

Invest in **ME**

Kindergarten

Invest in ME Kindergarten Initiative **Be an Invest in ME Kindergarten Champion!**

Whether you are a teacher or principal, student or parent, you know that education is critical to every child's future. The Alford Scholarship Foundation (ASF) and the Finance Authority of Maine (FAME) invite you to Invest in ME Kindergarten, an exciting new initiative launching in the fall of 2018 aimed at helping Kindergarten students and families plan and prepare for their future higher education.

It starts with the \$500 Alford Grant awarded to babies born Maine residents¹ on or after January 1, 2013. Since its inception in 2008, the Alford Scholarship Foundation has invested over \$40 million in Alford Grants for the benefit of 80,000 Maine children. Many of these children will be starting kindergarten in the fall of 2018, making the 2018-19 academic year the perfect time to promote how families, communities, schools and businesses can also invest in the future of these children.

The Alford Scholarship Foundation and FAME will be sharing resources and materials with all Maine elementary schools with a kindergarten to support a college-going culture. We are also inviting all Maine schools (with a kindergarten) to complete this "Invitation to Participate." Every elementary school that completes this "Invitation to Participate" will be recognized as an Invest in ME Kindergarten Champion. These Kindergarten Champion schools will be asked to do a few simple things that can help make a big difference. Additionally, we'll select 16 schools from among the Champion schools, one from each county, to be County Champions. These County Champions will receive some focused attention from the Alford Scholarship Foundation and FAME and be asked to host an event.

All Invest in ME Kindergarten Champion schools will receive:

- Recognition as an Invest in ME Kindergarten Champion school on the Invest in ME Kindergarten website and tools to promote their participation in your community.
- A Toolkit with electronic and printed resources that will be distributed 3x during the school year.²

The 16 County Champions will receive:

- All of the above AND...
- Bright Future Fun Packs of materials for each kindergarten student in your school
- A banner to hang in your school
- A \$500 grant to support your Invest in ME Kindergarten efforts

Invest in ME Kindergarten Champion schools will be asked to commit to the following starting in the fall of 2018:

- Encourage students to aspire to higher education.
(Schools will be asked to list specific tactics within the application.)
- Share information and resources about the Alford Grant, college aspirations and college savings with families of the fall 2018 kindergarten class using the Toolkit provided
- The 16 County Champions will also be asked to host a FAME and ASF event to share information about the Alford Grant or general college savings or NextGen 529.

Criteria for selecting County Champion schools

Staff from the Alford Scholarship Foundation and FAME will review the applications and select County Champions based on relative strength in the three main categories: Commitment, Communication and Engagement. The initiative's goal for selected schools to represent a range of communities across the state may also factor into decisions. The Alford Scholarship Foundation and FAME reserve for their sole right the full discretion to make all final decisions related to the Invest In ME Kindergarten initiative.

Timing:

- 1.** "Invitation to Participate" made available **March 30**
- 2.** Submit completed applications to education@famemaine.com by **April 30**
- 3.** Champion schools will be identified and confirmed by **June 15**
- 4.** County Champion schools will be selected and notified by **June 15**
- 5.** Toolkits will be distributed to Champion schools in **late August**

The Finance Authority of Maine (FAME) does not discriminate in the administration of any of its programs or in its employment practices on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, gender, religion, physical or mental disability, political affiliation, marital status or sexual orientation. FAME is an equal opportunity employer, provider and lender.

¹ *The Alford Grant is not automatic in all circumstances and is also available in limited other circumstances. The Alford Grant will only be paid to institutions of higher education, and is also subject to other restrictions - see Guidelines at 500forbaby.org.*

² *The resources available for distribution include contact cards which families can use to inform FAME of their current contact information in order to receive information about the Alford Grant and FAME's education programs, including NextGen 529, Maine's Section 529 plan, administered by FAME.*

The Alford Scholarship Foundation is not an authorized distributor of NextGen 529.

NextGen is a Section 529 plan administered by the Finance Authority of Maine (FAME). Before you invest in NextGen, request a NextGen Program Description from your Merrill Lynch Financial Advisor or Maine Distribution Agent or call Merrill Edge at 1-877-463-9843 and read it carefully. The Program Description contains more complete information, including investment objectives, charges, expenses and risks of investing in NextGen, which you should carefully consider before investing. You also should consider whether your or your designated beneficiary's home state offers any state tax or other state benefits such as financial aid, scholarship funds, and protection from creditors that are only available for investments in such state's 529 plan. Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith Incorporated, a registered broker-dealer, member SIPC, is the program manager and underwriter.

Application Submit completed applications to education@famemaine.com by **April 30**.

1. Applicant information

(If you are a superintendent or district-wide administrator and you want all the elementary schools in your district to apply, please provide a separate application for each school.)

Name of school _____

Address _____

School District _____ County _____

Name of superintendent and contact info _____

Name of principal and contact info _____

Lead person (must be located within the school): Name and contact info (job title, email address, phone number)

Grades offered at school (e.g. pre-k – 3, K-8, etc.) _____

2. Demographic Information

Anticipated total school enrollment for 2018-2019 _____

Percentage of all students receiving free & reduced lunch in 2017-2018 _____

Number of Kindergarten classrooms in the school listed in Section 1 _____

Anticipated total Kindergarten enrollment for 2018-2019 _____

Towns served by the school in Section 1 _____

3. Commitment

Preparing students for education after high school and a rewarding career can look like a lot of different things. Please identify three tactics your school will use to create a culture that encourages aspiring to education after high school. These tactics could be just for Kindergarten students, or, they could be school-wide and include Kindergarten students. They could also be programs or initiatives already in progress that you want to expand. Please tell us if each of these tactics is new or “improved” and what grades they will focus on.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4. Engagement

Tell us briefly about any important partnerships within your school and/or your community. Do you have an active Parent-Teacher Organization? A local business or Chamber that supports the school? An organization like Junior Achievement or Adopt-a-School that shares resources or programming? How do these partnerships support your students’ futures, and in what ways could they support this effort?

Are there new partners you plan to engage to support this initiative? If yes, how would they support this effort?

5. Communication

Sharing information with families is an important part of this initiative. How do you communicate with families?

Please check all that apply:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> School website | <input type="checkbox"/> School newsletter (print) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) | <input type="checkbox"/> School newsletter (electronic) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Text message | <input type="checkbox"/> Flyers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom webpage | <input type="checkbox"/> Phone auto dialer system |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Email | |

Do you send printed materials home? If so, how do you distribute these materials? _____

Which method do you find most effective? _____

What percent of parents do you typically reach when using this method? _____

Working with FAME/ASF

The Alford Scholarship Foundation and FAME intend to share resources and materials with all Maine elementary schools with a kindergarten. If your school is selected as a County Champion, you will be expected to host the Alford Scholarship Foundation and FAME at your school as part of an event to share information with families about the Alford Grant, or general college savings, or about NextGen 529 (the latter can be an information only event or an enrollment event). Please describe how this may work best at your school:

Tell us why you want to become a Champion school?

At the end of the year, we will ask you to complete a brief survey about your experience with this program to help us plan for future years. Thank you for your interest!

**Email this form by clicking the link below or attaching in an email to Education@FAMEmaine.com
or mail to PO Box 949, ME 04332-0949**

Email form