



## **2021 – 2022 PARENT HANDBOOK**

### **A Guide to Renaissance Scholarships, Inc. for Applicant Families**

Renaissance Scholarships, Inc. (RSI) is a Scholarship Granting Organization (SGO) established to give children who are zoned for or attending failing schools the opportunity to attend a non-failing public school or an accredited private school. RSI provides scholarships to families who choose to send their children to high achieving, college preparatory programs.

RSI operates in partnership with several college preparatory programs. These include Randolph School, The Altamont School, Indian Springs School, Highlands School, The Montgomery Academy, Creative Montessori, St. Francis Xavier Catholic School, Montgomery Catholic Preparatory School, BuildUp, John Carroll Catholic High School and The Donoho School. If your student has been accepted at one of these schools, we encourage you to apply for a scholarship. You may apply online at [www.renaissancescholarships.org](http://www.renaissancescholarships.org) using an access code provided by the school.

If you have questions concerning our application process or scholarships, please email [info@renaissancescholarships.org](mailto:info@renaissancescholarships.org).

**RENAISSANCE SCHOLARSHIPS, INC.  
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## Who is Eligible?

RSI operates and awards scholarships under the authority of the Alabama Accountability Act. Students entering Kindergarten to grade 12 may be considered for scholarships, provided:

- a rising Kindergarten student is five years old by September 1, 2021; and
- no student is over 18 years old at the time of application.

To be considered for a scholarship, all applicants must be “income eligible.” Income eligibility requires that the applicant’s 2020 gross annual income not exceed a certain threshold based upon the household size. All first-time scholarship applicants must meet the **New Applicants** income thresholds. This includes new applicants that currently have a sibling receiving the scholarship. The income thresholds for *2021-22 applicants* are:

Scholarship Income Guidelines 2021		
2021 - 2022 School Year		
	New Applicants	Returning Applicants
Household Size	Max. Annual Income	
2	\$32,227	\$47,905
3	\$40,626	\$60,390
4	\$49,025	\$72,875
5	\$57,424	\$85,360
6	\$65,823	\$97,845
7	\$74,222	\$110,330
8	\$82,621	\$122,815
Each additional person add:	\$8,399	\$12,485

The Alabama Accountability Act gives scholarship priority to students who are zoned to a “failing” public school, as designated annually by the Alabama State Department of Education. That list can be found by going to the Alabama State Department of Education website at <https://www.alsde.edu> and searching for “AAA Failing School List 2019”. Scholarship awards to new students who are not zoned for a “failing school” may not be made until after July 31, 2020. An applicant must verify his/her school assignment by submitting a Verification of Public School Assignment Form available through the appropriate Board of Education office. All applying students are subject to the failing school award priority.

The Alabama Accountability Act allows one-quarter of new scholarships awarded annually to go to students who were continuously enrolled in private education in the preceding academic year. All applicants must submit with their application a copy of their first semester report card. In June, all new students must submit to RSI a full-year report card for the 2020-2021 school year in order to verify the student’s prior year school status for the purposes of the law.

Please note that application procedures, including deadlines and certain priority considerations are subject to Alabama Accountability Act legislation and the guidance of the Alabama Department of Revenue. Procedures and policies operating under these authorities are subject to change.

### Selecting a School

RSI currently has eleven Partner schools – Highlands School, The Altamont School, Creative Montessori School, Indian Springs School, Build Up, John Carroll Catholic High School and St. Francis Xavier Catholic School in Birmingham; The Donoho School in Anniston; The Montgomery Academy and Montgomery Catholic Preparatory School in Montgomery; and Randolph School in Huntsville. Each school maintains its own admission and enrollment procedures. Students must be admitted to one of these schools prior to applying for a scholarship from RSI. Once your student has been admitted to the school, the school will provide you with instructions to apply for a RSI scholarship.

Students who are awarded a scholarship from Renaissance Scholarships, Inc. will receive a Scholarship Award Notification via email. Your Award Notification will contain an expiration date. Scholarships that expire due to inactivity may not be reinstated.

If you choose to enroll your student before he/she has been awarded a scholarship, you will be responsible for any financial obligations incurred and may not qualify for future scholarship funding. RSI strongly encourages families not to enroll a student in a non-public school without an official scholarship award or a financial plan to pay, out of pocket or otherwise, for any financial obligations incurred through the enrollment process.

### What the Scholarship Covers

RSI scholarships are awarded on the basis of an academic year. RSI scholarships may be applied toward tuition and mandatory academic fees that are listed on a partner school’s website. Each partner school informs RSI of the tuition and fees that are incurred by a student, by grade level. RSI pays a maximum scholarship amount by grade level, per student, per academic year as listed below.

