



Student Eligibility Requirements and Scholarship Calculation

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1. What are the eligibility requirements to receive a scholarship from The Pittsburgh Promise™?

The Pittsburgh Promise is available to graduates of the Pittsburgh Public Schools *regardless of financial need or income.*

To be eligible to receive funds from The Promise program students must meet the following criteria:

- Be a graduate of the Pittsburgh Public Schools beginning with the Class of 2008;
- Have been enrolled in the Pittsburgh Public Schools and been a resident in the Pittsburgh Public School District continuously since at least the 9th grade;
- Have met the minimum Grade Point Average (GPA). There is a 2.0 GPA requirement for the Class of 2008. The GPA requirement increases to 2.5 beginning with the Class of 2009;
- Earn admission to any school that is covered by The Pittsburgh Promise;
- Beginning with the 2009 Pittsburgh Public Schools graduating class, the minimum GPA will increase to 2.5 and high school attendance will count toward eligibility.
 - For the 2009 Pittsburgh Public Schools graduating class, students must have 85% attendance in high school, based upon both the number of unexcused absences and number of days suspended.
 - Beginning with the 2010 Pittsburgh Public Schools graduating class, students must have 90% attendance in high school, based upon both the number of unexcused absences and number of days suspended.
- Following the lead of many high-achieving states, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania intends to require a high school graduation exam. Once Pittsburgh Public Schools implements such an exam, the maximum scholarship award from The Pittsburgh Promise will increase to \$10,000 each year for students who pass the graduation exam. Given the opportunity to double the annual scholarship award from \$5,000 to \$10,000 each year, the Pittsburgh Public Schools will work collaboratively with the State to implement a graduation exam for the Class of 2012. Students who do not pass the graduation exam but fulfill all other eligibility requirements will continue to be eligible for a scholarship up to \$5,000 annually.



2. How much money will a student receive from The Pittsburgh Promise™?

The Promise will provide up to \$5,000 each year for up to four years for tuition. The actual amount that a student receives will be individualized based on factors such as the cost of The Promise eligible school they attend as well as the amount of grants and other scholarships they receive. Students who already have scholarships to cover the full cost of tuition may be eligible for a minimum award of up to \$1,000.

The intent of the “last dollar” scholarship from The Pittsburgh Promise is to make tuition affordable by providing up to \$5,000 to cover any gap between federal and state grants and the cost of tuition. Some students will receive the full \$5,000. Others may receive less than \$5,000, but still find that their full cost of tuition is covered. For example, a student attending a community college would not require \$5,000 from The Promise to have full tuition coverage.

Another aspect of the scholarship amount is based upon how long a student has both lived in the School District of Pittsburgh and has been enrolled in a Pittsburgh Public School. The Promise is designed to provide the maximum benefit to students who have both lived in the School District of Pittsburgh and have been enrolled in the Pittsburgh Public Schools continuously from kindergarten through high school graduation.

In order to calculate the amount of the Promise scholarship, students must first complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). A description of the four step process to determine the Promise scholarship amount is provided later in this document.

In the event a student has the entire cost of attendance covered – all tuition, room and board, and other expenses – by other scholarships (i.e. “full-ride”), The Promise would not need to contribute any money to ensure education.

3. Explain the minimum GPA requirement.

Students must have the following minimum cumulative high school Grade Point Average (GPA) upon graduation from the Pittsburgh Public Schools to be eligible for a scholarship from The Pittsburgh Promise.

Graduation Year	Minimum High School GPA at Time of Graduation
2008	2.0 GPA
2009 and beyond	2.5 GPA



4. Explain the attendance requirement that limits the number of unexcused absences and suspensions a student may receive.

We expect students to work hard in high school, to attend class, and to contribute to a safe and orderly school environment.

To be eligible for The Pittsburgh Promise™ scholarship, students must meet a minimum attendance requirement that considers the number of unexcused absences they had during their time in high school, as well as the number of days they were suspended from school during their time in high school.

Both unexcused absences (unlawful absences) and suspensions (involuntary exclusions) are defined in the Pittsburgh Public Schools Code of Conduct. Note that absences for illness, health care, bereavement, religious holidays and religious instruction, weather emergency, school-approved activities, or other principal-approved excusals are not counted against a student when determining Promise eligibility.

