

# **Golden Apple Scholars in Illinois Policies and Procedures Handbook**



**Golden Apple**

**May 2023**

## **Welcome to the Golden Apple Scholars Program**

Congratulations on the continuation of your journey as a Golden Apple Scholar. We have high expectations for you as we ensure that you are well prepared to help thousands of students achieve their potential.

This handbook is intended to serve as both a guide and a resource, providing you with a clear understanding of the policies and procedures of the Golden Apple Scholars Program. As a Golden Apple Scholar, you are dedicated to becoming a highly effective teacher in a school-of-need in Illinois for a minimum of five years. This handbook details the basic tenets and requirements of the program.

We expect to prepare you to positively and significantly impact the lives of students across Illinois. We thank you for aspiring to this high level of service, where students need you the most.

As you realize your dreams, you will provide your future students the opportunity to realize theirs too.

Alicia Winckler  
Chief Executive Officer

Alan Mather  
President



For more information on Golden Apple, please visit  
[www.goldenapple.org](http://www.goldenapple.org).

### **Policy and Procedures Not a Contract**

The policies and procedures described in this Handbook do not constitute contractual or other guarantees, but instead help Scholars understand The Golden Apple Foundation's expectations. There are a variety of other expectations of Scholars not found in this Handbook, including those in your individual Scholar Contract.

The Golden Apple Foundation reserves the right to amend, update or revise these policies and procedures as the need arises, without prior notice to Scholars. We typically will, however, inform Scholars when revisions have occurred as soon as practicable thereafter, if not before. Unless specified, all Scholars in pursuance of a bachelor's degree and teacher licensure as well as Scholars in process of fulfilling the teaching commitment are subject to the most recent policies and procedures as amended from time to time.

Furthermore, Scholars in no event shall be deemed to be employees of The Golden Apple Foundation or authorized to formally represent the organization without explicit written permission.

Finally, compliance with the Handbook is a requirement, but does not guarantee continued participation in the Scholar Program.

## The Golden Apple Foundation Scholar Policies and Procedures Handbook

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## **Mission Statement, History, and Purpose: Transforming Teachers and Teaching**

### **Mission Statement**

At Golden Apple, our mission is to inspire, develop, and support teacher excellence, especially in schools-of-need. Because the critical contributor to student achievement is the quality of the teacher in the classroom, Golden Apple provides exceptional, evidence-based preparation and development for teachers at all stages of their careers. Through our innovative programs offering methods, resources, and mentorship, we work to transform teachers and teaching, enriching both student and teacher lives.

### **History**

Founded in 1985, Golden Apple strives to advance the teaching profession at critical phases of educators' careers by: 1) recruiting and preparing aspiring teachers, 2) developing current teacher practitioners and school leaders, and 3) recognizing exemplary educators.

Golden Apple honors outstanding teachers each year throughout the State of Illinois via the Golden Apple Awards for Excellence in Teaching and exemplary principals with the Golden Apple Award for Excellence in Leadership - generously sponsored by the Stanley C. Golder family. Golden Apple award recipients are master teachers and leaders, highly engaged in many aspects of Golden Apple programming, thus ensuring that the organization can sustainably recognize, engage, and leverage the best educators to support and develop the next generation of teachers.

Since its inception in 1989, the Golden Apple Scholars in Illinois program has created partnerships with primary and secondary schools, universities, governmental agencies, and community organizations. In 1993, the program expanded statewide, providing more Scholars the opportunity to develop into excellent teachers for classrooms in schools-of-need throughout the state. In 2020, Golden Apple launched its Accelerators Program to help expedite the preparation of highly-qualified teachers to fill positions of need in targeted communities in southern, central, and western Illinois where the need is greatest.

### **Purpose of Scholars Program**

The purpose of the Golden Apple Scholars program is to recruit and prepare high school graduates and college undergrads that have the promise for successful careers as excellent teachers for students in schools-of-need across Illinois. In the Scholars program, master teachers and expert third-party partners provide appropriate methodology and subject matter through Scholar Institutes. Golden Apple Program staff provides recruiting services, undergraduate supports, placement services, and mentoring during the first years of teaching to inspire Scholars to develop the skills and knowledge required to excel in the profession.

### Key Words & Definitions

<b>Academy</b>	Golden Apple Award recipients become lifetime members of the Golden Apple Academy of Educators. The Academy supports the selection of future Award recipients and the professional development of Undergraduate and Teaching Scholars in addition to another Golden Apple Program - the Golden Apple Accelerators. The Academy consists of Fellows, Teachers of Distinction, and Leaders of Distinction.
<b>Alumni</b>	A Scholar who has fulfilled their commitment of teaching in a school-of-need for five years to Golden Apple. Additionally, he/she/they is a Crystal Apple recipient and considered a Completed Scholar.
<b>Crystal Apple</b>	Scholars who complete their 5-year commitment receive a “Crystal Apple” to celebrate their completion of the mission. Crystal Apple Recipients are Alumni.
<b>Exit</b>	The action of being removed from the Golden Apple Scholars program, which includes revocation of all benefits associated with being a participant in the program and results in an obligation to repay up to all of the tuition assistance received.
<b>Fellow</b>	A member of the Golden Apple Academy or Educator who won the Golden Apple Award for Excellence in Teaching or the Golden Apple Award for Excellence in School Leadership (Golder Award). Typically, there are ten recipients of the Golden Apple Award for Excellence in Teaching and 1-2 recipients of the Golden Apple Award for Excellence in Leadership across the state of Illinois. In order to qualify for these awards, you must have at least five years of teaching experience or five years of school leadership experience.
<b>Induction</b>	Induction is an event that celebrates the newest class of incoming Scholars.
<b>ISAC - The Illinois Student Assistance Commission</b>	<p>The state agency that provides information and assistance to help make education beyond high school accessible and affordable for Illinois families. ISAC provides comprehensive, objective, and timely information on education and financial aid for students and their families—giving them access to the tools they need to make the educational choices that are right for them. Then, through the state scholarship and grant programs ISAC administers, including the state’s flagship Monetary Award Program, ISAC can help students make those choices a reality.</p> <p>ISAC presently serves as the fiscal agent for the appropriation for Golden Apple’s Scholars and Accelerators Program and administers the tuition assistance component of our work.</p>

