



2020 Participation and Savings Patterns in the Wabash County Promise Scholarship Program: The First Three Years

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Introduction

The Community Foundation of Wabash County's Promise Scholarship program (Promise Scholars) was conceived and implemented with the goal of improving educational outcomes by providing opportunities to earn scholarship awards at a much earlier stage than traditional scholarship programs. More than just a commitment, deposits are awarded directly into the child's 529 as they are earned. This approach deviates in important ways from traditional college savings account programs, traditional scholarship programs, and even early commitment scholarship programs. In Promise Scholars, children not only receive a CSA, but they also receive early award scholarships directly, and immediately, rather than as the promise of money in the future.

This report provides an update to *2017 Participation and Savings Patterns in the Wabash County Promise Scholarship Program: Year 1* (O'Brien, Elliott, Lewis & Jung, 2018). The initial 2017 report included all 4th - 8th graders in Wabash County during the 2016-2017 academic year, which also served as the first year of the Wabash County Promise Scholars program. Accumulated savings in Promise Indiana 529s, Promise Scholarship awards and match, and free/reduced lunch status provided by the schools were used to obtain a cross-sectional view of the impact of the first program year. For the current report, we examine enrollment, savings behaviors, and asset accumulation for participants who enrolled in Promise Scholars during the first three academic years of the program: 2016/2017, 2017/2018, and 2018/2019. As with the first report, we include scholarship earnings, 529 savings data to date, as well as free/reduced lunch status provided by the schools to compare savings outcomes across program participants and non-participants and across poor and non-poor families.

Key Findings

- Among Promise Scholars participants, 55% have made at least one contribution into their account, compared to only 22% of non-participating students with CSAs.
- Findings indicate that family economic status (as measured by eligibility for free and reduced lunch), is an important factor for asset accumulation but not scholarship participation.
 - While lunch status is equally divided overall and among Promise Scholars participants, over three-quarters of students with CSAs, but not participating in Promise Scholars, are eligible for free/reduced lunch.
 - Poor Promise Scholars participants accrue less in their accounts compared to non-poor participants (average \$384 vs \$1,238)
 - Although poor families save less than non-poor families, the difference is largely explained by family contributions in that nearly equal assets are accrued through Promise Scholars awards (average \$150 non-poor; \$139 poor).
- Participation in the Promise Scholarship program is largely equivalent for poor and non-poor families, regardless of type (academic or college preparation).

Wabash County Promise Scholarship Program Development

Like many other community foundations across the United States, the Community Foundation of Wabash County (CFWC) has for decades been dedicated to addressing the needs of disadvantaged families and alleviating poverty in Wabash County, Indiana. In 2012, through a strategic planning process, the CFWC board prioritized educational attainment as the county's most pressing need, as it is the principal driver of economic opportunity and relief from poverty. Approximately 35% of the children between ages 0 to 5 in the Wabash County live in poverty, approximately 12% of adults have less than a high school education, and approximately 75% of the county's citizens do not have degrees beyond high school. Concurrently, the leadership of the Wabash County YMCA spearheaded the Wabash County Promise Program ("Wabash County Promise"), that focuses on enrolling every student in grades K-3 in their Children's Savings Account (CSA) program (for information on the Wabash County Promise program see Elliot & Lewis, 2015). The Wabash County Promise uses Indiana's College Choice 529 Plan as the account provider.

CFWC pursues its strategic goal to advance the level of educational attainment in the county through its grantmaking and its traditional scholarship program. Traditional scholarship programs across the country focus on providing awards for post-secondary education to children towards the end of their high school careers who have established records of success. However, CFWC concluded that traditional scholarships may leave behind those children whose circumstances make it far more challenging to successfully navigate the K-12 educational system. CFWC postulated that it is not enough, particularly for children from low-income families, to offer traditional financial support in the senior year for college and post-secondary education. What they felt is critical is to help young children and their families think about the future and see it as education-dependent (e.g., Destin & Oyserman, 2010). As evidenced by CSA program initiatives around the country and theorized by Michael Sherraden (1991), assets have the potential to change the way children and parents think about the future and serve as a tangible commitment to, and belief in, the potential to pursue education after high school (e.g., Elliott, 2009; Elliott, Choi, Destin, & Kim, 2011). With this guiding principle at the fore front of their minds, CFWC has designed Promise Scholars to award funds to students earlier in their schooling years to harness the power of assets (in CSAs) to influence identity and educational outcomes in ways that traditional scholarship programs have not.

More specifically, according to CFWC, Promise Scholars is intended to address three key limitations of a traditional scholarship program from the perspective of low- and moderate-income families:

- Scholarship awards at the end of public-school life may work well for those who have succeeded during high school but have a limited ability to shape or nurture a college-bound identity and behaviors during a student's earlier school years (e.g., Pallais, 2009).
- Because the award of traditional scholarships is so far in the distant future, they may have limited ability to incentivize engagement in learning during critical early school years, particularly among low-income and minority students (e.g., Bugler, Henry, & Rubenstein, 1999; Dynarsky, 2002).
- Despite many donors' desire to financially support students from low- and moderate-income families, all too many children from these communities do not make it to the

graduating senior applicant pool as a result of having lost hope and engagement in education earlier in the process (ACSFA, 2010). Thus, in many cases traditional scholarship programs may fail to deliver to the very population they intend to serve.

The Promise Scholars Program seeks to further develop CSA programming by extending the Wabash County Promise to students in grades 4-8 and providing them with opportunities to earn scholarships on a quarterly basis by satisfying objective criteria (see Appendix for a description of activities and amounts). Earned scholarship awards are later to be granted (up to the student's age of 23) for qualified educational expenses once a student enrolls in a qualifying post-secondary institution. Going beyond deploying assets to influence aspirations and expectations, the Promise Scholars Program seeks to embed, through early awards, student behaviors and family savings that support positive school outcomes and post-secondary success for the participating students. Given the design of the program, it provides a unique opportunity within the CSA field to examine the effects of adding an early award scholarship to existing CSA programs.

Wabash County Promise Scholarship Program Structure

The Wabash County Scholarship program provides financial awards to help students in grades 4 through 8 pay for college or career training after high school. These awards are based on school engagement benchmarks, college-going activities, and regular savings in a Promise-affiliated Indiana CollegeChoice 529 college savings account. The Wabash County Promise Scholarship program is available to all Wabash County, Indiana students in grades 4 through 8. Enrollment in the scholarship program requires ownership of an Indiana CollegeChoice 529 Direct Savings Plan and a signed consent form by which parents give permission for schools to release academic data to the Community Foundation for determining scholarship eligibility. Once fully enrolled, students can earn multiple small scholarship awards for regularly practicing learning, college readiness, and savings behaviors identified by Wabash County Promise Scholarship staff and school personnel as likely to lead to successful progress toward postsecondary education.

Scholarship and Savings Match Schedule

Scholarships available to students have evolved each year. For example, during the first program year, 4th and 6th grade students could earn up to \$100 in academic scholarship awards plus up to \$50 in savings matches. Students in 5th and 7th grade were limited to only savings matches. By the third program year (2018-2019), 4th and 6th graders had the potential to earn up to \$150 in academic scholarship awards and 5th and 7th graders were no longer limited to savings matches (See Tables in Appendix for details of award potential by year and grade).

Scholarship Descriptions

Each scholarship opportunity is described in detail in the Appendix. Briefly, scholarships are broken into two categories: 1) Learning and 2) College Prep. Learning awards are based on achievement of *both* goal setting on the NWEA-MAP (Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress in math, reading, and language arts and completion of corresponding assignments in each of the three subject areas. NWEA-MAP goals are determined

in concert between the student and teacher but must represent a gain from the beginning of the year score.

The category of College Prep includes a range of possible activities, most of which are only available to 8th grade students. These include completion of a personal career inventory, applying for 21st Century Scholars, or completing a family advising session by phone (additional details provided in the Appendix).

Methods

Sample

The population for this study includes all 4th - 8th graders who were attending public school in Wabash County during the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019 (N = 3,358). Fifty-one percent of these students were enrolled in the Wabash County Promise Scholarship program (n = 1,723) and 9% (n = 305) represent students with Promise Indiana savings accounts who were not enrolled in the Wabash County Promise Scholarship program. The remaining 1,330 (40%) are students without identifiable 529 accounts and not enrolled in the Promise Scholarship program.

[Note: the original file from Promise Scholars included 1,753 eligible students. However, to align the 529 savings data and three years of program data, accounts opened after May 31, 2019 were removed (n = 30; account open data provided by Ascensus). In addition six accounts with total family deposits greater than \$24,999 were removed from subsequent analyses, for an analytic sample of 1,723 Promise Scholars participants.]

Most students enroll in Promise Scholars during the first year of eligibility (4th grade). As shown in Table 1, below enrollment in later grades drops off each year as most students have already enrolled.

Table 1. New enrollment by program year N = 1,723

	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020*
4 th	278	309	269	170
5 th	178	63	14	7
6 th	201	32	12	1
7 th	50	35	3	1
8 th	87	5	0	5
Total	794	444	301	184

*This column does not include enrollment after May 31, 2019, making it appear to have lower enrollment. Most enrollment for 2019-2020 would have occurred during Fall 2019.

Data Sources and Variable Definitions

Data for this report cover transactions from account opening through May 31, 2019 to coincide with the cutoff date for the end of the 2018-2019 program year.

School Data.

Student-level data for all students were provided by each of the three Wabash County school districts. Variables included Free/Reduced Lunch eligibility status, attendance, and standardized academic achievement data for each academic year. In this report, with the focus limited to description of savings, we only use the Free/Reduced Lunch eligibility variable.

- *Free/Reduced Lunch Status.* Socioeconomic status operationalized by a dichotomous variable indicating whether a student receives a free or reduced-price lunch at school. Students who pay full price for lunch have a higher socioeconomic status than their peers who receive lunch for free or at a reduced price. In this report, we refer to these groups as “Poor” and “Non-Poor”. In a small number of cases, FRL status changes between years and in several cases the data are missing. In those cases, the most current available status is used.