Students must have the following minimum cumulative attendance record in high school upon graduation to be eligible for The Pittsburgh Promise scholarship:

If a student graduates in:	Then they must meet this attendance requirement to be eligible:
2008	No Criteria
2009	85% attendance based on unexcused absences and suspensions. This is equivalent to missing 3-days of school a month during a 180-day school year because of unexcused absences and suspensions.
2010 and beyond	90% Attendance based on unexcused absences and suspensions. This is equivalent to missing 2-days of school a month during a 180-day school year because of unexcused absences and suspensions.

5. What colleges or schools are covered by The Pittsburgh Promise?

The Promise scholarship can be used at approximately 100 schools in Pennsylvania, including all Pennsylvania state-funded schools, community colleges and most private schools in Allegheny County that offer two OR four year degree programs, including many trade schools. A complete list of these schools is available online at www.pittsburghpromise.com.

6. Please summarize the criteria that are used to determine scholarship eligibility.

Criteria that are used to determine scholarship eligibility

1

High school attendance requirement



- **2008:** None
- **2009:** 85% based on unexcused absences and suspensions
- **2010+:** 90% based on unexcused absences and suspensions

3

Enrollment and residency requirement

Enrolled in PPS and resident in School District of Pittsburgh continuously since	Percent of Promise multiplier
Kindergarten	100%
Grades 1-5	95%
Grades 6-8	85%
Grade 9	75%
Grades 10-12	0%*

* In order to minimize the incentive of last-minute enrollment in PPS for the sole purpose of obtaining the Promise scholarship, and to maximize the impact of the 'plan' and 'prepare' components, students that have not been enrolled in PPS and residents of the School District of Pittsburgh continuously since at least 9th grade are not eligible for the scholarship.

2

High school academic requirement

GPA

- **2008:** 2.0 min GPA
- **2009+:** 2.5 min GPA

4

Complete FAFSA and attend a Promise-eligible school

FAFSA



7. How much money will a student receive from The Pittsburgh Promise™ if they meet the eligibility requirements?

Assuming that a student has met all eligibility requirements, the Promise scholarship amount is determined based on the following 4-step process:

1) Calculate Expected Family Contribution (EFC) and total grants

The U.S. Department of Education uses the information on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to determine the EFC for a student. Financial aid offices use EFC, along with total cost of attendance and grant rules to determine total grants.

2) Calculate unmet tuition need

Unmet tuition need is the amount of tuition and fees not covered by grants.

3) Calculate 100% Promise scholarship

If the unmet tuition need is:	Then the 100% scholarship award is:
Less than \$1,000	Equal to \$1,000*
Greater than or equal to \$1,000 and less than or equal to \$5,000	Equal to the unmet tuition need
Greater than \$5,000	Equal to \$5,000

*This amount could be lower if \$1,000, combined with other grants and scholarships, exceeds the total cost of attendance at the school including tuition, room and board, and other mandatory fees.

4) Apply enrollment and residency requirement multiplier to determine final Promise scholarship.

If the student has been enrolled in the Pittsburgh Public Schools and been a resident in the Pittsburgh Public School District continuously since:	Then multiply the 100% Promise scholarship by the amount below to determine the scholarship award amount for each year:
Kindergarten	1
Grades 1-5	0.95
Grades 6-8	0.85
Grade 9	0.75
Grades 10-12	0

8. Please provide an example of the 4-step process for calculating the appropriate scholarship award amount.

Example of 4-step process for calculating a scholarship award

Step 1: Calculate EFC* and Grants

EFC is calculated from FAFSA.

EFC Calculation	Example
Household Income	\$40,000
Number of kids in college	1
EFC**	\$3,400

College financial aid offices use EFC, along with college cost of attendance and grant rules to determine Total Grants.

Grants

Federal Pell	\$1,500
PA State (PHEAA)***	\$3,500
Other grants****	\$1,500
Total grants	\$6,500

Step 2: Calculate unmet tuition need

Example is based on University of Pittsburgh (2006 tuition and fees).