<b>Leaders of Distinction</b>	Leadership Award Finalists whose superior work in education was noted by the Selection Committee and were runners-up for the Excellence in Leadership Award. The Leaders of Distinction are recognized for their distinguished contribution to education and are asked to participate in Golden Apple programs. Leaders of Distinction have at least five years of school leadership experience.
<b>Summer Teaching Experience/STE (Formally referred to as Onsite)</b>	A Scholar's summer school teaching placement during Scholar Institute where they receive hands-on training in the classroom.
<b>Scholar Institute</b>	A rigorous, multi-week teacher preparation program that Scholars participate in during summer months. Alumni, Academy members, and Golden Apple partners also participate in programming.
<b>Teachers of Distinction</b>	Teacher Award Finalists whose superior work in education was noted by the Selection Committee and were runners-up for the Excellence in Teaching Award. The Teachers of Distinction are recognized for their distinguished contribution to education and are asked to participate in Golden Apple programs. Teachers of Distinction have at least five years of teaching experience.
<b>Teaching Scholar</b>	A Scholar who has graduated with an educator license who has not yet completed the five-year teaching requirement.
<b>Undergraduate Scholar</b>	A Scholar who is currently pursuing an undergraduate degree in teaching.
<b>University Liaison</b>	An individual who connects Scholars at their university with Golden Apple staff. University Liaisons may host events, support Scholar recruitment, or participate in other Golden Apple-related activities.

### **Scholar Outcomes**

As a result of this program, Scholars:

- Advance student learning to help them reach their full potential;
- Demonstrate instructional best practices while meeting the diverse learning needs of all students;
- Serve to facilitate civic leadership in their classroom, school, and community;
- Personalize learning to meet the unique needs of all of their students;
- Develop an awareness of their own identity, addresses cultural competence, and how it impacts others;
- Build collaborative relationships and work effectively as a team member;
- Demonstrate professionalism in the classroom and school community;
- Commit to being lifelong learners; and,
- Improve educational outcomes for students.



### **Golden Apple Expectations of Scholars**

The State of Illinois, philanthropic organizations, corporations, many generous individual donors, and partnerships with districts and schools collectively provide funding for our Scholars program.

Because the Scholars program is supported in part by state funding, changes in this funding could alter or remove aspects of the program, including the amount of the scholarship provided to Scholars. **Regardless of changes in funding or scholarship, all Scholars are expected to complete the commitment to teach in a school-of-need in the State of Illinois for at least five years.**

Expectations for Scholars include meeting requirements set by Golden Apple, including requirements in the Scholar Contract, the university the Scholar attends, and the State of Illinois. If any of these requirements are not met, a Scholar may be exited from the program.

Rules and requirements from the State are available on the ISAC website at:

[https://www.isac.org/students/during-college/types-of-financial-aid/scholarships/golden-apple-scholars-of-illinois.html#program\\_requirements](https://www.isac.org/students/during-college/types-of-financial-aid/scholarships/golden-apple-scholars-of-illinois.html#program_requirements)

### **Golden Apple, University, and State of Illinois Requirements**

#### ***Before Induction:***

- Meet all eligibility requirements;
- Provide an approved state or government-issued photo ID;
- Be a U.S. Citizen, a legal resident of Illinois, or eligible non-resident such as an actively enrolled DACA student;
- Provide an official copy of a birth certificate AND a Social Security or Permanent Resident Card or Non-expired DACA mentation; and,
- Sign ALL contracts, promissory notes, and university transcript release forms.
- Inform Golden Apple if you're planning on participating in a five year Master's level education program.

#### ***While an Undergraduate:***

- Reside in Illinois (i.e., Scholar and Scholar's legal guardians must have an Illinois permanent address throughout the acquisition of their undergraduate degree);
- Earn a minimum 2.5 GPA for each term (on a 4.0 scale). Please note Golden Apple does not round GPA in any case;
- Maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 2.5 (on a 4.0 scale) throughout one's undergraduate preparation. Please note Golden Apple does not round GPA in any case;
- Submit grades and transcripts (official or unofficial) within seven days from the conclusion of each term. Tuition for the following term will NOT be released without a qualifying transcript from the prior academic term;
- Meet eligibility requirements to receive teacher licensure at a partner university. Please note that some of the university GPA requirements may be higher than the requirements by the Golden Apple Scholar Program and MUST be followed to remain "On Track" as a Scholar;
- Remain "On Track" with coursework to be a licensed teacher in the State of Illinois (30 hours entering sophomore year; 60 hours junior; 90 hours senior);
- Successfully complete ALL requisite Scholar Institutes;

- Participate in one (1) campus cohort sponsored event per semester **and** one (1) Golden Apple coordinated event per semester (not including Scholar Institute);
- Report Student Teaching Placement to Golden Apple **before** finalizing Placement;
- Successfully complete Student Teaching at your university;
- If the EdTPA is required by the state, pass and submit evidence of your successful completion of the EdTPA (i.e., the Teacher Licensure pre-requisite examination and requisite evidence); and,
- Graduate from a partner university within 6 years.

***For Placement:***

- Submit a resume on the official Golden Apple template, that follows the guidelines put forth in the format guidelines BEFORE interviewing for and accepting your first teaching position;
- Submit Placement Preferences indicating desired regions, level, and content specifications for your first position;
- Participate in a minimum of THREE placement events while Student Teaching;
- Submission of EdTpa before attending Scholar Institute 4 (if required by state); and,
- Earn Illinois Teacher Licensure and submit Illinois Educators Identification Number (IEIN) to Golden Apple.

***While Teaching:***

- Meet and confer with your Golden Apple Mentor on not less than three occasions each year, during your first two years of teaching;
- Submit employment verification forms for each of the first five years of teaching by the fall deadline;
- Submit a copy of your formal teacher performance evaluation for each of your first five years of teaching as appropriate; and,
- Teach in a school-of-need (as defined by Golden Apple) within Illinois for at least five years within the first seven years of obtaining your undergraduate degree.

