



Scholarship Bulletin | April 2020

Compliance Renewal Issues

Renewing private schools that met the Scholarship Compliance Form postmark deadline of March 1 must resolve any outstanding compliance issues by May 1 in order to remain eligible to participate in the state scholarship programs for the upcoming 2020 school year. Helpful tutorials and information can be found in the [Compliance Resource Manual](#) and under **Compliance Resources** (left-hand side of menu), when you are logged in at www.floridaschoolchoice.org.

Renewing schools having unresolved issues after May 1 should contact your assigned [Regional Manager](#) or email our office at schoolchoice@fldoe.org for further updates on the status of your compliance renewal completion.

Private School Facilities Inspections

To help your annual compliance process run more smoothly, please review your facility's fire, health, and radon inspection reports before you submit them to our office.

- Check to see that the inspector completes the forms with your **school's correct name and complete address**.
- Fire and health inspections should be appropriate for a K-12 private school (**not for a daycare or business**)
- Must **be in your school's name**, even if you are leasing space from a church or other organization.

Health and Fire Inspection - Electronic Submission Requirements

- The **Department of Health** is now required to send private school inspection reports directly to the Department of Education via electronic submission.
- The **State Fire Marshall** also requires your **local fire department** to enter your school's inspection information into a statewide database called the Online Reporting System at <https://sfm.bebr.ufl.edu/search/node> in order to grant the Department of Education access to private school fire inspection reports electronically.

Inspection Waiver Extension

We understand that statewide stay-at-home ordinance and facility closures during the coronavirus pandemic may cause a delay in school's compliance approval depending upon when the health and/or fire inspector will schedule and report annual inspection information. It is at this time that your regional manager will take this into consideration and grant your school an extension up to June. Please contact your regional manager directly for further updates and request if needed.

Ownership Documentation and Private School Fingerprinting Process

Requirements for owners, officers, board members, directors, etc.

Remember that ALL listed officers, owners, board members, and/or directors on school's Sunbiz report must provide a copy of the FDLE VECHS level 2 background screening report, **regardless of contact** (F.S. 1002.421) (p). If applicable under F.S. 623.12; it is recommended that a private school owned by a Diocese, Seventh Day Adventist or Private Charter list the diocese, SDA, or private charter's name on our website as the owner on the Annual Survey instead. If your school qualifies under F.S. 623.12, you will need supporting documents in the form of letter from the diocese, court filing, etc. Also any person signing the Annual Survey should be listed as an officer/director on the Sunbiz. If your name isn't listed when the Regional Manager reviews the Sunbiz report, then your school will need an authorization letter from someone listed on the Sunbiz giving the person permission to sign the annual survey. Please contact your Regional Manager for guidance on acquiring this information if needed.

Private School Guidance: COVID-19 FAQ's

In response to the continually changing circumstances surrounding COVID-19, please see our current list of frequently asked questions below:

1. Q: What does it mean to be closed through May 1st?

A: While education is ongoing through distance learning, all public K-12 school campuses in Florida were strongly recommended to remain closed through May 1, 2020, based on the most recent guidance from the CDC. Private K-12 schools in Florida are strongly encouraged to follow suit. Schools should operate virtually or through other non-classroom-based (distance learning) means. This may include:

- Educational packets provided to parents with teacher assistance provided as needed.
- Online learning platforms.
- Hybrid of packets and online resources.

2. Q: How will the implementation of online instruction impact statutory requirements in s. 1002.421(1)(i), F.S. for "direct student contact" in scholarship participating schools?

A: The Commissioner of Education has issued an order waiving the requirement for direct student contact, as required in s. 1002.421(1)(i), F.S. Virtual learning will count toward attendance requirements for private schools. Schools will need to have a mechanism to monitor and record attendance during this period. Please do not send this documentation to the SFO or the FLDOE, but do retain it in your school's records.

