

Report of the Education Committee to the NY Quarterly Meeting 10-19-25

The Educational Fund Committee awards scholarship funds to assist Members of New York Quarterly Meeting in sending their children to either Brooklyn Friends School or Friends Seminary. The funds come from the New York Quarterly Meeting.

This year, we dispersed a total of \$147,000 to 14 students. Three of the students attend Friends Seminary; they received a total of \$18,500. Eleven students attend Brooklyn Friends, they received a total of \$128,500. We were not able to give all of the students the money they requested, and we were not able to fund 2 students, whose families are not members of the Religious Society of Friends.

The Education Committee forwards a request to the NY Quarterly Meeting that it extend the definition of possible recipients of funds from the Education Committee to families who are applying to the Mary McDowell Friends School for the expenses they incur when applying for NY State funding to support their child's education at the school. To get the funding, the child needs to have an educational evaluation, which is expensive, and there are possible legal fees. We believe it is important for us to give Quaker children the opportunity to attend a school that meets their educational needs.

Background: Mary McDowell Friends School

Mary McDowell Friends School (MMFS) opened in September 1984 as Mary McDowell Center for Learning with just five students at the Brooklyn Meeting House on Schermerhorn Street. The school is named after Mary Stone McDowell (1876-1955), a Quaker teacher and member of New York Monthly Meeting who was fired in 1918 for refusing to ask her students to purchase war bonds—a principled stand based on her Quaker pacifist beliefs.

MMFS is now a K-12 college preparatory program dedicated to serving bright students with learning disabilities including dyslexia, dysgraphia, ADHD, dyscalculia, non-verbal learning disabilities, and language or auditory processing disorders. The school operates from three Brooklyn locations (Cobble Hill, Carroll Gardens, and Brooklyn Heights) and serves approximately 409 students with a 2:1 student- teacher ratio. Grounded in Quaker values of

equality, integrity, and social responsibility, MMFS has maintained its mission for over 40 years.

Current Relationship with NYQM

While MMFS reports to NYQM and has several Friends serving on its board, the school does **not** have the formal "care" relationship that Brooklyn Friends School and Friends Seminary have with NYQM. Unlike BFS and FS, where NYQM appoints half the governance board members (9 of 18), MMFS operates as an independent organization with an informal relationship to the Quarter.

Current Education Fund Limitations

According to the NYQM Handbook (Section II, Educational Fund Committee), the Education Fund is restricted to providing "financial assistance for Quaker children attending Quaker schools **under the care of New York Quarterly Meeting.**" This language has been interpreted to limit eligibility to schools with formal governance relationships with NYQM—currently only Brooklyn Friends School and Friends Seminary.

The Education Committee asks the New York Quarterly Meeting approve a handbook revision to expand Education Fund eligibility to include Mary McDowell Friends School.

Rationale:

1. **Mission alignment:** MMFS serves Quaker families and operates under Quaker values, making it a natural fit for Education Fund support
2. **Meeting the need:** Legal and assessment expenses for students with learning disabilities can be substantial barriers for Quaker families
3. **Historical continuity:** MMFS has served the Quaker community for over 40 years, with many NYQM members' children attending
4. **Education Fund support:** The Education Fund Committee itself is requesting this change
5. **Practical impact:** This would not create new financial obligations but would allow existing Education Fund resources to serve more Quaker families in need

Proposed by the Education Committee: 'financial assistance for Quaker children attending Quaker schools under the care of New York Quarterly Meeting or reporting to New York Quarterly Meeting. These schools currently

include Brooklyn Friends School, Friends Seminary, and Mary McDowell Friends School.