



Scholarship Bulletin | March 2020

2020 Legislative Session

The 2020 Legislative Session will end soon. Some of the legislation passed may impact state scholarship programs. Please stay tuned for future updates on the outcome of the 2020 Legislative Session in future bulletins from our office.

McKay & Family Empowerment: Attendance Verification & Payments

The final 2019-20 regular payment disbursement for the McKay and FES Scholarship Program is April 1st. March 3rd – 10th is the time during which private schools will need to submit their online Attendance Verification in order to qualify for the April 1 scholarship payment. The Attendance Verification link appears at the bottom of the school's "Welcome" page during this timeframe. Once a school has completed their Attendance Verification, the link will be replaced by a note indicating that the Attendance Verification has been completed for your records.

Parent Information

Remember that each McKay and FES student must have a valid social security number on file for the parent. And for McKay ONLY, a Parent Affidavit must be on file with our office, completed by the parent who will endorse scholarship payments. To ensure that you receive payments for all eligible students, please review your McKay student list and submit any missing Affidavit as soon as possible to parentaffidavit@fldoe.org.

Missing Payments?

To request payments missed for other reasons, submit a [Scholarship Issue Form](#) along with all documents noted on page 2 of the form. If you are unsure why a student hasn't received a payment, please contact your [regional manager](#) first. Private schools should make an effort to resolve any outstanding payment issues by March 11th.

Family Empowerment Scholarship 2020-2021 Re-enrollment

Current FES Students

Private schools are encouraged to inform parents of currently enrolled FES students of the re-enrollment process for the upcoming school year. **Please note there is no scholarship renewal process and no need for families to submit an application for income verification for the 2020-2021 school year.** By way of private school re-enrollment, current FES students are eligible for the 2020-2021 school year.

Re-enrollment for the scholarship program will begin mid-April of 2020. Your school will have the ability to re-enroll students through the school choice website (similar to McKay). To receive full funding, schools must re-enroll students **by August 2, 2020**.

As we approach mid-April, schools will receive additional guidance, including the date re-enrollment will open.

Re-enrollment will continue to be available until August 2, 2020; however, students who are not re-enrolled by JUNE 1, 2020, risk losing their spot to new applicants.

Scholarship Students and Virtual Schools

A McKay, Florida Tax Credit, or Hope Scholarship student may **take up to two state-funded virtual school courses each school year without jeopardizing scholarship eligibility**. This includes courses from Florida Virtual School as well as district virtual instruction programs and district franchises of FLVS. However, parents of Gardiner and Family Empowerment Scholarship students must contract to pay for any virtual courses from these providers. Parents should contact their scholarship funding organization for more information.

2020-21 Compliance Renewal

Renewing private schools that met the Scholarship Compliance Form submission deadline of March 1 must resolve any outstanding compliance issues by May 1, 2020, in order to remain eligible to participate in the state scholarship programs for the 2020-21 school year. Schools having unresolved issues after that date will not be able to participate in the McKay, Gardiner, FTC, FES, or Hope Scholarship programs for the upcoming school year.

Please contact your [regional manager](#) promptly if you have any questions concerning the review process. 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*

During compliance renewal season, it is important for both renewing schools and new participants to understand the employee fingerprinting requirements. Every employee or contracted personnel must electronically undergo a set of fingerprints through the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) for a state and national background screening. The screening results must be securely stored at the school's location and be available for inspection by the Department of Education should your school be selected for a site visit.

Once the criminal history report has been received, it is the private school's responsibility to ensure each employee and contracted personnel meets the background screening standards described in Section 1002.421, Florida Statutes. More information and links to applicable standards are available on our website on the [Employee Compliance Resources](#) page.

After initial processing, the electronic fingerprint submissions are retained by FDLE in the Applicant Fingerprint Retention and Notification Program. The retained fingerprints are searched against all incoming in-state arrest fingerprint submissions, and any matches will be reported to the private school. In addition, schools are required to instruct FDLE to re-run the FBI screening every five years. Private schools are invoiced by FDLE for the annual fee of \$6 charged per fingerprint submission retained. In order to remain in compliance with program requirements, private schools should promptly pay FDLE invoices for any personnel still working with your school.

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.

New Agreed-Up On Procedures Guidelines

FTC, FES, Gardiner, Hope, and McKay

If your school collectively receives more than \$250,000 from the Florida Tax Credit, Family Empowerment, Gardiner, Hope, and McKay Scholarship during a fiscal year, then you must contract with an independent certified public accountant to perform agreed-upon procedures pursuant to section 1002.395(6)(o), Florida Statutes. The annual report must be submitted to the scholarship funding organization that awards the majority of your school's scholarship funds. Please contact the scholarship funding organization if you have questions about this requirement.

McKay Only

If your school receives more than \$250,000 in **only** McKay scholarship funds, then the report must be submitted to the Department of Education. Please contact the School Choice Office if you have any questions.

AUP Reports must be submitted by September 15, 2020.

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 applicable 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.

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>.

Reporting NRT Results for FTC

For private schools participating in the Florida Tax Credit (FTC) Scholarship Program, the results of nationally norm-referenced tests or the statewide assessments administered by the private school in grades 3 through 10 must be reported to the parent and to Learning Systems Institute. **Please send copies of score sheets with name, testing date, and national percentile ranking by August 15, 2020, to:**

**Melissa Dyehouse
Learning Systems Institute
Florida State University
Suite 4600 University Center Bldg. C
Tallahassee, FL 32306-2540**

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).

Reporting NRT Results for FES, Hope, and Gardiner

Participating private schools are required to report Family Empowerment, Hope, and Gardiner student's test scores to the parent.

SAVE THE DATES! Upcoming Deadlines

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.

April 1

McKay and FES Scholarship payments are disbursed.

May 1

Date by which all 2020 Compliance Renewal issues must be resolved.

June 1

Date by which requests for 2019-20 missing payments must be submitted.

July 3

McKay 2020-21 Intent filing deadline for the September 1 payment.

August 2

McKay and FES 2020-21 Enrollment deadline for the September 1 payment.

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

Florida Preparedness for COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

The Florida Department of Education is working closely with the Florida Department of Health and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention to monitor COVID-19. Please review information provided by the Department regarding COVID-19 preparedness: <http://www.fldoe.org/em-response/index.stml>



Created by the Florida Legislature and housed at the University of Central Florida, the Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities provides financial support so students with intellectual disabilities have opportunities for on-campus college experiences and employment opportunities through degree, certificate, or non-degree programs. Support provided by the Center includes scholarship funding for students and grant funding to support postsecondary institutions as they develop new opportunities. For more information, see fcsua.org.

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