

Variable Tuition at Grace Episcopal Day School

In 2018, Grace Episcopal Day School became the first Metro DC independent school to launch a Variable Tuition program. This radical reinvention means that rather than offer financial aid packages to families, Grace offers a range of tuitions. Our ideal is that each family's tuition -- a figure that represents the portion of the full cost of a Grace education that a family is required to pay -- be in line with what that family can afford to contribute.

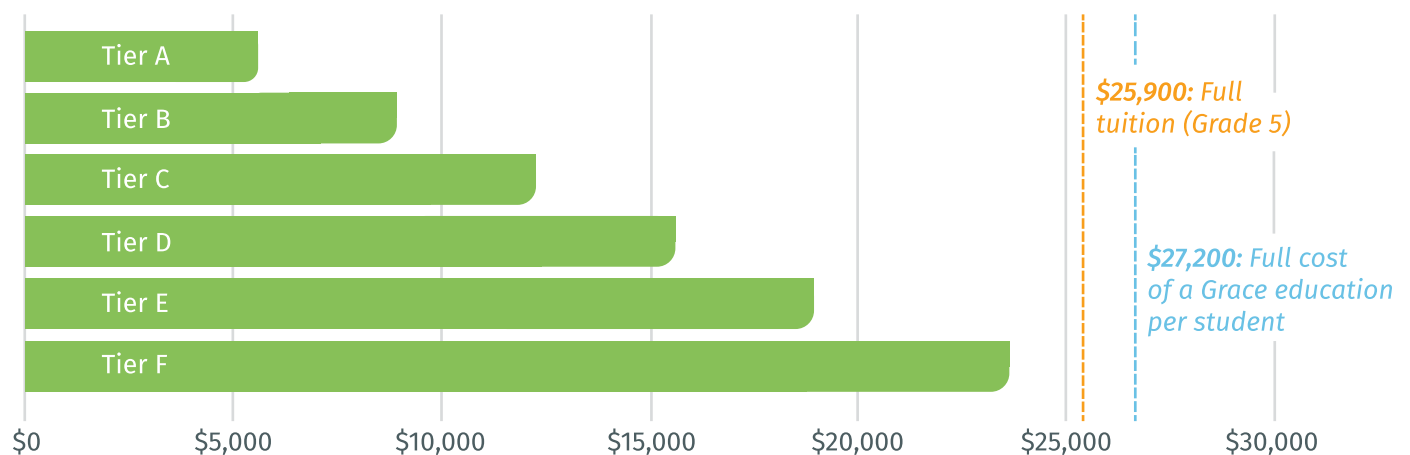
The shift from "financial aid" to Variable Tuition is more than semantic. It reflects our school's foundational commitment to building a socioeconomically diverse student body and an inclusive school community. We achieve our goals when all enrolled families know that they are making an equitable contribution to their child's education -- which makes all families equal contributors to school life.

SAMPLE VARIABLE TUITION RANGES USING 2018-2019 TUITION RATES

Tier A	\$2,900 – \$5,800
Tier B	\$6,000 – \$9,200
Tier C	\$9,300 – \$12,700
Tier D	\$12,900 – \$16,200
Tier E	\$16,400 – \$19,600
Tier F	\$19,900 – \$24,600
Tier G	Full tuition for grade

Grace anticipates that the annual household income of families to whom we offer a Variable Tuition rate may range from around \$40,000 to around \$280,000.

TUITION LEVELS RELATIVE TO THE FULL COST OF EDUCATING EACH STUDENT



In truth, even full tuition at independent schools falls short of covering the full cost of the education per student. We rely on annual giving and other generous sources of financial support to close the gap.

Quick Q&A

HOW IS “VARIABLE TUITION” DIFFERENT FROM “FINANCIAL AID”?

This shift from “financial aid” to “Variable Tuition” is more than semantic. It reflects our school’s foundational commitment to building a socioeconomically diverse student body and an inclusive school community. We achieve that goal when all enrolled families know that they are making an *equitable* contribution to their child’s education – which will make all families *equal* contributors to school life. With continued support for annual giving and the Grace Scholars Fund, this is an aspiration we hope to realize fully in the years to come.

HOW DOES GRACE DETERMINE WHAT A FAMILY CAN AFFORD?

Under the Variable Tuition program, Grace sets tuition for each student based on what TADS, our current third-party financial assessment provider, calculates as a family’s ability to pay. This number is based on a “Household Adjusted Income” (HAI) calculation that takes into account many of the factors that make up a family’s overall financial picture, including but not limited to assets, debt, household size, and tuition commitments for all children.

WHAT DOES SOCIOECONOMIC DIVERSITY LOOK LIKE?

Our goal is for the student body at Grace to be representative of the widest range of socioeconomic levels in our area. We aim to avoid a “barbell effect” that is typically experienced in a traditional tuition/financial aid model, where a large number of families are paying the full tuition rate and a large number of families receive significant financial aid packages. With a Variable Tuition program, we aim to spread out our tuition commitments per family more evenly, with a small increase in the number of families receiving a very low Variable Tuition rate and a corresponding increase in families who will receive a higher (but not full) Variable Tuition rate.

WHO ELSE HAS TAKEN THIS APPROACH AND WHAT RESULTS HAVE THEY ACHIEVED?

While we are the first in the DC Metro area to introduce a Variable Tuition program, we are not the first independent school in the country to do so. We stand on the shoulders of St. Elizabeth’s in Denver, Colo.; Lick-Wilmerding High School in San Francisco, Calif.; Stanley Clark in South Bend, Ind.; Duke School in Durham, NC, and others. All of these schools have experienced an increase in the socioeconomic diversity of their student populations.

“Grace’s mission, since our founding in 1960, has been to create a school for Greater Washington where everyone feels like they belong. We believe our school community is stronger when it reflects the diversity surrounding us. We are impelled by our mission and our morals to welcome students and families of varying financial means as equal partners in the project of educating Grace students.”

JENNIFER S. DANISH
HEAD OF SCHOOL