

Florida Scholarship Programs Newsletter

Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice

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Special Points of Interest:

- **To be eligible for the September payment,** new students must have a valid intent filed by July 3rd and have been enrolled by August 2. Returning or transferring students must have been reenrolled by August 2.
- The 2010-11 **Private School Annual Survey** will be available for submission on the School Choice Web Site on September 1, 2010.



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Restrictive Endorsement— Requirements and guidelines

With the start of classes and the arrival of the first scholarship payments for the 2010-11 school year, we would like to review the restrictive endorsement requirements for McKay Scholarship payments.

Florida law requires the Department to make McKay Scholarship payments by individual warrant (check) payable to the student's parent or guardian. The warrants must be mailed by the Department to the private school of the parent's choice. Section 1002.39(9)(f), Florida Statutes, then requires the parent of a scholarship student to restrictively endorse the warrant to the private school for deposit into the account of the private school.

The Department is also required to review a sample of endorsed scholarship warrants after each payment period to confirm compliance with the restrictive endorsement requirements.



When the McKay payment arrives, the parent or guardian of record must endorse the warrant over to the school.

The following are a few guidelines to assist you in correctly complying with these requirements:

- When a private school receives the McKay scholarship checks, the school should immediately stamp the back of each check with the words "For Deposit Only" and include the school's name, and the name of the school's bank or account number.
- The private school should immediately notify parents that the checks have arrived and ask the parents to come to the school to restrictively endorse (sign) the warrant.
- It is strongly recommended that the scholarship checks not leave the possession of the private school, and students should not bring scholarship checks home for a parent endorsement (signature).
- It is essential that the parent whose name is on the scholarship check be the individual that endorses the check. Under law, power of attorney cannot be given from the parent to the private school.

For additional details, please review the **Restrictive Endorsement Technical Assistance Paper** that may be found on the Quick Navigation Menu when logged in to the School Choice Web Site as a private school.

Mark Your Calendar



September 1—First quarterly 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.

October 4-8—Attendance Verification week for the second payment period.

December 3—Date by which students with a valid 2010-11 intent must be enrolled in order to receive the February 1 payment.

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

January 4-11—Attendance Verification week for the third payment period.

January 31—Last day to file an intent to participate for the 2010-11 school year.

February 1—First day to file an intent for the 2011-12 school year.

March 2—Date by which students filing by January 31 must be enrolled to receive the April 1 payment.

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

Please contact your Regional Manager with questions regarding these deadlines.

Annual Survey— Ensure your listing in the 2011 directory

The 2010 **Annual Survey of Private Schools** will be available online September 1. By law, all private schools in Florida are required to submit the Annual Survey by May 1. It is also a requirement for participation in the state scholarship programs. Those submitted by **November 30** will be included in the Department's **Directory of Private Schools**.

To submit the survey:

1. Log on to the School Choice Web Site as a private school administrator.
2. Complete the information and submit online.
3. Print the signature page and have it signed by the private school's **owner/chief administrative officer**. Then have it notarized, and mail it to the Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice.

Benefits

Besides fulfilling a legal requirement, submitting the survey provides other benefits such as:

- Being listed on the School Choice Web Site, where parents can view your school's information
- Receiving timely updates on federal initiatives or changes affecting private schools
- Allowing eligible students in your school to qualify for a Bright Futures Scholarship
- Getting informational updates on issues or requirements affecting private schools including IDEA and Title I

Please complete this important requirement promptly.

FTC Norm-Referenced Testing Requirement

With a new school year beginning, we would like to remind private schools participating in the Florida Tax Credit (FTC) Scholarship Program of the requirement to administer, or make provisions for FTC students in grades 3-10 to take one of the nationally norm-referenced tests identified by the Department of Education.

This requirement is outlined in Section 1002.395, Florida Statutes. The approved assessments and specific instructions are available on the School Choice Web Site at www.floridaschoolchoice.org/Information/CTC/norm_referenced_assessment.asp.

Please note that due to changes implemented by the 2008 Florida Legislature, the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) is **no longer listed** as a nationally norm-referenced test that may be administered to FTC students. Participating private schools must make arrangements to administer one of the approved listed tests during the 2010-11 school year, or the private school may request the use of an alternate assessment. Requests must be submitted to the Department **in writing by September 15, 2010**.

If you have any questions related to this requirement, please review the [Technical Assistance Paper](#) posted on the School Choice Web Site, or contact your Regional Manager.

Payment Problems?

Are you missing a payment for an enrolled McKay student? If so, please check the following issues before calling our office:

- **Check the date of intent.** For new McKay students, intents filed after July 3 of this year are not eligible for the first payment.
- **Check the date of enrollment or re-enrollment.** Students enrolled after August 2 are not eligible for the first payment.
- **Check the parent/guardian Social Security Number (SSN).** We must have a valid SSN. If the parent/guardian SSN is invalid or is the same as the student SSN, the payment cannot be processed.
- **Check that only ONE parent is listed as guardian.** If two names are listed, a payment cannot be processed. The SSN must belong to the parent who is listed.
- **Check that the student's parent has officially withdrawn the student from public school.** Prior to processing the McKay Scholarship payments each quarter, the Department sends a list of prospective scholarship students to the public school districts. Any student still registered as a public school student will be designated "EPS" (Enrolled in Public School), and the student's scholarship payment will be cancelled. Look on the scholarship payment **Reconciliation Report** to see if "EPS" is next to the student's name. **If a student was reported as EPS in error**, please follow the instructions located on our Web site's Quick Navigation Menu, and complete a **McKay District Verification Form** as soon as possible in order that we may process a supplemental payment.

