



Site Visits

Later this month, personnel from our office will be conducting site visits in participating schools throughout the state. As required by Florida Statute, each year three schools serving McKay Scholarship students and at least seven schools serving Florida Tax Credit (FTC) students are selected for site visits. The three McKay schools are randomly selected, and the FTC schools are determined by the department.

If your school is selected for a site visit, you will receive a notification letter and checklist approximately two weeks prior to the visit. In order to ensure a successful site visit, make sure all documentation has been organized and made readily available for the reviewers upon their arrival.

The items that are reviewed fall under the following categories: Student Cumulative Folder (Attendance and Academic Progress Reports), School Administration (employment history & background screenings), School Staffing (Teacher Qualifications), and School Facility (Health, Radon, and Fire inspections).

Compliance Notes:

Employee Screening

Before employing instructional personnel or school administrators in any position that requires direct contact with students, participating private schools must conduct an employment history check on potential hires by contacting previous employers and retaining documentation of the results in the employee's personnel file.

Potential employees must also be screened using the two employee screening tools available through the Department of Education: the

Upcoming McKay Deadlines

October 3-9

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 1st payment.

January 2

Date by which new students with a valid intent must be enrolled to receive the February 1st payment.

January 4-10

Attendance Verification week for the third payment period.

January 31

Last day to file an intent to participate for the 2017-18 school year.

February 1

First day for new students to file an intent for the 2018-19 school year.

March 2

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

March 5-12

Attendance Verification week for the final payment period.

Teacher Certification Database and the Professional Practices Database of Disciplinary Action. See *Employee Compliance Resources* when logged into our website for more information on the screening requirement and for links to the two databases.

Fiscal Soundness

To demonstrate fiscal soundness and accountability for scholarship programs, private schools that have been in existence less than three years are required to obtain a Letter of Credit, from a bank or other financial institution, or a Surety Bond, from an insurance company in an amount equal to 25% of the school's annual scholarship funding.

If your school falls under this requirement, and your enrollment has exceeded your original estimate, you may need to amend your bond or letter of credit to secure a higher amount. Contact your Regional Manager to discuss the amount of surety required for your school.

McKay Student List and Withdrawal

Procedures

Now that a new school year is well under way, please take a moment to ensure your McKay Student List is accurate. If a McKay student is no longer enrolled or attending your school, the student should be immediately **withdrawn** from your McKay Student List on the School Choice website. To withdraw a student, select the **Withdraw tab** on the student's general information page. Then enter the student's withdrawal date (last date of attendance), the name of the person completing the withdrawal, and a brief explanation of the reason for withdrawal.

*The withdrawal date must be **on** or **after** the student's first date of attendance. Therefore, if a student was enrolled but never attended, the student's first date of attendance should be entered as the withdrawal date. The first date of attendance is provided on the withdrawal tab as a reference.*

Private schools are responsible for the return of all scholarship funds that were received in error, including students who were not in attendance; therefore, timely submission of withdrawal information will save your school the inconvenience of returning incorrectly issued scholarship payments.

Please note that even if the parent of a McKay student has unpaid fees or incomplete documentation, the private

More Information

[Regional Managers](#)

[McKay Calendar](#)

[McKay Deadlines](#)

[Application & Renewal Instructions](#)

[McKay Student Technical Assistance](#)

[Compliance Resources](#)

[McKay Parent Affidavit](#)

[Update Notification Form](#)

FTC and Gardiner Norm-Referenced Testing

Private schools participating in the Florida Tax Credit (FTC) Scholarship Program must make provisions for FTC students in grades 3-10 to take one of the nationally norm-referenced tests identified by the Department of Education. Gardiner students for whom the tests are appropriate are also included in this requirement. Approved assessments and specific instructions are available on our website at:

<http://www.fldoe.org/schools/school-choice/k-12-scholarship-programs/ftc/annual-assessment-requirement.stml>

Private School Ombudsman

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires that each state establish a position for an ombudsman. The role of the ombudsman is to "monitor and enforce" the requirements of ESSA as related to the participation of children in private schools (also known as "equitable services").

All interested educators are encouraged to consider applying for this position which is integral to the effective implementation of ESSA. To view the complete job description

school may not refuse to withdraw the student for these unresolved obligations.

and instructions for submitting an application, see the advertisement in [People First](#). The deadline for submitting the application is October 13, 2017.

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