Tuition & fees	\$12,138
Total grants	\$6,500
Unmet tuition need	\$5,638

* Expected Family Contribution - Students must submit a FAFSA to be considered for a Promise scholarship. The United States Department of Education uses the information on the FAFSA to determine the EFC for a student.
 ** Based on a family of 2 parents and 2 kids, with older parent age= 45 years, with parent assets ~1x annual salary and reasonable student income and asset levels
 *** Based on estimates provided at www.pheaa.org
 **** Includes all school based scholarships, work studies

**Example of 4-step process for calculating a scholarship award
(continued)**

Step 3: Calculate 100% Promise scholarship

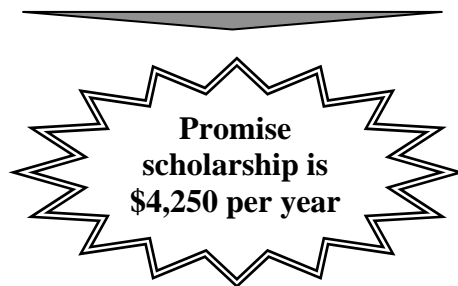
\$5,638 unmet tuition need is greater than the \$5,000 cap, so award is reduced to cap amount.

100% Promise scholarship \$5,000

Step 4: Apply multiplier

Example is based on a student that has been enrolled in PPS and lived in the School District of Pittsburgh continuously since 7th grade; therefore the multiplier is 85%.

Enrolled in PPS and resident in School District of Pittsburgh continuously since	Percent of Promise multiplier
Kindergarten	100%
Grades 1-5	95%
Grades 6-8	85%
Grade 9	75%
Grades 10-12	0%*



$\$5,000 \times 85\% = \$4,250$



9. Since The Pittsburgh Promise™ scholarship offers money towards tuition, does this mean that students will no longer need to apply for Federal and State Aid?

No. The Promise is designed as a “last dollar” scholarship that is applied toward tuition after federal and state grants. Students must submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to be considered for The Pittsburgh Promise scholarship. The FAFSA can be completed online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. Additionally, paper copies are available in the offices of high school guidance and career counselors.

Students are encouraged to pursue other scholarships, and The Promise will reward this by potentially contributing towards room and board or other college expenses.

10. What does a student have to do to keep receiving The Promise scholarship each year after attending a post-secondary school?

A student must submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) every school year so that the Promise scholarship can be calculated each year. Additionally, the student must maintain a minimum 2.0 GPA while making adequate progress toward a bachelor degree, an associate degree, or an equivalent two-year degree.

11. What is the time limit for using The Pittsburgh Promise scholarship funds?

Students have five years of eligibility during which to exercise four years of the Promise scholarship. This allows for a year off before or during college. The timeframe can be deferred for students entering military service.

12. Does enrollment in the post-secondary school need to be continuous?

No, as long as the education is completed within five years.

13. How will a student actually receive The Promise scholarship money?

Promise scholarship funds will be distributed directly to academic institutions and applied to the student’s account balances once the semester add/drop period has passed. No funds will be disbursed directly to students from The Pittsburgh Promise.



14. Explain how The Pittsburgh Promise™ scholarship award could increase to a maximum of \$10,000 each year.

Following the lead of many high-achieving states, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania intends to require a high school graduation exam. Once Pittsburgh Public Schools implements such an exam, the maximum scholarship award from The Pittsburgh Promise will increase to \$10,000 each year for students who pass the graduation exam.

Given the opportunity to double the annual scholarship award from \$5,000 to \$10,000 each year, the Pittsburgh Public Schools will work collaboratively with the State to implement a graduation exam for the Class of 2012.

Students who do not pass the graduation exam but fulfill all other eligibility requirements will continue to be eligible for a scholarship up to \$5,000 annually.

Here is one way that it could work:

Students can take the graduation test beginning in 10th grade with the requirement to pass it one time. If a student is unable to pass the exam in 10th grade, the student may take the exam in 11th and/or 12th grades. Students who both pass the graduation exam and have 2.5 GPA will be eligible for between \$1,500 and \$10,000.

Year of Graduation	Minimum GPA
2012 and beyond	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="630 1220 1370 1402">○ <i>2.5 GPA:</i> The Promise will provide up to \$5,000 each year for up to four years for tuition. Students that already have scholarships to cover the full cost of tuition may be eligible for a minimum award of up to \$1,000. <li data-bbox="630 1436 1370 1602">○ <i>2.5 GPA and Pass High School Graduation Exam:</i> The Promise will provide up to \$10,000 each year for up to four years for tuition. Students that already have scholarships to cover the full cost of tuition may be eligible for a minimum award of up to \$2,000.

15. What if a student’s Promise scholarship eligibility appears to have been miscalculated?

The Pittsburgh Promise will provide an appeals process and will consult with the Pittsburgh Public Schools if there are perceived errors in student data. If an error is discovered, the student will receive an updated statement of their eligibility.