



Implementing Indexed Tuition at Your School

Understanding Indexed Tuition and Why Now Is The Right Time For It

Independent School Executive Forum

Table of Contents

Section 1: Why Indexed Tuition?. 3

Section 2: The Logistics. 8

Section 3: Getting Internal Support. 11

Section 4: Marketing to Prospects. 14

How to Use this Tool

This implementation guide contains an overview of indexed tuition models, as well as key considerations and milestones in making a change from a traditional financial aid model. With the support of your head of school, use this tool with your admissions and business teams to identify how indexed tuition can help you meet your school’s unique enrollment and mission-oriented goals. Then establish key program elements, get internal buy-in, and create a communications plan for prospective families.



Why Indexed Tuition?

Understanding Indexed Tuition and Why Now is the Right Time to Implement It

SECTION

1

What Is Indexed Tuition?

Indexed Tuition:

Indexed tuition is a model that tailors tuition to each family's unique financial situation, allowing schools to speak about and offer tuition at the level that each family can afford.

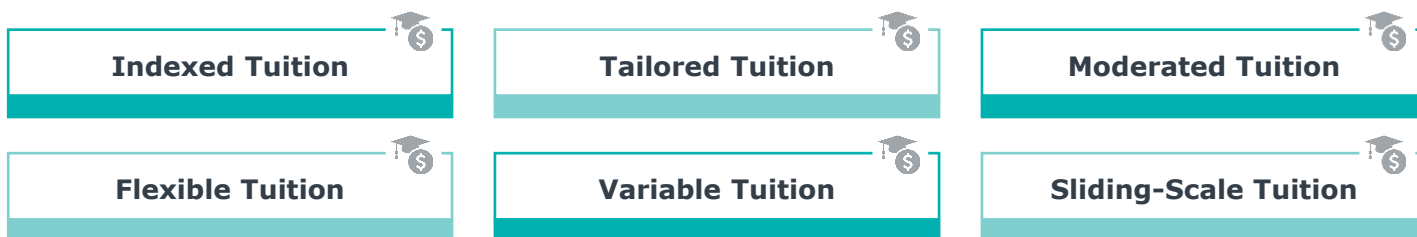
In traditional financial aid models, schools discount by offering "aid" to the families that apply. In contrast, an indexed tuition model frames the conversation around having families contribute what they can afford. The result is that the emphasis is put on each family's contribution, rather than the gap in what they cannot pay. Indexed tuition models prioritize transparency and communication around pricing and affordability, which helps attract families who have not traditionally considered independent schools and those who may not view themselves as qualifying for financial aid.

How is Indexed Tuition Different from the Traditional Tuition Model?

Indexed tuition is financial aid by another name: the process is not so different, but it has now been codified in a way that is more transparent, illustrates the school's values, and allows parents to understand how their contribution is being calculated. In an indexed tuition model, schools proactively communicate aspects of aid calculation that were previously opaque (i.e. what they take into consideration when determining the appropriate level of tuition for a family). Schools with indexed models intentionally communicate that they want to work with all families to enroll the best fit students at a price that fits their situation. Language about affordability has an important impact on who applies, enrolls and stays in a school community – so while the underlying financial aid process may remain similar, the shift in framework is significant.

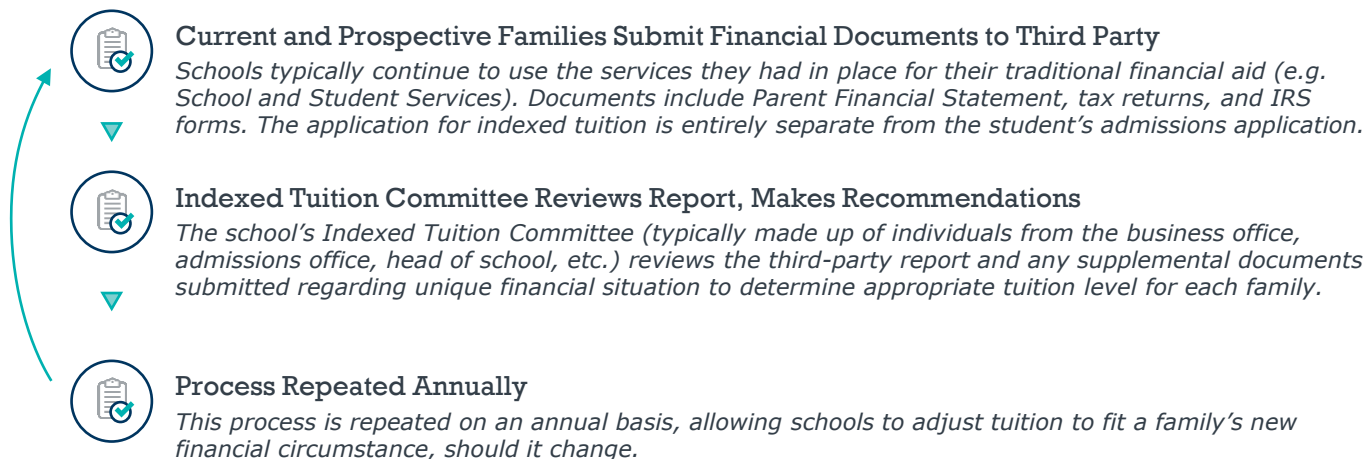
Terminology Used for Indexed Tuition Models

There are many names for indexed tuition models. The name a school selects typically reflects the primary goal or motivation of their program. Common names include:



Typical Process in Indexed Tuition Model

While indexed tuition models vary based on a school's unique goals and practices, most include three basic components in the application process:



Why Implement an Indexed Tuition Model Now?

