



Office of Independent Education & Parental Choice

325 West Gaines Street • Suite 522 • Tallahassee, FL • 32399-0400 • 850/245-0502 • www.floridaschoolchoice.org

Newsletter

Private School Annual Survey

For the past several months, we have been working diligently to notify private schools of their legal requirements. Completing a Private School Annual Survey is one of the requirements outlined in Section 1002.42(2)(b), Florida Statutes, which states in part:

"Each private school shall annually execute and file a database survey form on a date designated by the Department of Education."

If you have not already, please submit the required Private School Annual Survey for the 2006-07 school year as soon as possible. To verify if the Department has received your survey, please login as a private school administrator on the School Choice website. Under *Step One: Annual School Survey* a date will appear after the bolded text stating "Hard-Copy Received." If there is no date, the Department has not received a hard-copy of the survey.

Private schools that do not fill out a current annual survey will be removed from the Private School Directory. We encourage you to complete an Annual Survey for the 2006-2007 school year and take advantage of benefits which include:

- Being listed on the www.floridaschoolchoice.org website, where parents can access and view your school's information;
- Receiving timely updates on federal initiatives or changes affecting private schools which last year included information on receiving payments for students displaced due to the hurricanes;
- Allowing eligible students in your school to qualify for a Bright Future's Scholarship; and
- Getting informational updates from the Florida Department of Education on issues or requirements affecting private schools including IDEA, Title I, attendance requirements, records retention, and student immunizations.
- Serving as the first step in applying to participate in the McKay and Corporate Tax Credit Scholarship Programs.

Please visit the School Choice website at www.floridaschoolchoice.org, click on "Private School Annual Survey" in the green section, log-in using your four-digit school code and password, and complete your Annual Survey. The surveys must then be printed, signed, notarized, and mailed to the Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice.

Thank you to the private schools that have already complied with this requirement.

If you have questions or need assistance, please contact our toll-free School Choice Information Hotline at (800) 447-1636. We thank you for your cooperation.

New Executive Director



The Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice would like to introduce Dr. Carlo Rodriguez who recently assumed the position of Executive Director of the Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice. Dr. Rodriguez migrated to this country in 1987 as a political refugee from Cuba. Formerly the Administrative Director of School Choice and Parental Options in Miami-Dade County, he provided leadership and direction to Miami-Dade County Public Schools' Choice Programs. Previously, he implemented various choice initiatives including: satellite learning centers; the Opportunity Scholarship Program; and One Community One Goal. He served as Director of WLRN Public Radio/TV and as a District Supervisor. During his first year of teaching, Carlo was the recipient of the National Sallie Mae Teacher of the Year Award. As an advocate for educational reform, he is committed to his vision that School Choice will be the vehicle for equal access to quality educational opportunities.

Welcome Dr. Rodriguez!

Paperless Communication

We encourage all private schools to sign up for paperless communications. The Department of Education uses a paperless system as a means of notifying interested parties when official correspondence is distributed. Anyone may sign up to receive correspondence at <http://www.firn.edu/doe/menu/communications.htm>. By indicating your topics of interest, you will receive email notices containing links to messages, reports, legislative updates, technical assistance papers, and official memorandums issued by the department. All messages will link to PDF files which may be viewed, downloaded to your computer, or printed at your discretion.

When signing up for paperless, we recommend selecting the K12 Interest Area, then the following Program Areas depending upon your personal interest: ESE (Exceptional Student Education), McKay Scholarships, Non-Public Schools, and School Choice.

Cato Private School Survey

The Cato Institute, a non-profit public policy research foundation headquartered in Washington, D.C., is conducting a survey of private schools across the nation to gather information for their future research. The Cato Institute was founded in 1977 by Edward H. Crane and seeks to broaden the parameters of public policy debate to allow consideration of the traditional American principles of limited government, individual liberty, free markets and peace.

If your school is interested in participating in this national private school research endeavor, you may submit a survey online at www.cato.org/survey. Please note that **this is not a department requirement**, but all private schools are encouraged to participate. If you have any questions related to the survey, please contact:

Adam B. Schaeffer, Policy Analyst
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Phone: 202-789-5246
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Thank you again for your cooperation and assistance in increasing the quantity and improving the quality of educational options available to Florida students. If you have any questions, please contact the School Choice Information Hotline at (800) 447-1636, and a representative will be happy to assist you.