**Communication Expectations**

As a requirement of continued participation in the Program, Golden Apple Scholars must keep current university and home addresses, non-university email addresses, and phone numbers on file with the Foundation. Any changes for Teaching Scholars are to be reported within **10 days** to Ann Rowell at [rowell@goldenapple.org](mailto:rowell@goldenapple.org). Any changes for Undergraduate Scholars are to be reported within **10 days** to Jordan Lanfair at [lanfair@goldenapple.org](mailto:lanfair@goldenapple.org). It is essential that Scholars maintain open and frequent communication with Golden Apple throughout their undergraduate and teaching careers.

Scholars are responsible for submitting materials to the Foundation throughout their undergraduate and teaching careers. These documents include but are not limited to:

- Unofficial transcripts at the culmination of each term;
- Signed Code of Conduct and Policy and Procedures Handbook Book on an annual basis;
- Student Teaching Placement to Golden Apple before finalizing Placement;
- If the EdTPA is required by the state, submit the EdTPA Score Page at least one month before attending your final Scholar Institute
- Resume and cover letter;

- Illinois License Number (IEIN);
- Employment Verification Forms; and,
- Teacher Evaluation Summative ratings for the first five years of teaching.

Additionally, **Scholars are to respond appropriately to all Golden Apple communications within two business days to practice and promote professional expectations.** Golden Apple encourages Scholars to be proactive in their communications in order to build agency and professionalism. Failure to respond after several attempts will result in an out-of-compliance notification and may result in an Exit from the program.

### **Use of a Preferred Name Within Golden Apple**

Golden Apple recognizes that scholars may choose to identify themselves with a preferred name that is different than their legal/given name. Golden Apple will make an attempt to utilize preferred names where possible.

A scholar's legal name will still be used for all tuition assistance, stipend payments, or other legal documentation. If scholars pursue a legal name change, Golden Apple will update our systems upon receipt of the appropriate paperwork.

### **Consequences of Non-Compliance with Regard to Transcripts, Behavior, and Requirements**

Scholars found to be “out-of-compliance” due to lack of communication, failure to submit documents, or any violation of the Scholar Code of Conduct (page 13 of this document) or the Scholar Contract are at risk for a change of status up to and including an exit from the Golden Apple Scholars Program. Scholars who do not submit term transcripts by the appropriate deadline will not qualify for tuition assistance the following term regardless of GPA standing.

### **Consequences of Non-Compliance with Regard to Funding Payback**

There are financial consequences if a Scholar does not fulfill the contracted commitment entered into with the Golden Apple Foundation. If a Scholar fails to complete the requisite commitments and is exited from the Program, the tuition assistance afforded to the Scholars converts into a student loan to be repaid with interest. The collections process is largely managed by the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) – which must charge interest in accordance with the collection of all student loans.

For each completed year of effective teaching in an approved school-of-need as a full-time teacher in Illinois, 20% of the tuition assistance distributed is forgiven.

Scholars enter the Golden Apple contract with the understanding that the benefits of participating in the Golden Apple Scholars of Illinois program can only be offered and sustained as sufficient funding is received from the state and/or federal government. Please see your separate Scholar Contract or Contracts for full obligations and details.

### **Definition of a School-of-Need**

In order to fulfill their commitment to the Golden Apple Foundation, Scholars must teach at a school-of-need in Illinois. The Golden Apple Foundation uses two criteria to designate schools in Illinois as “of need”: an economic definition and an academic definition. Each is helpful to identify underserved schools whose students would benefit from Golden Apple Scholars on faculty.

The **economic definition** of an Illinois school-of-need is as follows:

An Illinois school that has been listed as having a student enrollment of 30% or more “Low Income” in the School Report Card from the Illinois State Board of Education on <https://www.illinoisreportcard.com>.

If a school is not represented on the Illinois Report Card, it is the responsibility of the Scholar to provide documentation that their employment meets the standard listed above and such documentation satisfies the school-of-need standards as otherwise defined by and in the sole determination of The Golden Apple Foundation.

The expectation is that Scholars teach at a school-of-need for five years. If, during the course of that five-year period, that school’s designation changes on the Illinois Report Card, Scholars must reach out to the Director of Placement and Alumni Relations to determine the next steps to relocate to a suitable school-of-need that meets the criteria stated above.

Scholars must teach for 10 full weeks of a semester in order to receive half a year’s credit toward their teaching commitment. For all questions regarding a school-of-need, Scholars should contact the Director of Placement & Alumni Relations, Talyia Eve Riemer, at [triemer@goldenapple.org](mailto:triemer@goldenapple.org).

## **Scholar Code of Conduct**

It is essential that all Scholars hold a high ethical standard. Scholars represent great promise to their future students, the teaching profession, and the Golden Apple Foundation. To protect the integrity of this program, and indeed that of the teaching profession, we require that certain academic, ethical, and legal standards of conduct be maintained, both during the school year and while Scholar Institute is in session.

### **Expectations of a Golden Apple Scholar**

Scholars, as representatives of the Golden Apple Foundation, while participating in the Program, must exemplify excellence. Any conduct that negatively affects the good order, welfare, reputation or name of the Golden Apple Foundation, the Scholars of Illinois, and/or the Academy is considered a serious breach of trust and a breach of the Scholar's obligations under his/her Scholar Agreement and these Policies. It is expected that:

1. Scholars model professionalism in attitude, demeanor, and behavior.
2. Scholars display a growth mindset in all learning and collaboration.
3. Scholars adhere to collegiate codes of conduct, Golden Apple Scholar Codes of Conduct, and all aspects of the law.

The following are non-exhaustive examples of misconduct that will not be tolerated and will cause for immediate Review and possibly Exit:

- Use of violence, force, or intimidation which endangers the safety or welfare of staff, citizenry, or fellow Scholars;
- Discrimination or harassment of anyone that the Scholar interacts with during his/her participation in a Golden Apple-sponsored event or program, regardless of relationship or status;
- Gang membership or participation in any gang activity;
- Conviction of a felony, provided that Golden Apple may also review any criminal charge which results in a consensual plea to a misdemeanor offense and in its sole discretion, adversely change a Scholar's status;
- Misuse of technology/internet/social media that disparages or otherwise casts Golden Apple or any of its staff, university partners or Scholar Institute partners in a negative light; or,
- Illegal drug use.