WHY NOW?



As the country grapples with the reality of racial inequities, opportunity gaps, and what it means to be an anti-racist society, **independent schools are facing their own moment of reckoning**. Given their common commitment to social justice, it is important that independent schools become more inclusive about who they attract, enroll and retain at their schools.

Over the past year, school leaders have navigated difficult conversations around race, equity and inclusion at their institutions. In times of turmoil, a school's history and mission are more important than ever. A closer look at independent school mission statements show a shared emphasis on the value of a diverse community, students focused on social good, and an aim to cultivate character.

Common Terms in Independent School Mission Statements

Value of **Diversity**



Inclusive



Global Citizens

Meaning of **Social Good**



Social Responsibility



Changing the World

Importance of **Character**



Respect



Ethical

But while these values are espoused by school leaders as north stars, they are not reflected in independent school student demographics. Current racial and socio-economic diversity at independent schools shows that there is a long way to go before schools will authentically reflect these aims, as detailed below.

Tuition at Many Schools is Cost Prohibitive, Limiting Socioeconomic Diversity

A central barrier to racial and socio-economic diversity at independent schools is the cost of attendance. As tuition has continued to rise, outpacing inflation and requiring a larger portion of families' household income, this challenge has worsened. A lack of transparency and understanding around available aid only exacerbates the perception that schools are simply out of reach for most families.

\$26,866

Average day school tuition at NAIS Schools 2019-2020

\$60,600

Average 7-Day boarding tuition at NAIS Schools 2019-2020

\$74,200

Median family income among US households with children, 2018

Schools Still Lack Racial Diversity, Remain Largely Homogenous

As of 2020, 54% of students at independent schools identified as white. In contrast, students of color accounted for only a fraction of the population.

4%

Of students enrolled at all NAIS schools identify as Latinx/Hispanic

7%

Of students enrolled at all NAIS schools identify as Black/African American

7%

Of students enrolled at all NAIS schools identify as Asian American

Indexed tuition models allow schools to more effectively address longstanding challenges to access by **increasing transparency and bringing new families into the conversation around affordability.**

Why Implement an Indexed Tuition Model Now?(cont.)

WHY NOW?



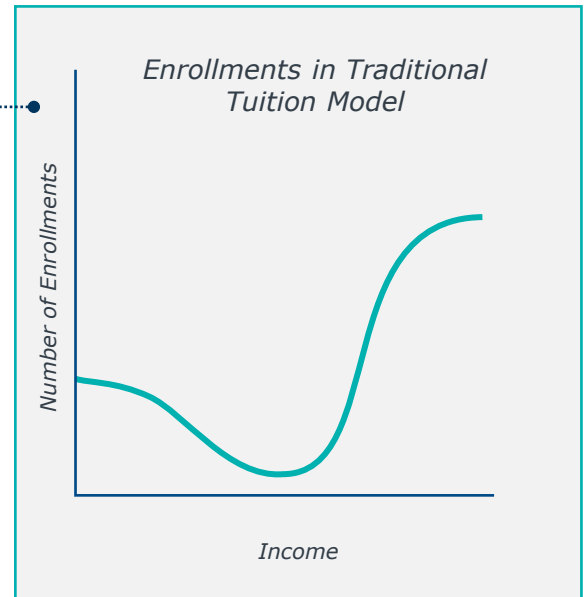
As public-school districts around the country struggle to effectively shift to virtual instruction, families are looking for alternative options for their children. Given their successful transition to remote learning, **independent schools are well positioned to capitalize on newfound interest from public-school families** who may not have previously considered them as an option.

Traditional Tuition Models Often Overlook Middle Class Families

The current independent school tuition model, which features a high sticker price and often ambiguous language around financial aid, results in an enrollment barbell curve: schools have a high population of wealthy students, smaller population of low-income students, and little in-between.

Now is the time to put strategies into place to address this gap, given the surge of middle to upper-class public-school families currently looking at your institution for the first time. These families:

- ▶ May be unfamiliar with independent school financial aid models, and be turned off by sticker price
- ▶ May not believe they qualify for financial aid



Indexed tuition emphasizes your school's **willingness to work with each family's unique financial circumstances**, helping attract often **elusive middle-class families**.

How Indexed Tuition Benefits All Students

In addition to meeting mission-centric diversity and inclusion goals and capturing newfound attention from public-school families, it should be noted that diversifying classrooms has positive impacts for all students. Classrooms with racial and socioeconomic diversity provide a host of benefits, including:

What it Looks Like

Social-Emotional Benefits



Classrooms with increased diversity can support student's self-confidence, particularly in their own academic abilities, and help boost leadership skills.

Civic Benefits



Diverse classrooms increase tolerance, reduce racial bias, encourage cross-cultural dialogue, and expose students to different backgrounds. They also prepare students for a global economy.

Academic and Cognitive Benefits



Classrooms with racial and socioeconomic diversity bolster critical thinking, creativity and problem solving.

Indexed Tuition and Net Tuition Revenue

While not required for an indexed tuition model, many schools with indexed tuition use Net Tuition Revenue (NTR). Indexed tuition can be done as a standalone initiative, but if your school has finite financial aid resources and is not using NTR, it will be even more important to be transparent about the school's limitations. For this reason, it is worth reviewing NTR's benefits.

