



## Pioneer Scholars Middle Grades Application- RISING Grades 6<sup>th</sup>- 8<sup>th</sup>

The Pioneer Scholars program at the Emily Krzyzewski Center is a free afterschool, academic enrichment program for underserved elementary and middle school students who reside in AND attend a school in Durham County. Through academic skill building, career and college exploration and enrichment activities, the goal of the program is to prepare students for success in high school.

### Student Admission Criteria

The Emily K Center is committed to enrolling students who are the best fit for the support and expectations of the Pioneer Scholars program. The application process is a competitive one involving an interview and only those students who most closely meet the admissions criteria are considered for admission. We are seeking applicants who meet the following criteria:

- **Academic Potential:** Applicants must demonstrate curiosity for learning as well as responsibility for their own learning, interactions, and conduct. The typical Pioneer Scholars student performs near, at, or above grade-level and consistently attends school. **Applicants must submit their most recent report cards with attendance information, as well as the final report card with attendance information from the previous school year.** *Please note that rising first grade students only need to submit the most recent report card.*
- **Leadership Potential:** Applicants must demonstrate the ability to work independently and collaboratively with peers and are involved positive members of their school community. We are looking for applicants who consistently display integrity, honesty, respect and a willingness to put their best effort into every task, advocate for their needs, and persevere when things are difficult.
- **Income & Residency:** The mission of the Emily K Center is to create equitable access to educational and economic resources for students in Durham County who face systemic barriers to educational opportunity. In order to qualify for the Pioneer Scholars program, families must reside in Durham County, demonstrate financial need and the student must attend a school in Durham County – public, charter, private or homeschool. Families whose students are selected for an interview are asked to provide documentation to verify financial eligibility. The Center will use personal financial data for eligibility purposes only and will destroy all collected information at the conclusion of the application process.
- **Family Support:** For a student to be successful in the Pioneer Scholars program, families must commit to partnering with the program by encouraging active participation in the program and encouraging and supporting their child(ren)'s academic achievement. Additionally, **families are required to arrange for transportation to and from the Emily K Center** and remain in consistent communication with program staff concerning their child(ren)'s academic performance and behavior.

### Application Process Overview

1. **Application Deadline:** The application window will open on Monday, January 13, 2025 and the deadline to submit applications for the 2025-2026 school year is Wednesday, April 9, 2025. Completed applications can be dropped off at the Emily K Center Monday – Friday from 10:00AM – 5:30PM or mailed to:  
Emily K Center  
Attn: Pioneer Scholars Program  
904 W. Chapel Hill St.  
Durham, NC 27701  
*Please note that staff can only confirm receipt of applications by phone. All admission decisions are communicated via email.*
2. **Completed Application Components:** Only completed applications are reviewed by staff. For your child(ren)'s application to be reviewed, you must submit:
  - The Pioneer Scholars Elementary (Rising 1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> grade) or Middle Grades (Rising 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade) application with all questions in each section answered in detail.
  - A copy of the student's most recent report card showing grades and attendance information.

- A copy of the student's final report card from the previous year showing grades and attendance for all four quarters. *Please note that rising first grade students only need to submit the most recent grade report.*
  - Two (2) recommendations are required for all applicants from classroom teachers who can speak to the student's academic performance in math, reading, science, and social studies. Please share the following link: [bit.ly/PSTeacherRec](http://bit.ly/PSTeacherRec) with the classroom teachers to complete. For rising first graders, the main classroom teacher and one other member of the school staff who can speak to the student's conduct and performance can complete the recommendation.
3. **Family Interview:** Applicants who most closely meet admissions criteria, a date will be set for you and your child(ren) to meet with Pioneer Scholars staff. The purpose of this interview is to explain the structure of the program, gauge whether the student and their family are a good match for the program and allow the family to gauge whether the program and staff are a good match for the student. Families will need to provide documentation of financial eligibility at this time. Staff will provide additional information on acceptable documentation when the interview is scheduled.
  4. **Admissions Decisions:** Final admission decisions are not solely based on the family interview. All aspects of a student's application, including their grades, attendance, teacher recommendations, academic and leadership potential, and desire to participate in the program weigh heavily in the final selection process. Families will receive notification of their child(ren)'s application status via email.