Promise Indiana Savings Data.

Savings data are provided from Ascensus College Savings, the provider of the CollegeChoice 529 Direct-Sold plan in Indiana. The dataset included date of account opening and the date and amount of each deposit. From this, several variables were created:

- *Account Tenure.* Number months since account open (as of May 31, 2019).
- *Deposit Frequency.* Number non-incentive/seed, non-match deposits; in other words, non-program deposits.
- *CSA Saver.* Dichotomous variable used to indicate accounts where money has been contributed beyond the initial seed deposit or match.
- *Incentive.* New accounts opened as part of the Wabash County Promise Scholarship received a \$25 incentive from a community sponsor. Because not all accounts were eligible to receive this incentive, the \$25 start-up incentive was separated out from the overall account value.
- *Match.* Accounts were eligible to receive a 3:1 savings match of up to \$75 each year if the family/champion deposits totaled \$25 by October 31st. Deposits after this annual cut-off are not eligible for match. Multi-account champion gifts were also recorded at match. These can occur when, for example, a champion sponsors a class and gift amount was distributed evenly among all students in the class.
- *Family/Champion Contribution.* A continuous variable measuring the amount of family or direct champion contributions made into the Promise 529 college savings account. This does not include the \$25 start-up incentive, match provided by the Promise Indiana CSA program, or multi-account champion gifts.
- *Program Contributions.* A continuous variable measuring program contributions including seed, match, and any community-based champion deposits.
- *Total Promise Indiana Account Value.* A continuous variable combining all deposits including seed, match, family, and program deposits.

Promise Scholars Program Data.

For each Wabash County Scholarship program participant, data included grade during each academic year, school, date of enrollment in the Promise Scholarship program, scholarships potential and awarded, and savings matches awarded quarterly and to-date. Data were also provided on activities completed by non-Promise Scholars participants which allows inspection of potential savings lost and may provide insight into the incentivizing effect of the monetary awards.

- *Total Wabash County Promise Scholarship Program Savings Match.* Students in fifth and seventh grades can earn \$20 match for each semester where they save at least \$20 in their Promise 529 college savings account, plus an additional \$10 bonus match if they save at least \$20 in each semester (for a maximum savings match of \$50). The \$10 bonus is not included in this report because it is not awarded consistently. Thus, for the purposes of this report, the maximum annual savings match possible is \$40. [Note: during the first program year, savings matches were made on a quarterly basis based on a \$10 savings threshold per quarter).

Promise Scholars 529. The abbreviation 529 refers to CollegeChoice 529 direct accounts. Families may have enrolled in a CollegeChoice account on their own apart from any participation in the Wabash County Promise CSA or the Wabash County Promise Scholarship Program. They may link this account to the Wabash County Promise Scholarship Program. Families may not use an advised 529 account or a 529 college savings plan offered by another state, for the purposes of participation in the Wabash County Promise Scholarship program. For the purposes of the paper, all CSA refers to any type of 529 linked to produce eligibility for the Promise Scholarship program.

Enrollment. To raise awareness and promote participation, the program developed marketing materials such as brochures, posters, and school-related products (i.e., rulers, pencils, sports bags, and water bottles). The Wabash County Promise Scholars program also used a variety of other approaches for enrollment including opportunities at both in-person and online school registration, parent-teacher conferences, athletic and community events. Regardless of enrollment method utilized, all parents were required to complete the Participation Agreement *and* have a linked account before enrollment is complete.

Intervention Components. Depending on the student's grade level, participants can earn scholarship awards by completing engagement activities and earn bonus awards for savings activities. Each program component can be thought of as measure of engagement with the CSA which is an important metric above and beyond savings amount and frequency.

- *Engagement Activities.* Engagement activities refer to the Wabash County Promise Scholarships program components:
 - Learning (which includes goal setting, completion of assignments and NWEA goals)¹
 - College Prep
 - Promise Savings match through family savings of at least \$20 per semester.

With the exception of the Family Advising Session, 21st Century Scholarship application, and savings matches, all students (regardless of Promise Scholars status) participate in these engagement activities. Lead teachers turn in a "report card" to the Community Foundation of Wabash County that documents whether a student (participant or nonparticipant) has completed the activities.² Based on this report, scholarships are deposited to the participating student's account. Administrators and school counselors also have access to this report of participants and non-participants.

¹ Goals for Language Arts, Reading, and Math for the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) MAP assessment. This assessment is conducted twice per year, allowing for measurement of growth in academic achievement.

² Most teachers knew who was participating though. This might be a limitation to this study if certain teachers and others acted on this knowledge differently for different students, perhaps encouraging some and not others. However, there was no way to know whether this happened in this study.

Analysis Plan

Merging of the three datasets (school, savings, and program) allowed for the creation of the three groups of interest: 1) Promise Scholars enrollees 2) Non-Promise Scholars with 529 and 3) all others (not in Promise Scholars or unknown 529 status). All members of Group 1 had a Promise Indiana or Promise Indiana-linked CSA. Group 2 represents families that have a 529 but chose not to participate in Promise Scholars. For Group 3, the 529 status is negative or unknown. Groups 1 and 2 are referred to as Promise Scholars and CSA Only.

First, frequencies (counts, percentages) of sociodemographic variables are calculated for the overall sample and by the two subgroups of interest (i.e., Promise Scholars participant and CSA Only). Next we present sample and account characteristics by intervention groups and subgroups (i.e., lunch and saver status) using descriptive analyses in the form of frequencies (counts, percentages), measures of central tendency (mean, median, mode), and measures of dispersion (minimum/maximum, range). Finally, Promise Scholarship specific participation and earnings by academic year and grade are examined with calculations of the proportion completing all activities and earning the maximum available reward. Scholarships are also examined in terms of awarded (to those eligible) and earned (activity completed but not eligible for award).

Results

Sociodemographic Characteristics Overall and by Intervention Group

Table 2 describes socio-demographic characteristics of the entire sample and the subgroups of Promise Scholarship and CSA Only students. The ‘All Students’ proportions provide a summary of the characteristics of the sample and, in a sense, these are the ‘expected’ values against which we can compare the ‘observed’ values for the accountholder subgroups. For example, we see that the male-female ratio in the total student population is 51-49%. In the Promise Scholars column, we see the male-female ratio is 48-52%, not appreciably different from the expected proportion. In the CSA Only column, there is slight observed excess with a male-female ratio of 56-44%. Here, being male is associated with being in the CSA Only group. With respect to racial/ethnic status, most students are White. Free and reduced lunch status is equally divided overall in the Promise Scholars group. However, the CSA Only group is just over three-quarters FRL eligible. Importantly, this indicates that more work needs to be done to recruit FRL children into Promise Scholars.

Nearly one-half (45%) of 529 accounts were opened in 2013, the year the Promise Indiana program began and nearly three-quarters were opened before the start of the Promise Scholarship program in 2016.

Table 2. Selected Sociodemographic Characteristics of All Students, all Promise Scholars participants, and CSA Only students. N = 3,358 unique accounts.

	All students		Promise Scholars		CSA Only	
	N	%	n	%	N	%
All students ^a	3,358	100	1,723	100%	305	100
Gender						
Male	1,634	51%	808	48%	158	55%
Female	1,577	49%	878	52%	127	45%
Race/Ethnicity						
White	2,962	92%	1,588	94%	261	91%
Multi-racial	111	3%	54	3%	11	4%
Asian	18	<1%	15	<1%	0	0%
Hispanic	83	3%	22	1%	10	4%
Black/African American	23	<1%	9	<1%	2	<1%
Am Indiana/Al Native	20	<1%	6	<1%	2	<1%
Graduating Class (2019-2020 Grade)						
2021 11th	390	12%	89	5%	23	8%
2022 10th	392	12%	88	5%	26	9%
2023 9th	426	13%	239	14%	47	15%
2024 8th	450	13%	245	14%	61	20%
2025 7th	468	14%	331	19%	27	9%
2026 6th	437	13%	306	18%	23	8%
2027 5th	437	13%	252	15%	54	18%
2028 4th	357	11%	173	10%	43	14%
Lunch Status ^c						
Free/Reduced	1,812	56%	827	49%	227	76%
Paid	1,434	44%	870	51%	70	24%
529 Account Open Year						
<2013	--	--	17	<1%	1	<1%
2013			761	45%	137	45%
2014			284	17%	76	25%
2015			171	10%	39	13%
2016			182	10%	37	12%
2017			164	10%	6	2%
2018			66	4%	9	3%
2019			51	3%	0	0%

^aDemographic data from students who remain in private school is unavailable (n = 40)

Gender: 147 missing in total sample; 37 missing in Promise Scholars group; 20 missing CSA Only Group

Race: 141 missing in total sample; 29 missing in Promise Scholars group; 19 missing in CSA Only Group

FRL: 125 missing in total sample; 26 missing in Promise Scholars group; 8 missing in CSA Only Group

^c FRL: Lunch status can change annually and was not consistently available each year; used most recent year available

Type of Saver by Year Account Opened. The subgroup called “savers” is used to differentiate between just having an account versus actively making deposits beyond any start-up incentives or match at *any time over the life of the account* up through May 31, 2019. Among Promise Scholars participants, 55% (n = 953/1,723) are savers and 22% of the CSA Only group are savers (68/305). Table 3 describes characteristics of saving students in each group by year of account

opening. Across years and groups, most saving students are White; approximately one-half are male and one-half are eligible for free/reduced lunch. For the Promise Scholars group, the proportion of students eligible for Free and Reduced lunch varies by year, with a low of 38% for the oldest accounts (pre-2013) and a peak of 65% for accounts opened in 2015 and 2018. Among the CSA Only group, except for accounts opened recently, the range is similar to that of Promise Scholars, ranging from 30% to 63%. Although accounts opened in 2018 but not linked to Promise Scholars were disproportionately FRL eligible at 75%, this is likely due to the very small number of saver accounts (n = 4).

