



Financial Aid Policy

Updated January 2021

INTRODUCTION

Independent school education is a choice for all families, and many families make significant financial sacrifices to support this choice. Bertschi School believes financial aid is an important tool for inclusivity of families representing socio-economic diversity. This document provides information about our financial aid program for prospective and current parents as well as guidance to our Financial Aid Committee to implement our financial aid policies. If you have further questions, please contact Keisha Wilson, our Director of Enrollment Management at keishaw@bertschi.org.

PHILOSOPHY

As a key component of our values, Bertschi School aims to prepare all students to embrace diversity in the world at large. As part of this effort, the school is committed to attracting and retaining a socio-economically diverse community of families. In order to do so, the school has established a program of financial aid for families who might otherwise be unable to consider Bertschi as an option due to cost. A significant portion of tuition and program revenue is allocated annually to financial aid for students in all grades. Additionally, endowment funds for financial aid increase the available financial aid each year.

Bertschi School considers all costs of attending the school when determining financial aid. Financial aid awards address student tuition, Extended Day and after school clubs, Learning Services, on-campus speech therapy and occupational therapy, and summer programs. Financial aid packages are also carefully structured to best meet the needs of specific family situations.

APPLYING FOR FINANCIAL AID

While each family's situation is unique, we have established a financial aid application process that ensures that all families receive fair and equitable consideration. This is a confidential process managed by a Financial Aid Committee that includes Head of School Rafael del Castillo, our Chief Financial and Operating Officer, Mike Gardner, and our Director of Enrollment Management, Keisha Wilson. The process starts with an online application via Financial Aid for School Tuition (FAST) to independently assess each family's ability to pay for Bertschi School. The committee then evaluates the FAST application information within the context of each family's individual circumstances to arrive at a specific financial aid award for a family, as appropriate.



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SIMPLIFIED RENEWAL PROGRAM

Returning Bertschi School families may be eligible for an annual renewal program that avoids having to submit a FAST application. To be eligible for the Simplified Renewal Program families must meet all of the following criteria:

- Income from all parents is reported as “wages, salaries, or tips” on IRS form 1040 and supported with form(s) W-2. A family income threshold may apply.
- The family’s gross income has not increased or decreased by more than 10% from the previous year’s application.
- The family does not have income from a business or farm.

Families eligible for this program will be required to:

- Submit their final December pay stub(s) showing their income from the previous calendar year by January 31, 2021
- Confirm that the conditions of renewal have been met
- Submit copies of their IRS form(s) 1040 and form(s) W-2 to Bertschi School by March 1, 2021

The Financial Aid Committee will use this information to determine whether to extend a family’s previous award percentage into the next school year. If any of the conditions of renewal are not met, the family will be encouraged to apply for financial aid using the full FAST application process and will be given full consideration for an award.

Eligible families can continue to renew their awards through this process until their oldest child is rising into third grade, or they have renewed their award three (3) times, whichever is longer. At third grade, or after three renewals, families will be required to complete the FAST application to reaffirm their eligibility for financial aid.

FINANCIAL AID AWARD COMPUTATION

Bertschi School subscribes to the belief that families who apply for aid and show a demonstrated need should have that need fully funded. We do require a minimum tuition payment of \$1,000 per student. Computation of financial need is complex and involves many factors, including income, expenses, assets and liabilities. Each family’s unique financial situation is evaluated using FAST and all information provided through the application process.



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APPEALS PROCESS

Once financial aid has been granted, families may appeal their awards to the Financial Aid Committee. The Financial Aid Committee will assess the appeal in a timely manner and make a decision regarding the appeal. Appeals on an award decision should be made based on new financial information that was not previously available to the committee.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Throughout the financial aid process, families provide information of such a personal nature that it is imperative that the highest standards of confidentiality be adhered to. Teachers, other parents, and students are never informed of a student or family's status as a financial aid recipient. A small number of administrators involved in implementation of financial aid awards are aware of a family's financial aid status. Only members of the Financial Aid Committee view the details of a family's finances.

Additionally, the school requires families applying for or receiving financial aid to refrain from discussing the specifics of their needs and awards with other Bertschi parents or prospective families.

REVOCAION OF FINANCIAL AID AWARD

If, at any time, it is determined that a family has provided false or misleading information through the FAST application or the documentation required through the renewal process, Bertschi School may revoke or reduce a financial aid award. Award revocation or reduction is at the sole discretion of the Financial Aid Committee.

OTHER FINANCIAL AID POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Admissions & Acceptance

Applicants are accepted for admission to Bertschi School on a need-blind basis based on the school's fit for their individual needs and their unique ability to contribute to our community of learners. Admission decisions are made by teams that include teachers and administrators. Once the Admission Team has identified the students they intend to offer enrollment, the Director of Enrollment Management reviews each file to determine if the family is an applicant for financial aid. The Admission Team is never informed of an applicant's status with regard to financial aid.



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Returning Students Receiving Financial Aid

Bertschi School is committed to offering an equivalent level of aid to all returning families as long as they continue to demonstrate a similar level of need. If the family's ability to contribute to the student's education increases, the level of aid awarded may decrease accordingly. If the family's ability to afford the costs of Bertschi School decreases, the school may raise the level of aid awarded to meet the need.

Returning Students Requesting Aid for the First Time

Re-enrolling families who have not received financial aid previously are encouraged to apply for financial aid if changes in their circumstances make it hard to pay for Bertschi School.

Separated, Divorced, or Never-Married Parents

All parents/guardians of a student must complete the FAST application for financial aid. The Financial Aid Committee may deny an award due to incomplete information if a second parent household does not submit financial details as required.

Financial aid at Bertschi School is determined by a family's ability to meet educational expenses; it is based on need, not on a willingness or unwillingness to pay. It is the position of the school that all parents retain the obligation to contribute to the education of their children whether or not there is a legal agreement between them to do so. The Financial Aid Committee will consider the assets of all parents before making any award, and cannot be held by the assertion that one parent has disclaimed responsibility for educational expenses.

The Financial Aid Committee may waive the requirement of financial information from a non-custodial parent when the non-custodial parent's whereabouts are unknown, or when the non-custodial parent has given no financial support to the student for more than two (2) years and has had no contact with the student during that time.

No financial information will be shared by the school with another parent/guardian participating in the application process without express permission from both parties.

Non-Working Parents

Bertschi School believes independent school education is a family choice requiring a significant commitment. In the case of a parent who does not work and all children are enrolled in a full-time preschool or school setting, a minimum of \$31,200 of income is imputed in calculating the family's



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gross income figure for the year. The Financial Aid Committee may waive this requirement under certain circumstances.

Children in Multiple Schools

It is expected that families will apply for financial aid for all children in tuition charging institutions, including secondary schools and colleges.

Financial Aid Beyond Tuition

Financial aid is available for all aspects of Bertschi School's program, including tuition, Extended Day and after school clubs, Learning Services, on-campus speech therapy and occupational therapy, and summer programs. For areas other than tuition, the school uses sliding scale discounts to arrive at a family's financial obligation. Sliding scale discounts are associated with a family's tuition award percentage.