### **Equal Opportunity**

In the provision of the Scholar Program, The Golden Apple Foundation does not discriminate or limit access to the benefits of the program on the basis of race, ancestry, color, creed, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, national origin, or disability, or any other factor prohibited by law. In addition, The Golden Apple Foundation will reasonably accommodate disabled Scholars in their enjoyment of and access to its programs. Should you wish to discuss such an accommodation, you must contact Golden Apple's Chief of Staff, Damarr Smith, at [dsmith@goldenapple.org](mailto:dsmith@goldenapple.org).

### **Anti-Harassment and Discrimination Policy**

Golden Apple is committed to maintaining a Scholar environment that encourages and fosters appropriate conduct among its Scholars, students, employees, interns, contractors and others, as well as respect for individual values and sensibilities. Furthermore, Golden Apple is committed to preventing unlawful discrimination and harassment, even when directed by or at non-employees, such as Scholars.

Accordingly, Golden Apple intends to enforce this Anti-Harassment and Discrimination Policy at all levels within its programs, as well as with its Scholars, Fellows, vendors, suppliers, visitors, employees and other non-employees, in order to create program environments free from discrimination and harassment of any kind, **including sexual harassment and harassment on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, color, ancestry, national origin, age, disability, religion, veteran status, marital status, citizenship status or any other basis prohibited by federal, state or local laws.**

Such harassment can be illegal, is a violation of this policy, and will result in a status change up to and including Exit from the program.

### **What is Unlawful Harassment or Discrimination?**

For the purposes of this policy, unlawful harassment is any unwelcome verbal, visual, or physical conduct on the basis of the factors referenced above (e.g. race, sex, sexual orientation, age, etc.) where: (a) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's participation; (b) a program decision affecting a participant is based on that individual's acceptance or rejection of such conduct; or (c) such conduct interferes with an individual's performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working or participation environment.

Unlawful discrimination generally occurs when a person is subjected to different terms and conditions of program participation because of the prohibited factors referenced above. It includes unlawful harassment on the basis of those prohibited factors, as well as a variety of other decisions (e.g. scheduling, promotion, pay, discipline or termination) based on prohibited factors. Bear in mind that conduct on the basis of the factors referenced above may not technically violate the law, but are prohibited by this Policy.

In particular, sexual harassment can take a variety of forms, ranging from the less severe though still inappropriate (e.g., unwelcome comments and jokes) to more severe (e.g., subtle pressure or innuendo, inquiries about another's sex life, preferences or habits, and requests to date) to the most severe (e.g., express requests for sexual favors or dates, actual physical contact or exposure). The examples above and below are for purposes of illustration only – they are not meant to be an exhaustive list of conduct that might rise to the level of sexual or other harassment:

- a. unwelcome comments about someone's clothing, hair or body;
- b. unwelcome flirting, pressure for dates, and/or touching;
- c. sexually-suggestive jokes, gestures, emails or texts directed to or at another;
- d. sexually-oriented or degrading comments about another;
- e. unwelcome sexual inquiries about a person (e.g., their sex life, their preferences, etc.)
- f. preferential treatment or promise of preferential treatment in exchange for dates or sexual conduct;
- g. the denial or threat of denial of program benefits or advancement for refusal to consent to sexual advances; and/or
- h. the display of sexually-oriented pictures, posters, or other material unwelcome or offensive to others.

### **Scope of Policy**

This policy against discrimination and harassment applies to every officer, manager, employee, Scholar, Accelerator, Fellow, intern, and independent contractor of Golden Apple. In fact, where such conduct is directed by a supervisor (or someone in a management position) toward a subordinate, the former will generally be held to a higher standard of accountability because of the degree of control and influence they have or are perceived to have over the program conditions and benefits of the subordinate. Similarly, Golden Apple will not tolerate harassment from (or of) its Fellows, Scholars, vendors, suppliers, or other non-employees who conduct business with Golden Apple. Finally, harassment

is not only unacceptable at program and institute events; it is unacceptable in any Foundation-related setting, for example, trips and social events.

## Complaint Procedure

All Scholars are encouraged but not required to immediately object to conduct which might be sexually or otherwise harassing or discriminatory and to tell the individual engaging in the conduct that is unwelcome and inappropriate. **Additionally, any conduct that may be a violation of this policy must be reported as promptly as possible in accordance with the following complaint procedures.** Without such reports/complaints, Golden Apple cannot effectively address the problems of discrimination and harassment. Retaliation against any person for making such reports/complaints is also a violation of this policy and warrants a separate complaint.

Reporting of Incident: All officers, managers, employees, Scholars, Accelerators, Fellows, interns, and independent contractors must report any reported, witnessed, known or suspected sexual or other harassment by another as follows: (1) an immediate supervisor or supervisor above them; (2) the Chief of Staff; or if any of these people are implicated in the harassment (3) the CEO or President of Golden Apple. The point is that you have multiple places to go with a complaint and need never report it directly to the alleged harasser or feel that your complaint will not be taken seriously. This reporting procedure exists for your benefit and following it will reduce the number of people who have knowledge of the complaint. This, of course, helps us to preserve the confidentiality of the matter and the integrity of the investigation and to reduce the likelihood of any retaliation. **All those who receive a complaint or notice of alleged discrimination or harassment from another have a duty to pass it on via the reporting procedures referenced above.**

In making reports of discrimination or harassment, it is crucial for investigative purposes that you report each and every act that may be a violation of this policy and every witness to such acts. Thus, at some point you will be asked to make a complete written complaint<sup>1</sup> or, if you prefer, to sign off on our written summary of your verbal complaint. If our summary leaves anything out, or is incorrect in any way, do not approve it until it is complete and accurate.