In the traditional view of financial aid, aid is often mistakenly seen as lost potential revenue. But unless you are currently turning away full-pay students, that is simply not true. Net Tuition Revenue demonstrates how using financial aid can have a positive impact on your budget, bringing in additional revenue from partial-pay families. Schools that are using Net Tuition Revenue are exceptionally well-positioned to shift to an Indexed Tuition Model.

Net Tuition Revenue:

The amount of tuition remaining after the marginal cost of educating a student is subtracted from tuition paid by that student.

To calculate net tuition revenue, work with your business office to determine the **marginal cost of educating each additional student** at your school once you have covered your school's fixed costs and determine **the school's capacity without having to increase fixed costs**.

Net Tuition Revenue Calculator

Total Tuition Cost:	\$30,000
Amount of Aid Given:	\$10,000
Marginal Cost of Educating a Student:	\$4,000
Net Tuition Revenue:	\$16,000

Rather than viewing the amount of financial aid given to a student as a loss of potential revenue, net tuition revenue focuses on the **amount still gained** by enrolling an additional student, even after accounting for aid given and the cost of educating that student.

Working with Your Business Office

Net Tuition Revenue will require a shift in more than just mindset and communication; it will require you to work closely with your business office to identify a few key metrics that will determine program limits and processes. Three areas to consider include:



The Basics

Determine the marginal cost of educating each additional student at your school and your school's full capacity for students without increasing fixed costs.



The Reality

Calculate how much tuition is currently generated by students receiving financial aid. Are you currently turning away full-pay students?



The Limitations

Determine limitations for financial sustainability, such as a cap on percent of need available for specific grades/divisions.



The Logistics

Key Considerations and First Steps for Moving to an Indexed Tuition Model

SECTION

2

Setting the Foundation for Indexed Tuition

Create a Task Force

To begin, create a task force of key internal stakeholders to design the model and plan your communication. Indexed tuition task forces often include the head of school, director of admissions/financial aid, director of marketing, and a member of the business office. This group will be charged with thinking through questions on tuition, financial aid, and the school's enrollment goals.

Establish the Goals of the Program

Once you have created a task force, work together to identify your primary goals for moving to an indexed tuition model. While these models offer a variety of benefits, it's important that you begin this process by selecting your specific driving motivator.

Drawbacks of Current Approach

How your current approach to financial aid could be hindering your goals

Questions to Consider:

- Are there negative perceptions about our school as it relates to pricing?
- Are there negative perceptions about our school as it relates to exclusivity?
- What assumptions do our current communications make about prospective families and the information they are looking for?
- Looking at our website analytics: where are people opting out of the admissions process (i.e. bounce rates)?

Potential Areas for Growth

How a new approach could help to capitalize on opportunities to reach new prospects

Questions to Consider:

- How could we better sustain conversations with prospective families when it comes to tuition?
- How could we make the conversation about affordability more comfortable for prospective families?
- Are there opportunities for us to proactively connect with underserved families and/or middle-class families?
- What demographics do we want to bring into our school that we are currently missing?

What are your goals for shifting to an Indexed Tuition Model?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Select a Name for Your Program

Your primary goals should drive what you name your program. From indexed to tailored to flexible, each program carries a more rigid or fluid connotation. Consider how current and prospective families will interpret this name – does it align with your goals?

“Our goal was to communicate to families that we were going to respond to their circumstances, but it would be based on an application. Flexible could suggest room for negotiation... ‘Tailored’ felt responsive.”

- Bayh Sullivan, Director of Enrollment Management, The Ellis School

Key Considerations for Your Indexed Tuition Model

Determine Program Details

There are many logistical details to consider when moving to an indexed tuition model, but the following four are particularly important:



Creating an Indexed Tuition Committee

Who will participate in your Indexed Tuition Committee?

If your current financial aid model does not have a committee to determine aid based on your third-party report and additional considerations, you will need to create one. Typically, these committees include senior members of the business office (e.g. CFO/Director of Finance) and the admissions office (e.g. Director of Enrollment Management). In some cases, schools designate a staff member to serve as a parent advocate on this committee.



Determining Considerations for Tuition Levels

What additional elements will the indexed tuition committee consider?

While third parties account for many aspects of a family's financial situation, you will need to identify the additional considerations for your tuition committee to review (e.g. saving for college, care of an elderly relative, the percent of family's discretionary income that should go towards tuition within your specific market, etc.). If you do not already have such a list, you will need to create that one. Remember that in an indexed tuition model, these considerations are typically shared with families in a transparent manner.



Required Contribution

Will there be an expected contribution, or base-level required payment, from all families?

Some institutions require a base contribution from all families. For some, this is a financial sustainability requirement. For others, it is a commitment that all families are prioritizing their child's education at the level that they can afford. This is not required, and not all schools with an indexed tuition model implement it.



Variations by Grade, Division

Will your tuition model vary by grade or division?

For some institutions, indexed tuition programs vary based on grade or division. This could be a result of underlying models (e.g. a cap on potential aid offered in the lower school) or enrollment goals (e.g. heightened focus on middle school enrollment). You should clarify this information early so that you can adjust your language accordingly.

Conduct Market Research

Given the fact that indexed tuition varies based on individual school demographics and enrollment goals, it is helpful to look at your specific market and comparable peers who have made the move to indexed tuition models. Some questions to consider include:

- ▶ **Are there comparable schools (enrollment, demographic, budget) that have made this switch?**
Is there someone you could speak with who already has this model in place at their school?
- ▶ **Are there other schools in your market currently doing this?**
This is not new to independent schools broadly or higher education, but is it new to your market?
- ▶ **How drastic of a change are you considering?**
Are you looking to solely change your financial aid communications strategy? Or do you want to redo your entire financial aid model?

