

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE
EDUCATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM
**Scholarship Granting Organization
Annual Report**

2026

For the academic year beginning 2025 and ending 2026

Section 16-6D-9, *Code of Alabama 1975*, as amended by Act 2015-434, provides for Scholarship Granting Organizations (SGOs) to report certain information to the department for the previous academic year. The Annual Report of Scholarship Granting Organizations (SGO) is due by September 1 of each year. Please complete and submit this form with required attachments, to the Alabama Department of Revenue.

SECTION I – Scholarship Granting Organization (SGO)

SCHOLARSHIP GRANTING ORGANIZATION NAME		FEDERAL TAX ID	
Arete Scholars Fund, LLC		[REDACTED]	
MAILING ADDRESS OF ORGANIZATION	CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE
500 Buford Hwy, Ste 1001, #1020	Suwanee	GA	30024
TELEPHONE NUMBER	EMAIL ADDRESS		
(770) 316-3893	mhicks@aretescholars.org		

SECTION II – Donation Information

TOTAL DONATIONS RECEIVED

1. Enter the total number of donations received during the academic year	1	3
2. Enter the total amount of donations received during the academic year	2	\$ 300,000.00

SECTION III – Scholarship Information

TOTAL EDUCATIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED (ACTUALLY PAID OUT) AND FUNDED

1. Total number of educational scholarships awarded and funded. Enter amount from attachment 1, line 3a.....	1	0
2. Total amount of educational scholarships awarded and funded. Enter amount from attachment 1, line 3b.....	2	\$ 0

STUDENTS QUALIFYING FOR FEDERAL FREE AND REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH PROGRAM

3. Total number of educational scholarships awarded to students qualifying for federal free and reduced-price lunch program ..	3	0
4. Total amount of educational scholarships awarded to students qualifying for federal free and reduced price lunch program. ...	4	\$ 0

FIRST-TIME RECIPIENTS

5. Total number of first-time scholarship recipients	5	0
6. Total number of first-time scholarship recipients continuously enrolled in a public school for the entire previous academic year.	6	0
7. Percentage of first-time scholarship recipients continuously enrolled in a public school for the entire previous academic year. Divide line 6 by line 5 and enter results here	7	%
8. Total number of first-time scholarship recipients not continuously enrolled in a private school and not zoned for a priority school for the entire previous academic year	8	0
9. Percentage of first-time scholarship recipients not continuously enrolled in a private school and <u>not</u> zoned for a priority school for the entire previous academic year. Divide line 8 by line 5 and enter results here	9	%
10. Total number of first-time scholarship recipients continuously enrolled in a private school for the entire previous academic year	10	0
11. Percentage of first-time scholarship recipients continuously enrolled in a private school for the entire previous academic year. Divide line 10 by line 5 and enter results here	11	%
12. Percentage of first-time scholarship recipients <u>not</u> continuously enrolled in a private school during the previous academic year, (100% minus line 11)	12	%

SECTION IV – Cumulative Donations and Expenditures

1. Enter the total of donations received during the current academic year.	1	\$ 300,000
2. Enter the total amount of donations received during all previous years.	2	\$ 0
3. Cumulative amount of donations received for current and all previous years. Add lines 1 and 2.	3	\$ 300,000
4. Limitation on allowable non-scholarship expenditures. Multiply line 3 by .05 and enter results here	4	\$ 15,000
5. Enter total amount of allowable non-scholarship expenditures made during the current academic year.	5	\$ 25

6. Enter total amount of allowable non-scholarship expenditures made during all previous years	6	0	
7. Cumulative amount of allowable non-scholarship expenditures for current and all previous years. <i>Add lines 5 and 6.</i>	7		\$25.00%

SECTION V – Reconciliation of Unexpended Scholarship Funds for the period of 07/01/2025 – 06/30/2026

