



Rocket City Scholarship Granting Organization

2021-2022 School Participation Guidelines

Definition of a Qualifying School

A qualifying school includes a nonpublic or private school, including parochial schools, not under the jurisdiction of the State Superintendent of Education and the State Board of Education, which provides educational services to children. Qualifying schools must notify the State Department of Revenue of its intention to participate in the scholarship program and comply with the requirements of the scholarship program.

A qualifying nonpublic school shall be accredited by one of the six regional accrediting agencies or the National Council for Private School Accreditation, AdvancEd, the American Association of Christian Schools, or one of their partner accrediting agencies. Rocket City SGO does not qualify schools or provide guidance. Accreditation compliance is maintained by the Alabama Department of Revenue.

Applications

Rocket City SGO will accept scholarship applications for returning students April 1-15, 2120. This date will be published in January each year. New applications will be accepted April 16-30, 2021. Families interested in applying should meet with the partner school of their choice for application instructions and eligibility requirements. All scholarship eligibility will be determined by Rocket City SGO.

Awards will be prioritized in the following order:

1. Students who received a scholarship from Rocket City SGO in the previous year and continue to apply and qualify for the scholarship.
2. New students zoned for a “failing school” as defined by the Alabama Accountability Act (AAA) of 2013 and as subsequently amended.
3. New students who qualify based on income guidelines as established by the AAA of 2013, as amended in 2015. These scholarships will not be awarded until after July 31st of each year, in accordance with the Act, as amended.

Scholarship recipients for the 2021-22 school year will be announced on August 1, 2021. If scholarships become available after this date, Rocket City SGO will continue to award scholarships to qualified applicants until funds are no longer available or until October 15, 2021.

Award of Scholarships

Scholarships will be paid in four payments throughout the school year or prorated based on award date. All scholarships will be paid in full by June 30, 2022.

Before receiving a payment, participating schools must verify eligible student attendance is compliant with school requirements. If the student no longer attends the school, Rocket City SGO must be notified within 3 days of the student’s transfer, withdrawal, or dismissal. If it is determined that the school owes Rocket City SGO for prepayment of tuition for that billing cycle or Rocket City SGO owes the school unpaid tuition, it will be reconciled on the next invoice.

Rocket City SGO scholarships are required by law to be transferable; all students in good standing may submit a transfer at a prorated amount. The school will be required to forfeit the remainder of the tuition



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owed, including providing refunds of any tuition already paid for any period for which the student was officially disenrolled.

Rocket City SGO will issue all scholarship payments directly to the school once per quarter. Schools are expected to invoice Rocket City SGO using the invoice provided by Rocket City SGO. Invoices must be submitted on September 1, 2021, December 1, 2021, March 1, 2022, and June 1, 2022 along with student attendance records. Once invoice and attendance have been verified, checks will be cut (within 10 days). If the invoice is not received on the due date, the check will not be cut until the following payment date.

School Administrative Requirements

All schools that accept scholarships from Rocket City SGO must meet the following requirements:

