



January 30, 2019:

The Diocese of Lincoln is announcing a new tuition and scholarship program for Catholic Schools, beginning in the 2019-2020 school year.

Many parishes and schools in the Lincoln Diocese are struggling financially to continue subsidizing their Catholic schools at the same rate as in the past, due to increasing salaries and other costs needed to effectively administer schools. In an effort to continue to build a legacy of strong, affordable Catholic education, the Diocese will institute a tuition and scholarship program across Catholic schools, starting in the 2019-2020 school year. By establishing a tuition and new scholarship program the Diocese can continue to offer an affordable Catholic education to any child. The benefits of this program include increasing the long-term viability of our schools, while giving the schools the resources they need to support low income families, compensate teachers fairly and to relieve some of the financial support needed from the parishes. Through the Good Shepherd Scholarship, the Diocese will balance this effort to increase the sustainability of Catholic schools with a continued commitment to provide an excellent faith-based education to students of all income levels.

The tuition and scholarship program are being implemented to increase the financial sustainability of our schools, to assist with increasing costs and teacher compensation, and to reduce the financial assessments to parishes.

Tuition Announcement

Starting in the 2019-2020 school year, the tuition program sets a beginning tuition amount based on the cost of education, enabling the scholarship program to effectively provide tuition assistance and funding to Diocesan Catholic schools. Many schools have started implementing this program in previous years, by setting tuition as a percentage of the cost of education, but several schools may need to need to increase tuition to meet the minimum level. Schools must meet the minimum tuition level to be eligible for the Diocesan Scholarship program. The average cost of education varies in each school and many schools have been moving to this model over the past few years and now the rest will follow.

The Good Shepherd Scholarship Announcement

The Lincoln Diocese is announcing the Good Shepherd Scholarship Fund, which is intended to help families with tuition assistance, based on household size and income.

The Good Shepherd Scholarship will provide up to 75% of tuition, up to a maximum amount each year. The scholarship is available for families that are within 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (*see chart below). The Good Shepherd Scholarships will be paid directly to the schools for those families that qualify. Families must apply through FACTS for the Good Shepherd Scholarship. The scholarship is 75% of tuition, up to a maximum scholarship of:

	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
High School	\$1,300	\$1,600	\$1,900
Grade School	\$ 900	\$1,300	\$1,600



The Family Tuition Cap Scholarship Announcement

Families are eligible for a Family Tuition Cap Scholarship in Lincoln Diocese Catholic Schools, regardless of income level. A maximum of three students from a family will be charged tuition; all other students are eligible for a full tuition scholarship, even if students are in multiple Diocesan schools. Families must apply through FACTS for the Family Tuition Cap Scholarship.

Scholarship & Tuition Program Benefits

Offering a truly authentic, Christ-centered education for our youth is an important mission of the Catholic Church and is paramount for our children, our families and the future of our church. The new tuition program and the Good Shepherd Scholarship are essential for ensuring that our schools will be vibrant and sustainable long into the future. The importance of this educational mission and the benefits to our children and families cannot be underestimated.

- † The Good Shepherd Scholarship Fund will enable the Diocese to support families that need assistance and to help schools that serve low income and middle income families with additional financial resources.
- † Catholic Schools in the Lincoln Diocese will continue to offer affordable tuition which is subsidized by our parishes and donors and it will continue to be lower tuition than almost all private schools in Nebraska and the nation.
- † Within a 5-year timeframe, schools will begin to implement a strategy to increase teacher salaries to a range within 80% to 90% of their published local public school district teacher base salary, if they aren't already there. This strategy will ensure that we offer competitive teacher salaries so our schools can continue to employ excellent educators and we will be able to pay them a fair and just wage.
- † Also, within the 5-year timeframe, parishes and schools will begin to implement a strategy designed to cap parish support to schools (assessments) to no more than 80% of parish weekly and holy day income, if they aren't already at less than 80%. This benefits the parishes that have struggled financially to support their schools. It will help them to make investments in additional programs and resources for building a strong and vibrant faith in their communities. The mission of Catholic education is paramount, but parishes need to be able to support other important programs and mission work, as well.

Good Shepherd Scholarship Income Guidelines

<u>Household Size</u>	<u>Adjusted Gross Income</u>
1	\$ 24,280
2	\$ 32,920
3	\$ 41,560
4	\$ 50,200
5	\$ 58,840
6	\$ 67,480
7	\$ 76,120
8	\$ 84,760
9	\$ 93,400
10	\$102,040

Family Tuition Cap Scholarship Income Guidelines

No income guidelines, all families are eligible to apply.



Frequently Asked Questions

Does tuition fully cover the total cost of educating each child?