Table 3. Saver Characteristics by Year 529 Account Opened

	Overall	<2013	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Promise Scholar Savers	N = 953	n = 17	n = 446	n = 145	n = 104	n = 112	n = 82	n = 29
Race/Ethnicity								
White	94%	100%	94%	94%	91%	95%	96%	97%
Non-White*	6%	0%	6%	6%	9%	5%	4%	3%
Male	50%	35%	52%	47%	44%	44%	56%	59%
Free/Reduced lunch	51%	35%	36%	46%	31%	32%	33%	45%
CSA Only Savers	N = 68	n = 0	n = 27	n = 10	n = 16	n = 7	n = 0	n = 4
Race/Ethnicity								
White	94%	--	100%	80%	94%	86%	--	100%
Non-White	6%		0%	20%	6%	14%		0%
Male	51%	--	58%	30%	56%	29%	--	75%
Free/reduced lunch	64%		59%	60%	63%	71%	--	100%

*Due to small n, combined non-White categories. Value may not add up to total due to missing data.

Savings Account Characteristics

Tables 4a – 4c summarize the savings data by Promise Scholars and CSA Only groups (Table 4a) and then for subgroups of Savers (4b) and Non-Savers (4c). These tables allow one to see the breakdown of the account earnings by source, revealing the additional contribution of the scholarship awards to the total account value. Among all Promise Scholars accountholders (savers and non-savers), the mean total family deposits is \$548 (median \$25) compared to \$53 (median \$0) in the CSA Only group. The mean grand total account value (all CSA savings plus scholarship awards) is \$838 (median \$285).

Table 4a. Summary of Account Accumulation for Full Sample (Savers and Non-Savers) from Account Opening through May 31, 2019 and all Promise Scholars data through end of 2018-2019 school year (also May 31, 2019).

	Mean^a	Median	Mode	Min/Max	Sum
Promise Scholars n = 1,717					
<i>CSA Accounts</i>					
Family/Champion Contribution	\$548	\$25	\$0	\$0/\$22,700	\$941,201
Seed	\$18	\$25	\$25	\$0/\$25	\$30,175

Savings Match/Multi-Account Champion	\$84	\$0	\$0	\$0/\$810	\$143,718
Total CSA Account Value	\$673	\$75	\$25	\$0/\$23,638	\$1,154,859
<i>Promise Scholarship</i>					
Scholarships Awarded	\$144	\$150	\$0	\$0/\$310	\$247,740
Savings Match Awarded	\$21	\$0	\$0	\$0/\$120	\$35,540
Total Scholars (Scholarships and Match)	\$165	\$170	\$0	\$0/\$430	\$283,280
Grand Total Account Value (CSA + Promise Scholars)	\$838	\$285	\$25	\$0/\$23,658	\$1,438,139
CSAs Only n = 305					
Family/Champion Contribution	\$53	\$0	\$0	\$0/\$5,440	\$16,191
Seed	\$21	\$25	\$25	\$0/\$25	\$6,525
Savings Match/Multi-Account Champion	\$22	\$0	\$0	\$0/\$375	\$6,837
Total CSA Account Value	\$102	\$26	\$25	\$0/\$5,640	\$31,238

^aRemoved six outliers with Total Account Value > \$25,000

Looking just at Table 4b, once non-savers are removed, the average total family deposits is \$994 (median \$125) among Promise Scholars and \$238 (median \$50) for CSA only families.

Table 4b. Summary of Account Accumulation for Savers Only

Table 5b. Summary of Savings for Savers	Mean ^a	Median	Mode	Min/Max	Sum
Promise Scholars n = 946					
<i>CSA Accounts</i>					
Family/Champion Contribution	\$994	\$125	\$50	\$1/\$22,700	\$941,202
Seed	\$14	\$25	\$25	\$0/\$25	\$13,125
Savings Match/Multi-Account Champion	\$146	\$120	\$0	\$0/\$810	\$138,268
<i>Promise Scholarship</i>					
Scholarships Awarded	\$158	\$160	\$0	\$0/\$310	\$149,180
Savings Match Earned	\$34	\$20	\$40	\$0/\$120	\$32,490
Total Scholars (Scholarships and Match)	\$192	\$190	\$0	\$0/\$430	\$181,670
Grand Total Account Value (CSA + Promise Scholars)	\$1,383	\$510	\$350	\$10/\$23,658	\$1,308,001
Savings Frequency	17	4	2	1/135	927
Average amount of each family deposit ^b	\$216	\$31	\$25	\$1/\$7500	\$11,479
CSAs Only n = 68					
Family/Champion Contribution	\$238	\$50	\$25	\$10/\$5,440	\$16,191
Seed	\$13	\$13	\$0	\$0/\$25	\$850
Match/Multi-Account Champion	\$88	\$75	\$0	\$0/\$375	\$5,987
Total CSA Account Value	\$243	\$130	\$50	\$25/\$5,640	\$23,384
Savings Frequency	9	3	2	2/27	34
Average amount of each family deposit	\$23	\$25	\$25	\$18/\$25	\$93

^aRemoved six outlier with Total Account Value > \$25,000

^bThe maximum of \$7,500 is clearly an outlier of case with the next highest being \$1,404, followed by

\$423. Removing \$7,500, the average reduces from \$216 to \$77 (median \$31, mode \$25). This outlier account was opened in 2014 and had only 3 deposits (1/2018, 1/2019, 1/2020) each of \$5000. These are mostly like deposits for tax purposes.

In Table 4c, among non-saving families, total savings account value is only slightly greater in the Promise Scholars group (\$37 vs \$33). It is interesting to note that even without any savings activity at all, scholarship awards between Table 4b and Table 4, while different in the expected direction, one could argue are not overwhelmingly so (\$192 vs \$132) which reflect the consistent theme of the independent importance of scholarship engagement.

Table 4c. Summary of Account Accumulation for Non-Savers Only

	Mean^a	Median	Mode	Min/Max	Sum
Promise Scholars n = 770					
<i>CSA Accounts</i>					
Family/Champion Contribution	--	--	--	--	--
Seed	\$22	\$25	\$25	\$0/\$25	\$17,050
Savings Match/Multi-Account Champion	\$7	\$0	\$0	\$0/\$285	\$5,450
Total CSA Account value	\$37	\$25	\$25	\$0/\$700	\$28,298
<i>Promise Scholarship</i>					
Scholarships Awarded	\$128	\$140	\$0	\$0/\$310	\$98,740
Savings Match Awarded	\$4	\$0	\$0	\$0/\$90	\$3,050
Total Scholars (Scholarships and Match)	\$132	\$140	\$0	\$0/\$340	\$101,790
Grand Total Account Value (CSA + Promise Scholars)	\$37	\$25	\$25	\$0/\$700	\$28,349
CSAs Only n = 237					
Family/Champion Contribution	--	--	--	--	--
Seed	\$24	\$25	\$25	\$0/\$25	\$5,675
Match/Multi-Account Champion	\$4	\$0	\$0	\$0/\$75	\$850
Total CSA Account Value	\$33	\$25	\$25	\$0/\$150	\$7,853

^aRemoved six outlier with Total Account Value > \$25,000

Sociodemographic Characteristics by Free/Reduced Lunch Eligibility

Free and reduced lunch status is used as a proxy for family income because actual family income was not available. Families must earn at or below 185% of the federal poverty level to be eligible for reduced-price lunch and no more than 130% of the federal poverty level to be eligible for free lunch. While this income threshold changes each year, in 2016-2017, a family of four could not have earned more than \$44,955 to be eligible for reduced-price lunch (Government Publishing Office, 2016) and for the last school year (2018-2019), it increased to \$46,435 (Government Publishing Office, 2018).

In the same way as Table 2, Table 5 allows contrasts between the characteristics of the overall sample and the subgroups. Overall, 56% of the sample is eligible for FRL, referred to as “Poor”; 44% are categorized as “Non-Poor”. Male students are equally represented in both the poor and

non-poor groups. White students are somewhat more represented in the non-poor group with 95% compared to 92% overall and 88% in the poor group.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics by Free/Reduced Lunch Status

	All students		Poor		Non-Poor	
	N	%	n	%	N	%
All students	3,358	100%	1,812	100%	1,434	100%
Sex						
Male	1,634	51%	905	51%	729	51%
Female	1,577	49%	875	49%	702	49%
Race/Ethnicity						
White	2,962	92%	1,598	88%	1,364	95%
Non-White	255	8%	214	12%	70	5%

Note. As a point of reference, 48% of children attending Wabash County Public Schools are eligible for the Free or Reduced-Priced lunch program (see <http://www.doe.in.gov/accountability/find-school-and-corporation-data-reports>).

Savings Account Characteristics by Free/Reduced Lunch Eligibility

Tables 6a – 6c summarize the savings data by Poor and Non-Poor groups (Table 6a) and then for subgroups of Savers (6b) and Non-Savers (6c). These tables allow one to see the breakdown of the account earnings by source, revealing the additional contribution of the scholarship awards to the total account value. Among all Promise Scholars accountholders (savers and non-savers), the mean total 529 account value (deposits, incentives, and match apart excluding any Promise Scholars earnings) among poor students was \$233, compared to \$590 among non-poor students (medians \$140 and \$50 respectively). Looking just at family deposits into the CSA, poor Promise Scholars participants average \$144 compared to \$899 among non-poor participants. The average grand total (CSA + Promise Scholars) account balance among poor students is \$384 and \$1,238 among non-poor (medians \$225 and \$373 respectively). In the CSA Only group, differences in account balance also indicate that poor families are contributing more to their CSA, with an average total family deposit of \$32 versus \$22 and \$80 vs \$69 for the total CSA account value (family deposits plus any Promise Indiana program deposits).

