

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Print Page1. What is the history and purpose of the new tuition tax credit legislation that gave rise to the Georgia GOAL Scholarship Program?

In 2008, the Georgia General Assembly passed House Bill 1133 and Governor Sonny Perdue signed it into law. The new law provides for the creation of student scholarship organizations (“SSOs”) that use Georgia income tax credit-eligible contributions to provide public school or kindergarten-entry students with the opportunity to attend private schools. Georgia GOAL Scholarship Program, Inc. is one of the SSOs created to implement the new law.

2. What other schools are participating in Georgia GOAL Scholarship Program?

There are presently 112 GOAL Participating Schools, including our school. The list of GOAL Participating Schools, which also includes such schools as Eagle’s Landing Christian Academy, Greater Atlanta Christian School, Marist School, Mount Paran Christian School, Westminster Schools of Augusta, and Whitefield Academy, is accessible on the homepage of the GOAL website at: [www.goalscholarship.org](http://www.goalscholarship.org).

3. How does our school benefit from this legislation?

As a GOAL Participating School, our school is eligible to promote the GOAL program to its donors who, in turn, can designate that their contributions to GOAL be used to provide scholarships at our school. Our school is also eligible to receive undesignated contributions from GOAL. Thus, our school will be able to increase the amount of financial aid for which its students and their families are eligible.

4. How does the tax credit work?

A taxpayer re-directing all or a portion of his or her Georgia income tax payments to GOAL and designating our school receives an income tax CREDIT against their Georgia income taxes for the amount of their contribution. Thus, if a married couple filing a joint return owes \$6,000 of Georgia income taxes and makes the maximum contribution to GOAL of \$2,500, they will only have to pay \$3,500 of income taxes to the state of Georgia.

5. What is the maximum amount of Georgia income taxes that an individual can re-direct each year to GOAL?

Each calendar year, as long as there is room available under the \$50 million annual cap on tax credits established by HB 1133, a married couple filing a joint return can re-direct up to \$2,500 of their income tax payments to GOAL. The maximum for an individual is \$1,000.

6. If an individual has paid all of his or her estimated Georgia income taxes for a particular tax year and makes a contribution to GOAL in that year, will he or she still receive a Georgia income tax credit for the amount contributed to GOAL?

Yes. If, after applying the tax credit against the Georgia income tax due and applying all estimated tax payments and withheld income taxes, there is an overpayment, the taxpayer can elect to have all or a portion of the overpayment paid to him or her.

7. Can corporations contribute to the Georgia GOAL Scholarship Program?

Yes, corporations can receive a tax credit for amounts contributed to the GOAL Scholarship Program, up to 75 percent of their Georgia income tax liability. Presently, this tax credit is only fully available to "C" corporations. Until the law is changed, regardless of the amount contributed to GOAL by an "S" corporation or other "pass-through" entity, "S" corporation shareholders (or the owners of such other "pass-through entities") are subject to the individual limitations of \$2,500 or \$1,000.

8. If he or she itemizes deductions, can an individual take a charitable income tax deduction on his or her federal income tax return for the amount of the contribution to GOAL?

Yes.

9. If I re-direct some of my Georgia income tax payment to GOAL, can I designate that it be used to provide scholarships for students who will be attending our school?

Yes.

10. If I re-direct some of my Georgia tax payments to GOAL, can I designate the student who will benefit from the financial assistance?

No. Although a donor to GOAL may designate our school and recommend a possible GOAL scholarship recipient (except a dependent of the donor), the financial aid committee at our school will have the discretion of deciding which qualified recipients will be recommended to GOAL for the receipt of the GOAL scholarships.

11. What is the deadline for making contributions that qualify for the tax credit? How is the contribution made?

In order to contribute to GOAL for a tax credit, an individual or corporation must first receive pre-approval from the Georgia Department of Revenue. The Forms needed for the pre-approval process are available from our school office, and the school and GOAL will assist you in managing the paperwork and pre-approval process. When submitting your paperwork to the school, you will also write a check equal to your contribution amount made out to "Georgia GOAL Scholarship Program, Inc." Be sure to designate our school in the memo section of the check. Your check will be held by either the school or GOAL until your approval Form has been received from the DOR. All contributions to GOAL must be made prior to the end of the applicable calendar year.