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.



Getting Internal Support

How to Get Key Community Stakeholders to Buy-In to Indexed Tuition

SECTION

3

Prioritize Community Education

To ensure the success of your new indexed tuition model, you will need to prioritize community education. A commitment to parent, board, and alumni education may be time-consuming, but is a critical piece of the transition. These internal stakeholders will each have their own set of concerns and motivators, so taking the time up front to share why you are making this change, how it will impact your school, and what challenges and benefits lie ahead will help to mitigate future complications. Some of these initiatives will need to happen before the program's introduction, while others should happen in tandem.

Common Concerns for Specific Internal Shareholders



Parent Education

Assure Current Families That They Can Apply

Your current parents will likely immediately wonder what this will mean for them. Clearly convey that current families will be welcome to apply, and that it will not negatively impact those currently receiving aid.

Offer Training for Word-of-Mouth Marketing

Your parents play an important role in your school's recruitment efforts through word-of-mouth marketing. Conduct a training to share with your parent ambassadors how to navigate discussions around the new indexed tuition program and how you'd like them to speak about affordability moving forward.



Board Education

Clarify the Extent of the Change

Since changing your approach to tuition can sound drastic, be sure to clarify with your board that this move to an indexed tuition model uses the same or similar approach to what you have currently been doing. Underscore that it is the language and transparency that will see the largest change.

Highlight the Impact of Language

Explain how using discounting language can negatively impact what students you attract and retain. From affordability for middle-class families to diversifying your student body, clearly outline how changing your language around tuition can help you meet your enrollment goals.



Alumni Education

Make Direct Connection to Mission, Goals

Alumni have been one of the most vocal groups when it comes to the recent social justice movement. In your communication, make direct connections about how this shift will help your school better fulfill your school's mission and improve access for families.

Explain Financial Implications, Sustainability

Consider compiling a presentation where you can talk to your alumni and broader school community about how this approach will help with the financial health of your school (i.e. reinforce the idea that attracting non full-pay students still has a positive impact on your revenue).



Word of Mouth Training

This training can be done with the parent association, board, or simply a group of your school's most vocal supporters. Word of mouth is a critical part of independent school recruitment, happening in moments big and small:



Parking Lots



Sports Games



Dinner Parties



Social Gatherings

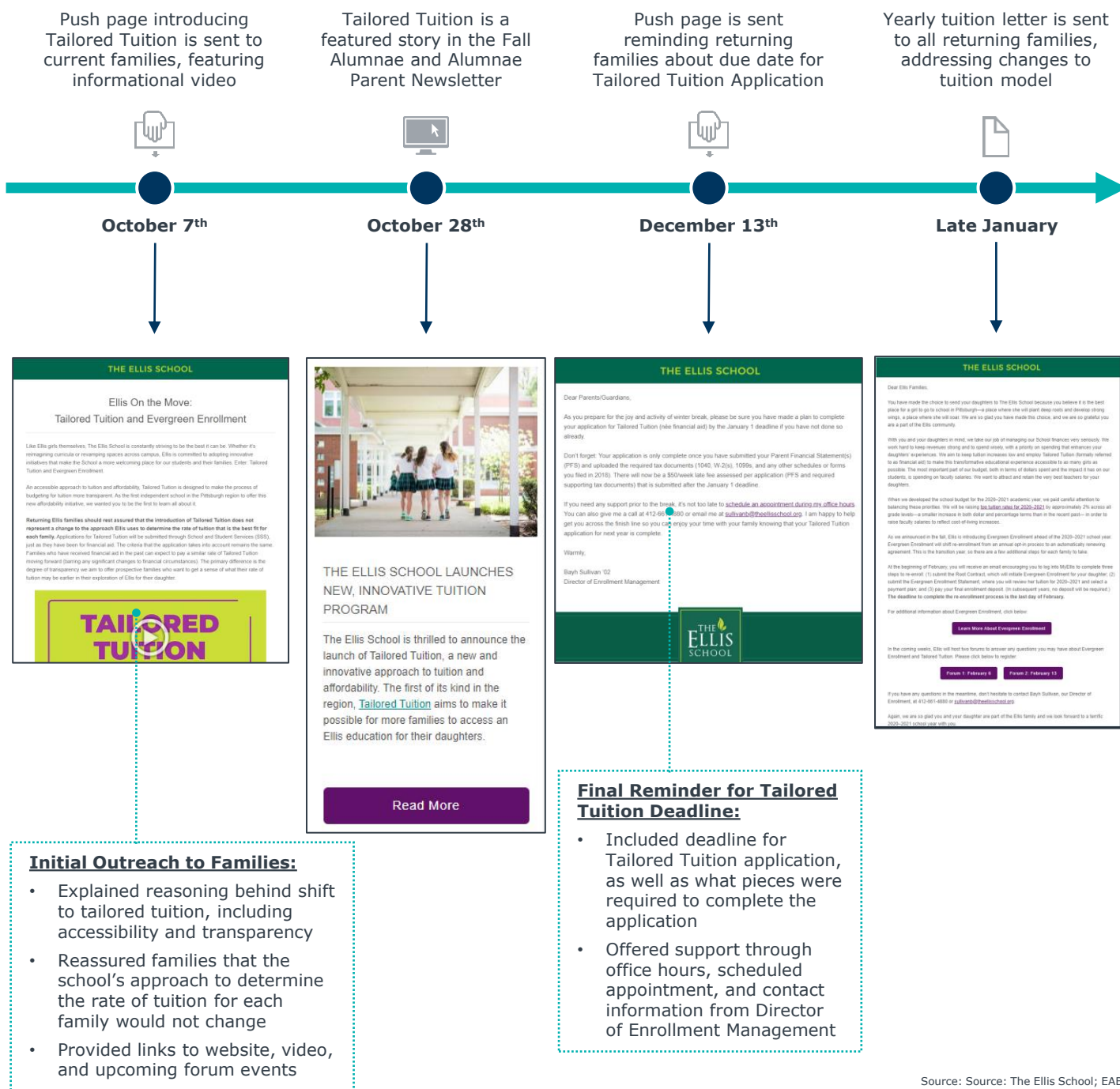
The goal of this session is to teach parents how to navigate common conversations around price and affordability, emphasizing the school's mission and new tailored approach to tuition.