Table 6a. Summary of Account Accumulation for CSA Group by Poverty Status (All - Savers and Non-Savers)

	Mean ^a	Median	Mode	Min/Max	Sum
Promise Scholars	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor
n = 825 Poor	(Non-poor)	(Non-poor)	(Non-poor)	(Non-poor)	(Non-poor)
n = 866 Non-Poor					
<i>CSA Accounts</i>					
Family/Champion Contribution	\$144 (\$899)	\$0 (\$70)	\$0 (\$0)	\$0/\$22,199 (\$0/\$22,700)	\$118,826 (\$777,561)
Seed	\$19 (\$17)	\$25 (\$25)	\$25 (\$25)	\$0/\$25 (\$0/\$25)	\$15,550 (\$14,350)
Savings Match/Multi-Account Champion	\$59 (\$109)	\$0 (\$0)	\$0 (\$0)	\$0/\$810 (\$0/\$780)	\$48,443 (\$94,525)

Total CSA Account value	\$233 (\$1,060)	\$50 (\$200)	\$25 (\$25)	\$0/\$23,638 (\$0/\$22,700)	\$192,279 (\$916,616)
<i>Promise Scholarship</i>					
Scholarships Awarded	\$139 (\$150)	\$150 (\$150)	\$0 (\$0)	\$0/\$310 (\$0/\$310)	\$114,935 (\$129,785)
Savings Match Awarded	\$11 (\$30)	\$0 (\$20)	\$0 (\$0)	\$0/\$120 (\$0/\$120)	\$9,280 (\$25,920)
Grand Total Account Value Promise + Scholars	\$384 (\$1,238)	\$225 (\$373)	\$25 (\$25)	\$0/\$23,658 (\$0/\$22,865)	\$316,419 (\$1,072,396)
CSAs Only n = 227 Poor n = 70 Non-Poor					
Family/Champion Contribution	\$30 ^b (\$14)	\$0 (\$0)	\$0 (\$0)	\$0/\$2,075 (\$0/\$120)	\$6,851 (\$947)
Seed	\$22 (\$21)	\$25 (\$25)	\$25 (\$25)	\$0/\$25 (\$0/\$25)	\$4,925 (\$1,500)
Match/Multi-Account Champion	\$17 (\$33)	\$0 (\$0)	\$0 (\$0)	\$0/\$375 \$0/\$300	\$3,962 (\$2,275)
Total CSA Account Value	\$74 ^b (\$73)	\$25 (\$34)	\$25 (\$25)	\$0/\$2,500 (\$0/\$375)	\$16,821 (\$5,113)

^aRemoved six outlier with Total Account Value > \$25,000

^bRemoval of two outliers > \$1,500 in CSA Only poor subgroup brings the mean family contributions down to \$14 and the mean total CSA Account value to \$53 and maximum deposit of \$675.

n = 26 missing data on FRL in Promise Scholars; 9 in CSA Only

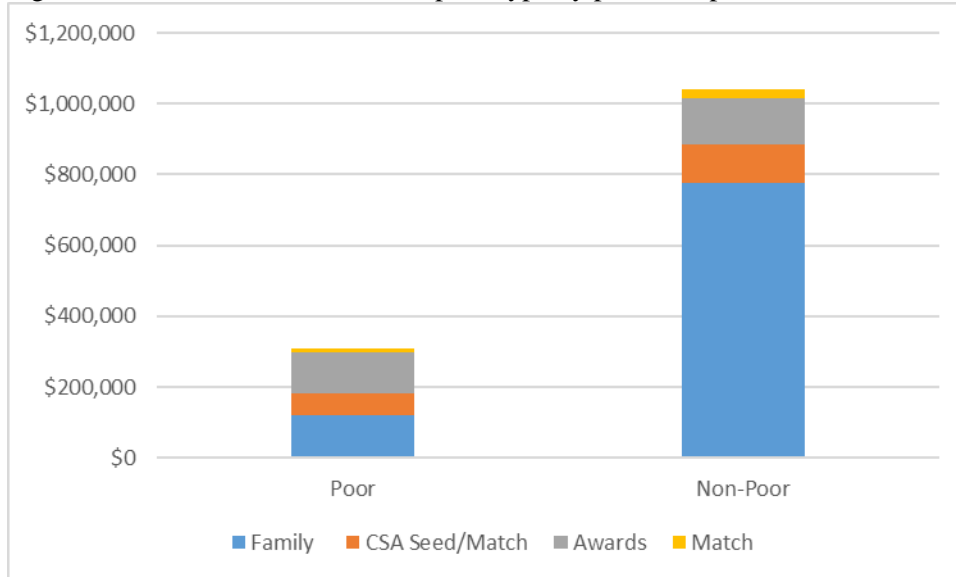
By comparing the sources of account accumulation for Promise Scholars participants, family contributions appear to play the biggest role in the difference between poor and non-poor families. Looking across the first row of Table 6a, the average family deposit among poor families is \$144, compared to \$899 among non-poor families. However, comparing poor and non-poor on Promise Scholarship awards, the two groups are nearly equal with average awards of \$139 among poor families and \$150 among non-poor (with identical median, minimum, and maximum). Looking at this in the form of relative contributions, we can take the sum of all sources and look at the overall proportion of each type (see Table 7 and Figure 1 below). The accounts of poor families are built about equally from their own contributions and from completing scholarship goals and activities (40% and 37% respectively). In contrast, non-poor families build their accounts mostly through family contributions, and much less from scholarship activities. Promise Scholarship savings match contributes equally to both groups at 2-3% of the total account value.

Table 7. Relative contribution of deposit type by poor/non-poor status

All	Sum of All Sources	Family Contribution	CSA Seed and Match	Promise Scholarship Awards	Promise Scholars Savings Match
	\$307,034	\$118,826	\$63,993	\$114,935	\$9,280
Poor	100%	39%	21%	37%	3%

	\$1,042,141	\$777,561	\$108,875	\$129,785	\$25,920
Non-Poor	100%	74%	10%	12%	2%

Figure 1. Relative contribution of deposit type by poor/non-poor status



These distinctions are more pronounced when looking just at savers in Table 6b. Here we see that Promise Scholarship earnings do not differ between poor and non-poor students (\$157 vs \$158; median \$160), whereas earning from savings match/bonus is \$22 among poor and \$41 among non-poor families (medians \$0 and \$40). Average savings frequency is notably higher for non-poor families (8 vs 17), as is the average amount of each deposit (\$38 vs \$79). We also see an increase in frequency of savings among both poor and non-poor in the Promise Scholars group compared to the CSA Only.

Table 6b. Summary of Account Accumulation for Savers Only by Poverty Status

	Mean	Median	Mode	Min/Max	Sum
Promise Scholars n = 338 Poor n = 600 Non-poor	Poor (Non-poor)	Poor (Non-poor)	Poor (Non-poor)	Poor (Non-poor)	Poor (Non-poor)
<i>CSA Accounts</i>					
Family/Champion Contribution	\$350 (\$1,296)	\$56 (\$190)	\$50 (\$25)	\$1/\$22,199 (\$10/\$22,700)	\$118,826 (\$777,561)
Seed	\$14 (\$14)	\$25 (\$25)	\$25 (\$25)	\$0/\$25 (\$0/\$25)	\$4,575 (\$8,525)

Savings Match/Multi-Account Champion	\$132 (\$155)	\$100 (\$150)	\$0 (\$0)	\$0/\$810 (\$0/\$780)	\$44,823 (\$92,920)
Total CSA Account value	\$513 (\$1,512)	\$225 (\$405)	\$50 (\$175)	\$10/\$23,638 (\$10/\$22,700)	\$174,041 (\$907,105)
<i>Promise Scholarship</i>					
Total Scholarships Awarded	\$157 (\$158)	\$160 (\$160)	\$0 \$0	\$0/\$310 (\$0/\$310)	\$53,025 (\$94,645)
Total Scholars Savings Match Awarded	\$22 (\$41)	\$0 (\$40)	\$0 (\$0)	\$0/\$120 \$0/\$120)	\$7,360 (\$24,850)
Grand Total Account Value Promise + Scholars	\$693 (\$1,711)	\$414 (\$600)	\$460 (\$350)	\$10/\$23,658 (\$30/\$22,865)	\$234,375 (\$1,026,600)
Total Savings Frequency	8 (17)	3 (7)	2 (2)	0/99 (0/176)	2,561 (10,436)
Average amount of each family deposit	\$38 (\$79 ^a)	\$20 (\$24)	\$25 (\$13)	\$1/\$520 (\$4/\$5,000 ^a)	\$12,911 (\$47,194)
CSAs Only N = 40 poor N = 23 non-poor					
Family/Champion Contribution	\$167 (\$41)	\$50 (\$25)	\$50 (\$25)	\$10/\$2,075 (\$15/\$120)	\$6,851 (\$947)
Seed	\$11 (\$16)	\$0 (\$25)	\$0 (\$75)	\$0/\$25 \$0/\$25	\$450 \$375
Match/Multi-Account Champion	\$81 (\$97)	\$0 (\$0)	\$0 (\$0)	\$0/\$375 (\$0/\$300)	\$3,312 (\$2,225)
Total CSA Account Value	\$263 ^b (\$157)	\$10 (\$150)	\$50 \$125)	\$25/\$2,500 (\$40/\$375)	\$10,800 (\$3,605)
Total Savings Frequency (# of fam dep over life of account)	6 (2)	2 (2)	2 (2)	1/67 (1/3)	261 (48)
Average amount of each family deposit	\$28 (\$21)	\$25 (\$13)	\$25 (\$13)	\$5/\$100 (\$7/\$60)	\$1,147 (\$495)

8 cases missing FRL among Promise Scholars; 4 cases missing FRL among CSA Only

^aRemoval of one outlier in the non-poor group brings the average amount per deposit from \$79 to \$70 and maximum average deposits to \$2,504. This case made three \$5000 deposits so their average deposit is \$5000. There are at least 5 other accounts that also make regular \$5000 deposits for tax time but since they make other deposits, their average per deposit isn't this high.

