

Frequently Asked Questions Georgia GOAL Student Scholarship Program

1. 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 this new law. The Georgia legislature has shown its commitment to providing school choice to the citizens of our state by the passage of this legislation.

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

There are many other independent schools that are participating with the Georgia GOAL Scholarship Program with Mount Paran Christian. (Georgia GOAL is one of several Student Scholarship Organizations that have been established in the state since the passing of this legislation.) Other member schools of Georgia GOAL include Mt. Bethel Christian School, Pinecrest Academy, Whitefield Academy, Landmark Christian School, Eagle’s Landing Christian Academy, Westminster Schools of Augusta, and Greater Atlanta Christian School.

3. How does MPCCS benefit from this legislation?

It removes financial barriers and enables more qualified students from Christian families to attend MPCCS. As a GOAL participating school, MPCCS is eligible to promote the GOAL program to its constituents who, in turn, can designate their contributions to GOAL to be used to provide scholarships at MPCCS. MPCCS is also eligible to receive undesignated contributions from GOAL.

4. How does the tax credit work?

A taxpayer contributing to GOAL and designating MPCCS 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 would only have to pay \$3,500 of income taxes to the state of Georgia. If paying taxes through payroll, the taxpayer will receive the amount contributed to GOAL back through their return. (NOTE: Every individual tax situation is different. Please consult a tax advisor.)

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

For married couples filing a joint return, the maximum tax credit-eligible contribution per year is \$2,500. The maximum for an individual is \$1,000. The limit for a married couple filing separately is \$1,250. Any amount up to the maximum is accepted and appreciated. A person may apply for this redirection of taxes each calendar year.

6. Who is eligible to redirect their state taxes?

Any Georgia state taxpayer is eligible to redirect their taxes. This includes parents, grandparents, neighbors, family friends, etc.

7. If a person has already paid his/her estimated Georgia income taxes for a particular tax year and makes a contribution to GOAL in that year, will he/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/her.

8. Can corporations contribute to the Georgia GOAL Scholarship Program and designate MPCs as the recipient?

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. Redirection of taxes from a "C" corporation can be designated for MPCs scholarships.

9. Can a person get a charitable tax deduction on federal taxes if itemizing deductions?

Yes.

10. Is it too late to redirect taxes to this scholarship program in 2010? What is the deadline?

To ensure approval of your intended contribution in time to secure a 2010 Georgia tax credit, a person must file the Form IT-QEE-TP1 by December 1, 2010. Upon receipt of the approval from DOR, a person has 30 days to issue a check to Georgia GOAL. All payments must be made by the end of the calendar year.

11. If I redirect taxes to GOAL scholarships, can I designate that it goes for MPCs students?

Yes. Definitely.

12. If I redirect taxes to GOAL scholarships, can I designate a particular student who will benefit from the financial assistance?

No. As a tax credit and charitable contribution, a family may not designate a specific student or family who will benefit, including their own. The financial aid committee at MPCs will have the discretion of deciding which qualified recipients will be recommended for the receipt of the GOAL scholarships.

13. What are the state qualifications for a student to receive financial assistance from Georgia GOAL?

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."

14. Will MPCS modify the admission criteria to accommodate students who would qualify for Georgia GOAL scholarships but not qualify under the current admission criteria at MPCS?

No. All applicants will be required to have completed the MPCS application for admission. Acceptance for admission will be based on the current MPCS standards and criteria for admission to our college-preparatory, covenantal Christian school. Exceptions will not be made for Georgia GOAL qualified students. The program simply allows for Christian families with qualified students who had not previously been able to attend MPCS to do so. Admission standards will not be relaxed.

15. Will the GOAL financial assistance be 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 MPCS admission standards and on financial need as assessed through FACTS (www.factsmgmt.com) financial assessment and tax record validation.

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

Applications for these scholarships can be obtained on the MPCS website. These applications will be completed by the family and submitted through the MPCS admission office. Applicants must be accepted to MPCS prior to consideration to receive GOAL tuition assistance.

17. Will a student automatically receive GOAL funding each subsequent year that he/she is enrolled at MPCS after he/she has received an initial scholarship?

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

18. If enough qualified applicants are not accepted at MPCS, what happens to the funds that have been donated and designated for MPCS?

Under the terms of the GOAL School Participation Agreement entered into between GOAL and MPCS, any unused funds that have been designated for use at MPCS are held by GOAL in an account earmarked for MPCS and, together with any net income earned on the account, are available for the awarding of future scholarships.

19. Does the Georgia GOAL Scholarship Program affect the current financial aid program at MPCS?

The current financial assistance program at MPCS exists to serve current MPCS families who have an identified financial need. Since the GOAL program serves new students to the school, the program at MPCS will continue to operate as it has in the past. There is no conflict between the two; one will compliment the other.

20. How will MPCS communicate this financial assistance opportunity to qualified families?

MPCS has had students who have had to leave the school and are currently enrolled in public schools due to economic reasons. These families will be contacted with information about the program. A strategy is being developed to create awareness within the community beginning with our current MPCS families and local churches.

21. Does this tax credit and student scholarship program open the door for government intervention in our school? Can we be forced to compromise our Christian principles and/or practices?

Absolutely not! We would never agree to participate in a program in which our mission or standards could be at risk of compromise.

22. Is Georgia GOAL an agent of the government, and 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 the 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 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 families who otherwise would not have a choice to attend schools such as MPCS.

23. How do I find more information about Georgia GOAL Scholarship Program?

If you have questions about Georgia GOAL Scholarship Program, please review the GOAL website at www.goalscholarship.org, the MPCS website at www.mtparanschool.com, or contact the school office.

24. Whom do I contact if I have additional questions?

Anyone who has additional questions may contact Jennifer New, Director of Development at jnew@mtparanschool.com.