



Advice to Families about Affording Independent School

Given the reality of our economy and the rising costs of independent schools, many families will consider financial assistance* as a way to help pay for their child's education. All BADA schools approach financial assistance differently and welcome calls or meetings to help you understand more about their particular financial assistance program and process. Each of the independent schools in the BADA consortium have financial assistance budgets and aspire to attract students of all economic backgrounds. Also know that independent school budgets are limited and not every family who qualifies will receive assistance. Following are some suggestions and some FAQs about applying for financial assistance.

*Please note: Schools use different terminology for financial assistance. Some examples include: financial aid, tuition assistance, sliding scale, indexed tuition, adjusted tuition.

Create a long list of schools:

Applying to a longer list of schools and considering public school options are two ways to increase the chances of getting a placement you are satisfied with.

Be transparent and prep early:

It is very important for you to be transparent with independent schools about your full financial profile before admission decisions are made. In fact, families' transparency and integrity are essential to the success of the financial assistance and admissions process. Withholding financial information from schools compromises both the school's financial assistance process and the trust that schools place in families. If you have any questions about any details, it is important to approach admissions staff directly. A key part of the process is an evaluation of your taxes. Even though the deadline for filing taxes is in April, you must submit your tax returns to the school well before that date. It will serve you best to plan accordingly so that you are not disadvantaged in the process.

Do a detailed financial analysis before applying:

Explore every possible financial resource in addition to family income, including your asset base, gifts, or loans from relatives before applying for assistance. Schools want to make sure their families stay in their community for the duration of their child's schooling without the burden of financial worries. In order to provide that comfort for applicant families, schools are annually budgeting for financial assistance and will often allocate their funds during the first round of decisions. If you apply for assistance upon entry and when you are offered a spot at a school, they are anticipating supporting

your family all the way through. If you delay, and apply a year later, those funds may have already been allocated.

How do schools make decisions about financial assistance?

Each school implements its own financial assistance criteria and goals based on their unique financial and enrollment priorities. Most schools make admission decisions and financial assistance determinations separately, and many use an outside service to help assess a family's financial profile. Because policies differ, it is important for families to contact individual admission offices for information about their specific processes. One common practice among all the BADA schools is that all information collected for the financial assistance process is held in the strictest of confidence.

What is "need-blind admissions," and is it really "need-blind"?

Need-blind means that admissions decisions come first, then schools offer financial assistance to as many of those admitted as possible.

Will schools admit students if they cannot fund them?

Some schools will accept a family regardless of whether funds are available; other schools will not admit a family they cannot fund. Some schools within BADA are choosing not admit a family if unable to fund the family for the full amount of demonstrated need as calculated by the outside service. These services include FAST by ISM, FACTS Management or SSS by NAIS (School and Student Services by the National Association of Independent Schools). It is best to ask each specific school you are applying to about their policies to be completely informed.