

Florida Scholarship Programs Newsletter

Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice

Volume 4, Issue 8

March 2010

Scholarship Compliance Renewal



Special Points of Interest:

- Intents currently being filed are for the 2010-2011 school year.
- **Attendance Verification** for the April 2010 scholarship payment must be submitted March 3-16, 2010.

March 1st is the deadline for submission of the Compliance Form. If your form has not been postmarked by the deadline, you will not be eligible to participate in the Scholarships Program for the upcoming school year.

For schools meeting the March 1st deadline, there may still be work to be done. Following the timely submission of the Scholarship Compliance Form, **renewing schools must resolve any outstanding compliance issues**, including the submission of inspection reports and fiscal soundness documentation (if applicable), **on or before May 1, 2010**.

Schools unable to resolve compliance issues by May 1st **will not be eligible** to participate in the scholarship programs for the 2010-2011 school year.

Upon demonstration of compliance for the 2010-11 school year, the Department will send the private school a letter confirming compliance along with a McKay Scholarship Program deadline chart for the upcoming school year.

The current deadline chart is on the back of this newsletter. As you may notice, **the intent and enrollment deadline dates do not change** from year to year. These deadlines are established in law and cannot be changed, extended, or waived by the Department of Education.

If you have any questions related to your school's compliance status, please contact your Regional Manager.

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McKay Payment Discrepancies

The fourth quarter McKay Scholarship payments for the 2009-10 school year will soon be distributed. It is very important for participating private schools to review these payments immediately, as well as other payment records from throughout the school year. Any discrepancies must be submitted to the Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice by **March 5, 2010**, for corrections to be reflected in the final payment of the school year that is scheduled for April 1. Any further payment correction requests for the current school year must be submitted to the Department **no later than June 1, 2010** in order to receive payment.

A sheet with additional instructions will be included in the April payment packet. If you have any questions, please contact our Payment Specialist, Scott Lingo at scott.lingo@fldoe.org.

Mark Your Calendar- Important Program Dates

March 2—Date by which new McKay students who filed intent 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.

August 2—Date by which new and renewing McKay students must be registered and enrolled in order to receive the September 1 payment.

September 2—Intent filing deadline to be eligible for the November 1 payment.

October 2—Date by which students filing by September 2 must be enrolled to receive the second quarterly payment.

Contact your Regional Manager with questions regarding these deadlines.

Sharing the Love- Scholarship Programs bring warm response from Temple Christian parents



Jackie Pitts, director at Temple Christian School in Jacksonville, has kindly shared with us a number of letters from pleased scholarship parents. Writes Ms. Pitts to the School Choice Office, "Because of your efforts, many students are afforded an opportunity they otherwise would never have. McKay and Step Up for Students Scholarships are a blessing to many." Below are excerpts from some of the parent letters.

I just wanted to say how appreciative and grateful I am for the McKay Scholarship for both of my children.... Without this scholarship program, my kids would have literally fallen through the cracks of the public education system.

Being in the Step Up for Students scholarship program has given my child a chance to have a better education... Since being in private school, my daughter is enthused about school, has many friends and is one grade from A-B Honor Roll.

My child is much happier than she was in public school.... Being an ESE student, she needs extra time and extra help. She is getting that now.... My daughter has better self esteem and a better attitude about school.

In public school, my son 's grades were D and F and it was hard for him to concentrate.... This private school really made a difference in his life.... Thank you to Step Up for Students for giving my family a chance.

We are sure that many thousands of McKay and Step Up Scholarship parents throughout Florida echo the feelings shared here.

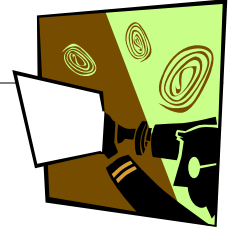
FTC Norm-Referenced Testing



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. Technical Assistance and a list of approved [Norm-referenced Assessments](#) adopted in State Board Rule 6A-6.0960 is available on the School Choice Web site.

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.

Private School Employee Fingerprinting



As private schools continue to resolve compliance related issues, it is important for both renewing schools and new participants to know and understand the employee fingerprinting requirements. **Every employee or contracted personnel with direct student contact must electronically submit a set of fingerprints** through the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) for a state and national background screening. The screening results must be securely stored at the school's location and be available for inspection by the Department of Education should your school be randomly selected for a site visit.

Q *What about personnel who only participate in before- or after-school programs?*

A level 2 background screening is required only if ALL of the answers to the questions below are "Yes."

Is the person an employee or contracted personnel of the private school?

Does the person have unsupervised access to or direct contact with a scholarship student?

Is the private school responsible for the scholarship student?

Please note that Department of Children and Families (DCF) background checks **do not** meet the statutory screening requirements for participation in the state scholarship programs because DCF does not provide the results to the private school for screening against [s. 435.04, F.S.](#) Only teachers with a valid Florida teaching certificate are exempt from this requirement according to [s. 1002.421\(2\)\(i\), F.S.](#)

If you have any questions about these requirements, please review the related [Technical Assistance Paper](#) on the School Choice Web site.



In the News

2010 Legislative Session

The 2010 Florida Legislature is in session from March 2—April 30, 2010. There are several bills proposed in both the House and the Senate that, if passed by both chambers and approved by the Governor, could affect Florida private schools in general and also those participating in the state scholarship programs. The Department has prepared a [Scholarship Program and Private School Bill Summary](#) which describes each of these bills. For more information about the legislative session or to contact your legislators, please visit [OnlineSunshine](#), the official site of the Florida Legislature.



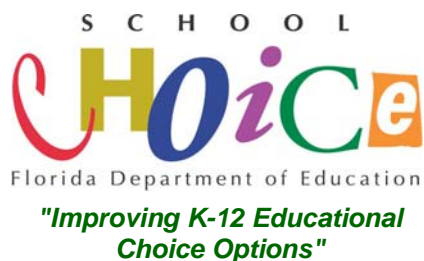
Toolkit for educators to help military families

A toolkit entitled **Supporting the Military Child** is available from the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) to help school leaders meet the needs of children whose parents are deployed or in transition. About 2 million American children have had one or both parents deployed since 2001. Understanding the challenges facing military families—and the resources available to help military children—is essential to meet their special educational needs. This free online resource is available on the AASA Web site at: www.aasa.org/MilitaryChild.aspx.

School Choice Town Hall Meetings announced

A series of Town Hall Meetings will be held at five locations throughout Florida to provide parents with information about the variety of choices available for their child's education, and ways parents can partner with schools to support their child's academic success. The presentations, sponsored by the School Choice Parent Advisory Council, will be held the fourth Tuesday of each month, starting March 23rd, in Quincy, Jacksonville, Tampa, Miami and Orlando. For more information, visit <http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/Information/vpsc/>.

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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.