

Florida Scholarship Programs Newsletter

Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice

Volume 4, Issue 6

January 2010



Intent to Participate for the 2010-11 School Year

Time is running out for those wishing to enter the McKay Scholarship Program for the current school year. The last day to file intent for the 2009-2010 school year is January 31, 2010. Any new scholarship students who file intent on or before this date must be enrolled by March 2, 2010, to be eligible to receive a fourth quarter scholarship payment on April 1, 2010.

Intents filed after January 31, 2010, will be for the 2010-11 school year. These students must be enrolled in a participating private school by August 2, 2010, in order to be eligible for a first quarter scholarship payment on September 1, 2010.

Although a student is not eligible for payment if intent is filed after January 31, 2010, a parent with a valid intent for 2010-11 may choose to enroll an eligible student in a participating private school for the remainder of the 2009-10 school year at his/her own expense. Of course, parents also have the option of keeping the student in public school for the rest of the current school year.



We would like to remind private school administrators assisting parents with filing, that all intents to participate in the McKay Scholarship Program **must be filed prior to the student withdrawing from public school.** Additionally, the student must have met prior year public school attendance requirements by being included for funding in the October and February FTE counts, and must have an active IEP.

Please note that a new intent does not have to be filed for a student already participating in the program in a private school. **All** students currently enrolled for the 2009-10 school year, regardless of whether or not they received payment, must be re-enrolled by August 2, 2010, to be eligible for a first payment next school year.

Check your Contact Information

A new year often brings changes such as new staff or a new location. Incorrect contact information or typos may prevent you from receiving important scholarship program communications. Please log in to the School Choice Web site and click "View School Info" to ensure your school's **address, telephone number, fax number, and e-mail address** are up to date. If corrections are necessary, please contact your Regional Manager as soon as possible.



Special Points of Interest:

- **Attendance Verification** for the February 2010 scholarship payment must be submitted between **January 4-8, 2010.**
- New scholarship students must be **enrolled by January 2, 2010,** to be eligible to receive a February 1st payment (parent must have filed intent by December 3rd).



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In the News

Congratulations to Vicki Maldonado!

The Scholarship Office would like to congratulate Customer Service Representative, Vicki



Maldonado who, along with her twin sisters, recently completed her undergraduate degree from Florida State University. Two years younger than her sisters, Vicki took

dual enrollment classes in high school, allowing her to graduate in December with a degree in Psychology and Public Administration. A two-year veteran of the School Choice Hotline, Vicki's dedication and focus have earned her increasing responsibilities even as she has pursued a full-time course of studies. Following her graduation, Vicki will continue working with the School Choice Office while she considers graduate schools. Vicki plans one day to work in the field of school counseling and psychology, specializing in helping children with disabilities.

FTC Norm-Referenced Testing

Private schools participating in the **Florida Tax Credit (FTC) Scholarship Program** are required to annually administer one of the norm-referenced assessments approved by the Department of Education to all FTC students in grades 3-10. When sending the assessments to be scored, please be sure to **request national percentile rankings** (not just the number correct) from the scoring company. As in previous years, Professor David Figlio will be collecting copies of each FTC student's test scores for the 2009-10 school year. Send copies of score sheets with the student's name, testing date, and national percentile ranking to: David Figlio, School Reporting Compliance Center, Department of Economics, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611-7140.

Reminder -

Compliance Workshops

Scholarship Compliance Workshops will be held at six locations throughout Florida. Over 800 attendees have already signed up.

Each training will be conducted from 9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m. Scholarship staff will be available to answer questions and assist you with completing your Compliance documentation during the workshop.

For more information, or to register, please contact: Cathy Russell, Program Specialist, at cathy.russell@fldoe.org or (850) 245-9640.

Scholarship Compliance Workshops

January 20	Tallahassee	FDOE 325 W. Gaines St.
January 21	Jacksonville	First Baptist Academy of Jacksonville 600 N. Main St.
January 26	Tampa	Tampa Bay Christian Academy 300 E. Sligh Ave.
January 27	Orlando	Central Florida Prep 1450 Citrus Oaks Ave. Gotha, FL
February 2	Miami	LaProgressiva Presbyterian 2480 NW 7th St.
February 3	Ft. Lauderdale	Ft. Lauderdale Preparatory School 3275 West Oakland park Blvd.

