

2027 SCHOLARSHIP OVERVIEW



The Carson Scholars Fund awards $1,000 college scholarships to students in grades 4-11 who excel academically and are dedicated to serving others.

Nomination Process

- Schools may nominate one student per grade category represented at the school.
- Nomination forms are emailed to all contacts in our database.
- After review of the nomination, students receive an application via email.



Categories

ELEMENTARY	MIDDLE SCHOOL	HIGH SCHOOL
GRADES: 4-5	GRADES: 6-8	GRADES: 9-11



Eligibility

- Enrolled in grades 4-11 at an accredited school in the US
- Minimum 3.75 GPA
- Current involvement in activities that serve others
- Must not be a previous recipient of the Carson Scholarship

Dates & Deadlines

ALL DEADLINES 11:59 PM EST

Nomination Form Available: **Monday, October 19, 2026**
Nomination Deadline: **Wednesday, December 16, 2026**
Application & Recommendation Deadline: **Wednesday, January 13, 2027**
Notification of Results: **March 2027**

Contact Us

410-828-1005
scholarship@carsonscholars.org
www.carsonscholars.org/scholarships

Pronunciation Guide

We ask all applicants to provide the pronunciation of their first and last names so that we're able to properly address applicants by name. More importantly, they allow us to properly announce winners' names at our awards banquets. We make every attempt to recognize each Carson Scholar at an awards ceremony, so please write a pronunciation for your name, even if you think it is obvious.

We recommend doing one of two things:

Write the name phonetically using common phonetic symbols:

Vowel Symbol	Sounds Like	Name	Pronunciation
ă	Apple, Cat	Brad	Brăd
ā	Acorn, Cake	Kate	Kāte
ăr	Carry	Mary	Măry
ĕ	Egg, Bell, Bet	Meg	Mĕg
ē	Bee, Ease, Tree	Ethan	Ēthăn
ĕr	Merry	Kerry	Kĕrrē
ĭ	Bit, Fish, City	Jim	Jĭm
ī	Ice, Pie, Bite	Isis	Īsĭs
ŏ	Clock, Not	Bob	Bŏb
ō	Rose, Go	Brody	Brōdē
ōr	Hoarse, Glory	Rory	Rōrē
ûr	Fur, Bird	Vernon	Vûrnŭn
ŭ	Sun, Umbrella	Chuck	Chŭck
ū	Glue, Flu, Boot	Lucy	Lūcē
oi	Boy, Noise	Roy	Roi

Write the name using other, basic words:

Name	Pronunciation
Erin	"Air" – "in"
Rocco	"Rock" – "oh"
Jaxon	"Jack" – "son"
Shelby	"Shell" – "bee"

Pronunciations have no effect on winner decisions – they just help us as we plan the awards banquets. We appreciate your assistance!

Understanding the Community Service Requirement

Current involvement in service activities is a required component of the Carson Scholars Program.

Any activity that is in service to others – inside and/or outside of school - may be included on the application. We encourage applicants and educators to consider all unpaid, volunteer activities that serve others when completing the application.

Depending on your age, activities will vary in scope and impact. **Applicants must have at least one service activity from the current calendar year to be considered.**

In the application, please include the following information about your activities:

- The organization you worked with or what the act of service was
- Dates on which you performed the activity
- Total number of hours served for this calendar year
  - **Please do not include dates or hours from prior year's service.** You can let us know which activities you've been involved with for more than one year by checking the box provided.

In the activity details box, please provide the following information:

- Impact on the community/person or people you're helping
- Specific accomplishments or events
- Your specific role related to the activity

To add additional activities, include text in all text boxes for activity 1 then select the box indicating that you have more activities to add. If you don't have additional activities to add, do not select the option to add more.