3. Q: Will private schools participating in the Florida Tax Credit, Family Empowerment, Gardiner, and Hope Scholarship Programs still be required to administer Statewide Assessments or NRT Assessments pursuant to s. 1002.385, 1002.394, 1002.395 and 1002.40, F.S.?

A: No. The Commissioner of Education has issued an order waiving the requirement for private schools participating in the Florida Tax Credit, Family Empowerment, Gardiner, and Hope Scholarship Programs administer Statewide Assessments or NRT Assessments. This applies to the 2019-20 school year only.

4. Q: Will scholarship payments continue for the remainder of the school year?

A: Yes. There will be no interruption in the delivery of scholarship checks.

5. Q: Are private schools entitled to Federal funds that may be used to help students access online/remote learning materials such as laptops/internet access?

A: Private schools, which are interested in this option, are highly encouraged to reach out directly to school districts and urge their consideration. There's no individual entitlement to federal funds for private schools. Districts may, at their discretion, request to transfer funds from the Title II, Part A program to Title IV, Part A, which may provide greater flexibility to purchase technology for student use. Districts shall continue to provide equitable services to private schools. Districts shall follow Title IV, Part A equitable service procedures and consult with private schools regarding use of their allocation. However, transferability from Title II, Part A program to Title IV, Part A is a district decision (after consultation), and a district is not compelled to utilize this flexibility. If the district does not transfer funds, then private schools cannot transfer funds.

6. Q: Where can information be found about Advanced Placement (AP) exams?

A: The College Board has developed a website dedicated to providing students, educators, and families with information related to AP in light of COVID-19. Please refer to this website for the latest updates on modified AP exams, instructional support and exam prep: https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/about-ap/news-changes/coronavirus-update?SFMC_cid=EM288604-&rid=67096081

7. Q: Does the state have direction, guidance, or specific resources to support instruction for English Language Learners (ELLs) through distance learning?

A: There are numerous free sites with bilingual materials that students and parents can use to encourage literacy skills in English and other languages. These sites include:

<http://bilinguis.com/>
<http://lingolibros.com/free-books>
<https://www.readconmigo.org/>
<https://www.colorincolorado.org/>
<http://www.fldoe.org/em-response/resources-families.shtml#ell>

For further clarification and additional resources, see the following webinar from FDOE that also contains resources and answers a number of questions:

<http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/19861/urlt/COVID-Super-SALA.pdf>.

8. Q: Are there resources available to help schools access cleaning, disinfectant, and hygiene supplies?

A: Yes. To facilitate a statewide, locally driven response for receiving emergency cleaning supplies, private schools should contact their County Emergency Operations Centers (EOC) with a detailed list of supplies needed. Local requests roll-up to the State EOC where they look at all the requests as a whole and direct responses locally. You can locate your County EOC at

<https://www.floridadisaster.org/counties/>.

9. Q: Are there resources available to help school districts, educators, and families ensure continuity of learning during this time?

A: Yes, FDOE has created two resource pages at its COVID-19 response website

<http://www.fldoe.org/em-response>:

- [Free Resources for Families & Teachers](#); and
 - [Best Practices for Distance Learning](#)."
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School Choice New Employees

GREETINGS FROM OUR NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR!

We are delighted to introduce our new **Executive Director** for the Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice, Dr. Dakeyan “Dré” Graham!



Greetings!

My name is Dr. Dré Graham and I am incredibly excited about the opportunity to serve the students of the state of Florida as a member of the IEPC team! I look forward to our collaborative efforts to positively impact the next generation of world changers. My road to the Department was through the vessel of public education. I am a proud product of Hillsborough County Public Schools, graduating from the C. Leon King High School International Baccalaureate Program. After earning my Bachelor’s and Master’s Degrees in Music Education from the University of Florida, I went back to KHS and took over for my high school band director, where I have served as the Director of Instrumental Studies for the past 10 years. While there, I earned my second Master’s Degree (Educational Leadership) and my Ph.D. (Music Education). Most recently, I served as the 2020 Florida Teacher of the Year and Christa McAuliffe Ambassador for Education. My desire has always been to promote equity in education and provide ALL students with an opportunity to succeed. I anxiously await the future victories the Office for Independent Education and Parental Choice will experience by way of providing open doors for ALL the students in the great state of Florida!