To Do:

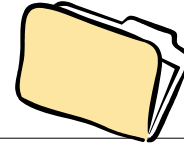
Compliance Deadline Approaches

The Scholarship Compliance Form must be submitted online, printed, signed, notarized, and **postmarked by March 1, 2010**, to renew participation in the McKay and FTC Scholarship programs for the 2010-2011 school year.

Schools will then have 60 days to correct any outstanding issues. All issues must be resolved **on or before May 1, 2010**, in order to continue to participate in the scholarship programs for the upcoming year. Please contact your Regional Manager if you have any questions.

Are your records in order? - Part 2

Staff Information



In this three-part series, we review the need for private schools to maintain certain records, and to have those records ready and available for inspection upon request by the Department of Education. This month, we address **staff records** which must demonstrate compliance with statutory requirements for screening, qualifications, ethics training and other requirements.

Each year, a number of McKay and Florida Tax Credit Scholarship schools are randomly selected for site visits per s.1002.39(6)(f)1. and 220.187(6)(n)1., F.S. During these visits, DOE representatives will inspect the school's records for compliance, including student records, staff information, and program and facilities documentation.

Staff records should be kept in two separate files. One, containing personnel records, must include each staff member's full name and their teaching credential (bachelor degree or higher, or three years' teaching experience, or qualifying special skills, knowledge or expertise).

The other, kept in a secured location, must contain the results of the VECHS Level 2 criminal history screening for all employees and contracted personnel, the employment history check, and the results of the BEC-PASS and the Professional Practices Database of Disciplinary Action screenings.

DOE inspectors will also be looking for compliance with [Ethics in Education Act requirements](#), including the School's written policy of Standards for Ethical Conduct, verification of staff training in the school's Ethics Policy, and posted information on how to report misconduct.

Other records which must be available for inspection include:

- the UCT-6 Form—if the school is liable to pay the Florida Unemployment Tax. (If the school states it is exempt from this tax, the inspector may require the school produce the documentation to demonstrate this.)
- documentation that any individual employed as contracted personnel is registered as an independent contractor with the Department of Revenue.
- the school's Workers Compensation policy, for schools with four or more employees.

For questions regarding any of these requirements, please contact your regional manager.

Important Program Dates

Mark your calendar



Please be aware of the following important McKay Scholarship dates.

January 2, 2010—Date by which students with a valid Intent must be enrolled to receive the February 1 payment.

January 4-8—Attendance Verification week for the third payment period.

January 31—Intent filing deadline for the 2009-10 school year.

February 1—Intents filed for the McKay Scholarship on or after this date apply to the 2010-11 school year.

March 1—Date by which the signed and notarized Compliance Form must be postmarked.

March 2—Date by which new McKay students who filed by January 31 must be enrolled in order to receive the final quarterly payment.

March 3-16—Attendance Verification period for the fourth payment .

May 1—Deadline by which any outstanding Compliance issues must be resolved to be renewed for participation in the 2010-11 school year.

June 1—Date by which requests for missing payments must be submitted.

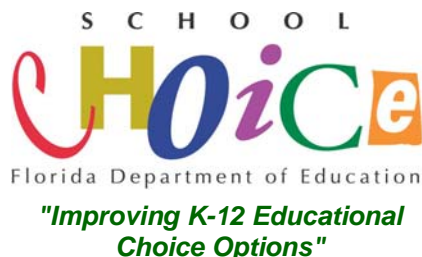
July 3—Intent filing deadline to be eligible for the first 2010-11 payment on September 1

Contact your Regional Manager promptly with any questions regarding these deadlines.

A HAPPY NEW YEAR



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MCKAY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM 2009-2010 IMPORTANT DEADLINES*

Payment Period	Payment Date	Parental Intent Deadline	Private School Enrollment Deadline	Attendance Verification Available Online	Attendance Verification Deadline
July 1 – Sept 30	September 1	July 3	August 2	N/A	N/A
Oct 1 – Dec 31	November 1	September 2	October 2	October 5	October 9
Jan 1 – Feb 28	February 1	December 3	January 2	January 4	January 8
Mar 1 – June 30	April 1	January 31	March 2	March 3	March 16

*

Please note:

- Private schools participating in the **Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program** (formerly the Corporate Tax Credit Program) must meet the deadlines set by the Scholarship Funding Organizations to receive FTC payment.
- The deadlines for filing a parental intent and private school enrollment are statutory deadlines. Therefore, the Department cannot make exceptions if these deadlines are missed.

Current and previous newsletters are available in PDF format on the School Choice Web Site.