Communicate Launch to Current Families, Alumni

When the time comes to roll out your program, it is important to have a broad communication plan catered to current families and alumni. This plan can include targeted emails, stories in your weekly newsletter or school magazine, blog posts and website pages. Be sure to highlight opportunities for these stakeholders to ask questions or voice their concerns.

The Ellis School, a PreK-12 all girls' school in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, launched their Tailored Tuition Program in October 2019. In the months leading up to the launch, Ellis's enrollment office sent out a series of push pages, newsletters, and communications explaining why they were launching the new program and what it would look like for current families.

The Ellis School's Communications to Current Families and Alumnae



Source: Source: The Ellis School; EAB interviews and analysis.



Marketing to Prospects

Communicating Information About Your New Tuition Model
with Prospects


SECTION

4

Share New Program with Prospective Families

Once you have established your indexed tuition model's approach and secured the necessary buy in from internal stakeholders, it's time to market your new program to prospective families. The Ellis School did this in several ways, including emails introducing Tailored Tuition to potentially interested families and follow-up communication to all families that had completed the lead form.

THE ELLIS SCHOOL



Tailored Tuition Is Here!


Do you want to give your daughter a private school education, but the price tag gives you sticker shock? From paying your mortgage and car payments to saving for a family vacation—it can feel like there isn't much wiggle room for additional expenses.

Enter: Tailored Tuition, Ellis' new and innovative approach to tuition and affordability. The Ellis School is the first independent school in the Pittsburgh region to offer Tailored Tuition, which takes into account each family's significant financial variables and recommends a rate of tuition that fits sustainably within their budget. We want you to envision your daughter at Ellis, and we know budgeting for tuition is a big consideration. Tailored Tuition is here to help.

Check out our webpage to see how Tailored Tuition works for Ellis families and how it could work for you, too!

[Visit Webpage](#)


TAILORED TUITION



Start Your Admission Checklist

Are you ready to take the next step and learn even more about Ellis? Click below to tell us about your daughter—our Admission team will follow up with your family as soon as possible.

[Tell Us About Your Daughter](#)



THE ELLIS SCHOOL

Hi ,


Thank you for your interest in Tailored Tuition! In order for a school to be the right fit for your daughter, the tuition needs to be a good fit for your family's budget. That's why The Ellis School is proud to offer Tailored Tuition, a transparent affordability initiative that means you can envision your daughter at Ellis with the certainty that Ellis will partner with you to determine a rate of tuition that is sustainable for your family.

For families with household incomes between \$120,000–\$149,999, the minimum rate of Tailored Tuition for 2019-2020 is \$3,000* and the maximum is \$28,750. That means that, across all grade levels, families with incomes** similar to yours pay an average Tailored Tuition rate of \$11,206, or \$1,121 per month with the ten-payment plan.

Significant variables that influence Tailored Tuition include income, assets, liabilities, debts, allowances, the number of dependents and children in tuition-charging schools, saving for retirement and college, and certain unexpected one-time expenses. If you would like to learn more about the variables that impact the calculation of each family's Tailored Tuition, what Tailored Tuition covers, or how to begin the application process, please visit the [Tailored Tuition webpage](#) and review the FAQs.

Tailored Tuition ensures that all Ellis students attend school with other bright, engaged, interesting and interested students who create the vibrant, diverse, inclusive community we all want for our children and that we know supports a more compelling and effective learning environment. We are thrilled that you are exploring Ellis for your daughter and considering how tuition will factor into your family's finances. We can't wait to show you what makes The Ellis School the best option in Pittsburgh for girls entering pre-kindergarten through grade 12, and a compelling and welcoming school community for your family.

Warmly,
Bayh Sullivan '02



Anyone who filled out a Tailored Tuition lead form received a follow-up email that:

- Explains variables used to determine tuition
- Restated the purpose of tailored tuition, and its goal to make an Ellis education financially sustainable for families from a wide range of financial backgrounds
- Shared what their tuition may cost based on the income entered into their lead form

The Ellis School sent three emails to prospective families and those who had demonstrated interest, framing Tailored Tuition as an innovative approach to independent school affordability and a solution to the sticker shock often associated with private education.

Make Information Readily Available on Your Website

Over the last decade, prospective families have increasingly relied on stealth shopping in their admissions process, looking online as a first source of information about independent schools. As a result, it is critical to make information about your new tuition model easily accessible and readily available to prospective families on your website. This can be done through a designated landing page or on your existing tuition page.

