

Thetford Academy Scholarship Assistance Process and Procedures

May 18, 2021

Background

The enrollment of private pay students represents an opportunity for Thetford Academy (TA). By recruiting and enrolling such students, TA aims to enrich and diversify its student body, support core and extracurricular programming with robust and consistent enrollment numbers, and broaden the reach of the school's mission into new markets.

TA enrolls students from towns in the region in the following categories: designating school districts, non-designating partner school districts, and sending school districts. (See policy C25 for definitions.) Tuition for students in these three categories is paid with public funds.

Additionally, Thetford Academy recruits and enrolls students from school districts that do not offer publicly funded school choice outside of their designated or in-district school(s). Should such students choose to attend Thetford Academy, the student's family is responsible for TA's tuition. We refer to these as "private pay" students.

TA believes in optimizing the realization of the school's mission by broadening and diversifying the student population; the development and implementation of a scholarship program to increase the number of private pay students at TA is one way of doing so. By offering partial scholarships to private pay students, TA is able to recruit students who would otherwise not be able to attend and thus supplement its overall tuition revenues.

Application Process

Admission of Private Pay Students. Applicants must fill out the same application form as students in sending school districts. The TA application review team reviews all applications and makes admissions determinations. Upon acceptance, any private pay students who wish to apply for need-based scholarship assistance must complete a FAST Aid application by March 30 in order to be considered for a scholarship for the following school year.

Assessment and Award Process

Tuition. The annually approved tuition fee applies to all students. This amount is set by the TA board of trustees in January for the school year that begins the succeeding August.

Scholarship Process. If private pay families cannot afford the full tuition fee, they may apply for partial scholarship assistance. Families are encouraged to apply for assistance by contacting the Director of Admissions. The funds for scholarships are limited.

Families of students new to TA who wish to apply for assistance must complete Thetford Academy's application for admission by March 1 and the financial aid application by March 30. Families of currently enrolled students must submit a FAST application annually by March 30 as part of the scholarship renewal process. All private pay students are eligible to apply for scholarship assistance throughout their time at Thetford Academy, provided they remain in good academic standing and there is no significant change in their family's financial situation.

TA uses the financial aid assessment tool commonly used by independent schools (FAST Aid) to determine the financial need of private pay families requesting assistance paying their student's tuition to Thetford Academy.

Scholarship Award Committee. The purpose of TA's scholarship award committee is to review the FAST Aid applications and to allocate the available pool of scholarship funds among the families that have applied. The committee consists of TA's Chief Financial Officer, Director of Advancement, and Enrollment Coordinator. This review is completed for all students who meet the criteria for need and have been accepted to TA. The admissions decisions and the scholarship decisions are made independently of one another.

Evaluation process. The scholarship evaluation and award process takes into consideration a number of factors. The following are general guidelines used by the committee:

1. Awards are based on financial need. The ability to pay the TA tuition is assessed based on the financial data supplied on the FAST Aid application and any special situations that are expressed by the applicant.
2. The total amount of awards may not exceed the budgeted allotment for available awards in any given year.
3. Awards are provided for a specific year and are not a guarantee of future awards to that applicant.
4. Special education service costs (504 or IEP) are the responsibility of the student's family or home school district and are not eligible for scholarship support. However, such students are eligible for scholarship assistance toward the regular tuition fee.
5. All data submitted by applicants is kept confidential.

Notification. Applicants are notified of scholarship decisions by letter by April 15.

Availability of Funds

The sum available for scholarships will be set annually, based on a recommendation from the Head of School and Chief Financial Officer to the Resources Committee of the Board of Trustees, and included by the Resources Committee in the budget proposed to and approved by the board for the following school year.