Examples of service activities by age:

Elementary

Grades 4 - 5

- Safety patrol
- Scout activities
- Library/teacher helper
- Place of worship activities
- Altar server
- Neighborhood cleanup
- PTA or school events
- Assisting family members
- Donation drives

Middle

Grades 6 - 8

- Scout activities
- Library volunteer
- Neighborhood cleanup
- Place of worship activities
- Animal rescue
- PTA or school events
- Donation drives

High

Grades 9 - 12

- Scout activities
- Fundraisers
- Non-profit work
- Starting your own non-profit
- Hospital volunteer
- Science fair judge
- Place of worship activities

**Note: these lists are not exhaustive, but provide activities to consider for students of any age*

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2027 Essay Questions

Grades 4-5:

- Teachers help us grow in many ways. Think about a teacher, coach, family member, or mentor who taught you something important. Describe what you learned and explain how you could use that lesson to help another person. How can sharing what you've learned make your community stronger?
- Imagine you've been asked to give a "Book Talk" to your classmates to encourage them to read a book that you really love. In essay format, write your speech. Be sure to include the title of the book, why you would recommend the book and what lesson(s) could be learned from the story.

Grades 6-8:

- People often think about leaving a legacy later in life, but our actions today shape how others remember us. What kind of legacy do you want to begin building now? Explain how education, service, and paying it forward can help you leave a positive impact on your school and community.
- Leadership is not only about being in charge—it's also about helping others succeed. Describe a time when you demonstrated leadership by serving someone else. What qualities do you believe make an effective leader?

Grades 9-11:

- Many works of art, music, literature, scientific discoveries, and innovations can shape the way we view ourselves and the world around us. Write an essay about one such work or idea that had a meaningful impact on your thinking and discuss how it influenced your outlook.
- "You miss 100% of the shots you don't take" – Wayne Gretzky
  Tell a story about a time you took a shot at something. In your story, include how this experience impacted your life (positively or negatively) and share what came out of the experience.

Educator FAQs

What are the eligibility criteria for the scholarship?

Students must be in grades 4-11 with a current GPA of 3.75 or higher and be actively involved in activities that are in service to others, inside and/or outside of school.

How many students can my school nominate?

Generally, schools can nominate one student each year. Schools that serve multiple grade categories can nominate one student per grade band per year.

> Example: A school that serves grades K-12 can nominate three students: one from 4th or 5th grade; one from 6th, 7th or 8th grade; and one from 9th, 10thor 11th grade.

How can I nominate a student?

In mid-October, the nomination form is emailed to all contacts in our database. Submit that form before the deadline to nominate your student! If you don't see the email in your inbox, check your spam folder and/or reach out to us.

I nominated a student. What happens next?

Nominations are reviewed on our end within two business days. Once approved, the student will receive an email with access to the application. The nominator and principal will receive a copy of the email as well.

Our school uses an alternative grading system. Is my student still eligible?

Yes. Please provide the student with a letter, on school letterhead, stating their current courses and the best estimation of "traditional" course grades and/or a GPA. The student should upload this with their grade report to the application.

What do Carson Scholars win?

Students named Carson Scholars for the first time will receive a $1,000 college scholarship that the Carson Scholars Fund invests on their behalf to earn interest until high school graduation. Students also receive an invitation to a regional awards banquet and a recognition packet including an Olympic-sized medal and a certificate of achievement.

Educator FAQs

My student already received the Carson Scholarship. Can he/she win again?

No, the scholarship is a one-time award. Students who have already won the scholarship are eligible to participate in our recognition program to renew their status as Carson Scholars. Applications for recognition are sent directly to eligible students and don't require a nomination. No financial award is given for the recognition program.

How do I submit a recommendation letter for my student as part of the application?

In the online application portal, students must email a request for a recommendation letter to an educator of their choice. The email contains a link to upload the letter to the application. Students cannot view the contents of the letter but can see submission status. If your student emailed you a recommendation request and you don't see it in your inbox or spam folders, contact us!

My student asked me to write a letter of recommendation on his/her behalf. What should the letter contain?

We ask that you address the applicant's leadership ability and impact in the classroom/school and his/her scholastic work ethic, motivation, and achievements. Feel free to include additional information that should be shared about your student!