Examples: Lick-Wilmerding, Vistamar Provide Information on Tuition and Affordability Landing Pages

LICK-WILMERDING

ABOUT | ADMISSIONS | CURRICULUM | COMMUNITY | ATHLETICS | ALUMNI | SUPPORT

APPLYING | **AFFORDING** | EXPLORE LWS | VIRTUAL TOUR | FAQ & CONTACT US | ¡BIENVENIDOS!

Affording

The Flexible Tuition program ensures access and socioeconomic diversity at LWS.

Thanks to its 125 year history of being accessible to students from all walks of life, including 77 years of being tuition free, Lick-Wilmerding High School enjoys the legacy, the resources, and the strategic resolve to push the limits on what it can mean to be a truly accessible independent school.

Today, 28 percent of LWS' operating budget is devoted to Flexible Tuition. 35% of our students are enrolled through the school's Flexible Tuition Program. One thing we have learned is that language of discourse really matters—especially when talking about accessibility. Based on feedback received from parents during the 1988-1989 school year, we have for more than two decades eschewed the use of the term "financial aid" in favor of "Flexible Tuition."

Para obtener información en español, hacer clic aquí.

FLEXIBLE TUITION APPLICATION PROCESS

Step 1: Start preparing your 2020 Tax Returns as soon as possible.
READ MORE

Step 2: Submit the Parents' Financial Statement (PFS) by Thursday, January 21, 2021
READ MORE

Step 3: Submit 2020 tax information and LWS Supplemental Information Form by Friday, February 12, 2021
READ MORE

Step 4: Notification & Enrollment
READ MORE

DOWNLOADS

- Flexible Tuition Application Procedures
- LWS Supplemental Information Form
- SSS Application Procedures
- SSS Application Procedures (Español)
- 20-21 PFS Workbook
- 20-21 PFS Workbook (Español)
- Tax Primer for Parents
- Completing the PFS
- Tax Primer for Self-Employed
- Parents Completing the PFS

VIEW THE BROCHURE

VISTAMAR SCHOOL

About Us | Admissions | Academics | Vistamar Experience | Athletics | Giving | Alumni

ADMISSIONS

TUITION & AFFORDING VISTAMAR

Welcome | Meet the Admissions Team | Admissions Process | Admissions Events | International Students

Tuition & Affording Vistamar | Transportation | New Vikings | Virtual Tour

Tuition

Vistamar School's tuition falls within the median range of independent schools throughout greater Los Angeles. Our tuition for the 2020-2021 school year is listed below:

Domestic Students: \$40,500

International Students: \$44,000

There is a one-time new student fee of \$1,900 for all students.

The cost for books and miscellaneous expenses range from \$400-700 per year, depending upon the student's schedule of classes.

Affording Vistamar

Introducing "Moderated Tuition"—Vistamar's exceptional take on financial aid.

We at Vistamar are deeply committed to working with qualified students from all socioeconomic backgrounds to assist with tuition costs. To do this, we've developed a robust, need-based program we call **Moderated Tuition**. Many schools refer to these programs as **financial aid**, but Vistamar's program is preferable because it serves a wider variety of family circumstances including families who have moderate need. The chart below illustrates the range.

Business Office Staff

Najah Lowe
Chief Financial Officer

Downloads

- Family Guide to Moderated Tuition
- Parent's Workbook and Instruction Booklet
- How to Apply for Moderated Tuition
- 2020-2021 Moderated Tuition Supplemental Form
- PFS Tax Primer for Parents
- PFS Tax Primer for Self-Employed Parents
- Tigre Scholarship Program en Español
- Guía Familiar para Ayuda

Web Page Highlights

- **Exhibits School Values:** Directly states commitment to working with students from all socio-economic backgrounds and explains how their approach uniquely positions them to do so
- **Provides Additional Resources:** Links in-depth materials on moderated tuition, specifically highlighting important SSS resources with details on the steps for applying

Web Page Highlights

- **Makes Direct Tie to Mission:** Clearly outlines that the goal of the program is to continue the school's history of expanding access to independent school education, and provides specific data on how many students are currently enrolled using flexible tuition
- **Outlines Timeline for Application:** Provides important dates, offers instructions on steps to complete each stage of the process

The following pages highlight best-in-class features for indexed tuition websites.




Source: Lick-Wilmerding, "Affording"; Vistamar "Tuition and Affording Vistamar"; EAB interviews and analysis.

Directly Convey Connection to Mission

The introduction to indexed tuition on your website should clearly state its connection to your school's mission. From equity and inclusion to educational access, school leaders should directly outline how this new approach to tuition helps the school reach its goals and fulfill its mission.

Example: Lick-Wilmerding's Website Frames Flexible Tuition around History, Mission and Accessibility

Affording



The Flexible Tuition program ensures access and socioeconomic diversity at LWHS.

Thanks to its 125 year history of being accessible to students from all walks of life, including 77 years of being tuition free, Lick-Wilmerding High School enjoys the legacy, the resources, and the strategic resolve to push the limits on what it can mean to be a truly accessible independent school.

Today, 28 percent of LWHS' operating budget is devoted to Flexible Tuition, 35% of our students are enrolled through the school's Flexible Tuition Program. One thing we have learned is that language of discourse really matters—especially when talking about accessibility. Based on feedback received from parents during the 1988–1989 school year, we have for more than two decades eschewed the use of the term "financial aid" in favor of "Flexible Tuition."