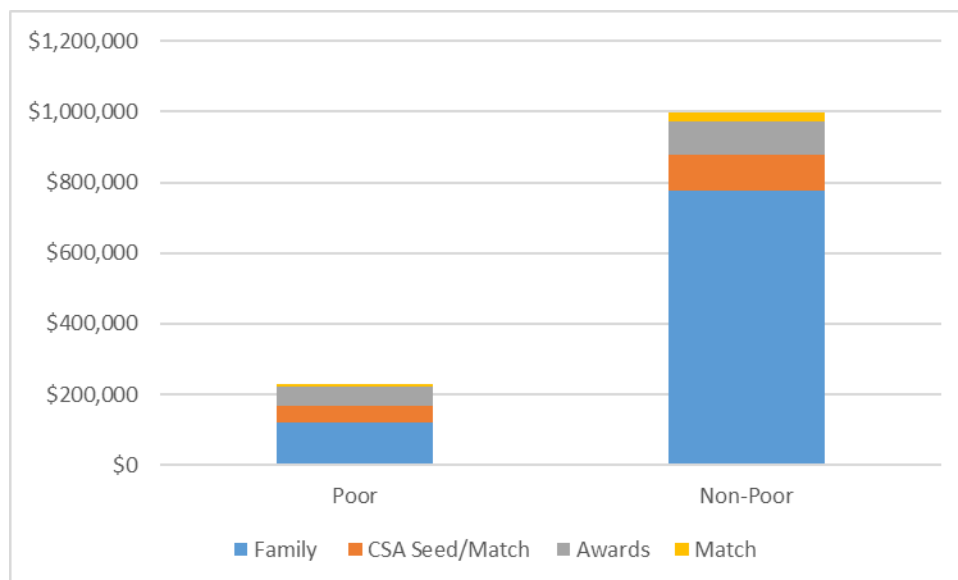
^bRemoval of two outliers greater than \$1,500 for family contributions in CSA Only poor subgroup brings the mean total CSA Account value to \$153, and the mean family contributions down to \$71.

Looking just at Promise Scholar participants that are savers (Table 6b above), we see a similar pattern, except the relative contribution of family deposits in poor families is more than double that supplied by scholarship awards. This is a function of removing non-savers, which reveals a more accurate picture of the relative contribution of family deposits. As shown in Table 6b, the average deposit for poor families is less than non-poor (\$38 vs \$79) whereas the average total scholarships is nearly equal (\$157 and \$158), possibly indicating that the poor families are augmenting their accounts with scholarships at a higher rate than non-poor families. This pattern is also represented in Table 8 and Figure 2 below.

Table 8. Relative contribution of deposit types among savers by poor/non-poor status

Savers Only	Sum of All Sources	Family Contribution	CSA Seed and Match	Promise Scholarship Awards	Promise Scholars Savings Match
	\$228,609	\$118,826	\$49,398	\$53,025	\$7,360
Poor	100%	52%	22%	23%	3%
	\$998,501	\$777,561	\$101,445	\$94,645	\$24,850
Non-Poor	100%	78%	10%	9%	2%

Figure 2. Relative contribution of deposit types among savers by poor/non-poor status



Finally, in Table 6c, we see little difference between non-saving poor and non-poor students on either scholarship earnings or savings matches/bonuses.

Table 6c. Summary of Account Accumulation for **Non-Savers** by Poverty Status

	Mean	Median	Mode	Min/Max	Sum
Promise Scholars n = 487 Poor n = 265 Non-poor	Poor (Non-poor)	Poor (Non-poor)	Poor (Non-poor)	Poor (Non-poor)	Poor (Non-poor)
<i>CSA Accounts</i>					
Family/Champion Contribution	--	--	--	--	--
Seed	\$23 (\$22)	\$25 (\$25)	\$25 (\$25)	\$0/\$25 (\$0/\$25)	\$10,975 (\$5,825)
Savings Match/Multi-Account Champion	\$7 (\$6)	\$0 (\$0)	\$0 (\$0)	\$0/\$285 (\$0/\$200)	\$3,620 (\$1,605)
Total CSA Account Value	\$37 (\$36)	\$25 (\$25)	\$25 (\$25)	\$0/\$700 (\$0/\$268)	\$18,237 (\$9,510)

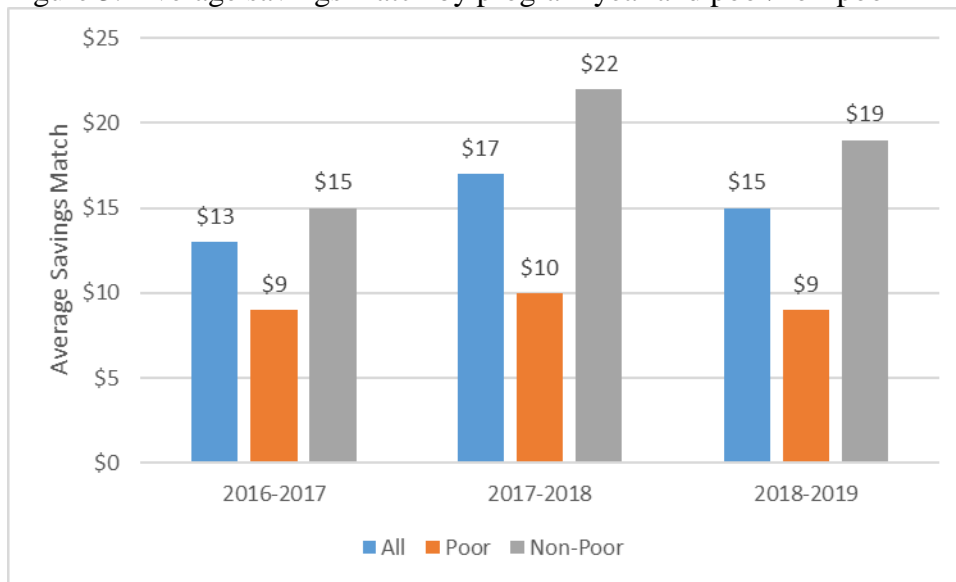
<i>Promise Scholarship</i>					
Scholarships Awarded	\$127 (\$132)	\$140 (\$145)	\$0 (\$0)	\$0/\$310 (\$0/\$310)	\$61,910 (\$35,140)
Grand Total Account Value (CSA + Promise Scholars)	\$168 (\$172)	\$175 (\$185)	\$25 (\$25)	\$0/\$950 (\$0/\$568)	\$82,043 (\$45,795)
CSAs Only n = 186 poor n = 47 non-poor					
Seed	\$24 (\$24)	\$25 (\$25)	\$25 (\$25)	\$0/\$25 (\$0/\$25)	\$4,475 (\$1,125)
Match/Multi-Account Champion	\$3 (\$1)	\$0 (\$0)	\$0 (\$0)	\$0/\$25 (\$0/\$25)	\$650 (\$50)
Total CSA Account Value	\$32 (\$32)	\$25 (\$25)	\$25 (\$25)	\$0/\$76 (\$0/\$77)	\$6,020 (\$1,508)

Promise Scholarship Savings Match

Promise Scholars participants are eligible to earn up to \$50 each program year based on completion of minimum savings criteria. Each semester, participants can earn a \$20 match for depositing at least \$20 with all match awarded at the end of the academic year. In some program years an additional \$10 was available for meeting this goal during both semesters. For the current analyses, this \$10 is not included and \$40 is considered the maximum potential savings match. Although the total possible has remained consistent over each of the three program years, in the first year, families were required to deposit at least \$10 quarterly to earn the match. In the second year, the frequency was reduced to one deposit per semester. As we will see, this programmatic shift may have had a positive impact on savings behaviors.

For understanding the relationship between Promise Scholars savings match and the overall savings presented earlier, it is important to remember that a family can be a saver and yet not meet the semester threshold for the match. As shown in Figure 3, across the board, poor families save less and savings match is consistent across program years for all groups.

Figure 3. Average savings match by program year and poor/non-poor



Below we see the percent of families meeting savings threshold increases substantially after the first year, likely a function of the programmatic adjustment to semester rather than quarterly savings criteria (burden reduced but dollar amount remains the same). Figure 5 shows that, while the relative proportion of total accumulation is 2-3% across all groups (Tables 7 and 8, last column), the percent meeting the match threshold remained notably lower among poor families.

