



ASSUMPTION HIGH SCHOOL

NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE SPONSORED BY THE SISTERS OF MERCY

November 11, 2016

Dear Commissioner Tackett, KHSAA Staff and Board of Control Members:

Assumption High School formally requests a waiver or exemption for our Success Scholar Program from the following KHSAA regulation:

Bylaw 11 Sec. 2) IMPERMISSIBLE FINANCIAL AID *A student shall be ineligible to participate in interscholastic athletics if the student: a) Receives financial aid beyond the limits defined in Section 1, f) Receives financial aid that is not available to the entire student body by published objective criteria.*

1. What is the Success Scholar Program and who is eligible?

Only students who have graduated from Nativity Academy in Louisville, KY are eligible to participate in the Success Scholar Program at Assumption High School. Nativity Academy is part of a nationwide program to provide a faith-based, private education and mentoring program for low-income children with academic promise. Currently, Nativity Academy provides education for students in grades 5-8.

Assumption continues the work begun at Nativity Academy by providing a Catholic high school education for at risk and low income students. Our program began in 2006 with our first class graduating in 2010. We are proud of the fact that ALL of our Nativity Academy students who have graduated from Assumption have received college admission and scholarship offers. We believe that our 100% success rate with college admissions proves the value of our program at Assumption and is the foundation for success in high school and beyond.

Assumption views this program as a partnership and a privilege which requires commitment on part of the student, her parents/guardian(s) and the school. This program requires a level of investment on the part of the school that is substantial. As such, Assumption expects a corresponding level of commitment from the student and her parents/guardian(s) in order to participate in the program.

2. History of Success Scholars Program:

Nativity Academy programs exist in 15 different states. The program began nearly forty years ago at the Nativity Mission in New York City's Spanish Harlem. With the opening of Nativity

Academy, Louisville joined forty other cities in the United States, which have at least one private middle school based on the NativityMiguel model of education.

When Nativity Academy opened in Louisville, KY, the goal of its local founders was to provide a Catholic high school education to all of its graduates. Recognizing that even with financial aid, Catholic high school tuition may be out of reach for many of its graduates, the founders of Louisville Nativity Academy approached the presidents and principals of Catholic high schools, asking them for a pledge to provide tuition support to students from Nativity Academy. Assumption made this commitment in 2005 and has sought through the use of the Success Scholars program to fulfill that commitment in what we believe to be the most ethical way possible.

Nearly ninety percent of Nativity program's alumni graduate from high school in four years. Over seventy-five percent enroll in two or four-year colleges and universities. At Assumption, 100% of our Success Scholar graduates matriculate to a two or four-year college. We believe that our above average success rate is directly correlated to the fully developed Success Scholars Program that we offer to Nativity Academy graduates who attend Assumption and participate in this program.

3. Why we provide Success Scholars as a program?

Assumption provides the Success Scholar Program because it is in direct correlation with our mission and vision. Our mission is to educate young women in a Catholic community where faith guides, compassion inspires, integrity matters, and excellence empowers.

Assumption High School's vision is that we will thrive as the college preparatory school of choice for young women in Louisville by providing a wide range of educational and co-curricular programs that are complemented by spiritual and physical development opportunities.

This unique experience educates the whole person in a caring, Christian environment that is permeated with the charism of Catherine McAuley, foundress of the Sisters of Mercy. Catherine McAuley dedicated her life to serving the poor. She believed that the education of women and children was paramount to changing society for the better.

This is why our Success Scholars program for Nativity Academy graduates goes beyond just tuition. Assumption has maintained a deep commitment to our partnership with Nativity Academy. It has been our belief that in order to ethically fulfill that commitment and partnership with Nativity Academy, we must provide to our Success Scholars the tools necessary to fully participate in an education at Assumption and developing an after-school support program that mirrors that at Nativity Academy. We believe that meeting the many needs of our students; including providing things that would otherwise limit their ability to participate fully, such as books, school supplies and uniforms, are absolutely necessary for these students to achieve.

4. What are the benefits and requirements of the Success Scholars Program?

We have each student and parent sign a document each year as follows:

This document outlines the commitment of the school as well as the expectations and requirements of the student and her parents/guardian(s) who decide to participate in this program.

