



Private School Newsletter | January 2023



National School Choice Week kicks off January 22nd! School choice means giving parents the opportunity to select the best K-12 education environments for their individual kids. For more information events happening this week, visit <http://schoolchoiceweek.com/>

2022-2023 Private School Annual Survey

Thank you to the private schools that have already submitted the Private School Annual Survey for the 2022-2023 school year! If you have not already completed the Annual Survey, please visit the School Choice website as soon as possible. Submitting a Private School Annual Survey outlined in Section 1002.42(2)(b), Florida Statutes, which reads, "**Each private school shall annually execute and file a database survey form on a date designated by the Department of Education.**" We encourage you to complete the Annual Survey for the 2022-2023 school year and take advantage of the benefits which include:

- Being listed in our Directory of Private Schools;
- Serving as the first step in applying to participate in our Scholarship Programs;
- Allowing eligible students in your school to qualify for a Bright Futures Scholarship;
- Receiving additional updates from the Department on issues or requirements; and
- Receiving timely updates on federal initiatives or changes affecting private schools.

To access the Annual Survey, please visit the [School Choice website](#) , click on "Private School Annual Survey," [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 by **May 1, 2023** in order to be included in the Directory of Private Schools.

The failure of any institution to submit the annual database survey form and notarized statement of compliance with the fingerprinting and criminal background provisions of Section 1002.42(c), Florida Statutes, shall be judged a misdemeanor. Submission of data for a nonexistent school or an institution providing no instruction or training, the purpose of which is to defraud the public, is unlawful and the person or persons responsible commit a misdemeanor of the second degree, punishable as provided in Section 775.082, or Section 775.083, Florida Statutes. Persons owning or operating a private school found to have been convicted of a crime involving moral turpitude commit a misdemeanor of the first degree, punishable as provided in Section 775.082, or Section 775.083, Florida Statutes.

Apply to Administer Statewide Assessments

Participating scholarship schools with at least one Florida Tax Credit, Family Empowerment, and/or Hope Scholarship student have the opportunity to apply and participate in administering Florida State Assessments including, Florida Assessment of Student Thinking [FAST], Florida EOC assessments, and Statewide Science Assessment to all students at the private school. This program is one of many available options that private schools with students receiving a scholarship may use to fulfill the annual private school assessment requirement. The application to participate, along with Frequently Asked Questions, is available on the [Department of Education website](#).

The application window for the 2023-2024 school year is open thru March 1, 2023, with school eligibility determinations finalized in August 2023.

School Certification for the Federal Teacher Loan Forgiveness Program

Schools that apply and receive certification for the Federal Teacher Loan Forgiveness Program will be placed on the annual Directory of Designated Low-Income Schools for Teacher Cancellation Benefits, and will give the opportunity for certain teachers currently repaying a Perkins Loan or a Stafford/FFEL Loan to contact their loan providers and possibly have a portion of their loan forgiven. The criteria for determining school eligibility for certification are:

- Applicants for certification must be registered as a nonprofit private school with the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE);
- Private schools must be nonprofit. A copy of IRS correspondence determining the school's Nonprofit Status is needed with the Private School Eligibility Application form and;
- School grades must be Elementary and/or Secondary (K-12);
- Schools must determine that 35% or more of their students are considered low income in relation to the total membership (K-12) of the school.

Visit website below for more information:

http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/Information/Private_Schools/assistance_resources/ftlfp.asp.

NOTE: The Florida Department of Education does NOT make determinations as to teacher loan forgiveness.

All questions about loan reductions need to be made by the teachers to the teacher's loan company and not to the FLDOE. Information concerning the cancellation or reduction of loans can be found at the following Federal site: <http://www.studentaid.ed.gov>.

Other Resources:

Safe Schools - Best Practices

The Office of Safe Schools serves as a central repository for best practices, training standards and compliance oversight in all matters regarding school safety and security. Private schools can learn more about school safety procedures, resources, and guidelines by visiting <https://www.fldoe.org/safe-schools/best-practices.stml>

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

Private schools have the opportunity to register with and provide data to the NCES for the purposes of education research. If your school has not provided information for this national database you may register by visiting http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pss/privateschoolsearch/school_requestform.asp

National School Lunch Program

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) is a federally funded program that assists schools and other agencies in providing nutritious meals to children at reasonable prices. In addition to financial assistance, the NSLP provides donated commodity foods to help reduce lunch program costs. The United States Department of Agriculture NSLP is responsible for overseeing the program nationally. Florida Statute on School Food Service Requirements Schools must apply through the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' Division of Food, Nutrition and Wellness and complete the requirements prior to the operation of these programs. Once approved, schools will be reimbursed by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services for each lunch and breakfast meal served provided they meet established state and federal regulations.

- Complete the application process.
- Attend a Child Nutrition Program training.
- Maintain documentation and verification of children's eligibility category and count meals by eligibility category (free, reduced-price and paid meals).
- Maintain meal production records and inventory records that document the amount and types of food served.
- Maintain records of on-site accountability reviews.
- Maintain records of all program income and expenditures.

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' Division of Food, Nutrition and Wellness will conduct periodic reviews of the school lunch and breakfast programs to ensure that program sponsors comply with state and federal regulations.

Website: <https://www.fdacs.gov/Food-Nutrition/Nutrition-Programs/National-School-Lunch-Program>

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