



Scholarship Bulletin | February 2020



All Scholarship Programs: March 1st Renewal Deadline Approaching!

Participating private schools have less than one month left to submit a Scholarship Compliance Form in order to renew participation in the Florida Tax Credit, Family Empowerment, McKay, Hope, and/or Gardiner Scholarship programs.

- **Step 1:** The form must be submitted online, and a signed and notarized **hard copy** must be mailed to our office postmarked no later than **March 1**.
- **Step 2:** For renewing private schools that submit their compliance forms by the deadline, any outstanding compliance issues must be resolved and any additional compliance documentation must be received by our office no later than **May 1**.

Schools missing either of these deadlines **will not be eligible** to participate in these scholarship programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

Your Regional Manager can assist you with any questions. Schools are advised to contact them as early as possible, as the increasing volume of calls and e-mails may delay their response as deadlines approach.

Scholarship Compliance Notes

Fingerprint Retention

New Requirements for Owners/Operators:

Section 1002.421(p), Florida Statutes, requires private schools that intend to participate in state scholarship programs must have **each owner/chief administrator, operator, officer, and board member** reported to the Division of Corporations (www.sunbiz.org) undergo a level 2 background screening **regardless of direct contact with scholarship students**. The fingerprints must be submitted electronically through the school's **Volunteer and Employee Criminal History System (VECHS) for a level 2 background check**. Further information on the VECHS program can be obtained at <http://www.fdle.state.fl.us/Background-Checks/VECHS-Home.aspx> or by calling 850-410-8324.

Ownership Documentation: Sunbiz Reporting

Private schools participating state scholarship programs (for-profit or nonprofit organizations) must also have its own listing, either as a Fictitious Name Registration (i.e., "doing business as") or as a separate entity for each campus. Otherwise, the school hasn't satisfied the requirements for doing business in Florida. This requirement can be met by submitting a printed copy of your school's information on the Florida Division of Corporations' Sunbiz™ website: www.sunbiz.org.

Employee Ethics Policy: Abuse and Misconduct Notices

All private schools must post notices about the duty to report actual or suspected cases of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect. Reporting to the Florida Department of Children and Families can be done by phone, fax or online at reportabuse.dcf.state.fl.us/.

Schools that participate in state scholarship programs must also post notices at the school site and on the school's website with information about reporting professional misconduct by school staff. The posting must include a contact person and a statement about the penalties for failing to report misconduct. Additional information as well as samples of the abuse and misconduct notices are available on the Office of Professional Practices Services (OPPS) website at www.fldoe.org/teaching/professional-practices/.

When you visit the OPPS website, there are several posters listed. The 4 notices that the school should post are the following:

- 1.) Either the "DCF Mandatory Abuse Reporting" or the "Text Version" poster. This should be posted in a prominent place.
- 2.) The "English Poster" regarding abuse reporting. This should be 11"x17", on the student's level, and posted in a public area widely used by students.
- 3.) The "Spanish Poster" regarding abuse reporting. This should be 11"x17", on the student's level, and posted in a public area widely used by students.
- 4.) Any 1 of the 8 misconduct posters. This should be posted in a prominent place and should be included on the school's website, if available. Remember to fill in the contact information on the poster.

Legislative Updates: Immunization Registry

Florida HB213 Immunization Registry will take effect January 1, 2021. The bill requires health providers who administer vaccines to children through age 17, or to certain college or university students, to report the vaccinations to the Florida Department of Health (FDOH) Immunization Registry. The bill includes an opt-out process for parents or college students who may not want to be included in the registry and directs the FDOH to remove any identifying records for those who opt out. School districts and private schools will be required to have a policy permitting each student to have a certification of immunizations on file with the state's immunization registry. However, the school must still accept FDOH-approved immunizations forms for individuals who have opted out of the registry.

Norm-Reference Testing

Private schools participating in the Florida Tax Credit, Family Empowerment, Gardiner, or Hope 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. Participating private schools must make arrangements to administer one of the approved listed tests during the 2020-21 school year, unless the private school has requested and received approval to use an alternate assessment. For information about upcoming deadlines or questions about the project, please contact Melissa Dyehouse via phone (850- 645-0396) or email (mdyehouse@lsi.fsu.edu).

The approved assessments and specific instructions are available on the School Choice website at: <http://www.fldoe.org/schools/school-choice/k-12-scholarship-programs/ftc/annual-assessment-requirement.stml>.

McKay & Family Empowerment: Minimum Attendance for Payment

In order for a McKay or FES student to be eligible for a quarterly payment, the student must have **attended for at least ten school days** during that payment period. Rule [6A-6.0970\(5\)\(d\) and \(e\)](#), F.A.C., requires private schools participating in the McKay and FES Scholarship Program ONLY to return to the Department of Education any scholarship funds issued for a student that did not attend the private school for ten or more school days during the payment period. If your school receives a payment for a student who did not attend for at least 10 school days within the payment period, the warrant must be immediately returned to the following address:

**Florida Department of Education, OIEPC
Attn: McKay Scholarship Office
325 W. Gaines Street, Suite 1044
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400**

McKay and FES Student Guardian Changes

When a McKay or FES scholarship family needs to change the parent or guardian who is listed on the scholarship checks, please submit a proper **Guardian Issue Form** to our office. Be sure to attach the applicable supporting documents, such as the adoption documentation, new social security number, marriage/death certificate, or power of attorney documentation. For McKay ONLY, a [Parent Affidavit](#) for the new guardian should also be submitted. McKay Scholarship forms are available for download from the [McKay Student Technical Assistance](#) link on our website. **Please contact your Regional Manager for the FES forms** or if you have any questions.