Investigation: A prompt (within five (5) working days of the complaint whenever possible) investigation will be commenced by Golden Apple or one of its designees (e.g., outside counsel). To the extent possible, **confidentiality must be preserved. Accordingly, do not discuss the allegations or the facts of the investigation with anyone outside of the person investigating it without prior approval (excepting, of course, governmental bodies). That includes but is not limited to the complainant, the person accused and other witnesses.**

The alleged offender (called the Respondent), however, must be given notice of the complaint and given an opportunity to respond to the complaint. The complaining party (called the Complainant) and the Respondent will both be interviewed as part of the investigation. Other actual or potential witnesses to the acts complained of may also be interviewed. We necessarily depend in large part on you in determining whom to interview, so please make sure you let us know of all potential witnesses. During the pendency of the investigation, either the Complainant or the Respondent may request that they be temporarily separated such that they are not required to directly interact during the course of program activities (when practical), or that there be another person present during such interaction.

Decision: The person responsible for conducting the investigation will ordinarily prepare a written decision to the investigation, usually within two weeks of the initial complaint, unless extenuating circumstances exist. This decision will typically include a finding that sexual or other harassment or discrimination occurred, it did not occur, or there is inconclusive evidence as to whether it occurred. A copy of any written decision will be given to the Complainant, the person to whom the harassment or discrimination was allegedly directed (if different from the Complainant) and the

<sup>1</sup> A copy of a complaint form is available on request from the Chief of Staff, Damarr Smith.

Respondent. When written decisions are given, the individuals receiving them shall acknowledge in writing receipt of the conclusion. In most instances, written decisions shall be final.

Review Process: In extraordinary cases, Golden Apple may entertain either the Complainant, the victim (when different from the Complainant) or the Respondent's request for a decision to be reviewed. Any of these dissatisfied parties should submit written comments or objections to the decision within seven days. Requests for review should be directed to the Chief of Staff or, if they are implicated in the complaint, to the CEO or President. If a request for review is granted, a designee of Golden Apple will endeavor to review the request and issue a determination within seven (7) days of receipt. This determination shall be final.

### **No Retaliation**

**It is unlawful to retaliate in any way against anyone who has complained about, reported or cooperated in an investigation of sexual or other harassment or discrimination, whether that concern relates to harassment or discrimination against the individual raising the concern or against another individual. Complaints of retaliation should be submitted in accordance with the same procedures outlined above.**

### **Discipline/Sanctions**

Disciplinary action will be taken against any Respondent found to have engaged in sexual or other harassment or discrimination of any other employee Scholar, Fellow, intern, etc. or otherwise found to have violated the policies stated herein. The extent of the discipline/sanctions imposed generally depends on the nature of the offense and may include suspension, transfer, termination or Exit in appropriate circumstances. If the offending party is a non-employee of Golden Apple, other sanctions up to and including cessation of its business relationship with such person may be imposed. In any event, the discipline/sanction imposed shall be calculated to end the harassment or discrimination and/or eliminate any hostile environment.

If an investigation results in finding that the Complainant falsely accused another of harassment or discrimination knowingly or maliciously, the Complainant may be subject to appropriate discipline/sanctions as well.

Finally, individuals who breach the confidentiality provisions of this policy will be subject to appropriate discipline, up to and including termination. **Having said that, however, this policy of confidentiality will not be construed to interfere with your right to communicate with outside agencies about alleged harassment.**

### **Outside Enforcement of Anti-Harassment and Discrimination Laws**

Discrimination and harassment on the basis of the foregoing factors is also prohibited by a variety of federal, state and local laws, including but not limited to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Illinois Human Rights Act and many other state, county and local laws and ordinances.

In addition, federal and state governments, counties, cities, and towns often have their own agencies responsible for enforcing those laws and investigating complaints. For example, at the federal level the U.S. EEOC is responsible for investigating outside charges of harassment. In Illinois, we have the Illinois Human Rights Department, The Cook County Commission on Human Rights and the Chicago Committee on Human Relations, each of which are responsible for enforcing separate laws. If you would like more information on these governmental agencies, please consult the postings in your particular locations.



## Scholar Status

While in the Scholars Program, Scholars are assigned a “status” as an indicator of the state of compliance of that Scholar with all requirements of the Golden Apple Scholars Program. All Scholars start as Undergraduates “On Track”- which means that the scholar is complying with all requirements to complete the Golden Apple Scholars program, and their universities education program successfully. A Scholar’s status may change throughout the Undergraduate and Post-Baccalaureate experience based on circumstances, including the ones described below.

### **On-Track:**

- An Undergraduate Scholar stays On-Track as long as the Undergraduate Scholar:
  - Is making sufficient progress towards graduation and teaching, earning a term and cumulative GPA of 2.8 or above (please note that Golden Apple does not round GPAs);
  - Submits all requisite documents requested by the program by the deadlines specified;
  - At all times, adheres to the professional standards set by the Scholars Program;
  - Participates effectively in all requisite Scholar Institutes; and,
  - Graduates with an undergraduate degree in education within 6 years.
  
- A Teaching Scholar stays On-Track as long as the Teaching Scholar:
  - Is progressing towards fulfilling their contractual obligation to Golden Apple by teaching full-time in an Illinois school-of-need (as defined by Golden Apple);
  - Submits employment verifications for each of the first five years of teaching by the fall deadline;
  - Submits a copy of their formal teacher performance evaluation for each of the first five years of teaching; and,
  - At all times, adheres to the professional standards set by the Scholars Program.

### **On Watch:**

- A Scholar is placed On Watch for academic concerns if the Scholar has a term or cumulative GPA between 2.5 and 2.79.
- The Scholar may be contacted by the Director of Undergraduate Scholar Support Services to discuss targeted support and possible next steps to ensure academic success.
- Once the Scholar’s GPA rises above 2.79, the Scholar will be removed from academic “On Watch”.
- A Scholar placed “On Watch” for behavior concerns may be contacted by the Director of Undergraduate Scholar Support Services to discuss targeted support and establish a plan for improvement and future success.
- A Scholar will be placed On Watch the subsequent academic term they were placed on Probation regardless if a 2.8 GPA or higher was reached.
- This status will not impact tuition assistance.