#### Determining Income Eligibility

Review the chart below to determine if your family's adjusted gross income (AGI) is less than or equal to 200% of federal poverty guidelines (based on family size). In the event your AGI exceeds the 200% max, special circumstances such as military status/deployment, caring for elderly or sick relatives, incarcerated parent(s), or attending a Title I school may be taken into consideration to determine eligibility. Please contact program staff via email at [ps@emilyk.org](mailto:ps@emilyk.org), or by phone (919) 680-0308 with questions.

Household Size*	Maximum Adjusted Gross Income (200% of Federal Poverty Line)
2	\$40,880
3	\$51,640
4	\$62,400
5	\$73,160
6	\$83,920
7	\$94,680
8	\$105,440
*For households with more than 8 individuals, add \$10,280 for each additional person.	



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Student Applicant Information

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth (month/day/year): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code: \_\_\_\_\_

Ethnic Background – check all that apply

- African American, Hispanic/Latino, White, Multiracial, Asian, American Indian, Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander, Prefer not to answer

Gender: Female Male Non-Binary Prefer not to answer

Are any languages other than English spoken at home? No Yes If yes, which language(s)? \_\_\_\_\_

Is student in an ESL or ELL program? No Yes

Current School (2024-2025): \_\_\_\_\_

Current Grade: 5 6 7 Current Grade K-4 students should complete the Rising Grades 1st – 5th Elementary application

Current Teacher(s) and School Counselor:

Table with 3 columns: Subject, Name, Email Address. Rows include English, Math, Science, Social Studies, School Counselor.

Anticipated School for next year (2025-2026): \_\_\_\_\_

Has your child ever been given an IEP (Individualized Education Program), 504 Plan, MTSS (Multi-Tier System of Supports) interventions, or received individual help at school for any reason? No Yes

If yes, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

Has the student been tested and/or identified as Academically or Intellectually Gifted (AIG) or Talented? No Yes If yes, please submit documentation.

What activities does the student participate in outside of school? \_\_\_\_\_

Has the student received any awards/achievements for his/her academics and/or extracurricular activities? No Yes If yes, list awards/achievements \_\_\_\_\_

Does the student have a sibling or family member who participates in *Pioneer Scholars* or another program at the Emily K Center?  No  Yes If yes, list their name and the program below. *Having a sibling or family member in a program does not guarantee admission to our programs.*

\_\_\_\_\_ Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Program \_\_\_\_\_

**Teacher Recommendation Information**

Two (2) teacher recommendations must be submitted from teachers who can speak to your child’s academic and leadership potential. At least one should be the child’s current teacher. Please share the following link with the teachers filling out the recommendations: [bit.ly/PSTeacherRec](https://bit.ly/PSTeacherRec) . Teacher feedback is an essential part of our admissions process and applications are considered incomplete until the required recommendations are received. For rising first graders, the main classroom teacher and one other member of the school staff who can speak to the student’s conduct and performance can complete the recommendation.

Current Teacher Name: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Current Classroom Teacher?  No  Yes

Teacher/Staff Name: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Current Classroom Teacher?  No  Yes

**Parent/Legal Guardian/Caregiver Information**

Name of Parent/Legal Guardian/Caregiver #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Does the student live with this person?  No  Yes

Address (If different from student): \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please check primary phone above*

Primary Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Ethnic Background – check all that apply

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> African American | <input type="checkbox"/> Multiracial     | <input type="checkbox"/> Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic/Latino  | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian           | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to answer       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White            | <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian |   |

Gender:  Female  Male  Non-Binary  Prefer not to answer

Education History – check all completed

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Some High School | <input type="checkbox"/> Four-Year Degree                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High School/GED  | <input type="checkbox"/> Some Graduate/Post Graduate                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Two-Year Degree  | <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate Degree/Post Graduate Certification |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                                |

Do you work outside of the home for pay?  No  Yes If yes, what is your occupation? \_\_\_\_\_

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_ Years of Employment: \_\_\_\_\_

Is English your first language?  No  Yes

If no, what is your preferred language? \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parent/Legal Guardian/Caregiver #2: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Does the student live with this person?  No  Yes

Address (If different from student): \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please check primary phone above*

Primary Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Ethnic Background – check all that apply.

