

RIDGEFIELD ACADEMY TUITION ASSISTANCE UPDATE

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Did you receive our November mailing?

- ◆ It contained the Family Guide to Financial Aid 2018-2019, PFS Workbook for Families, Applying for Financial Aid Flyer, and RA/LP specific instruction-cover letter
- ◆ Call for another if you did not!

Welcome from the Financial Aid Office!

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide specialized information to current and prospective Landmark Preschool (LP) and Ridgefield Academy (RA) families about the schools' tuition assistance process.

This marks the fifth year of this publication for our LP and RA schools, and I hope you will find it useful. The tuition assistance process can feel like a daunting one at times, and one of my chief goals is to partner with you to simplify and de-mystify it as much as possible.

Over the course of the school year, these newsletters will include helpful tips about the process, educate families about Landmark Preschool and Ridgefield Academy's commitment to tuition assistance, and increase communication between school and home on this very important topic.

Believe it or not, the time is upon us to contemplate the 2018-2019 school year already, so please do read through the attachments and familiarize yourself with the information we have sent. They include a one page overview to answer as many of the FAQ's of the what/when/where/how variety, a top 10 tips for completing your financial aid application, and some information specific to the Landmark Preschool and Ridgefield Academy tuition assistance program.

As I work my way through another financial aid application cycle at RA (though certainly not my first with financial aid; this is my 24th year in independent schools, and 20th working with financial aid!), I look forward to working with you as we strive to make access and affordability a reality for as many families as possible in our Landmark

Answering some FAQ about FA at RA and LP

Q: When can I start the financial aid process for 2018-2019?

A: Immediately! You can log-in to www.solutionsbysss.com/parents and complete your Parents Financial Statement (PFS)

Q: Can I complete a paper application or do I have to go online?

A: School and Student Services (SSS) by the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) has "gone green" and no longer accepts paper applications.

Q: What is the deadline to apply for aid for the 2018-2019 school year?

A: January 15, 2018 is the due date for completing the PFS to be considered for the first round of aid awards; applications completed after that date will be subject to a rolling, or funds available, evaluation.

Q: What other forms do I have to submit to have a completed file?

A: Families must submit 2016 & 2017 1040's & W-2's, at least, in addition to their PFS. These can be uploaded to the SSS website.



Solutionsbysss.com is a valuable online resource to aid you in your application process

“The time is now to begin the financial aid process for 2018-2019. If you need assistance with the process, let us know!”

Looking for an online overview of the process?

You might consider going online to the website www.solutionsbysss.com/parents/learn/ for a great online overview. On this helpful website, you can identify financial aid options and take the guesswork out of making an independent school education more affordable.

You might consider reading the “Family Guide to Financial Aid,” downloadable

in PDF form. You can also download an ebook called [Understanding Financial Aid](#), or review the five most common sources of aid. Finally, you can see FAQ’s, look at relevant case studies, and browse the NAIS guiding principles for families.

Whether it is reading their documents, calling their toll-free support helpline, or applying online, SSS by NAIS is there!

How about coming in to talk, one-to-one?

One of the best parts about being at a small independent school is having the ability to build relationships.

Parents are invited to come in at any time and sit down with the Director to talk about your application for aid. Your submitted personal information is confidential, and held in confidence by the aid committee.

Each family has a unique set of circumstances, and every parent may have their own questions. So, at any point you want to get further clarification, give a call or send an email so that we can meet!

Did you know that...?

...**28%** of the student body at Landmark Preschool & Ridgefield Academy receives tuition assistance.

...the school granted **\$2.1 million** for the 2017-2018 school year.

...the average need-based award for this year is **\$12,122**.

...families may have more than one child enrolled and receive tuition assistance.

...more than **2,100** schools use SSS to help with tuition assistance.

...more than **160,000** families work through SSS each year to receive tuition assistance from their children’s private or independent school.

Annual Giving and Financial Aid

A common concern for families receiving tuition assistance at independent schools is whether they can or should contribute to the school’s annual fund each year.

The short answer is that families are strongly encouraged to participate at the level they feel is appropriate for their family. As one parent said to me last week, “We look to make a gift that is meaningful for our family because we

value the school and what it has meant for our (children).”

As you often hear at independent schools, participation and community are important. The same is said for fundraising activities. All families, regardless of their financial aid status, are vital to these efforts.

If you want to talk more about this topic, feel free to reach out!