



Incarnate Word

A C A D E M Y

January 10, 2020

Dear Parents:

I am writing to let you know that Incarnate Word Academy has been approved as an EdChoice provider for the 2020-21 school year. We join nearly 500 other Catholic and private schools throughout Ohio to offer this potential scholarship opportunity to our school families. In addition to the vast majority of surrounding Catholic elementary schools, the Educational Choice Scholarship (EdChoice) is offered by nearly all of the area Catholic high schools, including St. Ignatius, St. Edward, Magnificat, St. Joseph Academy, Beaumont, Walsh Jesuit, Holy Name, and Padua Franciscan.

What is the EdChoice Scholarship and will IWA families qualify to participate?

Per the Ohio Department of Education website:

*The **Educational Choice (EdChoice) Scholarship Program** offers students in grades K – 12 the opportunity to attend a private school for little or no cost. Students from designated public schools qualify for these scholarships.*

*The **EdChoice Expansion Program** is an income-based program. It provides students in grades K – 12 the opportunity to attend a private school for little or no cost whose families meet the Federal Poverty Guidelines. This program is only open to students who do not qualify for the Educational Choice Scholarship.*

The EdChoice scholarship amount is \$4,650 for grades K – 8 and \$6,000 for grades 9-12.

Although IWA will be an approved provider for the 2020-21 school year, the unfortunate reality is that the vast majority of our families, including those in districts with failing public schools, will not qualify for the scholarship. This is due to a restriction in the program which notes that families with students currently enrolled in kindergarten – 7th grade in a private or Catholic school DO NOT qualify for the EdChoice Scholarship.

Why did Incarnate Word Academy choose to participate in the EdChoice program at this time if the vast majority of current IWA families will not benefit from it?

We made the decision to become an approved EdChoice provider for four reasons:

- 1) We have current IWA families with students enrolled in our preschool program that may benefit from the EdChoice program based on their assigned public elementary school and we want to afford these families this opportunity.
- 2) We have existing IWA families that may benefit from the EdChoice Expansion program based on their household income. Families may qualify for the EdChoice Expansion program if their household income is at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.
- 3) For the 2020-21 school year, the EdChoice program was modified so that students currently enrolled in grades 9-12 in a private or Catholic school **ARE** eligible if they are assigned to an EdChoice listed high school. While there is no way to predict future changes, we want to be

sure we are an approved EdChoice provider in case the same type of modification is made to the EdChoice program for students currently enrolled in kindergarten – 8th grade.

- 4) If a nearby private or Catholic school that currently enrolls students in the EdChoice program were to close, we want to make certain that we can accommodate qualified applicants coming from that school.

Does an EdChoice provider have to take all applicants to the school?

No. EdChoice approved providers maintain complete control over the application and selection process for prospective students. A recent correspondence from the Diocese of Cleveland to all Catholic schools noted:

“Both the EdChoice and the income-based EdChoice Expansion scholarship, which will serve grades K-12 for next school year, are very private-school friendly. They are written so that all private schools, including our faith-based schools, may deliver education in accordance with their missions. Operating specifics such as admissions, curriculum, materials, and discipline, all remain the school’s purview.”

Simply put, Incarnate Word Academy has extremely high standards for its students and will continue to base admission on academic and behavioral readiness for kindergarten students and academic and disciplinary records for all transfer students.

Where can I go to learn more about the EdChoice program?

More information about the EdChoice program can be found at:

<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Other-Resources/Scholarships/EdChoice-Scholarship-Program>

When is the application period for the EdChoice program?

The application window for the EdChoice and EdChoice Expansion programs for the 2020-21 school year runs from February 1 – April 15, 2020.

In the coming weeks, we will be announcing EdChoice information sessions to provide interested families more details about the program offered at both the elementary and high school levels. In the meantime, please feel free to contact me directly by email at mwisnor@incarnatewordacademy.org or by phone at (440) 842-6818 ext. 303 with any questions about the EdChoice program.

Yours in the Incarnate Word,

Mike Wisnor
President