



Office of Independent Education & Parental Choice

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Private School Newsletter

Private School Annual Survey

If your school has not yet completed the 2006-07 Private School Annual Survey, please log on to the School Choice website at www.floridaschoolchoice.org, and submit the survey as soon as possible. Completing a Private School Annual Survey is a requirement outlined in Section 1002.42(2)(b), Florida Statutes.

Private schools that do not fill out a current annual survey may be removed from the Private School Directory in August when the 2007-08 survey is posted. Removal of your listing in the directory may affect your school's ability to participate in other state and federal programs such as the Bright Futures Scholarship Program or the National School Lunch Program.

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.

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

Private School Website Improvements



We are pleased to announce that the **K-12 Private School Information** section of the School Choice website has been updated to include new information for private schools and parents. The website now provides a more detailed list of the responsibilities of private schools as well as technical assistance documents. Additional resources such as the latest newsletters and legislative updates are also available. Please visit the School Choice website at www.floridaschoolchoice.org to access these additional resources.

Private School Legislation

The Florida Legislature was in session from March 6—May 4, 2007. There were two bills passed this year that, if approved by the Governor, will affect Florida private schools:

<u>Bill Number</u>	<u>Sponsor</u>	<u>Bill Title</u>
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HB 461	Rep. Llorente	High School Athletics/Drug Testing
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This bill requires the Florida High School Athletic Association to facilitate a 1-year drug testing program to randomly test students in grades 9 through 12 in its member schools who participate in football, baseball, or weightlifting for anabolic steroid use. Both private and public schools are required to consent to the provisions of the program as a prerequisite for membership in the organization. Students and their parents are also required to consent to the provisions as a prerequisite to participation.

HB 463	Rep. Llorente	Pub.Rec./Drug Test/HS Athletics
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This bill exempts from public records requirements the finding of a drug test administered to a student by the testing agency with which the Florida High School Athletic Association has contracted.

For more information on the legislative session, please visit Online Sunshine, the official site of the Florida Legislature, at <http://www.leg.state.fl.us>.

Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) – Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener

Attention VPK Providers: All kindergarten students who attended Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) during the 2006-07 school year are required to participate in the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener (FLKRS). The results of the screening will provide information about a child's readiness for school and will also be used to calculate a readiness rate each year for providers of the VPK Education Program.

Public school districts will provide training for teachers on the screening instruments included in the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener. District dates, times, locations, and contact information for the training may be obtained on the Department of Education, Office of Early Learning's website at: <http://www.firn.edu/doe/earlylearning/sruss.html>. If you have questions about the screening program, please contact Dr. Martha Haynes at (850) 245-9560 or via email at martha.haynes@fldoe.org.

Safe Passage To and From School - Keeping Florida's Children Safe

The Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) Missing Children Information Clearinghouse Advisory Board (MCICAB) was created to address issues dealing with Florida's missing children and child safety. The MCICAB is comprised of law enforcement officials, victim parents, government agencies, missing children non-profit organizations and members of the business community with interest in missing children issues. Board members are chosen from around the state to provide balanced representation of Florida.

The MCICAB has met quarterly for the past 10 years to discuss and implement plans and policies to combat and create an awareness of the large number of children that go missing every year. Approximately 52,000 missing children were reported to local law enforcement agencies in Florida during the year of 2006 alone.

The MCICAB publishes a brochure titled "Safe Passage, A Guide How to Keep Safe" that is available for school children at www.fdle.state.fl.us. Also, listed below are some of the other MCICAB child safety, public awareness and missing child initiatives:

Internet Safety

The Advisory Board would like to help parents better prepare their children to avoid unsafe situations. For specific safety guidelines, parents, educators, and children can visit the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's website at: <http://www.missingkids.com/>. Another excellent resource to help keep children safe while navigating through the Internet is the Netsmartz Workshop. This interactive, educational resource for children ages 5-17 can be used by parents and children alike, and can be accessed at: www.netsmartz.org.

Amber Alert Program

Teachers, parents, and concerned adults are also encouraged to sign up to receive email and/or a text message notification when a child is abducted and an AMBER alert is issued by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement. You may register to receive these alerts at: www.missingchildrenalert.com.

Sexual Offender Database Searches

It is always beneficial to be informed about potential risk factors in one's neighborhood. Educators, parents, and guardians are encouraged to visit the Florida Department of Law Enforcement's Sex Offender Registry at: www.Floridasexoffender.net. During travels out of state, the Department of Justice's National Sex Offender Public Registry provides sex offender information for forty eight states including Florida, and may be accessed at www.nsopr.gov.

Florida Missing Children's Day

Each year the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) Missing Children Information Clearinghouse Advisory Board (MCIC AB) commemorates Florida Missing Children's Day at the Florida State Capital.

This year's ceremony will be on September 10, 2007. The ceremony remembers Florida's past and present missing children and recognizes citizens and law enforcement officers who made special effort in missing children cases. We also remember those children whose lives were tragically taken. Other awards include a 5th grade essay contest written on a Child Safety topic.

For additional information, please contact the Missing Children Information Clearinghouse at 1-888-FL Missing.

Title I Toolkits

The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement, Office of Non-Public Education, has published a booklet related to the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001. The NCLB Act of 2001 requires equitable services for private school students, teachers, and other education personnel in some of its major programs. The booklet provides information related to available benefits including those to educational personnel in religiously affiliated schools. These services are considered assistance to students and teachers rather than private schools themselves. The booklet explains some of the law's provisions and summarizes relevant programs.

The booklet is titled: **The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001: Benefits to Private School Students and Teachers** and is available on the U.S. Department of Education's website at:
<http://www.ed.gov/nclb/choice/schools/privbenefits/index.html>.

Requests for the booklet may also be **e-mailed to:** edpubs@inet.ed.gov