1a. Enter the scholarship funds on hand as of July 1, 2025.	1a	\$	0
1b. Enter the amount of commitments for the upcoming school year, as of July 1, 2025.	1b	\$	0
1c. Unexpended scholarship funds*, as of July 1, 2025. <i>Subtract line 1b from line 1a.</i>	1c	\$	0
2. Plus: Interest and revenue from investment of scholarship funds received from 07/01/2025 – 12/31/2025	2	\$	0
3. Plus: Scholarship donations received from 07/01/2025 – 12/31/2025	3	\$	0
4. Plus: Return of scholarship funds previously funded from 07/01/2025 – 12/31/2025	4	\$	0
5. Less: Actual scholarship grants paid from 07/01/2025 – 12/31/2025	5	\$	0
6. Less: Allowable non-scholarship expenditures made from 07/01/2025 – 12/31/2025	6	\$	0
7. Less: Amounts transferred to SDE At-Risk Student Program from 07/01/2025 – 12/31/2025	7	\$	0
8a. Scholarship funds on hand, as of December 31, 2025. <i>Add lines 1a, 2, 3 and 4 and subtract lines 5, 6 and 7.</i>	8a	\$	0
8b. Enter the amount of commitments for the remainder of the school year, as of 12/31/2025.	8b	\$	0
8c. Unexpended scholarship funds*, as of December 31, 2025. <i>Subtract line 8b from line 8a.</i>	8c	\$	0
9. Plus: Interest and revenue from investment of scholarship funds received from 01/01/2026 – 06/30/2026	9	\$	
10. Plus: Scholarship donations received from 01/01/2026 – 06/30/2026	10	\$	300,000
11. Plus: Return of scholarship funds previously funded from 01/01/2026 – 06/30/2026	11	\$	0
12. Less: Actual scholarship grants paid from 01/01/2026 – 06/30/2026	12	\$	0
13. Less: Allowable non-scholarship expenditures made from 01/01/2026 – 06/30/2026	13	\$	0
14. Less: Amounts transferred to SDE At-Risk Student Program from 01/01/2026 – 06/30/2026	14	\$	0
15a. Scholarship funds on hand, as of June 30, 2026. <i>Add lines 8a, 9, 10 and 11 and subtract lines 12, 13 and 14.</i>	15a	\$	300,000
15b. Enter the amount of commitments for the upcoming school year, as of June 30, 2026	15b	\$	0
15c. Unexpended scholarship funds*, as of June 30, 2026. <i>Subtract line 15b from line 15a.</i>	15c	\$	0

SECTION VI – Summary of Compliance with Eligibility Requirements

- Was the percentage of first time recipients not continuously enrolled in a private school during the previous academic year (**Section III, line 12**) equal to or greater than 75%? ☒ Yes ☐ No
- Is the cumulative amount of allowable non-scholarship expenditures made during the current and all previous years (**Section IV, line 7**) less than 5% of the cumulative amount of all scholarship funds received during the current and all previous years (**Section IV, line 4**), in which the SGO has operated? ☒ Yes ☐ No
- Has the SGO given priority to receive an educational scholarship to eligible students zoned to attend failing schools? ☒ Yes ☐ No
- Has the SGO only, and not any qualifying schools accepting educational scholarship recipients or scholarship funds, determined whether scholarship recipients are eligible to receive educational scholarships? ☒ Yes ☐ No
- Has the SGO's actions and policies provided for a parent's educational choice by not limiting or prohibiting the enrollment of eligible students in a qualifying school if those students received educational scholarships from other SGOs? ☒ Yes ☐ No
- Has the SGO collected achievement test results from qualifying schools accepting its scholarship recipients and submitted them by August 15 to the Alabama Department of Revenue (ADOR) and the independent research organization selected by ADOR? ☒ Yes ☐ No
- Were the scholarship funds on hand at the beginning of the calendar year 2023, expended on educational scholarship grants and allowable non-scholarship expenditures by December 31, 2025? ☒ Yes ☐ No
- Has the SGO ensured that no donations are directly made to benefit specifically designated recipients or to particular qualifying schools? ☒ Yes ☐ No

9. Has the SGO submitted a copy of the Individual Education Plan (IEP) or 504 plan when submitting test scores to ALDOR and ISSR? ☒ Yes ☐ No

If any of the above are checked "No" then please attach documentation explaining any extraordinary circumstances preventing the requirement from being met.

SECTION VII – Required Attachments

Please include a copy of the following required attachments:

- A financial information report prepared by a certified public accountant.
- A copy of the SGO's required annual federal form 990.
- Written verification from participating qualifying nonpublic schools that accept its educational scholarship students that those schools do all of the following:
 - Comply with the Alabama Child Protection Act of 1999, Chapter 22A of Title 16.
 - Comply with all health and safety laws or codes that otherwise apply to nonpublic schools.
 - Hold a valid occupancy permit if required by the municipality.
 - Certify compliance with nondiscrimination policies set forth in 42 USC 1981.
 - Conduct criminal background checks on employees and exclude from employment any person not permitted by state law to work in a public school and any person who may reasonably pose a threat to the safety of students.

- Has the SGO received any complaints of discrimination? ☐ Yes ☒ No *If "Yes", please attach a description of the action taken.*

SECTION VIII – Signature

UNDER PENALTIES OF PERJURY, I declare that I have examined this report and accompanying schedules and statements, and to the best of my knowledge and belief, they are, true, correct and complete. Declaration of preparer (other than taxpayer) is based on all information of which preparer has any knowledge.

ALL SECTIONS OF THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED TO BE CONSIDERED A PROPERLY FILED RETURN.
Please mail this annual report and all required attachments to Alabama Department of Revenue,
ATTN: Education Scholarship Program, P.O. Box 327010, Montgomery, AL 36132-7010