Clearly states the goal of the program at the top of the page

Begins with school's history and mission being a "truly accessible" independent school

Highlights the importance of language for accessibility while explaining the change in name

Example: The Ellis School's Blog Post Explains How New Tuition Model is Driven by School's Mission

Ellis Launches New, Innovative Tuition Program



10/8/2019

The Ellis School is thrilled to announce the launch of **Tailored Tuition**, a new and innovative approach to tuition and affordability. The first of its kind in the region, Tailored Tuition aims to make it possible for more families to access an Ellis education for their daughters.

In a traditional financial aid model, it can be difficult for a family to discern whether they qualify for aid and, if they do, what their cost of attendance would be. For many families, this can be a deterrent to pursuing an independent school education, even if they are certain their daughters would thrive at a school like Ellis.

"We know from our research that a significant number of families do not pursue an independent school education because they believe it is out of reach financially. This new approach will ask each family to pay a rate of tuition that is a sustainable stretch for them while taking into account other significant financial variables," says Head of School Macon Finley.

Offering Tailored Tuition is in keeping with the School's 100-year history of empowering girls and young women. Because an Ellis education is a transformative experience, all girls who are bright and curious, principled in their beliefs, eager to make a difference, and ready to make the very most of their school experience **should be Ellis students**.

In addition to serving the needs of girls in the region, the School is focused on issues of **equity and inclusion**. Ellis' commitment to adopting innovative initiatives like Tailored Tuition make the school a more welcoming place for a wide range of students and their families.

Blog post published surrounding the launch of tailored tuition, outlines motivations and goals for the program

References school's history and mission of empowering girls and young women, noting that this should include **all** girls who are *"bright, principled in their beliefs, eager to make a difference, and ready to make the most of their school experience"*


Language identifies equity and inclusion as a key focus for the school and of the program, including effort to make the school welcoming to a wide range of students and families

Source: Lick-Wilmerding, "Affording"; The Ellis School "Tailored Tuition"; EAB interviews and analysis.

Proactively Provide Answers with Video, FAQ Section

Include informational videos or a frequently asked question section directly on your website to answer questions from prospective families who may be new to the independent school community or unfamiliar with tuition pricing. Making tuition more approachable and easier to understand is a key part of this move to an indexed tuition model.

Example: North Cross School Website Features Video from Director of Admissions



Topics Covered in Video:

- What is Tailored Tuition?
- What percentage of students use Tailored Tuition at North Cross?
- How Does Tailored Tuition work?
- What is the timeline/what are some of the process details?
- How does North Cross compute a family's ability to pay?
- What is Discretionary Income for Education?

Video invites families to reach out directly to the admissions or business department for help with any additional questions.

Example: Lick-Wilmerding School Provides Answers to Common Questions with FAQ Section

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS LICK-WILMERDING

Q: What Is Flexible Tuition?

Q: Is my family eligible for Flexible Tuition?

Q: Does an application for Flexible Tuition affect a student's chances of admission to the school?

Q: When will a family learn if they have been offered Flexible Tuition?

Q: If a ninth grader's family participates in Flexible Tuition, does the student stay in the program until graduation?

Q: Are all students who are offered admission also offered Flexible Tuition if their parents qualify?

Q: If a family does not receive Flexible Tuition one year, can they reapply the following year?

Q: In the case of parents/guardians who do not live together (e.g. divorced, separated, never married), do both households have to submit financial information?

Q: What if my family has unusual circumstances?

Answer:
"There is a wide range of families who qualify, from those who can afford only minimal tuition to those who can afford almost full tuition. In calculating each family's ability to pay, the school considers many factors."

Answer:
"Provided family circumstances remain the same and the school's resources can continue to support the program to the same extent, the school intends to fund the student for four years. To continue in the program, the family must reapply each year."

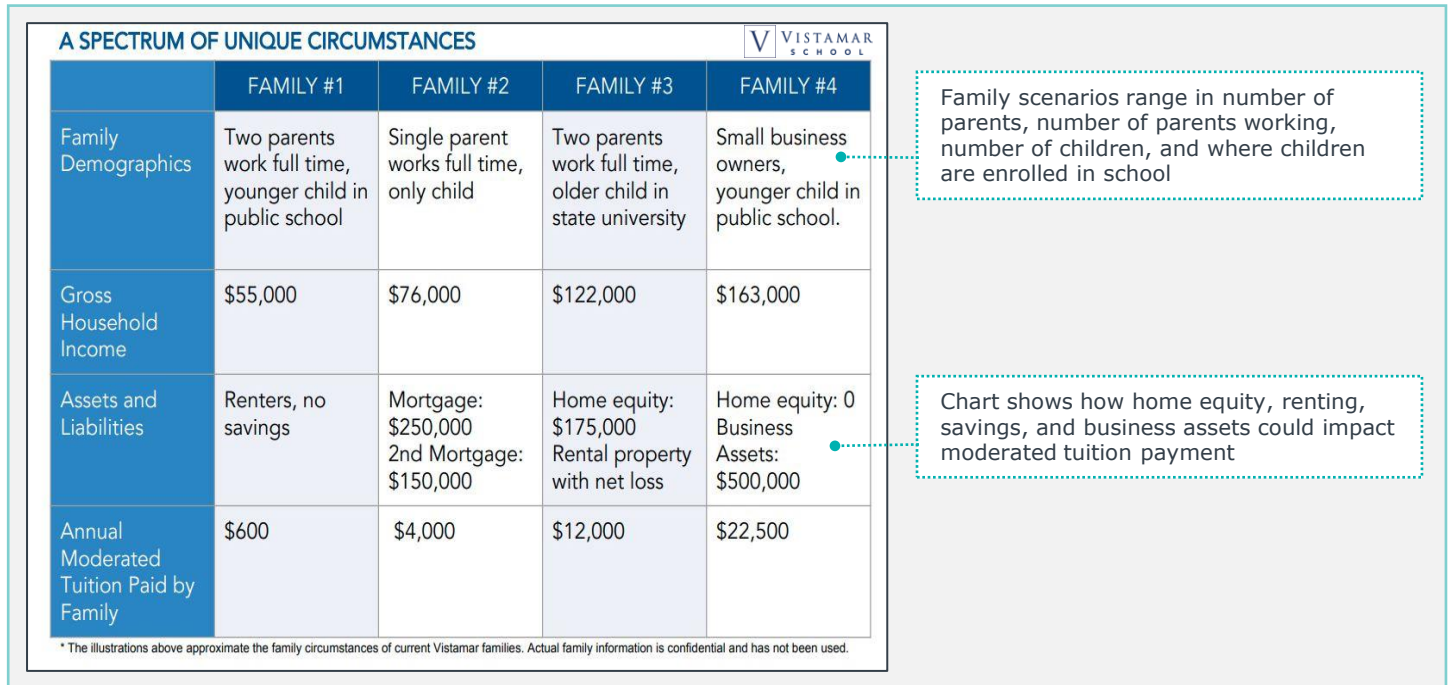
Additional Questions to Include in Video or Frequently Asked Question Section:

- ▶ What kind of financial situation is typical of those who receive tailored tuition?
- ▶ Will a student's grades affect determination of tailored tuition?
- ▶ Do I need to apply for indexed tuition every year?
- ▶ Is every family required to submit an indexed tuition application?
- ▶ How does my home equity affect the calculation of my tuition obligation?
- ▶ Is it possible to attend your school at no cost?

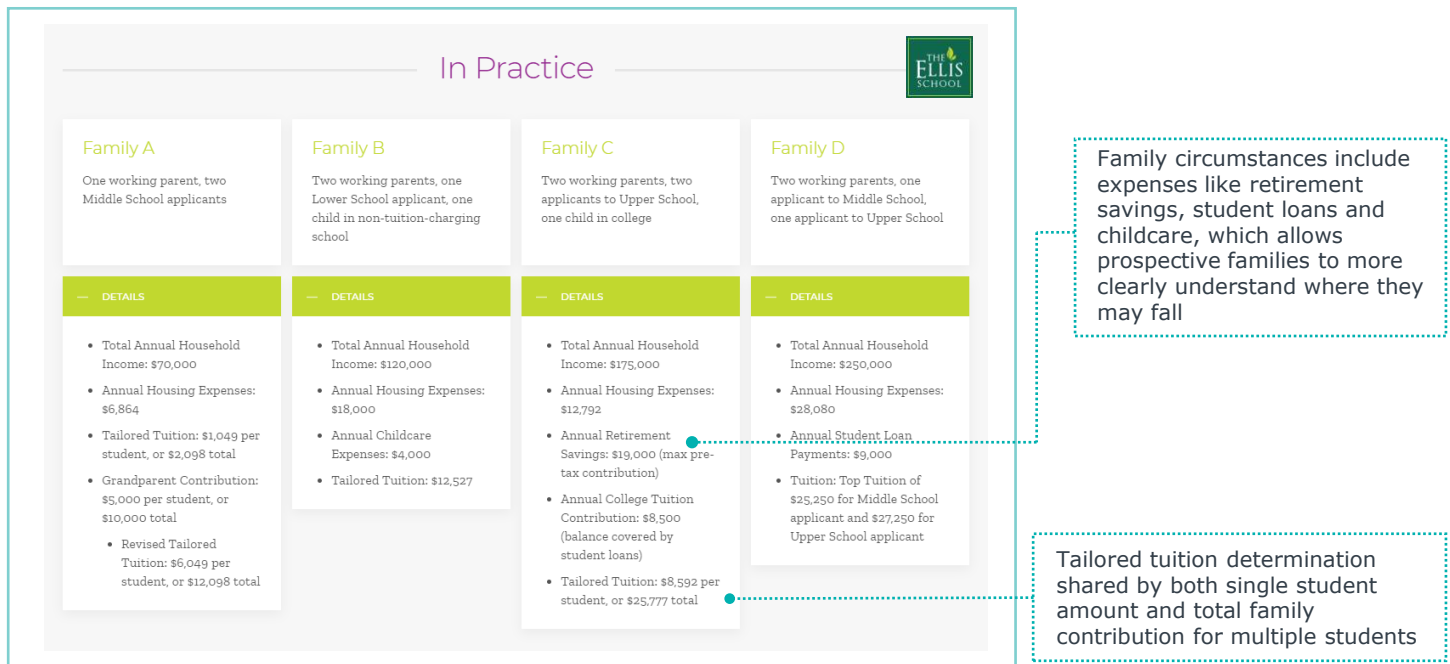
Give Clear Examples Through Family Profiles

One valuable tool in communicating indexed tuition models are illustrative family scenarios. Including charts on your website that highlight different family structures and financial circumstances helps perspective families get a sense of what tuition could look like for their child and imagine themselves affording your school.

Example: Vistamar School's Website Offers a Spectrum of Family Circumstances



Example: The Ellis School Demonstrates Tailored Tuition in Practice on Their Website



Source: Vistamar "Tuition and Affording Vistamar"; The Ellis School, "Tailored Tuition"; EAB interviews and analysis.