- **Dakeyan C. Graham, Ph.D.**

Executive Director
Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice
2020 Florida Teacher of the Year

New Regional Manager

Please welcome the newest staff member on our Regional Manager team, **Kembriel Robinson!** Kembriel will be overseeing scholarship schools in Hernando, Pasco, Hillsborough, Polk, and Osceola County. Before joining the Department, Kembriel was an abuse counselor for the Florida Abuse Hotline. Kembriel has a Bachelors’ of Arts in Sociology from Albany State University, and is now taking on her first job in education here at the School Choice office. Kembriel is a proud mother and enjoys reading, traveling, shopping, and spending time with her family most. Kembriel is very happy to join our office as she says the Department brings a change of scenery she was looking for. As she loves to learn new things, Kembriel says her favorite part of the position so far is learning about all the Scholarship Programs offered to K-12 students in Florida! *We are very happy to have her on board!*



McKay and FES Payment Discrepancies

McKay and FES supplemental payments for the final pay period will be processed during the week of April 13th. Schools will be notified once supplemental payments are disbursed and FedEx tracking is assigned. Any requested student documentation that was not submitted in time to your regional manager for review will be included with the final summer payment distribution. **Please be aware that the final deadline for the submission of any outstanding payment request for the current school year is June 1st.** Payment requests and documentation submitted after that date may not be processed.

Clearing McKay and FES EPS Flags

One of the most common reasons a student does not receive a quarterly payment is due to being **marked Enrolled in Public School (EPS)** based on your district's response to the Pre-Payment Verification File. If a student has been marked EPS incorrectly, it's easy to correct the record. The private school may need to contact the school district office and request them to look into removing the EPS flag by logging into the School Choice website to updating their EPS student list. If you are not familiar with your McKay or FES District Contact, please contact your Regional Manager for the name and contact information.

McKay Scholarship 2020-2021 Re-enrollment

Current McKay Students

Please note that a new intent does not have to be filed for a student already participating in the McKay program in a private school. Re-enrollment for the scholarship program will begin during May of 2020. Once compliant, your school will have the ability to update your fee schedule and re-enroll students through the school choice website. To receive full funding, schools must re-enroll students **by August 2, 2020**. Schools will receive further notification on the date re-enrollment will open.

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. Once compliant, your school will have the ability to update your fee schedule and 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.***

SAVE THE DATES! Upcoming Deadlines

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 Virtual School is providing **100 free digital courses** to all Florida private school students through the end of the school year as educational relief to the COVID-19 pandemic for grades K-12 on select Learning Management Systems (LMS). Courses will be available as an emergency service in response to COVID-19 from March 25 through June 30, 2020. Charter and private schools must contract with FLVS by May 31, 2020. Schools must have one of the following LMS platforms to access the courses:

Blackboard (Ultra and v9.1), Buzz, Canvas, Bright space (v9, v10), Moodle or Schoology. Note: The courses selected through this option will not jeopardize scholarship students' eligibility. **For more information please visit flvs.net or contact your [FLVS District Relations Manager](#).**



SCHOOL LIBRARY MONTH

April is School Library Month. School library programs enhance students' reading enjoyment and help prepare them for lifelong learning. National Library Week is during the week of April 19-25, 2020 which highlights the resources and contributions of all types of libraries. For ideas and recommended reading lists, see ilovelibraries.org.



Spearheaded by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, [Living Healthy in Florida](#) provides consistent information to Florida's children, families and seniors on healthy eating, good nutrition and active living. Check

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