### **Out of Compliance:**

- If a “Teaching Scholar,” a Scholar who has graduated with an educator license who has not yet completed the five-year teaching requirement, is not currently pursuing the mission of Golden Apple by teaching full-time in a school-of-need as defined by Golden Apple, their status will be changed to “Out of Compliance.” When a Scholar has a status of “Out of Compliance,” the Scholar will not be able to:
  - Receive mentoring services from the Foundation
  - Seek full-time employment at The Golden Apple Foundation or any independent contractor roles with or for The Golden Apple Foundation

- The Scholar will be contacted by the Director of Placement and Alumni Relations if the Scholar’s status is changed to "Out of Compliance." The Director of Placement and Alumni Relations will offer targeted support and recommended next steps to gain employment at a school-of-need.
- Once a Scholar obtains full-time employment in a school-of-need and submits a completed employment verification to Golden Apple, their status will be changed to “On Track.”

**Golden Apple reserves the right to change a Scholar’s status to one or more of the above statuses, in its sole discretion.**

**Undergraduate Leave of Absence, Post-Baccalaureate Leave, and Graduate School**

- Scholars may secure a leave of absence from the program. Undergraduate Scholars have six years to complete their degree and obtain their license. Teaching Scholars have seven years to complete their five years of teaching in a school-of-need. Only approved extensions (a request made in addition to a leave request) will provide a Scholar with additional time to complete their obligations. Requests for leaves or extensions must be made in advance with appropriate documentation and will be monitored by the appropriate Director throughout the leave.
  - Undergraduate Scholars must contact the Director of Undergraduate Scholar Support Services for an Undergraduate Leave Form and approval.
  - Teaching Scholars must contact the Director of Placement and Alumni Relations, in the event a leave must be requested or the Scholar is planning to take one of the allowed “two” gap years in completing their 5-year teaching requirement.

**Probation:**

- A Scholar may be placed on a provisional, performance-based Probation status due to one or more of the following:
  - Received one term GPA less than a 2.5 OR a cumulative GPA lower than 2.5;
  - Is placed on probation by the university;
  - Demonstrates unacceptable, but remediable performance during Scholar Institute; or,
  - Demonstrates attitudes or behavior deemed harmful to the public reputation of the Golden Apple Foundation or the teaching profession.

	<b>Probation Expectations</b>
<b>The Terms</b>	Golden Apple administration will specify the terms that a Scholar must fulfill within a designated time period to continue in the program.
<b>Compliance</b>	Full adherence by the Scholar of the prescribed terms is required.
<b>Academic</b>	If academic performance has prompted concern by Golden Apple staff, that Scholar’s performance during the next marking period in college will be monitored by the Director of Academic and Social Emotional Supports. The university liaisons will be informed to assist in supporting the Scholar’s progress. An academic plan will be created with the Scholar to ensure success.

<b>Behavior</b>	If behavior warrants concern by the Scholar staff, that Scholar's performance during the subsequent marking period in college will be monitored by the Director of Undergraduate Scholar Support Services. A behavioral plan will be created with the Scholar to ensure success. The university liaisons will be informed to assist in supporting the Scholar's progress. With support from the Director of Academic and Social Emotional Supports, Scholar will submit evidence of growth.
<b>Tuition Assistance Funds</b>	<b>Scholars on probation status are not eligible to receive tuition assistance for the term following that which they entered Probation status.</b> A Scholar is not eligible for tuition assistance again until the specifics of the probation contract have been reached. Once a Scholar resolves the probation status, the Scholar becomes eligible to receive tuition assistance the subsequent marking period.

**NOTE:** Any Scholar who transfers to another partner university or takes a leave while on Probation, will remain on Probation at the new university or at their return from leave.

**Exit:**

- While an undergraduate, any Scholar with two consecutive, or three total terms (i.e., term or cumulative) with a GPA lower than 2.5, will be exited from the program.
- If a Scholar does not meet program expectations or fails to fulfill the required terms of probationary status, that Scholar will be exited from the program.
- Scholars excused from further participation in the program or who fail to complete the teaching commitment will be expected to repay with interest Golden Apple and/or the Illinois Student Assistance Commission depending on the year the Scholar entered the program for funds forwarded for tuition assistance in that Scholar's name.

### **Social Media Policy**

Scholars are deemed role models, as they are working with students. To the families of your students, you are the face of the school. To your administrators, you are the professional face of the school, the embodiment of the educational atmosphere they are trying to foster.

Scholars are therefore expected to respectfully utilize Golden Apple laptops, cell phones, and digital media for effective teaching and learning purposes only, and not for personal purposes. Furthermore, your social media communications, like any of your behavior, can reflect adversely on the Foundation and its associated programs. Accordingly, the Golden Apple Foundation reserves the right to monitor your social media communications on behalf of or relating to, directly or indirectly, it, its programs or its personnel, as well as the students or their families, teachers, and/or administrators at any school where you will work.

For purposes of this policy, "Social media communication" shall mean all methods of communicating or posting information or images on the Internet, including your own or someone else's blog, journal, or diary, personal website, social networking or affinity website, web bulletin board or chat room.

The Golden Apple Foundation has established certain guidelines re: Scholars' social media communications. Specifically:

- Scholars may not use Foundation equipment or devices for social media communications;
- Scholars may not engage in social media communications while Golden Apple programs are in progress, unless otherwise directed or encouraged to do so by a Golden Apple Instructor or Staff member, Scholars may not post confidential or proprietary information about the Golden Apple Foundation or its employees, mentors, or other personnel;
- Scholars may not, without expressed permission, utilize Golden Apple intellectual property (e.g. logos) while engaging in social media communications;
- Scholars should, generally, not identify their participation in or reference the Golden Apple Foundation when posting regarding personal, social, political or other matters not related to the Golden Apple Foundation;
- Scholars who in social media communications have identified themselves as affiliated with the Golden Apple Foundation may not post obscenities, slurs, personal attacks, discriminatory or harassing comments or materials or any other content that can damage the reputation of the Golden Apple Foundation or its employees, mentors, or other personnel.

A Scholar can be Exited from the program because of violations of this policy if deemed harmful to the reputation of the Golden Apple Foundation.