Figure 4. Percent of savers who met maximum savings match by year and group

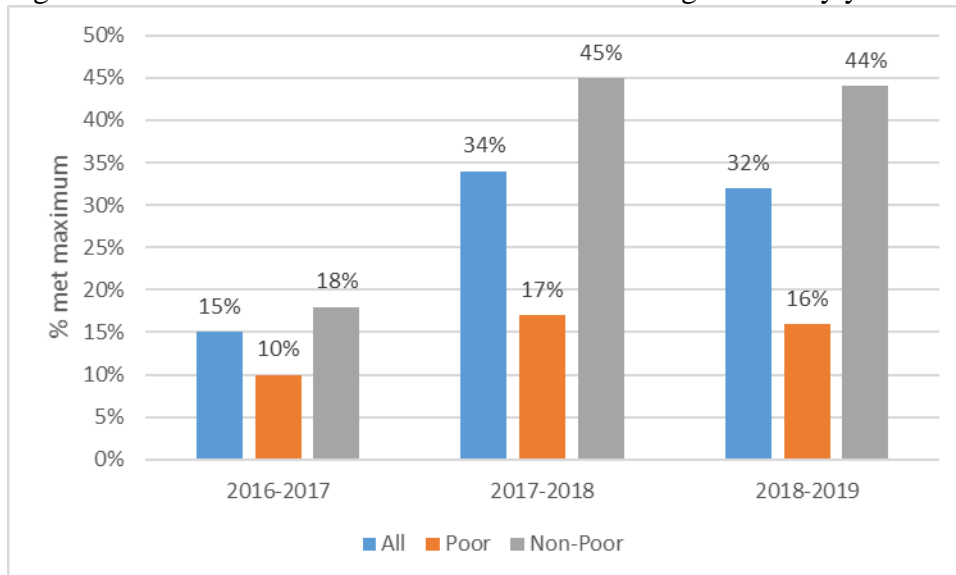
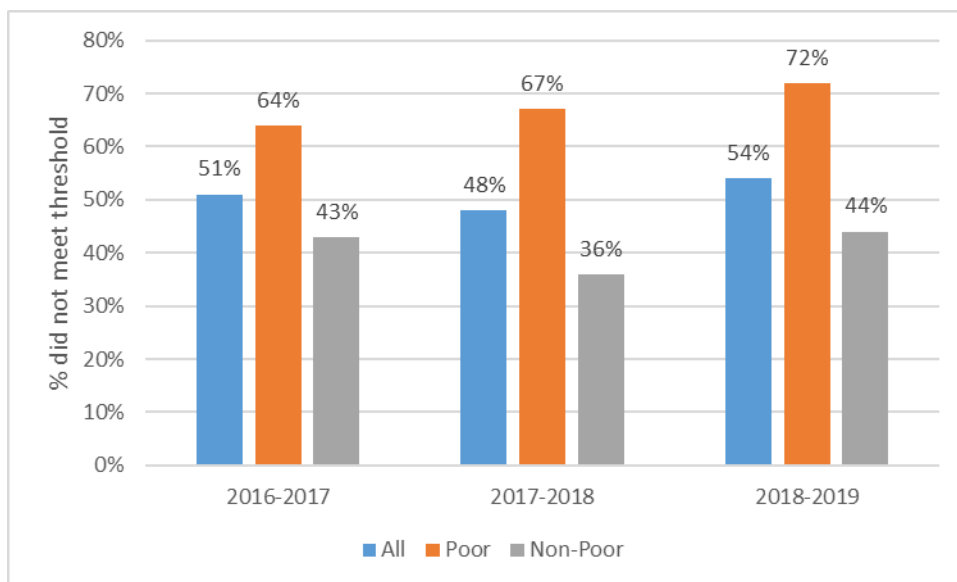


Figure 5. Percent of savers who did not meet the threshold for any savings match by year and group



Below we also look at average savings match by grade. As expected, poor students earn less match each year. Savings match is fairly consistent across years with the exception of 8th graders where we see a notable increase. *Could this be due to a programmatic characteristic?*

Table 9. Average savings match by program year, grade and poor/non-poor status.

	2016-2017		2017-2018		2018-2019	
	Poor	Non-Poor	Poor	Non-Poor	Poor	Non-Poor
4th	\$9.00	\$16.00	\$10	\$22	\$13	\$25
5th	\$8.00	\$12.00	\$10	\$20	\$9	\$25
6th	\$9.00	\$14.00	\$11	\$23	\$10	\$20
7th	\$6.00	\$14.00	\$6	\$19	\$11	\$22
8th	\$16.00	\$20.00	\$25	\$33	\$6	\$19

SCHOLARSHIP TYPE

In this section, we take a closer look at the make-up of Promise Scholarship Awards. Here, given the annual variations, we focus on analysis by grade, program year, and poor/non-poor status.

Table 10 below summarizes the award schedule for each of the three program years. Briefly, in 2016-2017, non-savings awards were limited to 4th, 6th, and 8th graders. In subsequent years, Learning and College Prep opportunities were made available to 5th and 6th graders.

Table 10. Promise Scholarships maximum award schedule for 2016-2017 school-year. Updates for 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 schools year are in parentheses.

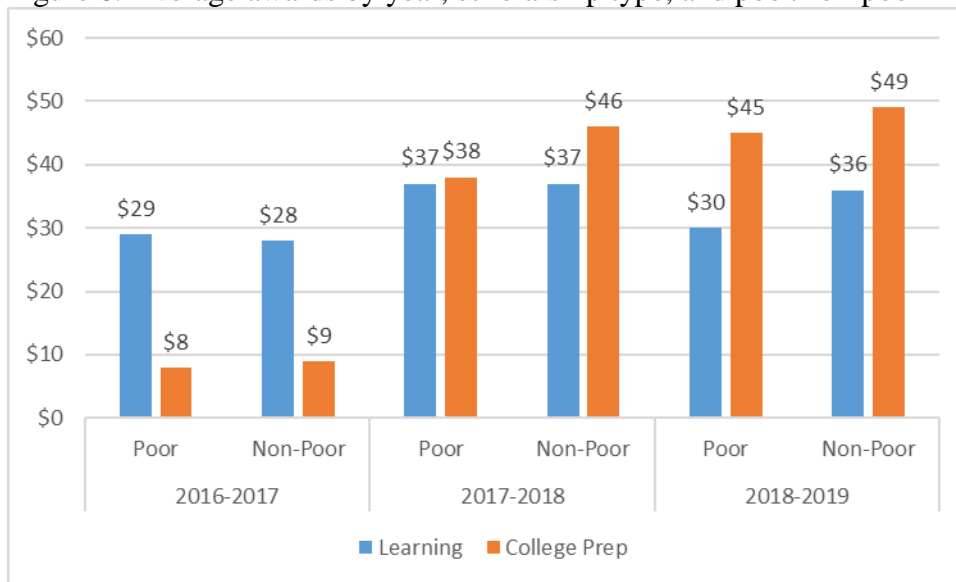
	Grades					
Engagement Activities	4th	5th	6th	7th	8 th	
Learning	\$100 (\$150)	(\$10)	\$50 (\$75) (\$100)	(\$10)		
College Prep		(\$50)	\$50	(\$50)	\$100 (\$160)	
<i>Engagement Total</i>	<i>\$100</i> <i>(\$150)</i>		<i>\$100</i> <i>(\$125)</i> <i>(\$150)</i>	<i>(\$60)</i>	<i>\$100</i> <i>(\$160)</i>	
Savings Match	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	
<i>Program Maximum</i>	<i>\$150</i> <i>(\$200)</i>	<i>\$50</i> <i>(\$110)</i>	<i>\$150</i> <i>(\$175)</i> <i>(\$200)</i>	<i>\$50</i> <i>(\$110)</i>	<i>\$150</i> <i>(\$210)</i>	<i>\$650</i> <i>(\$805)</i> <i>(\$830)</i>

As previously described, scholarships are broken into two categories: 1) Learning and 2) College Prep. Learning awards are based on achievement of *both* goal setting on the NWEA-MAP (Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress in math, reading, and language arts and completion of corresponding assignments in each of the three subject areas. NWEA-MAP goals are determined in concert between the student and teacher but must represent a gain from the beginning of the year score.

The category of College Prep includes a range of possible activities, most of which are only available to 8th grade students. These include completion of a personal career inventory, applying for 21st Century Scholars, or completing a family advising session by phone (additional details provided in the Appendices).

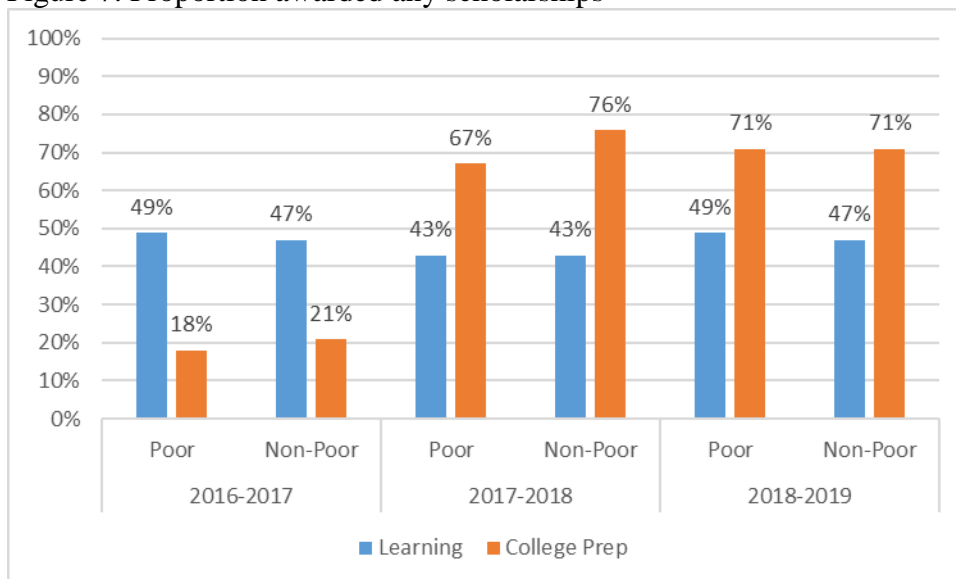
Overall, poor and non-poor families are awarded nearly equal average learning and college prep awards (Figure 6). The greatest discrepancy is in 2017-2018 where the average College Prep earned among non-poor was about \$8 more than the poor families.

Figure 6. Average awards by year, scholarship type, and poor/non-poor



To better understand participation, we look at the proportion of families who earned *any* of the awards (Figure 7). Below we see that across years and poor/non-poor, nearly one-half complete some Learning scholarships. College Prep is also equal between poor/non-poor, although rates of participation increased dramatically after 2016-2017.

Figure 7. Proportion awarded any scholarships



Given the variation in awards by grade, we also consider average awards by grade within each program year (Figure 8a and 8b). Below we can see the consistency across groups and years and displayed in earlier figures. We can also see that this consistency remains across grades.