McKay Intent to Participate for 2020-2021

Final intent filing and enrollment deadline for the 2019-20 School Year

The last day for parents to file a McKay intent for the 2019-20 school year was February 1, 2020. Any new scholarship students who file an intent on or before this date must be enrolled by March 2, 2020, to be eligible to receive a fourth quarter scholarship payment on April 1, 2020.

Intent filing for the 2020-21 School Year

Intents filed after February 1, 2020, will be for the 2020-21 school year. These students must be enrolled in a participating private school by **August 2, 2020**, in order to be eligible for a first quarter scholarship payment on September 1, 2020. After filing an intent to participate in the McKay Scholarship Program, the parent is provided with a **confirmation number** that may be used to check the status of the intent, including the student's intent date, eligibility, matrix number, and estimated scholarship amount.

Private schools may assist parents in checking the intent status on the School Choice website. Simply enter the student's last name, birth date, and the intent confirmation number provided by the parent. Please note that School Choice office personnel can provide student status information only to the parent or with the parent's permission.

School Choice New Employees

This month, we would like to highlight our two new staff members, Treveka Smith and Chasity Ingram.



Treveka Smith (left) is originally from Gadsden County and is joining as our new Staff Assistant. She currently owns a business providing services and aid to senior citizens in the community. Treveka prides herself in helping the elderly in her community and dreams of one day having her own facility for senior citizens. Prior to working for the Department, Treveka worked for the Department of Business and Professional Regulation for 15 years and has also been a part of the Florida Retirement System now for 17 years in total.

Prior to her arrival, Treveka was Media Specialist at Ruediger Elementary School in Tallahassee. In her spare time, Treveka loves to draw and sing. She is an active member at her church, and enjoys helping others. She is a mom of three children, and is also a grandmother. Before working for the School Choice office, Treveka wanted a better opportunity in education; she is very excited to be here at the Department where she can still be a part of the education system in Florida.

Chasity is our new Regional Manager for 25 of our North Florida counties that are participating in K-12 Scholarship Programs. Chasity Ingram (right) was born in Ozark, Alabama and is a proud mother of four. Chasity began her professional career in the United States Army, where she served for six years deploying to both Afghanistan and Iraq. After being in the military, Chasity worked for Tallahassee Memorial Hospital as an Office Coordinator. Soon after, Chasity sought out a Bachelor's degree in Technology Management from DeVry University, and is now working on her Master's degree.

Aside from work, Chasity loves scary movies and is a fan of Marvel. Chasity is a fond lover of Italian food, and is a foodie! Chasity enjoys helping others and says, "it is a nice environment here at the Department, I like that a lot." Chasity hopes to be with the Department long-term where she can ground herself and use her professional experience to help parents and students.



Welcome aboard Treveka & Chasity!

Upcoming Deadlines

February 3

New students can begin filing a McKay intent for the 2020-21 school year.

March 1

Date by which Scholarship Compliance Form applications for renewal are to be mailed.

March 2

Date by which a new McKay and FES student must be enrolled to receive the 2019-20 fourth quarterly payment.

March 3 - 10

McKay and FES Attendance Verification week for the final 2019-20 payment period.

May 1

Date by which all Compliance Renewal issues must be resolved.

June 1

Date by which requests for missing payments must be submitted.

More Information

[Regional Managers](#)

[McKay Calendar](#)

[McKay Deadlines](#)

[McKay Parent Affidavit](#)

[Application & Renewal Instructions](#)

[McKay Student Technical Assistance](#)

[Compliance Resources](#)

[Update Notification Form](#)

Other Resources



First Lady Casey DeSantis has announced the theme for this year's Kindergarten through 12th grade art and essay contests will be **"Celebrating Untold Stories and Contributions of African Americans in Florida"**. Information about the contests and Florida's Black History Month is available at <http://www.floridablackhistory.com/>.



The Sunshine State Young Readers Award (SSYRA) Program is a statewide reading motivational program for children in grades 3 through 8. The purpose of the SSYRA program is to encourage students to read independently for pleasure and to read books that are on, above, and below their reading level in order to improve their reading fluency. Voting is open for the reading programs from March 9 – April 16, 2020 and the registration deadline is February 28, 2020. For more information, go to <https://www.floridamediaed.org/ssyra.html>.



Kids.gov is the official kids' portal for the U.S. government, linking kids, parents and teachers to information and services on the web from government agencies, schools, and educational organizations, all geared to the learning level and interest of kids. See <https://kids.usa.gov/>.

Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice
Turlington Building, Suite 1044 | 325 W. Gaines Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400
Toll-Free Information Hotline: 1-800-447-1636
Fax: 850-245-0875