If a team of educators is completing the recommendation, educators may individually address one of the topics or the team may collaborate on each topic as a group.

Will we find out the status of the student's application?

Yes! All applicants and educators are notified in early March via email. If your student is selected as a Carson Scholar, you'll also be invited to a regional awards banquet.

Report Card & GPA Calculation Policies

Because the Carson Scholars Fund works with students and schools across the country, we use a standardized method to calculate GPAs to ensure fairness and consistency. **All students applying for the Carson Scholars Program must have a GPA of 3.75 or higher based on this calculation.**

The Carson Scholars Fund only considers grades from the following courses:

- English/Reading/Language Arts
- Math
- Science
- Social Studies
- Foreign Language

A report card from the **current school year** must be uploaded to the application. If a report card is not available by the application deadline, a progress report or a screenshot of current grades from an online grading portal is acceptable. Please ensure the student's name and school are visible on the document.

Please do not submit a transcript as they often do not include current year grades.

Because the Carson Scholars Fund works with schools across the country, the following chart is used to convert and calculate applicants' GPAs.

Letter Grades		Numerical Scores
A = 4.0	E (Excellent) = 4.0	90 - 100 = 4.0
B = 3.0	G (Good) = 3.0	80 - 89 = 3.0
C = 2.0	S (Satisfactory) = 2.0	70 - 79 = 2.0
D = 1.0	P (Poor) = 1.0	60 - 69 = 1.0
F = 0	U (Unsatisfactory) = 0	Below 60 = 0

How to Calculate GPA

First convert individual grades using the table above **then** calculate the GPA by finding the average.

Grades from Report Card:	Conversion:	Final Calculation:
English: 95	English = 95 = 4.0	4.0
Math: 89	Math = 89 = 3.0	3.0
Biology: 93	Biology = 93 = 4.0	4.0
History: 90	History = 90 = 4.0	+ 4.0
Music: 99	Music = not included	15

15 ÷ 4 = 3.75

Report Card & GPA Calculation Policies

Policy for Weighting Courses – High School Students

The Carson Scholars Fund assigns additional weight to the following courses for high school students:

One additional point	Half point
Advanced Placement (AP)	Gifted and Talented
International Baccalaureate (IB)	Honors
Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE)	Pre-IB
College dual-enrollment courses	

To determine the correct conversion for a weighted class, see the **Weight Conversion Table** below.

High School Weight Conversion Table

AP, IB, AICE or Dual Enrollment	Gifted and Talented, Honors or Pre-IB
4.0 = 5.0	4.0 = 4.5
3.0 = 4.0	3.0 = 3.5
2.0 = 3.0	2.0 = 2.5
1.0 = 2.0	1.0 = 1.5
0 = 1.0	0 = .5

In order to receive additional weight on a grade, the course must be clearly labeled as one of these categories on the submitted grade report(s).

Dual-enrollment grades may be submitted using a transcript from the college (if course grades are included on the report) or a screenshot of grades from the grade portal. The name of the college must be clearly shown on the report to receive additional points.

Sample calculation with weighted courses:

Grades from Report Card:	Conversion:
AP English: 83	AP English: 3.0 + 1 = 4.0
Math: 89	Math: 3.0
Honors Biology: 93	Honors Biology: 4.0 + 0.5 = 4.5
Pre-AP History: 90	Pre-AP** History: 4.0
Pre-IB Spanish: 92	Pre-IB* Spanish: 4.0 + 0.5 = 4.5

Final Calculation:

4.0
3.0
4.5
4.0
\+ 4.5
20

20 ÷ 5 = 4.0

** Pre-AP classes are not weighted | * Pre-IB is weighted as High School Honors

Report Card & GPA Calculation Policies

Policy for Weighting Courses – Elementary & Middle School Students

The Carson Scholars Fund assigns additional weight to the following courses for elementary and middle school students:

Half point
Honors
Advanced
Gifted and Talented

To determine the correct conversion for a weighted class, see the **Weight Conversion Table** below.