If you have questions, please contact Payment Specialist Scott Lingo at scott.lingo@fldoe.org, or at (850) 245-0872.

Employee Fingerprints— Avoid deletion!



Florida statute requires private schools participating in the McKay and FTC Scholarship Programs to ensure that all staff having contact with students pass a Level 2 background check through FDLE and to retain staff fingerprints in the Applicant Fingerprint Retention Notification Program (AFRNP).

FDLE sends invoices to private schools monthly for the retention of fingerprints in their database. Invoices must be paid as soon as possible.

If the invoice is not paid, the prints are deleted from the AFRNP. Once fingerprints are deleted, they cannot be retrieved. To be in compliance with the law, your school employees will have to again submit their fingerprints for state and national checks and for retention; the fee for the state and national check of \$43.25 will be assessed.

Please contact FDLE's Volunteer and Employee Criminal History System (VECHS) with any questions.



In the News

New Brochure titled "Evaluations for Special Education Services:" Information for Parents –

District program contacts expressed concerns regarding potential miscommunications between school personnel and parents when parents request an evaluation for special education services for their child. Therefore, the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services has provided a brochure designed to answer the following questions for parents:

- My child needs help in school. Does my child have a disability?
- What is RtI?
- I have requested an evaluation for my child. Now what?
- What is the evaluation going to include?
- How will I know the results?

The direct link to the brochure is <http://www.florida-rti.org/EvaluationsSpecialEd.pdf> or you may access the brochure at Florida's Response to Instruction/Intervention Web site at <http://www.florida-rti.org/> under the **RtI News** section.

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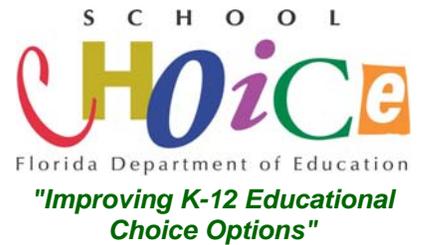
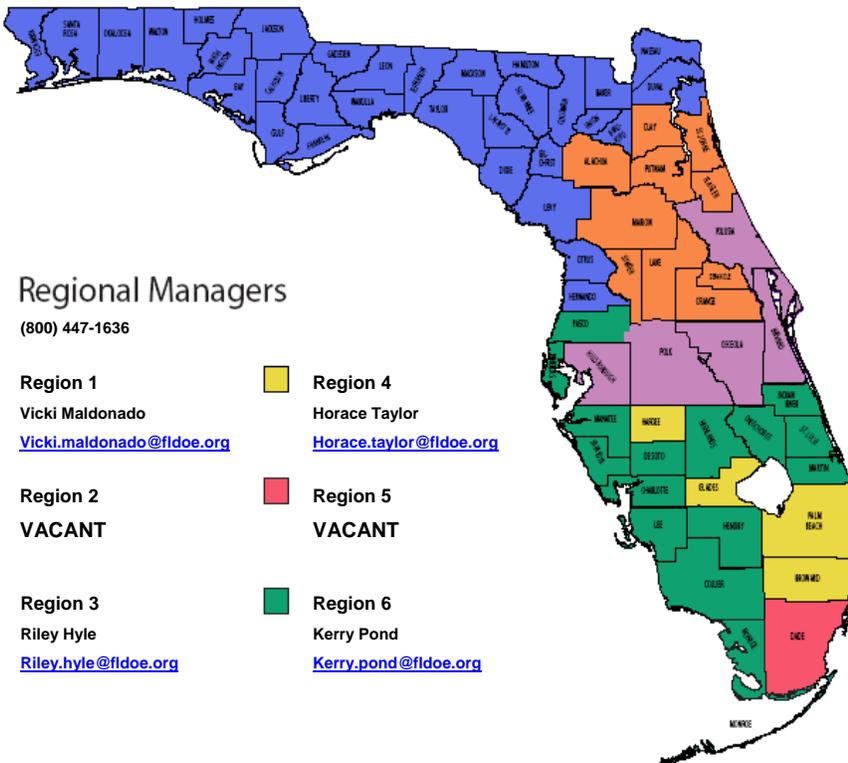
McKay Scholarship Program 2010 - 2011 IMPORTANT DEADLINES*

| Payment Periods | 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 4 | October 8 |
| Jan 1 – Feb 28 | February 1 | December 3 | January 2 | January 4 | January 11 |
| 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** must meet the deadlines set by their Scholarship Funding Organizations to receive 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.

Regional Managers



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