In fact, the additional resources could further support our mission of providing a quality CATHOLIC education. Presently our enrollment for 2023-2024 is approximately 90% Catholic and 10% children of other faiths. While Catholic Schools are certainly an opportunity for evangelization, we are and will be taking this percentage seriously as we move forward with the benefits of receiving these scholarships.

What is our admission policy?

We interview each child before an acceptance decision is made. We set the bar academically, behaviorally and we grant preference to active Catholic parishioners and Catholics from other parishes.

What about classroom sizes?

We have always strived to keep our classrooms small and take pride in maintaining one of the lower student/teacher ratios in the area, compared to other Catholic schools in Summit County. We are comfortable growing to a max of 20-23 children per classroom. Currently our average is about 17.

What if a family applies after October 14th, 2023?

Applications submitted after October 14th will be awarded at a prorated amount based on how much of the school year remains after the date of the student's enrollment at IHM. Please note: Families who miss the October 14th Application and Income Verification deadline will be responsible for any difference in the prorated EdChoice Scholarship amount and IHM tuition.

Who determines what each family is awarded through EdChoice?

The State of Ohio will make the award determinations based on adjusted gross income. IHM does not determine award amounts. Once IHM has confirmation from the state of Ohio, we will review each family's tuition commitment and provide additional scholarship opportunities whenever possible.

What if I already completed a Jon Peterson Scholarship application?

Lisa Massello (lmassello@ihmgradeschool.org) will be in touch with more information!

What if I don't want to apply for EdChoice?

EdChoice Expansion is a groundbreaking opportunity for us to greatly strengthen our school's foundation, providing us the opportunity to better compensate our teachers with more competitive salaries, and sets us up for future success and sustainability. For these reasons we **STRONGLY** encourage every family to participate, regardless of scholarship level. In addition, the more Ohioans that take advantage of this opportunity, the greater the chance that EdChoice will expand even further benefitting all private/Catholic schools throughout the state.