MAXIMUM SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS	
2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR	
Entering Grades K - 5	\$6,000
Entering Grades 6 - 8	\$8,000
Entering Grades 9 - 12	\$10,000

Partner schools must make available to an applicant a list of tuition and mandatory fees covered by the scholarship and discuss any financial obligations outside of the scholarship or listed on the

website of the partner school. Partner schools may not charge a different rate for scholarship students. Likewise, RSI cannot pay for any fees that are not included on the published fee schedule.

**Any financial obligations at a school incurred beyond the maximum cap amount, or for fees or items not covered by the scholarship, are the responsibility of the parent or guardian.** If you have questions about a particular school, please contact the school directly to inquire about their tuition and fee schedules and what will be covered by the scholarship.

Many schools charge more than the maximum scholarship amount. In some cases, schools may decide to provide RSI scholarship students with supplemental financial aid at their own discretion. In other cases, parents will be required to pay the difference between the RSI scholarship and the full tuition and fees. Those payments are not discretionary. Every family must pay the difference between the school's total tuition, the RSI scholarship, and any other financial aid or supplemental scholarships the school may provide. There are no exceptions to this rule, and a student may lose the RSI scholarship for failure to comply.

### The Application Process

To apply, visit <https://www.renaissancescholarships.org/documents> and use the access code provided by the school.

The Alabama Accountability Act defines a "family" as "a group of two or more people related by birth, marriage, or adoption, including foster care, who reside together." Accordingly, a parent or guardian may apply for a student to whom the applicant is related by birth, marriage, adoption, or who is the legal guardian of an applicant student in foster care, so long as the applicant adult and student reside together.

- **Income.** Each family is required to verify annual household income for the previous calendar year when applying for their student(s). In reviewing your application, RSI will look at all of the people who live in your household and all of the income that is derived from the people who live in the household. Income sources include, but are not limited to: prior calendar year Alabama Income Tax filings (Alabama Form 40), W-2s, and Social Security Income/Disability for every household member (including children); child support; and any other taxable/non-taxable income.
- **Household Composition.** Applicants must submit a verification of their household composition
- **Other.** Applicants must provide:
  - ✓ Verification of their Alabama Public School Assignment and
  - ✓ a report card for the first semester at the time of application, followed by a full-year report card in June.

Completing this process is the responsibility of the parent/guardian, not the school.

**Applications are considered on a first-come, first-served basis. An application cannot be considered for eligibility until both the application and all required supporting documentation have been received.** Scholarship awards are dependent on standards contained in the Alabama Accountability Act as well as funding availability.

## Application Consent/Certification

The applying parent or guardian must certify that he or she has completed the scholarship application fully and accurately and that the true circumstances of the applicant's household size, household income, and any other statements related to eligibility are reflected in the application. Misrepresentation of application information or failure of an applicant parent/guardian to disclose information relevant to scholarship eligibility may result in the refusal or revocation of a scholarship award. RSI reserves the right to verify any information submitted in the process of the application or the required documentation process.

Applicant families who are awarded an RSI scholarship will be subject to the program and the reporting requirements of the Alabama Accountability Act. These requirements include the reporting of a student's scholarship award status to the Alabama Department of Revenue. In addition, students who are awarded a scholarship under the Alabama Accountability Act may be required to take a standardized, norm-referenced test -- the results of which must be submitted by the scholarship student's partner school to RSI and the Alabama Department of Revenue.

## Adjusting to a New School Environment

Entering a new school setting can be challenging for both students and parents/guardians. RSI knows some students may need help in making the adjustment to a new school environment. The courses may be more advanced and rigorous, and there may be higher expectations for homework and studying outside of the classroom. The school may have different rules or standards and may be stricter in the enforcement of their rules/standards. We urge parents to establish regular and frequent contact with the school, its counselors, and teachers, and to seek tutoring, mentoring, or other support services that might be available.

## Scholarship Payment Distribution

Scholarship checks are written and mailed to the school the student is attending. No payments will be made to the parent or guardian of the scholarship recipient. The parent or guardian who is listed on the scholarship application must personally co-endorse the check after the school receives it. The school will notify you when to go to the school to endorse the check. This will happen twice during the school year, in August and January. The applicant parent or guardian must endorse the scholarship check, even if that student is no longer attending that school or has withdrawn from the scholarship program. Failure of the designated parent to endorse the check within ten business days after being notified by the school or within the time specified by school policy could result in the loss of your scholarship and could also affect scholarship eligibility in future years.