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|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> African American | <input type="checkbox"/> Multiracial     | <input type="checkbox"/> Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic/Latino  | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian           | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to answer       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White            | <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian |   |

Gender:  Female  Male  Non-Binary  Prefer not to answer

Education History – check all completed.

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|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Some High School             | <input type="checkbox"/> Some Graduate/Post Graduate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High School/GED              | <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate/Post Graduate      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Two-Year College             | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Four-Year College/University |  |

Do you work outside of the home for pay?  No  Yes If yes, what is your occupation? \_\_\_\_\_

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_ Years of Employment: \_\_\_\_\_

Is English your first language?  No  Yes

If no, what is your preferred language? \_\_\_\_\_

How did your family hear about the *Pioneer Scholars* Program?

- Referred by a current *Pioneer Scholars* family: \_\_\_\_\_ (name of current Pioneer Scholar or student's parent/guardian/caregiver)
- Word of mouth, from a friend
- From your child's teacher or counselor
- From a flyer distributed by your child's school
- Already have 1 or more children enrolled in programs at Emily K
- From community program/partner: \_\_\_\_\_
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Financial Eligibility</b>
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Total Number of adults and children currently residing in your residence (including the student applicant): \_\_\_\_\_

List Household Members:

Name	Age	Relation to Student Applicant

Name	Age	Relation to Student Applicant

Please indicate the bracket in which your annual income falls using your annual adjusted gross income reported on your most recent tax return. If you are not required to file taxes, please report your annual income to the best of your ability.

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$0-\$10,000      | <input type="checkbox"/> \$40,000-\$50,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$80,000-\$90,000  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$10,000-\$20,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50,000-\$60,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$90,000-\$100,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20,000-\$30,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$60,000-\$70,000 |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$30,000-\$40,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$70,000-\$80,000 |   |

Based on your family's Adjusted Gross Income and household size as outlined in the chart, does your family meet the financial eligibility requirements for this program?  No  Yes

If no, are there any circumstances that affect your household income that you believe makes you eligible? Special circumstances could include but are not limited to military status/deployment, caring for elderly or sick relatives, incarcerated parent, or attending a Title I school.

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Does your student qualify for Free or Reduced Priced Lunch at school?  No  Yes  Unsure

If yes, does your child currently utilize free or reduced lunch?  No  Yes

Did anyone in your family receive unemployment benefits or a reduction in hours/pay in 2020 and/or 2021 due to COVID-19 closures?  No  Yes

Is anyone in the student's immediate family (e.g. parents/guardians, siblings) currently pursuing a four-year college degree?  No  Yes

If yes, who? (relationship to student): \_\_\_\_\_

If no, will your child (or one of their siblings) be the first person in your immediate family to attend a four-year college?

No  Yes

### Parent/Legal Guardian/Caregiver Questionnaire

Your responses on this questionnaire, in addition to your student's academic record and teacher recommendations, help to assess whether your student may be a good match for the *Pioneer Scholars* program. Please answer each of the following questions thoroughly. Use the additional space section or a separate sheet of paper if you need additional space. *Incomplete applications will not be reviewed.*

Why do you want your child to participate in the *Pioneer Scholars* program? \_\_\_\_\_

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What are your child's greatest strengths and talents? What makes your child stand out from other kids their age?

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Please describe your child's academic strengths and challenges. Which subjects does your child excel? Which subjects does your child find more challenging?

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What are your educational goals for your child's future? \_\_\_\_\_

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Do you believe that your child is being adequately challenged and supported in his/her academic growth at their current school? If so, how? If no, what do you believe is lacking? \_\_\_\_\_

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What are your child's hobbies and/or extracurricular interests outside of school? \_\_\_\_\_

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Has your child's teacher ever recommended tutoring?  No  Yes  
If yes, in which subject(s)/area(s)? \_\_\_\_\_

Has your child ever been retained (held back a grade)?  No  Yes      If, yes, in which grade(s)?  
\_\_\_\_\_

How is your child currently performing in reading?  Below Grade Level  At Grade Level  Above Grade Level

If your child is below grade level in reading, what interventions or strategies have been implemented to get your child performing at grade level?

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How is your child currently performing in math?  Below Grade Level  At Grade Level  Above Grade Level

If your child is below grade level in math, what interventions or strategies have been implemented to get your child performing at grade level?

