

# 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 2011-12 **Private School Annual Survey** will be available for submission on the School Choice Web Site on September 1, 2011.



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## Payment Problems?

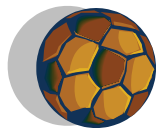
Warrants for the first McKay payment are scheduled to arrive on or before September 1. Upon receipt, schools should immediately check to determine if all enrolled and eligible McKay students have been paid. If not, check the following issues:

- 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- Check that the student's parent has officially withdrawn the student from public school.** Prior to processing the McKay Scholarship payments each quarter, the Department sends a list of prospective scholarship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 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 your Regional Manger.

## Interscholastic and Intrascholastic Sports

With the signing of of House Bill 797, students attending private middle and high schools may participate in interscholastic and intrascholastic sports at a public school, effective July 1, 2011. The law requires the Florida High School Association (FHSA), in cooperation with each school district, to facilitate a program in which private school students may participate in sports at their zoned public school. **Certain stipulations and deadlines apply, however.** Please review the memorandum issued by the Department of Education. The memorandum may be viewed at: <http://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-6142/dps2011-103.pdf>.



## 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.

## FTC Norm-referenced Testing

Private schools participating in the Florida Tax Credit (FTC) Scholarship Program are reminded 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. The approved assessments and specific instructions are available on the School Choice Web Site at [www.floridaschoolchoice.org/Information/CTC/norm\\_referenced\\_assessment.asp](http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/Information/CTC/norm_referenced_assessment.asp).

Participating private schools must make arrangements to administer one of the approved listed tests during the 2011-12 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, 2011**. 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.

## Restrictive Endorsement— *Requirements and guidelines*

With the start of classes and the arrival of the first scholarship payments for the 2011-12 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.

**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, the parent cannot give power of attorney 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.

## Annual Survey Now Available

The 2011 **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. It is also a requirement for participation in the state scholarship programs and must be completed as part of the Compliance process. **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.



## In the News

### “News You Can Use” Newsletter

The National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (NICHCY) is pleased to offer a wealth of information on disabilities. The August Newsletter *News You Can Use* is now available at <http://nichcy.org/newsletters/august2011>.

NICHCY serves the nation as a central source of information on disabilities in infants, toddlers, children, and youth. You will also find easy-to-read information on IDEA, the law authorizing early intervention services and special education. The State Resource Sheets will help you connect with the disability agencies and organizations in your state.



## Mark Your Calendar

**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 3-10**—Attendance Verification week for the second payment period.

**December 3**—Date by which a new student must file intent in order to be eligible for the February 1 payment.

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

**January 3-9**—Attendance Verification week for the third payment period.

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

**February 2**—First day for new students to file an intent for the 2012-13 school year.

**March 2**—Date by which a new student must be enrolled to receive the fourth quarterly payment.

**March 5-14**—Attendance Verification week for the final payment period.

*Questions? Please contact your Regional Manager.*

### Management of Food Allergies in School: What School Staff Needs to Know

Schools at Allergy Home provides online teaching tools to help school nurses educate faculty and staff. Educational aids include audio-video modules, slide presentations, certificate of completion, and parent resources at <http://www.allergyhome.org/schools/>. The report on Florida School District Allergy Policies is located at <http://www.fldoe.org/FNM/pdf/far.pdf>.

# Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice

McKay Scholarship Program 2011 - 2012 IMPORTANT DEADLINES					
Payment Periods	Payment Date	Parental Intent Deadline	Private School Enrollment Deadline	Attendance Verification	
				Available Online	Submission 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 3	October 10
Jan 1 – Feb 28	February 1	December 3	January 2	January 3	January 9
Mar 1 – June 30	April 1	February 1	March 2	March 5	March 14

**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.

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SCHOOL CHOICE  
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*"Improving K-12 Educational Choice Options"*

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