No. In the Diocese of Lincoln, tuition has always been and will continue to be very affordable for our families. Tuition only covers 25% – 45% of the cost of education. Although we are extremely frugal and resourceful, administrative costs including building maintenance, technology, salaries, insurance and curriculum resources have gone up in recent years.

What kind of expenses do the schools incur to educate a student?

Lincoln Catholic Schools have some of the lowest cost of per student education in the state of Nebraska, but we must offer competitive salaries, appropriate academic programs, technology resources, and beneficial extra- curricular activities for our students. The average cost of educating a child in Lincoln Diocese Catholic Schools ranges from \$5,000 to \$10,000 and averages \$6,500 per year. Tuition only covers 25%-45% of this. In comparison, the public schools in Nebraska spend an average of \$12,979 per student per year. (https://cdn.education.ne.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/1617AFR_PPC.pdf).

Why doesn't the parish continue to cover the increases school expenses?

They do and the Diocese covers expenses as well. But the cost of educating a child is going up and each school is encountering higher expenses. As the expenses increase, it is not feasible for the parish to cover a greater share of the growing expenses. Currently, in some cases we have 100% of weekly/ holy day tithes/offerings going to schools from the parishes. This model simply isn't sustainable.

How does Catholic Education affect our parishes?

Educating Catholic youth in parish and diocesan schools is the best supplement to the spiritual direction the child receives in the home and the best way to ensure vibrant parish communities. We know that each child will grow to have a vocation, whether that be married, single or religious life. Catholic schools help to foster vocations by teaching children about vocational options, as well as encouraging spiritual and academic growth. Catholic education allows parents to feel secure in that, while their children are away from the home, those children are receiving quality spiritual direction and Catholic formation, in addition to quality academic instruction. Many of our parishes would not be able to operate were it not for the number of priests and religious vocations that are formed in our diocesan and parish schools. Simply put, the better we educate our children, both spiritually and academically, the more vibrant our parishes will be.

Will families just go to other schools if tuition is raised?

Many other schools and dioceses have been through similar changes and did not lose a significant number students to other private or public schools. We are confident that the education and formation provided in the Catholic Diocese of Lincoln is of such high-quality that students will not want to leave. In addition, by adding the Good Shepherd Scholarship we are confident that any student, regardless of financial status, can continue to receive a quality, Catholic education right where they are.

How do I apply for a scholarship?

Beginning in early 2019, families of K-12 students may apply for tuition assistance by completing a FACTS application online at www.goodshepherdscholarship.com. FACTS is a third-party company used to evaluate financial need. Using FACTS helps ensure the process is fair and financial data is secure and confidential. The information used for the Good Shepherd Scholarship will have restricted access, limited only to the Diocesan Education Office for the purpose of awarding scholarships.



What is the process to apply for a Good Shepherd Scholarship?

Beginning in this year, applications will be accepted at www.goodshepherdscholarship.com or on your local school website. Applications are due by March 31 each year. Award letters will be sent out by the end of April and funds will be distributed to your school at the beginning of each semester, starting in August.

How will families know if a child qualified for The Good Shepherd Scholarship and/or Local Scholarships for elementary or secondary school?

Schools are notified of approved Good Shepherd Scholarship Awards by April and schools will notify each family shortly thereafter. In addition, local scholarship awards will be announced within the same notification period.

Will late applications be accepted?

No. We have to set and maintain a deadline to ensure fair and equal access to all students. The deadline is March 31 each year.

How do I receive the scholarship funds?

The Good Shepherd Scholarship funds are sent to schools at the beginning of each semester and are applied to your outstanding tuition amount, reducing what you owe. It is important to inquire at your school and parish regarding local scholarships, as well.

In addition to the Good Shepherd Scholarship what other types of financial aid are available?

- † **Local Parish Discounted Tuition** - Local financial assistance in the form of discounted tuition comes from the parish and/or school to which families apply. This tuition assistance is available from the generous support of the local school's parishes in the form of a discount from the true cost of educating students. The average cost to educate a student in the Lincoln Diocese is over \$6,500 per student, depending on the school. All Catholic parishioners receive significantly discounted tuition.
- † **Local Parish and School Scholarships** – In addition to discounted tuition, many schools and parishes have scholarship funds that are made available through a school's supporting donor community. Pastors and principals try to accommodate families with a final tuition amount and payment program that can fit a family's budget. The Diocese and school leaders recognize the sacrifices parents and relatives make to be able to afford and offer their children an excellent Catholic education.

What happens if I don't receive a scholarship?

If you are not eligible for the Good Shepherd Scholarship Fund, but still feel that you need financial assistance, please contact your pastor or school administrator.

Is other financial support available if a family has a financial hardship?

If during the course of the school year a family is having difficulty meeting tuition payments, they should contact their parish pastor or school administrator. Financial hardship programs vary across the Diocese.

What are the eligibility requirements for the Good Shepherd Scholarship Fund?