Figure 8a. Learning awards by grade, year, and poor/non-poor status

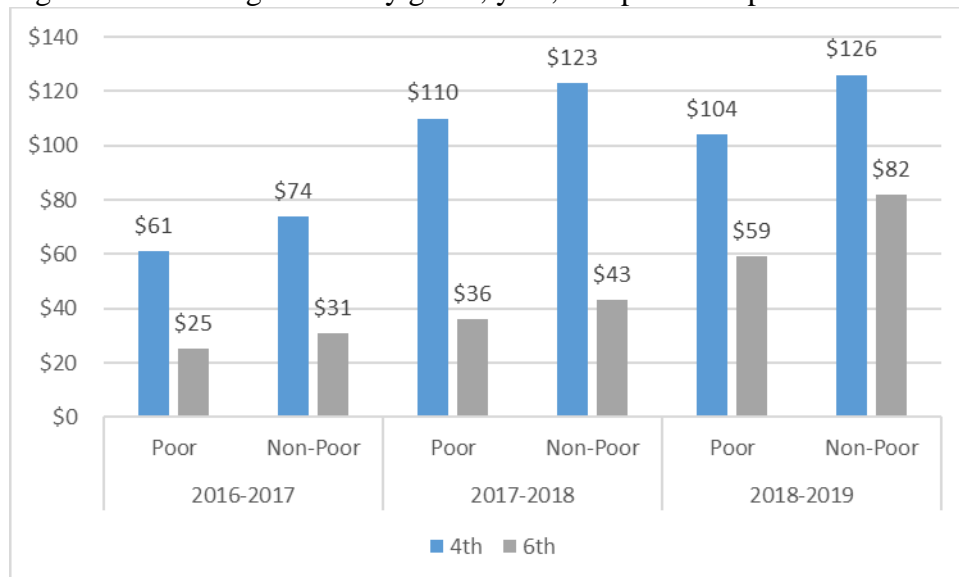
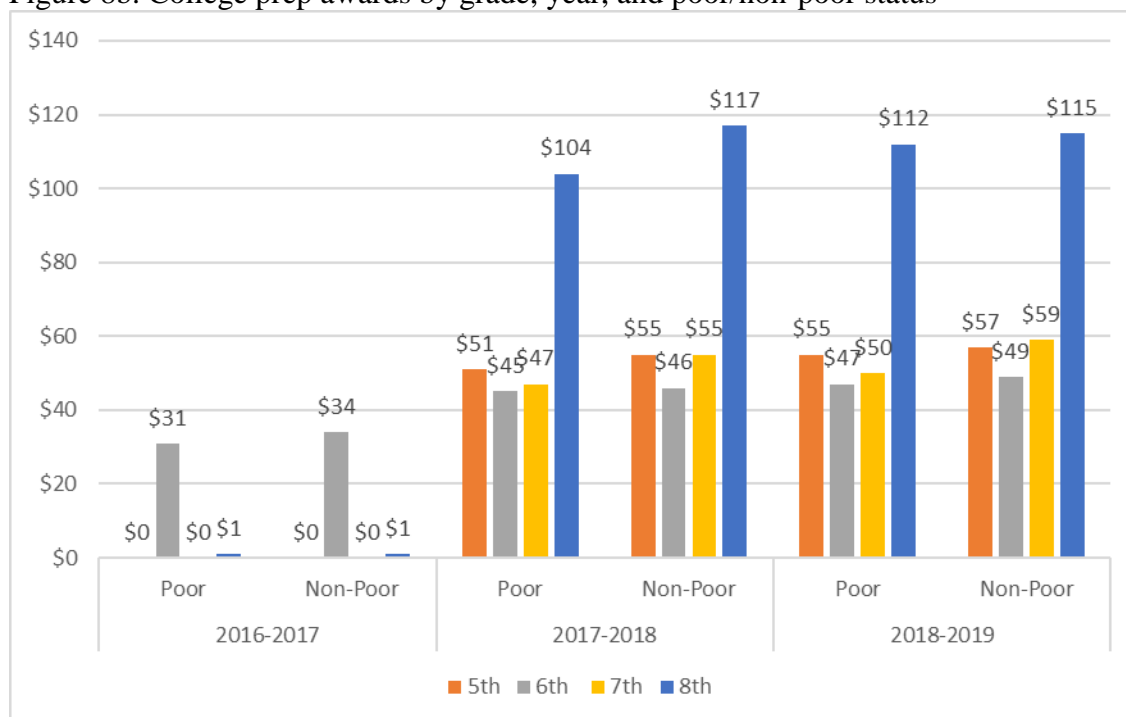


Figure 8b. College prep awards by grade, year, and poor/non-poor status



Discussion

Among families who have or open a Children's Savings Account (CSA), the Wabash County Scholarship program provides financial awards to help students in grades 4 through 8 pay for college or career training after high school. The study examined the savings outcomes of families participating in the Wabash County Scholarship program or Promise Scholarship for short with a particular focus on differences by poverty status.

Findings indicate that, on average, poor children are earning almost identical amounts of scholarship rewards (\$157) as non-poor children (\$158). With regard to savings match, however, there is more of a gap with non-poor children earning more savings match than poor children (\$22 versus \$41). This appears to have implications for understanding engagement/effort in children's asset initiatives. When engagement is defined as saving, non-poor families, on average, appear to outperform poor families. This should not be surprising because of the built-in advantage that non-poor families have when it comes to saving; that is, they have more money. However, Promise Scholars provides families with another way to engage in their child's CSA. Specifically, the child can set goals, complete assignments, and take academic tests (i.e., the NWEA), while parents can support the child not only in this engagement in school, but also by facilitating attendance at workshops and completing other college preparation activities. When this type of engagement is considered, there appears to be little to no difference in the effort of poor and non-poor children.

Moreover, Promise Scholars is helping poor children in particular build assets above what they can in a CSA - specifically, Promise Indiana - alone. Among poor children in Promise Scholars, when we just consider Promise Indiana incentives and match, they have a total account value of \$513. However, when scholarships and match from Promise Scholars are also considered, the total account value for poor children rises to \$693. This is an increase of about 35%. With regard to building assets, Promise Scholars appears to do this better for poor children than it does for non-poor children. When comparing total account value of the CSA Only and Promise Scholars participants among non-poor children, the Promise Scholars program results in a 95% increase (\$263 vs \$513). However, importantly, because poor and non-poor children on average are earning almost the same amount of scholarship rewards, the scholarship program does not appear to be reducing inequality. More progressive targeted scholarships (e.g., provide poor children with additional scholarships or larger amounts) might be needed if the goal is to reduce inequality.

Further, this asset building does not seem to offset the saving difference between poor and non-poor. For those with the CSA Only, the poor/non-poor gap in total account value is about 68% (\$263 vs. \$157), whereas for participants in Promise Scholars, the poor/non-poor gap grows to about 147% (\$693 vs. \$1,711). The growth in inequality appears, in part, to be the result of Promise Scholars savings match component. The non-poor children on average earn nearly 86% more in match than poor children (\$22 vs \$41). Given that the non-poor save more and the amount of match families can earn depends on meeting savings goals, it is not surprising there is evidence to suggest that the match component of Promise Scholars exacerbates inequality rather than reducing it. The finding that match can increase inequality in CSA programs is consistent

with previous findings (Elliott, 2018). While the move from quarterly to semester-based savings criteria after year 1 appeared to play a role in increasing savings match awards, it did so for both poor and non-poor students.

An implication of the findings on scholarships and match is that increasing scholarship funding in current CSA models and defining ‘engagement’ so that activities other than family contributions are rewarded may be more important to helping poor families than increasing match. Additionally, if tackling wealth inequality is a goal, evidence suggests that progressivity is a necessary criterion of CSA programs. For example, research done by the Institute on Assets and Social Policy finds that a universal, progressive children’s asset-building intervention could close the Black/White wealth gap by 23% and the Latino/White wealth gap by 28% (Sullivan, Meschede, Shapiro, Asante-Muhammed, & Nieves, 2016). Therefore, we suggest here that even scholarships and savings matches should adhere to progressive principles if they are going to reduce wealth inequality.

Conclusion

A growing body of evidence attests to the potential of Children’s Savings Account programs to improve children’s outcomes, including those that support their progress to and through postsecondary education. Investing in assets early promises to cultivate identities associated with higher educational expectations (Huang, Sherraden, Kim, & Clancy, 2014); in turn, these expectations can facilitate engagement in school and greater achievement (Davis-Kean, 2005; Zhang, Haddad, Torres, & Chen, 2011). One of the challenges facing children’s asset interventions such as CSAs is the need to ensure that asset accumulation in the accounts will be great enough for the CSA to appear, to children and to their parents, as a potent aid to help them face the task of paying for college. As tuition prices continue to rise (College Board, 2017), this becomes increasingly difficult, particularly when many American families struggle to be able to save much for their children’s college educations, even in a supportive program such as a CSA (Elliott, 2018). The combination of scholarship programs and CSAs, then, offers more than a funding source to finance early children’s asset programs (Elliott & Levere, 2016). The melding of these two complementary approaches promises to do more than help scholarship providers push their investments to an earlier intervention point. Programs such as the Wabash County Promise Scholarship facilitate greater asset accumulation, allow families to earn additional deposits in return for accomplishing key milestones on the path to higher education, and place educational asset building truly within reach of every child. As such, they have the potential to make significant contributions to the construction of an equitable and successful opportunity pipeline for today’s students.