## Student Behavior and Scholarship Obligations

Scholarship students must follow all academic and conduct policies of the school that they attend on scholarship. Schools maintain the right to enact discipline, including expulsion or suspension, against students who fail to comply with the partner school's policies and procedures. RSI recommends that you carefully review the school's policies and procedures to ensure your child remains eligible for the scholarship. Renaissance Scholarships, Inc. does not govern school policies regarding the retention of students due to academic or disciplinary issues.

A student who is expelled from a partner school while on scholarship may seek to enroll in another partner school. However, expulsion from or failure to gain admittance into another partner school may cause a student to lose their scholarship or to be ineligible for scholarship application in future academic years.

Scholarship students are expected to maintain regular school attendance.

### Leaving a School

During the course of the school year, circumstances may change causing a parent or guardian to opt to withdraw the student from a partner school. If you plan to withdraw your student during the school year, please notify both RSI and the partner school as soon as possible. If you transfer to another school, you may be able to use your scholarship at the new school, if funds remain available.

### Moving Your Student to Another School

If you are not satisfied with a school, or if you move within the state of Alabama, you may be able to use your RSI scholarships to attend another school. You may transfer your scholarship student to another eligible school at the completion of the first semester, as long as you have no outstanding financial accounts at the previous school, including unsigned scholarship checks, and provided that the student meets the enrollment criteria of the new school and has remaining RSI scholarship funds.

If you plan to withdraw your student during the school year, please notify RSI and your current school as soon as possible. The school your student is leaving must then complete a form that confirms the student is planning to leave and they must submit the form to the RSI office within five business days of being notified that the student is leaving. A scholarship cannot be activated at another partner school until (a) the student has officially withdrawn from the original partner school, *and* (b) the original partner school confirms the withdrawal and that the household has no outstanding balance owed. A student's maximum scholarship award is for an academic year, not per school year. Transfers during the school year may cause scholarship dollars to be expended before year end. Parents should verify the remaining scholarship funds available before finalizing any decision.

After confirmation of official withdrawal, the new school you choose must fill out a School Commitment Form (SCF) for your student. RSI will confirm receipt of all necessary documents and complete the transfer process.

### Withdrawing From the Scholarship Program or Declining a Scholarship

After being awarded a scholarship, a parent or guardian may elect to decline a scholarship. A scholarship may be declined either before or after enrolling and attending a partner school, resulting in the applicant's voluntary withdrawal from the scholarship program. Declining a scholarship after enrolling or attending a partner school does not release the parent from any financial obligation to the school.

Should you choose to withdraw from the scholarship program at any time during the academic year, please contact RSI and the partner school, if applicable, as soon as possible. Please be aware that withdrawal from the scholarship program at any time does not disqualify the student from future application, but the student may be considered “new” for the purposes of scholarship eligibility for future years.

## Updates

It is very important that RSI is able to reach a parent or guardian at all times. Your application log-in information will contain information about updates or additional needs for your scholarship process. Please check your email and online application frequently for updates. If RSI is unable to reach you about documentation or eligibility questions during the application process, your application will be placed on hold and processing will be suspended. Additionally, if you are awarded a scholarship, award notifications will be sent to the contact information on file. RSI cannot be responsible for the expiration of scholarships due to insufficient applicant contact information.

When you submit your application, you must provide a physical address, valid email address, and at least one phone number. RSI may attempt to contact you during the course of application and award process. If any of your contact information changes during the course of the academic year, please update RSI.

## Renewals

A student who has received a scholarship from RSI and who is invited to continue at a partner school may apply to renew his/her scholarship annually, provided the student remains in good standing with the partner school. Parents may access their TADS account after January 1 to apply for renewal. Parents will be contacted via the email used on the original application with a link and code to apply.

Renewals will be given priority over new students. Students who intend to transfer from a partner school to any other school should contact RSI before applying for renewal of their scholarships.



## 2021 – 2022 NEW APPLICANT CHECKLIST

*After reviewing the 2021-2022 Parent Handbook and deciding to apply for a scholarship through Renaissance Scholarships, Inc., below is a checklist of the forms/documentation required for submission.*

- Verification of Alabama Public School Assignment Form  
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- 2020 Alabama State Income Tax Return  
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- If you have not yet filed a 2020 Alabama State Income Tax Return and are not required to file one, you may provide one of the following:
  - ✓ A Statement of Non-Filing (SNF)
  - ✓ All forms of income (which may include but is not limited to: W-2, 1099, Profit & Loss, Unemployment Compensation, Child Support Documentation)
  - ✓ Statement of No Wages (NW)-----
- Applicant child's 2020-2021 Mid-Year Report Card
- End-of-Year Report Card to be submitted upon completion of current school year.  
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