



*giving parents a choice- giving children a chance*

## **About The BISON Children's Scholarship Fund**

The BISON children's Scholarship Fund is a privately funded partial tuition assistance program for low-income children living in the eight counties of Western New York: Erie, Niagara, Genesee, Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Wyoming and Orleans.

BISON's goal is to equalize educational opportunities for elementary students by offering low-income families educational options normally denied them because of cost. BISON believes that every child should have the chance to succeed. BISON makes a minimum of a four-year commitment to each student awarded a scholarship, but has set a goal of providing scholarships to students throughout their grammar school years.

Thanks to the generosity of the Western New York community and matching grants from the Children Scholarship Fund (CSF), the BISON Scholarship Fund has grown from helping 200 children in its first year to more than 1,750 children today. These BISON children attend over 65 different private or Catholic schools in the greater Buffalo area.

While BISON's dramatic growth in scholarship support is remarkable, the demand for BISON scholarships is even more overwhelming as awareness of the program has heightened.

This demand is our challenge; we appreciate your generosity to help more children have a better chance for a brighter future!

### **How to Apply**

Attention Western New York Families! The BISON Fund is a privately funded tuition assistance program offering partial tuition assistance to low income families. Families awarded a BISON scholarship can enroll their child in any Kindergarten through 8th grade private school of choice in the greater Buffalo area. Scholarships are awarded by annual lottery drawing and are not academic or race-based scholarships, but awarded solely based on need.

**New Applicant Eligibility Forms for the 2015-2016 school year are available at [www.bisonfund.com](http://www.bisonfund.com)** If you have questions or need more information; contact the BISON Fund at 716-854-0869 ext. 1

### **BISON Children's Scholarship Fund NEW Dates to Remember**

December 2014 -New Applicant Eligibility Forms are available for the 2015-2016 academic year

February 2015 - Current families receiving BISON funding are required to sign the Verification Report at your child's school. Schools will supply requalification papers for the 2015-2016 academic year to current families when signing verification reports

February 28, 2015 -New Applicant Eligibility Form deadline for NEW students. Families can apply after the deadline and will be placed on the waiting list.

- March 2015 -Lottery drawing and notification from BISON
- March 31, 2015 -Requalification papers due back from current families
- April 30, 2015 -Deadline for paperwork from NEW families
- Spring 2015 -BISON will start to notify families and schools of award amounts

### **BISON Children's Scholarship Fund - Quick Facts from the 2014-15 Academic Year**

- The BISON Fund is a privately funded tuition assistance program offering *partial* tuition assistance to low income families
- Families are required to contribute a minimum of \$500 towards each child's education to be eligible for BISON funding
- The BISON Fund is currently providing tuition assistance for 1,750 children attending 65 different private schools in Western New York
- The average scholarship awarded in the 2014-2015 school year was \$1,080
- The greatest award given was \$1,500 per student
- The total amount of money awarded in the 2014-2015 academic year was \$1.9 million
- Families awarded a BISON scholarship can enroll their child in any Kindergarten through 8th grade private school of choice in the greater Buffalo area.
- Scholarships are awarded by **annual lottery drawing** and are not academic or race-based scholarships, but awarded solely based on need
- BISON makes a minimum of a four-year commitment to each student awarded a scholarship, but has set a goal of providing scholarships to students throughout their grammar school years.

BISON contacts: Cindy McDonald, Program Director (Program questions)  
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