



# Most Frequently Asked Questions

March 2010

## **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 the new law.

## **2. What other schools are participating in Georgia GOAL Scholarship Program?**

There are presently 36 GOAL Participating Schools, including our school. The list of GOAL Participating Schools is posted on the GOAL website at: [www.goalscholarship.org](http://www.goalscholarship.org).

## **3. How does our school benefit from this legislation?**

As a GOAL Participating School, our school is eligible to promote the GOAL program to its donors who, in turn, can designate that their contributions to GOAL be used to provide scholarships at our school. Our school is also eligible to receive undesignated contributions from GOAL. Thus, our school will be able to increase the amount of scholarships for which its students and their families are eligible.

## **4. How does the tax credit work?**

A taxpayer re-directing all or a portion of his or her Georgia income tax payments to GOAL and designating our school receives an income tax CREDIT against their Georgia income taxes for 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 will only have to pay \$3,500 of income taxes to the state of Georgia.

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

Each calendar year, as long as there is room available under the \$50 million annual cap on tax credits established by HB 1133, a married couple filing a joint return can re-direct up to \$2,500 of their income tax payments to GOAL. The maximum for an individual is \$1,000.

## **6. If an individual has paid all of his or her estimated Georgia income taxes for a particular tax year and makes a contribution to GOAL in that year, will he or 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 or her.

### **7. Can corporations contribute to the Georgia GOAL Scholarship Program?**

Yes, 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. Until the law is changed, regardless of the amount contributed to GOAL by an “S” corporation or other “passthrough” entity, “S” corporation shareholders (or the owners of such other “pass-through entities”) are subject to the individual limitations of \$2,500 or \$1,000.

### **8. If he or she itemizes deductions, can an individual take a charitable income tax deduction on his or her federal income tax return for the amount of the contribution to GOAL?**

Yes.

### **9. If I re-direct some of my Georgia income tax payment to GOAL, can I designate that it be used to provide scholarships for students who will be attending our school?**

Yes, by placing our school’s name on the memo line of your contribution check.

### **10. If I re-direct some of my Georgia tax payments to GOAL, can I designate the student who will benefit from the financial assistance?**

No. Although a donor to GOAL may designate our school and recommend a possible GOAL scholarship recipient (except a dependent of the donor), the financial aid committee at our school will have the discretion of deciding which qualified recipients will be recommended to GOAL for the receipt of the GOAL scholarships.

### **11. What do I need to do to participate?**

Participation is simple. A Prequalifying Form (IT-QEE-TP1) must be filled out. (These forms are available online at [www.khcs.org](http://www.khcs.org) or in the KHCS offices).

Attach your contribution check made payable to GA GOAL Scholarship Program with Killian Hill Christian School in the memo line. Return your form and check to KHCS

Killian Hill Christian School (Attention: Karen Harrison) 151 Arcado Lilburn, GA 30047. KHCS will send your Prequalifying Form to the GA Department of Revenue for approval. Once approval has been received KHCS will send your form and payment to the GA GOAL office. GOAL will send you a confirmation form and Form IT-QEE-TP2 that you will need when filing for your tax credit.

### **12. What students are eligible under the law to receive financial assistance from the Georgia GOAL Scholarship Program?**

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.”

**13. Will our school modify the school’s admission criteria to accommodate students who would qualify for Georgia GOAL scholarships but not qualify under the current admission criteria at our school?**

No. All applicants will be required to have completed our regular application for admission. Acceptance for admission will be based on the current standards and criteria for admission to our school. Exceptions will not be made for applicants who are eligible for a GOAL scholarship. The program simply allows for families with qualified students who had not previously been able to attend our school to do so. Admission standards will not be relaxed.

**14. Will the GOAL financial assistance be awarded, in whole or in part, based on achievement in extra-curricular areas such as arts and athletics?**

No consideration is given to extra-curricular achievement in allocating Georgia GOAL financial assistance. All admission decisions are made based on our school’s admission standards and the verified financial need of the student’s family.

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

Our admissions officer will explain the availability of the GOAL Scholarship Program to interested applicants to the school. Any applicant family interested in receiving a GOAL scholarship merely needs to express such interest to the admissions office. They will then be asked to provide proof of their child’s enrollment in a public school or eligibility to enter kindergarten. The family will also be required to submit the first two pages of their signed federal income tax return for the prior year. If the applicant family is approved for a GOAL scholarship, prior to enrollment, the family, our school, and GOAL enter into a GOAL Scholarship Agreement.

**16. After a recipient student’s first GOAL scholarship year, will he or she automatically receive GOAL funding each subsequent year that they are enrolled at our school?**

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

**17. After our school awards GOAL scholarships in a particular year, what happens to any remaining GOAL funds that have been designated for use at our school?**

Under the terms of the GOAL School Participation Agreement entered into between GOAL and our school, any unused funds that have been designated for use at our school are held by GOAL in an account earmarked for the school. The designated funds (together with any net income earned on the account) are available for providing ongoing financial aid to existing GOAL scholarship recipients at our school and for awarding future GOAL scholarships at our school.

**18. How will our school communicate this financial assistance opportunity to qualified**

## **families?**

The first families who will be contacted with information about the GOAL Scholarship Program are those families whose children were enrolled at our school but who had to leave for economic reasons. Beyond those families, awareness will be built through our current school families and local churches.

### **19. Does participation in the GOAL Scholarship Program open the door for government intervention in our school? Can we be forced to compromise our mission, standards, and/or practices?**

Absolutely not! We would never agree to participate in a program that forces us to compromise our mission, standards, and/or practices.

### **20. Is the Georgia GOAL Scholarship Program a government agency? 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 its 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 the 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 low- and middle-income families who otherwise would not have a choice to attend schools such as ours.

### **21. How do I find more information about Georgia GOAL Scholarship Program?**

If you have questions about the Georgia GOAL Scholarship Program, please review the GOAL website at [www.goalscholarship.org](http://www.goalscholarship.org) or contact the school office.