12. What students are eligible under the law to receive financial assistance from the Georgia GOAL Scholarship Program?

As the legislation indicates, eligible students include those who are "Georgia residents enrolled in a Georgia secondary or primary public school or eligible to enroll in a qualified kindergarten or pre-kindergarten program."

13. Will our school modify the school's admission criteria to accommodate students who would qualify for Georgia GOAL scholarships but not qualify under the current admission criteria at our school?

No. All applicants will be required to have completed our regular application for admission. Acceptance for admission will be based on the current standards and criteria for admission to our school. Exceptions will not be made for applicants who are eligible for a GOAL scholarship. The program simply allows for families with qualified students who had not previously been able to attend our school to do so. Admission standards will not be relaxed.

14. Will the GOAL financial assistance be awarded, in whole or in part, based on achievement in co-curricular areas such as arts and athletics?

No consideration is given to co-curricular achievement in allocating Georgia GOAL financial assistance. All admission decisions are made based on our school's admission standards and the verified financial need of the student's family.

15. How does a family apply to receive financial assistance from the Georgia GOAL Scholarship Program?

Our school will explain the availability of the GOAL Scholarship Program in the financial aid information packet distributed to interested applicants to the school. Any applicant family interested in receiving a GOAL scholarship merely needs to express such interest to the admissions office. They will then be asked to provide proof of their child's enrollment in a public school or eligibility to enter kindergarten. The family will also be required to submit the first two pages of their signed federal income tax return for the prior year. If the applicant family is approved for a GOAL scholarship, prior to enrollment, the family, our school, and GOAL enter into a GOAL Scholarship Agreement.

16. After a recipient student's first GOAL scholarship year, will he or she automatically receive GOAL funding each subsequent year that they are enrolled at our school?

GOAL scholarships are awarded for the duration of a student's enrollment at our school. However, the amount of the GOAL scholarship received in each year is determined annually based on continued financial need, the availability of GOAL funds designated for use at our school, and the student's compliance with behavioral, academic, and covenant standards. The financial assistance evaluation must also be completed each year to validate financial need.

17. After our school awards GOAL scholarships in a particular year, what happens to any remaining GOAL funds that have been designated for use at our school?

Under the terms of the GOAL School Participation Agreement entered into between GOAL and our school, any unused funds that have been designated for use at our school are held by GOAL in an account earmarked for the school. The designated funds (together with any net income earned on the account) are available for providing ongoing financial aid to existing GOAL scholarship recipients at our school and for awarding future GOAL scholarships at our school.

18. Does the Georgia GOAL Scholarship Program affect the current financial aid program at our school?

Our school's financial assistance program serves our currently enrolled families who have an identified financial need. Since the GOAL program serves new students to the school, the financial aid program at our school will continue to operate as it has in the past. There is no conflict between the two; one will compliment the other.

19. How will our school communicate this financial assistance opportunity to qualified families?

The first families who will be contacted with information about the GOAL Scholarship Program are those families whose children were enrolled at our school but who had to leave for economic reasons. Beyond those families, awareness will be built through our current school families and local churches.

20. Does participation in the GOAL Scholarship Program open the door for government intervention in our school? Can we be forced to compromise our mission, standards, and/or practices?

Absolutely not! We would never agree to participate in a program that forces us to compromise our mission, standards, and/or practices.

21. Is the Georgia GOAL Scholarship Program a government agency? What is its role?

No. Georgia GOAL Scholarship Program, Inc. is an independent 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. GOAL, not the state of Georgia, provides scholarships to students at its participating schools. In addition to saving its participating schools the trouble of creating and operating their own HB 1133 student scholarship organizations, GOAL serves as an information clearinghouse; provides information and insights regarding the marketing aspects of the tuition tax credit legislation; monitors legal and regulatory developments; shares best practices among the participating schools; solicits contributions from corporations; promotes the program in the CPA and financial community; and encourages participating schools to direct as much financial aid as possible to low- and middle-income families who otherwise would not have a choice to attend schools such as ours.