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Has your child been suspended from school in the last two years?  No  Yes

Has your child ever been removed from an afterschool program or other extracurricular activity due to behavior?

No  Yes

If yes, please explain the situation that led to the removal/dismissal. \_\_\_\_\_

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Does your child currently receive behavioral support or intervention for socioemotional concerns through school or a community based agency? *Please note that this is not a disqualifier; we simply want to understand your child's holistic needs.*  No  Yes

If yes, please explain the current strategies, interventions, and supports currently in place for your child.

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Compared to previous school years, how is your child performing academically this school year? \_\_\_\_\_

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The *Pioneer Scholars* program requires a strong commitment on the part of our students' families. Students must be able to attend the program after school on assigned days according to their grade level from 4:00-5:30 p.m. and families must provide transportation to and from the Center as **transportation is not provided**.

Do you feel that your family is prepared to make the necessary commitment to support your child's participation in the *Pioneer Scholars* program?  No  Yes Parent/Guardian/Caregiver Initials \_\_\_\_\_

Is your family able to provide transportation to and from the Emily K Center for your child?  No  Yes  
Parent/Guardian/Caregiver Initials \_\_\_\_\_

By signing below, I confirm that the information provided on this form and on the parent questionnaire is accurate and complete. I am also giving permission for staff to contact my student's teacher(s) for grades and recommendations.

Parent/Guardian/Caregiver Name: \_\_\_\_\_



Parent/Guardian/Caregiver Name Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Student Questionnaire**

Your responses on the questions below, in addition to your grades, attendance, parent questionnaire, and teacher recommendations, are used to assess whether you may be a good match for the *Pioneer Scholars* program. Please answer each of the following questions thoroughly and in English. Use the additional space section or a separate sheet of paper if you need additional space. **All questions must be answered in order for your application to be complete.**

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Current Age:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Current Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_

Why are you interested in becoming a *Pioneer Scholar*? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What do you consider to be your greatest strengths and/or talents? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What are your future goals in terms of your college and career interests? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

In which academic subjects do you excel? What have you done to develop strength in these subjects? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Which academic subjects do you find challenging? What have you worked on to improve your performance in these subjects? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What are your hobbies/interest and extracurricular activities outside of school? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What are you most proud of about yourself? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How would your teachers describe your behavior in the classroom? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How would your parents/guardians/caregivers describe your behavior at home? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Rising 6<sup>th</sup> grade students:** Do you feel that you are academically prepared to enter middle school? If yes, why do you feel prepared? If not, please explain what makes you feel unprepared. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Rising 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students:** Do you feel that you are academically prepared for the next grade level? If yes, why do you feel prepared? If not, please explain what makes you feel unprepared. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

All *Pioneer Scholars* students are expected to demonstrate our six leadership and character pillars in school, at home, at the Emily K Center and in the community. During this current school year, how have you demonstrated each of the six leadership and character pillars? Each pillar along with an explanation is below.

1. Heart: Dream with courage, daring, and passion.  
*Students are expected to be kind and considerate to staff and their peers.*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. High Expectations: Commit to excellence in everything you do.  
*Students have a positive attitude towards learning, demonstrate a commitment to put their best effort into every task, advocate for their needs, and persevere when things are difficult.*

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3. **Hard Work:** Do your best at every task so that you are a responsible member of your family, team, and community.

*Students are expected to stay on task and complete all work as requested.*

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4. **Integrity:** Choose to do the right thing no matter who is watching.

*Students are expected to follow all rules and policies and make good choices.*

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5. **Honesty:** Make truth the basis of your success so that you are a trustworthy member of your family, team, and community.

*Students are expected to be truthful and trustworthy.*

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6. **Respect:** Achieve with respect and care for yourself and for the dignity and potential of others.

*Students demonstrate that they respect each other, themselves, staff and workspaces within and outside of the Emily K Center.*

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“You must do the thing you think you cannot do,” is a quote by Eleanor Roosevelt, a former First Lady of the United States. Write about a time when you did something that you did not think you could do. Include specific details.

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By signing below, I confirm that the information provided on this questionnaire is accurate and complete:

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

RETURN COMPLETE APPLICATION TO EMILY K CENTER, 904 W. CHAPEL HILL ST. DURHAM, NC 27701