- Comply with the Alabama Child Protection Act of 1999, Chapter 22A of Title 16. Compliance with this Act requires that background checks be performed on all school employees through the state-designated agency, which is currently Cogent ID.
- Comply with all health and safety laws or codes that otherwise apply to nonpublic schools.
- Hold a valid occupancy permit if required by the municipality.
- Certify compliance with nondiscrimination policies set forth in 42 USC 1981.
- Conduct criminal background checks on employees and exclude from employment any person not permitted by state law to work in a public school and any person who may reasonably pose a threat to the safety of students.
- Maintain a website that describes the school, the instructional program of the school and the tuition and mandatory fees charged, updated annually. The school website should also have a link directly to our website.
- Must annually administer achievement tests that measure learning gains in math and language. The results of these tests should be provided to the student's family, the Alabama Department of Revenue and Rocket City SGO by the deadline date of June 30th.
- Verify student data information (gender, family income level, and race) annually to Rocket City SGO on behalf of the Alabama Department of Revenue, along with graduation rates of students benefiting from the scholarship.
- Ensure that all scholarship recipients conform to the attendance requirements of the school. If the scholarship recipient does not conform, the school should immediately notify Rocket City SGO.
- Acknowledge that scholarship awards are limited, up to \$6,000 per elementary school student, up to \$8000 per middle school student, and up to \$10,000 per high school student. Schools are prohibited from charging any fees to a scholarship student that will exceed fees required of a non-scholarship student.
- Will submit financial information that demonstrates the financial viability if the school will receive student scholarships of \$50,000 or more during the school year.
- Complete the Participation Agreement and submit to RCSGO yearly.
- Attend annual Partner School Training held in March of each year.
- Partner with RCSGO to build our donor base. Each school is required to attend a marketing session and will host the executive director and/or board member of RCSGO twice yearly (spring/fall) at an event that will create a partnership between the organization and your community to encourage donations to the program.



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2021-22 School Information Form

School Name: _____

Address: _____

School Website: _____

Accreditation Agency: _____

Date of Accreditation: _____

Date of Accreditation: _____

Accreditation Expiration: _____

Name of Achievement Test Administered: _____

Principal: _____

Principal Phone: _____

Principal Email: _____

Primary POC for RCSGO: _____

POC Phone Number: _____

POC Email: _____



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2021-2022 School Participation Agreement

After reviewing all the information in the school participation packet, this document must be signed by the participating school principal.

By signing this document, I, _____, hereby attest that:

___ I have read, understand, and will comply with the requirements within the Rocket City SGO 2021-22 Participating School Guidelines and Required Document List.

___ I have filed a "Non-Public School Notice of Intent to Participate" form and my school agrees to adhere to the requirements as listed.

___ My school is accredited by one of the six regional accrediting agencies or the National Council for Private School Accreditation, AdvancEd, the American Association of Christian Schools, or one of their partner accrediting agencies.

___ I have provided a copy of my accreditation.

___ My school complies with the Alabama Child Protection Act of 1999 and completes background checks on all school employees.

___ My school complies with all Alabama health and safety laws and codes as required of public schools, all Alabama nondiscrimination policies and holds a valid occupancy permit if required by my municipality.

___ My school maintains a website that describes the school, the instructional program of the school and the tuition and mandatory fees charged as well as a link to rocketsgo.org. Website will be updated yearly to reflect changes in tuition and fees.

___ My school will annually administer state achievement tests that measure learning gains in math and language arts to students receiving scholarships and the results will be provided to Rocket City SGO.

___ My school will provide financial information that demonstrates financial viability if my school will receive student scholarships of \$50,000 or more during the school year.

Principal or Head of School Signature

Date



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2021-22 Attestation of Compliance with the Child Protection Act of 1999

I attest that my school complies with all aspects of the Alabama Child Protection Act of 1999 and completes criminal background checks on all school employees.

Principal or Head of School Signature

Date

Printed Name/Title



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2021-2022 Participating School Required Documents

The Alabama Accountability Act of 2013 and subsequent amendments require that certain information be provided to Rocket City SGO annually. All documentation must be provided before any scholarship checks will be issued. Please ensure the following documents are submitted annually:

- Signed copy of the Rocket City SGO School Participation Agreement
- Financial information that demonstrates the financial viability if the school will receive student scholarships of \$50,000 or more during the school year. **NOTE: This documentation is required before Rocket City SGO can issue any payments, for any year during which this criterion applies.**
- Copy of published statement of all tuition and fees for 2021-2022 which is also reflected on the school website.
- Achievement test scores for all scholarship recipients in grades requiring testing in the state of Alabama. (Grades 3-8, 10 and 11) Must be received by 6/30/2021.
- Copy of Accreditation Certificate

All required information should be provided to Rocket City SGO by March 10, 2021 except for achievement test scores which must be received by 6/30/2021.