

# Missoula Christian Montessori School Student Scholarship Organization

## **Mission Statement**

The purpose of the Missoula Christian Montessori School Student Scholarship Organization (hereafter, MCMS SSO) is to earn annual business tax credit funds and award those funds as scholarships to Montana families who apply for tuition assistance AT A PRIVATE SCHOOL OF THEIR CHOICE for school-aged children (kindergarten through high school).

## **Policy Statements**

MCMS SSO commits to the following practices for the duration of its operation:

1. **Non-Discrimination Policy**
  - a. No family shall be discriminated against on the basis of race, color, religion, nationality, ethnicity, handicap, or school preference.
2. **Administration**
  - a. The administration of the SSO will be staffed by not less than four individuals, each of whom sign a policy agreement to not prioritize specific students or QEPs, and to comply with our non-discrimination policy.
  - b. No administrative staff shall be permitted to apply for funding through the MCMS SSO.
  - c. Staff shall each be compensated for their time at a rate of no less than 1% and no more than 2% of funds received.
  - d. Staff must provide via email a full and clear report on disbursements for each year to the MCMS Board of Directors once all funds are disbursed for the year.
  - e. Staff shall be appointed by the MCMS Board of Directors for staggered two year terms, beginning in August of each year. For the first year of operation, two staff shall be appointed for one year terms and two staff appointed for two year terms.
3. **Qualified Education Providers**
  - a. All private schools in Montana may apply to be a qualified education provider (QEP).
  - b. All private schools in Montana who satisfy MT tax law regarding QEPs will be accepted as QEPs.
  - c. The school of a family's choice must register as a QEP before funds can be disbursed to it.
  - d. A QEP must register prior to the open application period.
  - e. A QEP registers by completing an application form.
  - f. The application form for a QEP requests evidence of operation and of satisfaction of MT state law regarding schools/QEPs.
  - g. QEPs must renew their status from one year to the next by submitting a simple statement that they adhere to MT tax law regarding schools/QEPs and providing evidence of operation (website link, enrollment data, etc). Statements are due prior to the open application period of each year.
  - h. QEPs are invited to help earn tax credits for the MCMS SSO. Please contact Julie Fayen for information on how to earn individual and business tax credit.
4. **Public Information**
  - a. All necessary information for applicants regarding the MCMS SSO will be readily available on MCMS' website, under a distinct, well-labeled menu tab.
  - b. Current application forms will be readily available for download from the website.
  - c. The MCMS SSO website page will provide the information and form that QEPs need to successfully apply for QEP status.
  - d. This policy document will be available as a .pdf link on the MCMS SSO website page.
  - e. All information on the website shall be current for each application period.
  - f. Once all funds are assigned, the website will be updated to signify the rolling application period is closed.
  - g. The next year's open application date will be published when MCMS publishes its school calendar for the next school year (end of May).
5. **Contact Information**
  - a. An email point of contact will be included on the website.
  - b. All emails to the MCMS SSO seeking information will be responded to within 72 business hours, barring unforeseen circumstances.
6. **Applications**
  - a. The application open date will be the Friday preceding MCMS' spring break.

- b. All applications must be submitted via email to the email contact listed on the MCMS SSO webpage.
- c. Current application forms will be readily available for download from the website.
- d. An application must be complete before it is eligible for consideration. Proof of tuition (invoice, enrollment paperwork, or school website tuition page) must be included with the application for it to be complete.
- e. An application is time stamped as received when submitted as complete.
- f. Applications submitted before the open application date will not be admitted for review; premature applicants will be notified to resubmit beginning on the application period open date.
- g. All applicants will be considered on a rolling basis, beginning with the application start date of each year.
- h. Applications will be accepted until all funds are assigned.
- i. Applicants will receive notification whether funds are awarded within ten business days of receipt of a complete application.
- j. In all areas, MCMS SSO shall adhere to current, relevant MT Tax Law, including "Requirements for Student Scholarship Organizations" and "Reporting Requirements for Student Scholarship Organizations."

7. Disbursement

- a. Scholarship funds shall be awarded on a first-come, first-served rolling basis beginning in MCMS' Spring Break of each school year.
- b. Applicants may be awarded between 20-50% of the cost of their annual tuition.
- c. Funds must be dispersed to qualified education providers (QEPs).
- d. Funds will be disbursed to QEPs by August 31 of each year. QEPs will receive the full amount for the year and are responsible for full dispersal of funds over the course of the following school year.