A. Assumption High School will provide to Student who participates in the Success Scholar Program:

1. **Discounted Tuition and Tablet PC.** Student shall receive discounted tuition and a tablet PC as part of the Success Scholar Program. A student's tuition obligation will be based upon her financial need as determined by Private School Aid Service (PSAS). Once a determination has been made by PSAS, the Finance Office will set the student's tuition and communicate that amount to the parents/guardian(s). **Even if full need is determined - a minimum monthly payment of \$50 will be required per student beginning in July and ending in April for a total of \$500 annually for tuition.** Current tuition is \$12,285 which includes \$600 annual lease fee for the HP Tablet PC. As part of the Success Scholar Program, Parents/Guardian(s) and Student agree to abide by Assumption's Tablet PC program which is outlined by separate agreement.
2. **School Books.** Savings of up to \$600 per semester. Please see below for expectations and requirements for the Book Program.
3. **School Uniforms.** New or gently used school uniforms. Savings of up to \$200.
4. **School Spirit Wear.** New or gently used spirit wear. Savings of up to \$100.
5. **Scientific Calculator.** Savings of \$160.
6. **School Supplies.** Supplies as needed. Binders, folders, paper, pencils, pens, graphing paper, notebooks, notecards, and poster board are always available.
7. **Summer Reading Books.** Savings of up to \$30.
8. **Reduced Registration Fee.** Reduced fee of \$25 which constitutes a savings of \$175. This fee will be due at the time of registration early in 2nd semester.
9. **Fees Waived for Summer Seminar.** Waive fees for Freshman Summer Seminar which constitutes a savings of \$55.
10. **Fees Waived for Retreats** Waive fees for Retreats which constitutes a savings from \$80-\$200 per year depending on grade level.
11. **Fees Waived for ACTS Program.** Waive fees to participate in A Christian through Service (ACTS program) and provides ACTS pants at a savings of \$150.
12. **Fees Waived for Graduation.** Graduation fees are set each year. A savings of typically \$175.

13. After School Academic Support Program Assumption is proud of the academic support offered to students in the Success Scholar Program which offers a continuity of services from Nativity Academy's own after-school program. This is a mandatory requirement. Please see below for more information as well as expectations.

NOTE: Per regulations of the KENTUCKY HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION (KHSAA), a student who participates in the Success Scholar Program is ineligible and forfeits the right to participate in KHSAA sanctioned sports. Success Scholar Program students may participate in non KHSAA sanctioned sports as well AHS extracurricular activities. Assumption DOES NOT pay for extracurricular, athletic or team sports fees. These fees are the responsibility of the student and her parents/guardian(s).

B. Student and her Parents/Guardian(s), in choosing to participate in the Success Scholar program, agree to:

1. File the PSAS form each year by the due date. Please contact the Finance Office at 271-2521 if you need assistance.
2. Meet all financial obligations for tuition payments and fees on a timely basis.
3. Attend a Parent Meeting prior to the start of each school year, scheduled by Mrs. Dawn Deweese, to review program expectations and answer any questions.
4. Abide by all rules and regulations contained in the Parent/Student Handbook including the Code of Conduct.
5. Student must abide by the expectations and requirements of the Book Program as outlined below.
6. Student must attend the After School Academic Support Program as outlined below.
7. Student must consistently perform to the best of her ability in the classroom.
8. Student must consistently participate in at least one extra-curricular activity in keeping with Assumption's mission of developing the "whole" person - Mind, Body and Spirit.
9. Student must participate in the Walk for Assumption – a school wide effort to raise funds for Financial Aid held in the fall each year.

➤ **Book Program:**

Assumption is pleased to offer free books with the following expectations:

- Student must keep track of the books and keep them in her possession. These books are not to be loaned to other students.
- If a book is misplaced, this must be reported to Mrs. Deweese ASAP and the student is responsible for the replacement cost of the book.
- Student must return all of the books received to Mrs. Deweese no later the last day of school.

- Books needed *only* for the first semester must be returned to Mrs. Deweese no later than the last day of exams for first semester. Student will not receive any second semester books needed until all first semester books are returned.
- Books should be well cared for and maintained in good condition.
- All students receiving books are **required** to attend a **Mandatory Book Return Work Day** at the conclusion of the school year as a service project. The date and time for this event will be announced at least one month in advance and a letter will be sent home for parents to notify them of the date.

➤ **After-School Academic Support Program** - *During this time, students are able to work on homework, seek help from teachers, receive academic advising/assistance, and build community with other students from Nativity Academy. This support is provided in an effort to offer a continuity of academic services students receive at Nativity through Nativity's after-school programs.*

Student must notify Mrs. Deweese if she cannot attend and all absences will be reported administratively. A pattern of non-attendance, especially with no notice given, will result in an administrator/parent conference. Missing more than two sessions per semester may result in dismissal from the Success Scholar program.

- Freshmen and sophomores are expected to stay after school on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 3:00-4:00pm in room 204.
- Juniors and Seniors are expected to stay after school on Mondays only; but may choose to attend Wednesday and Thursday sessions. Juniors and Seniors with a D or F grade are required to attend all three days – Mondays/Wednesdays/Thursdays.

5. Do other Catholic schools in Louisville offer programs to Nativity Students?

Other Louisville Catholic high schools provide financial aid for students from Nativity Academy. Some of them provide full tuition for a student who demonstrates full need as determined by PSAS. Other schools use a sliding scale to access need. However, all other Catholic High Schools limit their aid to tuition only. Anything beyond tuition is the responsibility of the family.