## Scholar Institute Policies

### Attendance

Participation in all eligible Scholar Institute (SI) activities is a mandatory condition of your continued participation in the Scholar Program. Scholar Institute may be hosted virtually, in-person, or in a hybrid format. Scholars, even those on probation, are required to attend all Scholar Institutes annually. Scholars on probation for the first time will be invited to attend SI. Scholars on probation for a total of two terms will not be eligible to attend Scholar Institute. An appeal process can be requested by the Scholar. Other outside activities should be postponed or canceled during the weeks of Scholar Institutes. Any potential conflicts must be relayed to the Director of Scholar Institute and Curriculum in a timely manner.

**All schedule requests or changes must be finalized by May 1, 2023. Schedule changes after this date may jeopardize your participation in Scholar Institute 2023.**

In the case of an emergency or health related absence, please contact Neal Grimes, [grimes@goldenapple.org](mailto:grimes@goldenapple.org).

### Compensation

Again, **Scholars attending Scholar Institutes are not employees of the Golden Apple Foundation**. However, for all Scholar Institutes except “Intro”, Scholars receive a stipend for active, professional, and positive participation in scheduled Scholar Institute activities. Stipends may be considered income by the state and federal government and must be declared on federal tax returns. The Golden Apple Foundation does not withhold taxes for Scholars who earn the Scholar Institute stipend. Scholars who fail to meet attendance requirements will not receive a stipend.

### Assignments & Performance Tasks

Although Scholars do not receive grades or college credit for their performance during SI, their work and attention to instruction during SI serves as a measure for continuation in the program by assessing attitude, work quality, and acquisition of skills. Insufficient work ethic, negative attitude, or inability to demonstrate the necessary skills for highly effective instruction observed during SI can be cause for dismissal from the program or change in Scholar status. Therefore, it is important that Scholars manage their time to complete all assignments, performance tasks and attend all experiences fully and responsibly during SI. Prior arrangements can be made with SI Leadership if circumstances arise which interfere with completion of assignments in a timely manner.

### Scholar Institutes

#### University Life at Scholar Institutes while In-Person

When Scholar Institute is hosted in-person, Scholars attending Intro to Scholar Institute through Scholar Institute 3 must reside on campus during SI and abide by all established residential policies of local, state, and federal laws, the host university, and the Golden Apple Foundation. Scholars attending Scholar Institute 4 may opt out of residential housing, but are still required to follow university policies while on campus. Any abridgment places a Scholar’s standing in jeopardy, especially in the cases of alcohol or drug use or violations detailed in the Code of Conduct section of this Handbook. Scholars are financially liable for any damage to the rooms they are assigned, and restitution as prescribed by the host university.

#### Scholars attending Scholar Institutes In-person:

- Should engage positively and productively in all activities of the Scholar Institute;
- Must honor curfew established by the Golden Apple Foundation at the host university during Scholar Institute;
- Are prohibited from using automobiles for any Scholar Institute or Golden Apple sponsored activity;
- Must allow Golden Apple leadership to contact medical authorities if an illness or injury requires it; and,

- Must follow all rules and guidelines established and published related to Scholar Institutes.

Scholars attending Scholar Institutes virtually:

- Should engage positively and productively in all activities of the Scholar Institute;
- Must follow all rules and guidelines established and published for the Scholar Institute.

COVID-19

- Golden Apple reserves the right to modify Scholar Institute expectations and requirements as necessary to address precautions and requirements related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Scholars are required to be vaccinated for COVID-19 to attend an in-person Scholar Institute.
- Scholars are not required to be vaccinated for COVID-19 to participate in all summer teaching experiences, however; Scholars must comply with their assigned school district protocol which may include vaccination requirements.

**Summer Teaching Experience Expectations**

Scholars may be supporting classrooms in-person, virtually, or in a hybrid format for a minimum of 50 hours. While working with a classroom teacher and students, Scholars need to maintain professional expectations and exhibit a demeanor that is conducive to the Scholar Code of Conduct. Scholars will self-assess and be assessed by their Reflective Seminar Instructor using the Scholar Growth Tool.

Communication with school staff, program leads, and Golden Apple staff members should remain professional at all times. Scholars will be expected to complete any district specific requests (e.g. district specific background checks) in a timely manner and prior to the summer program’s start date. Scholars will have the autonomy to build a schedule of support hours, which includes but is not limited to: planning time, debrief/feedback sessions, and direct instructional support.

Based on the geographical location of a Summer Teaching Experience, summer school programs may occur before, during, and/or after Scholar Institute. Scholars will be expected to begin completing their 50 hours at their earliest available time.

A Scholar whose summer program runs through Scholar Institute is expected to prioritize attendance at SI. Scholars will be expected to communicate their Scholar Institute dates to their cooperating teacher. Communicating and co-planning one’s absence is expected to ensure a seamless transition.

Verification of Summer Teaching Experiences will be required by all Scholars. Scholars will provide their cooperating teacher’s contact information. Golden Apple will use it to verify placement, completed hours, obtain feedback and overall professionalism.

**Scholar Status**

Golden Apple reserves the right to change a Scholar’s status to “On Watch” or “Probation” status if a Scholar is found to be in violation of the Code of Conduct or displays behavior deemed by the Foundation in its sole but reasonable discretion to be negative or harmful to others or the Foundation during Scholar Institute. A Scholar who is NOT on-track to successfully complete the program may be found ineligible to receive tuition assistance and/or Exited from the program dependent upon the severity of the indiscretion.

## **Scholar Institute (“SI”) Leave**

A Scholar may request a leave for a maximum of one Scholar Institute at a time, as long as that Scholar can earn a bachelor's degree and licensure within six years, and complete the required five years of teaching in a school-of-need in Illinois within seven years of graduation. Scholars are required to attend a minimum of three Scholar Institutes.

Scholars may also be placed on Scholar Institute leave if their graduation date is delayed. Scholars will attend a set amount of Scholar Institutes based on their induction into Golden Apple and their college coursework. If a Scholar is placed on leave by the organization due to delayed graduation, the Scholar will have the same number of SI experiences provided to them at the time of their induction spread over a longer period of time. A decision to place a Scholar on leave by the organization does not take an experience away.