The Good Shepherd Scholarship eligibility guidelines are based on family size and income, for families that are within 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. Local school or parish scholarships may use additional criteria for scholarships, please contact your school for more information.

What are the guidelines for the Family Tuition Cap Scholarship?

Any family may apply for a Family Tuition Cap Scholarship in all Lincoln Diocese Catholic Schools, regardless of income level. A maximum of three students from a family will be charged tuition; all other students are eligible for a full tuition scholarship, even if students are in multiple Diocesan schools. Families must apply through FACTS for the Family Tuition Cap Scholarship.



What are the income levels for the Good Shepherd Scholarship Fund?

The Income Guidelines will be published each year at www.goodshepherdscholarship.com and are set to be 200% of the Federal Poverty Level.

	Family Size													
	Based on 2018 Federal Poverty Guidelines for all states except Alaska & Hawaii													
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
100%	\$12,140	\$16,460	\$20,780	\$25,100	\$29,420	\$33,740	\$38,060	\$42,380	\$46,700	\$51,020	\$55,340	\$59,660	\$63,980	\$68,300
130%	\$15,782	\$21,398	\$27,014	\$32,630	\$38,246	\$43,862	\$49,478	\$55,094	\$60,710	\$66,326	\$71,942	\$77,558	\$83,174	\$88,790
185%	\$22,459	\$30,451	\$38,443	\$46,435	\$54,427	\$62,419	\$70,411	\$78,403	\$86,395	\$94,387	\$102,379	\$110,371	\$118,363	\$126,355
200%	\$24,280	\$32,920	\$41,560	\$50,200	\$58,840	\$67,480	\$76,120	\$84,760	\$93,400	\$102,040	\$110,680	\$119,320	\$127,960	\$136,600
230%	\$27,922	\$37,858	\$47,794	\$57,730	\$67,666	\$77,602	\$87,538	\$97,474	\$107,410	\$117,346	\$127,282	\$137,218	\$147,154	\$157,090
285%	\$34,599	\$46,911	\$59,223	\$71,535	\$83,847	\$96,159	\$108,471	\$120,783	\$133,095	\$145,407	\$157,719	\$170,031	\$182,343	\$194,655
300%	\$36,420	\$49,380	\$62,340	\$75,300	\$88,260	\$101,220	\$114,180	\$127,140	\$140,100	\$153,060	\$166,020	\$178,980	\$191,940	\$204,900

What income and documents are used for the Income Guidelines?

The Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) from your Tax Form is used for the Income Guidelines. You will need to submit copies of your Tax Form and supporting documentation, such as W-2 Forms.

How much will the Good Shepherd Scholarship Program grant to students each year?

The Good Shepherd Scholarship Fund will provide grants of \$2m to \$2.5m annually, to students whose families are within 200% of the nationally published Federal Poverty Level. This equates to approximately 25% to 30% of all students in Catholic Schools in the Lincoln Diocese.

If we have more than three students, but they are in high school and grade school, are we eligible for the Family Tuition Cap Scholarship for children in multiple Catholic Schools?

Yes, the family will be charged the three highest amounts for tuition and will be eligible to receive a Family Tuition Cap Scholarship for the rest of their students, even if they are in different Catholic Schools in the Lincoln Diocese. Families must apply through FACTS for the Family Tuition Cap Scholarship.

How many students receive Good Shepherd Scholarships each year?

It is estimated that 1,300 to 1,500 students will receive Good Shepherd Scholarships each year.

Can Non-Catholics apply for the Good Shepherd Scholarship Fund?

Yes. Any family may apply for a scholarship whose children will be attending a Lincoln Diocese Catholic School.

How are the Good Shepherd Scholarship funds generated to pay for the scholarships?

The Good Shepherd Scholarship funds were established using the Joy of the Gospel campaign funds that were allocated to schools. In addition, new donations will be raised through the collaborative efforts of the Lincoln Diocese, local parishes, schools and the Catholic Foundation of Southern Nebraska. These donors believe in the value of Catholic education and recognize that tuition assistance is needed by many families wanting their children to attend Catholic schools. For more information about the various fundraising initiatives or to make a contribution, please visit our website at www.goodshepherdscholarship.com.

How can I help and why does the Lincoln Diocese need my support?

Each and every dollar matters. We are not a diocese that rests on the giving of a few, large donors. We count on the stewardship of our whole Catholic community to support our families and children and we need each family to give according to their means, to their schools, parishes and to the important mission work of the Christian community and the Catholic Church.

How is the Good Shepherd Scholarship Fund application information used?

FACTS Management will provide the Diocese of Lincoln with the name and school for each Scholarship that is awarded and will not need to have access to the application information that is provided by families. Based on local guidelines your school does have access to the family information they need to grant local scholarships.