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APPENDIX I – 2016-2017 PROGRAM DETAILS BY GRADE

1. Fourth grade program. The Promise Scholarship Program for fourth-grade students focuses entirely on scholarship incentives for learning and savings behaviors.
 - a. Goal setting: All students—participants and nonparticipants—take the Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress (NWEA-MAP) Assessment at the beginning of the year (BOY), after the second quarter (MOY), and at the end of the year (EOY). The BOY test results establish a baseline for each student and projects individual-level expectations for growth. Using the results (provided in the form of RIT scores) from the BOY, students conference with their teachers to determine growth goals for math, reading, and language arts for the rest of the school year. Teachers and students review RIT scores and decide together whether the provided RIT projection is a good target or whether the student should aim for a score under or over the RIT. In each case, the teacher will require that the goal represent a gain. The scholarship award for goal setting is \$10 for participating students.
 - b. Reading: Participant fourth-graders will earn \$10 each of three quarters if they complete all reading assignments. They must meet their NWEA reading goal in the fourth quarter and complete all reading assignments to receive the fourth-quarter scholarship of \$10 for a year total of \$40. By 2018-2019, the total possible increased to \$60.
 - c. Math: Participant fourth-graders will earn \$10 in the second and third quarters if they complete all math assignments. If they complete all assignment in math in the fourth quarter and reach their NWEA math goal, they will earn a fourth-quarter scholarship of \$10 for a year total of \$30. By 2018-2019, the total possible increased to \$50.
 - d. Language Arts: Participant students will earn \$10 per essay for two essays, one in the second quarter and one in the third quarter for a year total of \$20. By 2018-2019, this was increased to \$30 (\$10 for each essay plus a \$10 bonus for completion of both).
 - e. Saving: Participating students who make a minimum \$10 deposit in a CollegeChoice 529 account during any quarter will receive a match of \$10 for that quarter. If they make four on-time deposits, they will receive an additional \$10 bonus for a total match of \$50.
2. Fifth Grade Program. Beginning in 2017-2018, students in 5th grade were also eligible to earn \$10 for one Language Arts essay and \$25 for each of two College Prep activities for a potential \$60.
3. Sixth Grade Program. The Promise Scholarship Program for sixth-grade students focuses on all three behaviors: learning, college-going, and saving.
 - a. Goal setting: Sixth-grade students—participants and nonparticipants—also conference with teachers to set NWEA goals in reading, math, and language arts. Participant students receive \$10 for setting a goal.

- b. Learning incentives: Participant sixth-graders earn \$10 in each of the first three quarters when they complete all assignments in reading, math, and language arts. If in the fourth quarter they complete all assignments and reach at least two out of three NWEA goals, they will receive an additional \$10 for a total of \$40. By 2018-2019 this had increased to \$100, due to increased in third and fourth quarter awards to \$35 each.
 - c. College-going activities: All sixth-graders take part in two college-going projects, one in the first quarter and one in the third quarter. Participant students will earn \$25 for each activity completed at 70% competency for a potential total of \$50.
 - d. Saving: Participating students who make a minimum \$10 deposit in a CollegeChoice 529 account during any quarter will receive a match of \$10 for that quarter. If they make four on-time deposits, they will receive an additional \$10 bonus for a total match of \$50.
4. Seventh-Grade Program. Beginning in 2017-2018, students in 7th grade were also eligible to earn \$10 for one Language Arts essay and \$25 for each of two College Prep activities for a potential \$60.
5. Eighth-grade Program. Eighth-graders focus entirely on college-going behaviors and savings.
- a. Instead of NWEA goal-setting, eighth-grade students—participants and non-participants, income eligible and non-eligible—enroll in Indiana’s 21st Century Scholars Program. The application process is an exercise in understanding both college costs and college-going behaviors. Teachers will introduce the programmatic portion of the 21st Century Scholars Program called Scholar Success Program that involves twelve college-going activities. By requiring all to apply, any income stigma is erased and programmatic features benefit all. Participating students earn \$20 for submitting the application.
 - b. College Costs Estimator (similar to the FAFSA). Each participating student will be required to fill out and submit a College Costs Estimator for a scholarship of \$10.
 - c. When participating students and their parents who have completed an estimator make an appointment for a phone conference with an advisor from the Center for College Costs to interpret the results of the College Costs Estimator, students will receive a \$10 scholarship.
 - d. Workshops. Eighth-graders will earn \$10 for each of six workshops that address aspects of preparing for college for a total of \$120 (originally \$60 in 2016-2017). Workshops are attended by all students, participants and nonparticipants.
 - i. Personal interest inventory. Students will take an inventory and file it with the guidance counselor as part of their college and career file.

- ii. High school course planning. Students meet with guidance counselors to plan an individualized high school curriculum that supports career goals.
- iii. Jobs and careers: This workshop looks at a “jobs economy” and the educational requirements of jobs in each strata of the economy. Students will research educational requirements of jobs in their own area of interest. Research can also be filed in a student’s guidance file.
- iv. Personal finance and budgeting. Students will create their own personal finance plan.
- v. Comparing college costs using a comparison tool. Students will make three college choices and compare the cost of each institution.
- vi. Mock college application exercise. Students will choose an essay prompt from the national common scholarship essay requirement and prepare a trial essay.

Savings: Participating students who make a minimum \$10 deposit in a CollegeChoice 529 account during any quarter will receive a match of \$10 for that quarter. If they make four on-time deposits, they will receive an additional \$10 bonus for a total match of \$50.

Program Scholarship and Savings Match Detail by Program Year and Grade

2016-2017

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
4th Grade					
Goal Setting	\$10				
Reading assignments <u>and</u> reach NWEA goal in Q4	\$10	\$10	\$10	\$10	
Math assignments <u>and</u> reach NWEA goal in Q4		\$10	\$10	\$10	
Language Arts essays		\$10	\$10		
Savings Match (if \$10 is deposited into 529 account each quarter)	\$10	\$10	\$10	\$20	
					\$150
5th Grade					
Savings Match (if \$10 is deposited into 529 account each quarter)	\$10	\$10	\$10	\$20	
					\$50
6th Grade					
Goal Setting	\$10				
Reading, Math, and Language Arts assignments <u>and</u> reach 2 out of 3 NWEA goals in Q4	\$10	\$10	\$10	\$10	
College Go Activity #1	\$25				
College Go Activity #2			\$25		
Savings Match (if \$10 is deposited into 529 account each quarter)	\$10	\$10	\$10	\$20	
					\$150
7th Grade					
Savings Match (if \$10 is deposited into 529 account each quarter)	\$10	\$10	\$10	\$20	
					\$50
8th Grade					
Personal Career Inventory	\$10				
High School Course Planning	\$10				
College Application Essay	\$10				
Lifetime Earnings	\$10				
Personal Finance	\$10				
Compare College Costs	\$10				
21st Century Scholars Application	\$10				
File College Costs Estimator	\$10				
Family Advising Session by Phone with NCCC	\$20				
Savings Match (if \$10 is deposited into 529 account each quarter)	\$10	\$10	\$10	\$20	
					\$150
Grand Total					\$550

2017-2018

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
4th Grade					
NWEA Goal Setting	\$10.00				
Reading assignments <u>and</u> meet NWEA goal in Q4	\$10.00	\$10.00	\$20.00	\$20.00	
Math assignments <u>and</u> meet NWEA goal in Q4		\$10.00	\$20.00	\$20.00	
Language Arts essays		\$10.00	\$20.00		
Savings Match (if \$20 is deposited each semester)		\$20.00		\$30.00	
					\$200.00
5th Grade					
Essay/Presentation			\$10.00		
College Go Activity #1		\$25.00			
College Go Activity #2				\$25.00	
Savings Match (if \$20 is deposited each semester)		\$20.00		\$30.00	
					\$110.00
6th Grade					
NWEA Goal Setting	\$10.00				
Reading, Math, and Language Arts assignments <u>and</u> reach NWEA 2/3 goals in Q4	\$10.00	\$10.00	\$10.00	\$35.00	
College Go Activity #1	\$25.00				
College Go Activity #2				\$25.00	
Savings Match (if \$20 is deposited each semester)		\$20.00		\$30.00	
					\$175.00
7th Grade					
Essay/Presentation			\$10.00		
College Go Activity #1		\$25.00			
College Go Activity #2				\$25.00	
Savings Match (if \$20 is deposited each semester)		\$20.00		\$30.00	
					\$110.00
8th Grade					
Personal Career Inventory	\$20.00				
High School Course Planning	\$20.00				
College Application Essay	\$20.00				
Lifetime Earnings	\$20.00				
Personal Finance	\$20.00				
Compare College Costs	\$20.00				
21st Century Scholars	\$20.00				
File College Cost Estimator	\$10.00				
Family Advising Session by Phone	\$10.00				
Savings Match (if \$20 is deposited each semester)		\$20.00		\$30.00	
					\$210.00
Grand Total					\$805.00

2018-2019

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
4th Grade					
NWEA Goal Setting	\$10.00				
Reading assignments <u>and</u> meet NWEA goal in Q4	\$10.00	\$10.00	\$20.00	\$20.00	
Math assignments <u>and</u> meet NWEA goal in Q4		\$10.00	\$20.00	\$20.00	
Language Arts essays		\$10.00	\$20.00		
Savings Match (if \$20 is deposited each semester)		\$20.00		\$30.00	
					\$200.00
5th Grade					
Essay/Presentation			\$10.00		
College Go Activity #1		\$25.00			
College Go Activity #2				\$25.00	
Savings Match (if \$20 is deposited each semester)		\$20.00		\$30.00	
					\$110.00
6th Grade					
NWEA Goal Setting	\$10.00				
Reading, Math, and Language Arts assignments <u>and</u> reach NWEA 2/3 goals in Q4	\$10.00	\$10.00	\$35.00	\$35.00	
College Go Activity #1		\$25.00			
College Go Activity #2				\$25.00	
Savings Match (if \$20 is deposited each semester)		\$20.00		\$30.00	
					\$200.00
7th Grade					
Essay/Presentation			\$10.00		
College Go Activity #1		\$25.00			
College Go Activity #2				\$25.00	
Savings Match (if \$20 is deposited each semester)		\$20.00		\$30.00	
					\$110.00
8th Grade					
Personal Career Inventory	\$20.00				
High School Course Planning	\$20.00				
College Application Essay	\$20.00				
Lifetime Earnings	\$20.00				
Personal Finance	\$20.00				
Compare College Costs	\$20.00				
21st Century Scholars	\$20.00				
FAFSA Information Meeting	\$20.00				
Savings Match (if \$20 is deposited each semester)		\$20.00		\$30.00	
					\$210.00
Total possible scholarship for 4th-8th grade:					\$830