Examples of approved leave requests include:

- summer coursework essential for licensure,
- travel abroad experience for university credit,
- unique educational experience designed to increase your teaching capacity, or a
- significant life- changing event.

Scholars who are unable to attend Scholar Institute experiences may be required to provide evidence of skill mastery outside of Scholar Institute. A work plan will be created by the Scholar in collaboration with the Director of Scholar Institutes and Curriculum.

Scholars may submit a SI Leave Request to the Director of Scholar Institutes and Curriculum.

**All Scholar Institute Leave requests must be finalized by April 14, 2023.**

## Undergraduate Scholar Support Services and Resources

Golden Apple strives to provide meaningful and differentiated support to Scholars so they can successfully obtain an undergraduate degree and launch their careers as teachers in schools-of-need.

The Golden Apple Director of Undergraduate Scholar Support Services shares resources and connects Scholars to university, cohort, and peer mentor supports throughout college. Targeted supports are available. Scholars are encouraged to take ownership of their learning and seek out support rather than waiting until Golden Apple staff observes a need.



**Scholar Obligation to Golden Apple Through Teaching**

Scholars have seven years after earning a bachelor's degree and teaching licensure to fulfill their five-year obligation to be a classroom teacher in a school-of-need in the State of Illinois. For each year a Scholar teaches in a school-of-need in Illinois (as defined by Golden Apple), 20% of all money forwarded on a Scholar's behalf by Golden Apple to a Scholar's university (not including Scholar Institute stipends), is forgiven by the Foundation.

If the Scholar does not completely fulfill this teaching obligation within the time allotted, the Scholar will be responsible for repaying any funds left unforgiven. Only a position that requires a teaching license satisfies a Scholar's commitment. Other positions within a school, including, but not limited to, building administrator, counselor, social worker, dean, district position, or teacher's aide, do not count as part of the five-year obligation, nor does teaching within a school that does not fit the definition of a school-of-need as established by Golden Apple.

### **Partner District and Partner Schools Incentive**

Golden Apple partners with school districts, charter operators, and other schools who value diversity and highly effective teaching - understanding that the combination of the two allows their students to learn, grow, and reach their full potential. Our model is a long-term solution to recruiting talented teachers who stay.

**Placement Incentive:** Scholars who accept an offer in a Partner District/School/ Charter Operator are eligible for a one-time stipend payment of \$1000 dollars. This payment is dependent on all performance and retention criteria being met and is awarded in their second year of teaching.

Scholars who meet the following criteria are eligible for this incentive:

- Scholar has provided all required documentation has been submitted in accordance with this Handbook (Employment Verification forms, Teaching Evaluation, etc.);
- Scholar has completed the school year with a minimal rating of proficient.
- Scholar has signed a contract or has agreed to return to teach at a school-of-need within one of our partner Districts for a 2nd school year on or before the 20th day of school. If there are budgetary constraints that prevent an available position for the Scholar, this requirement will be waived providing that the Scholar is actively seeking a new position at a school-of-need with one of our partner districts; and,
- Scholar has demonstrated professionalism in compliance with the stated requirements and expectations of the Golden Apple Mentoring Program and is in good standing with the Golden Apple Foundation.

This incentive is not retroactive to Scholars graduating prior to December 2020. This incentive is contingent upon available funds within the Golden Apple Foundation's overall budget.

For questions about this incentive, Golden Apple's K-12 partners, or Golden Apple's Placement Program, please contact Dr. Talyia Eve Riemer at [triemer@goldenapple.org](mailto:triemer@goldenapple.org).

### **Mentoring**

The Golden Apple Foundation is committed to the continual growth of our Scholars. To that end, Scholars are assigned a Golden Apple Mentor who will observe the Scholars' teaching practices multiple times throughout the school year, offering recommendations for continued practice and ways to enhance practice. Mentoring has been identified by national research to be a significant, contributing factor to new teachers' success. As a result, participation in Golden Apple's Mentoring Program is mandatory during the first two years of teaching. At the discretion of the mentoring team, mentoring services may be provided to Scholars teaching beyond the first two years.

### **Requisite Documentation While Completing Teaching**

**Employment Verification:** To ensure that Scholars are progressing successfully towards the completion of their commitment to teach in an Illinois school-of-need for five years within seven years of graduation, we require that Scholars submit an Employment Verification Form. It is important that these verification forms are signed by authorized agents of the school or district (i.e., which typically include principals, assistant principals, and/or talent / human resource professionals) and submitted by the requested deadline each fall (or within the first 30 days of employment if employment changes in the spring). Included in this Employment Verification is a request for a current, non-lapsed IEIN number, and any updates to personal email addresses or phone numbers to enable The Golden Apple Foundation to maintain contact with Teaching Scholars. Employment Verifications should be submitted within the first 30 days of employment each summer / fall to [employmentverifications@goldenapple.org](mailto:employmentverifications@goldenapple.org).

As a Teaching Scholar, if you leave employment in a particular school or district mid-semester or mid-year, you are required to inform the Director of Mentoring and Teacher Development, Rozy Patel, at [patel@goldenapple.org](mailto:patel@goldenapple.org) in addition to sending an email to [employmentverifications@goldenapple.org](mailto:employmentverifications@goldenapple.org).

**Evaluations:** In order to enhance Scholar programming, set goals and objectives, inform the curriculum for Scholar Institutes, and better support the professional growth of our Scholars, Golden Apple will analyze aggregated data from teacher performance evaluations. As a result, Teaching Scholars are required to submit copies of their teacher performance evaluations to Golden Apple at [teachingevaluations@goldenapple.org](mailto:teachingevaluations@goldenapple.org) every year while completing their five-year teaching commitment in a school-of-need. Golden Apple will send the requirements for submitting evaluations to Scholars annually. In addition, at the beginning of each academic year, a Teaching Scholar shall provide a signed consent in the form deemed necessary by Golden Apple for Golden Apple to receive evaluation(s) from the applicable School District.

Golden Apple will not share individual evaluations with other stakeholders. Evaluations will be kept on Golden Apple's secure database. Please see the Teaching Evaluation Request FAQ document for additional information.



Golden Apple

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Transforming Teachers and Teaching