At Assumption, we recognize the financial hardships these families face in providing their children a Catholic high school education. We believe that in order to be successful at AHS – we need to meet each student's individual needs in a nurturing, caring and supportive environment.

Students from Nativity Academy are some of our most challenging students - struggling with significant socio-economic issues. Our program is successful in addressing many of these

impediments. By providing not only financial aid and other educational resources including mentoring and support services, these students are not only prepared to graduate high school but also attend and ultimately graduate from college.

No other high school provides this extensive of a program.

6. Why are we asking for a waiver now?

In the past, we have excluded those students participating in the Success Scholar Program from participating in KHSAA sports due to the fact that the student either **a) Receives financial aid beyond the limits defined in Section 1, f) Receives financial aid that is not available to the entire student body by published objective criteria;**

However, we received the following email from a parent of a Success Scholar student, which forced us to reexamine the issue and pursue a waiver for this program.

Request from Ms. Sutton – Parent of Amaria - a Success Scholar Program student:

Amaria has informed me that she along with all graduates from Nativity Academy are not allowed to participate in sports related activities. This decision poses a major concern for me for a number of different reasons. The girls that come from Nativity are typically Hispanic or Black. Assimilating into the Assumption culture is a challenge for these young women. The decision to limit how they assimilate or find their place at your establishment is a bit discriminatory. As a former Division 1 athlete and 4-time State Champion I understand all the benefits of participating in athletics for young women.

Participation in competitive sports instills a level of confidence in young women that cannot be easily duplicated. It offers a physical outlet this is imperative for all young women at this stage of their lives. Exercising this right also offers these young women productive extracurricular activities that allow them to stay focused on the things that matter. Most importantly it enters them into life-long sisterhoods with teammates, and life skills that could aid them in finding their place at Assumption as well as life in general. To deny them these basic rights that all other students are allowed to exercise would be as unfair as denying them an equal education. I know that they are “allowed” to join “other” teams (debate, chess, etc.). That’s awesome but that is not my concern. There denial of beneficial activity is my concern. The Feminist Majority Foundation released an article entitled “Interesting facts about Athletics, Sports and Title IX.” The findings in this article were as follows:

What Sports Do for Women

Regular exercise...

may decrease a woman's risk of breast cancer

increases self-esteem

increases confidence

increases a woman's bone mass and decreases her chance of osteoporosis

Women and girls who participate in sports...
have higher grades than students who don't
have lower dropout rates
have lower pregnancy rates
are less likely to use drugs
are more likely to graduate college
learn skills that will help them all of their lives

All girls that enter your establishment should be afforded this opportunity. Amaria has been afforded the opportunity to receive an education at Assumption, and for that we are grateful. Although we are grateful we do understand that any education with limits based on scholarship status, income or race is not a fair education. As a loving parent I cannot sit by idle and allow her to believe that this type of behavior, is just, fair or even legal. Amaria was encouraged to participate in Sports last school year so I am curious to know when this rule went into effect. I would also like to know the reasoning behind such a decision. Amaria has proven that she is an awesome fit academically as she finished her freshman year with a 3.91 GPA. Her work ethic will gain her entry into whatever college she chooses to attend.

In addition to the above letter, Ms. Sutton and Amaria requested to meet with the President and Athletic Director as well as our guidance counselor for our Success Scholar Program. At that meeting they asked us to pursue a waiver for this program. We agreed and concurred with their position that participation in athletics has significant benefits for high school student far beyond just the physical.

7. Why we think the KHSAA Board of Control should grant a waiver to this program?

First and foremost, Assumption understands the reason for the KHSAA rule and the need to prohibit illegal recruitment and enticement of students to attend Catholic high school for the sole reason of athletic ability and sports participation.

We believe that even with the resources provided to Success Scholars, the program still consistently meets the expectation that it not be used to recruit athletes to our school. That is because our Success Scholars Program has been and remains true to the Nativity model: aimed at educating at risk and low income students in a faith filled environment with the end result of preparing them for college. Enrollment in the Success Scholar Program is in no way conditioned on athletics. This is a result of the fact that the primary condition for acceptance into our Scholars Program is that the student is a graduate of Nativity Academy. Athletic participation is not considered as factor in admission to Nativity Academy. The resources provided to students are provided in fidelity with our partnership with Nativity Academy and commitment to aiding in the achievement of these goals not athletic participation.

It is our belief that a waiver request would better equip us to create young leaders who are able to develop their leadership through co-curricular activities and athletic program

participation. Currently, our Success Scholars may only participate in co-curricular activities and KHSAA sport activities that do not have bylaw 11 as a restriction, such as archery and bowling.

A waiver would open many more opportunities for our Success Scholars, opportunities that could help in the formation of leadership and team-building skills, as well as lead to essential scholarship money for college.

Please let me know if there are any questions or any further information I can provide regarding this request for a waiver of Bylaw 11 for our Success Scholar Program.

Sincerely,



Mary Lang
President



Angela Passafiume
Athletic Director