Elementary/Middle School Weight Conversion Table

Honors, Advanced or Gifted and Talented
4.0 = 4.5
3.0 = 3.5
2.0 = 2.5
1.0 = 1.5
0 = .5

In order to receive additional weight on a grade, the course must be clearly labeled as one of these categories on the submitted grade report.

Sample calculation with weighted courses:

Grades from Report Card:	Conversion:	Final Calculation:
Advanced English: 83	Adv. English: 3.0 + 0.5 = 3.5	3.5
Math: 89	Math: 3.0	3.0
Honors Biology: 93	Honors Biology: 4.0 + 0.5 = 4.5	4.5
Gifted and Talented History: 90	GT History: 4.0 + 0.5 = 4.5	+ 4.5
		15.5

15.5 ÷ 4 = 3.87

Elementary School English/Reading/Language Arts Policy:

If a school assigns grades for English, Reading and Language Arts separately, the Carson Scholars Fund will average these grades to use one averaged grade when calculating the GPA.

Elementary School Standards-Based Reporting Policy:

If a student is "proficient" or "meeting the standards" in more than half of the academic standards evaluated by the Carson Scholars Fund on their report card, they would be eligible for the scholarship program.

GPA Frequently Asked Questions

I only have grades for the first quarter of this school year. What report card should I submit?
You should submit your first quarter grades. We calculate GPA based on what is available at the time of our application deadline. Since this varies from school to school, please submit the most recent grades you have from the current school year. Do NOT submit a prior-year report card or a transcript.

My school doesn't issue report cards until after your application deadline. What should I do?
If you do not yet have a report card or progress report for the current school year, a school official (teacher, counselor or administrator) may provide you with a list of your current courses and grades to be uploaded to the application. Alternatively, you may submit a screenshot of an online grading portal showing your name, school, date and current courses with grades.

My school uses an alternative grading system or does not calculate GPAs. What do I do?
Applicants must have at least an estimated GPA in order to submit an application. If your school uses an alternative grading system, or does not calculate GPAs, a school official (teacher, counselor, or administrator) must estimate your GPA on a 4.0 scale based on your performance this school year up to the time of our application deadline. **For schools using standards-based grading, the "Standards-Based Grading to 4.0 Scale (General Guide)" chart below provides suggested grade conversions to assist with this estimate.** This estimate should be submitted with the rest of the application packet, written on school letterhead, and signed by the school official.

Standards-Based Grading to 4.0 Scale (General Guide)

SBG Level	Description	Traditional Grade	4.0 Scale Equivalent
4 - Exceeds Standard	Demonstrates advanced understanding	A+	4.0
3 - Meets Standard	Proficient understanding	A / B	3.0 - 3.7
2 - Approaching	Partial understanding	C	2.0 - 2.7
1 - Below Standard	Minimal understanding	D / F	0.0 - 1.0
0 - No Evidence	No demonstration of understanding	F	0.0

GPA Frequently Asked Questions

My school categorizes courses in a way that is not covered by your Weight Conversion Chart. Is my GPA still weighted?

No. In order to be fair to applicants across the country, we need to follow standardized language in determining which courses can be weighted. Due to the volume of applications we receive, we cannot accept alternative classifications of course levels.

How do I know which of my elective courses count toward my GPA?

In general, assume that your elective courses do not count. Exceptions are made when elective courses in a subject area take the place of a more traditional course in a student's schedule, i.e. when a student is taking a "British Literature" course and does not have a standard "English" course. Elective courses that never count include religion, art, music, and physical education.

If you are unsure if your elective course would count and it could make a difference in whether or not you meet the 3.75 minimum GPA, please email scholarship@carsonscholars.org. In addition to explaining the course in question, also include a list of all of your course names as they appear on your report card and their corresponding grades.

I still have a question.

We're always happy to help. Please call us at 410-828-1005 during our office hours (8:00am – 4:00 pm ET, Monday through Friday) or email us at scholarship@carsonscholars.org and we'll reply as quickly as possible.