



## Scholarship Bulletin | October 2021

### Scholarship Program Technical Assistance

The **2022 Compliance season is around the corner!** Private schools that participate in state scholarship programs are responsible for complying with the laws and rules related to the programs every year. Our office has created web-based tutorials and other technical assistance to help familiarize administrators with the state's requirements. Log in at [www.floridaschoolchoice.org](http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org) and select **Compliance Resources** from the left hand menu to access this information.

### 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.

The Department also requires potential employees to be screened using two employee screening tools: the 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 with less than three years of existence (through the submission of an Annual Survey) are required to obtain a Letter of Credit (from a bank or another 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 Scholarship Updates:

### McKay Parent Affidavit Submission

An approved parent affidavit is required for new students currently enrolled in the McKay Scholarship Program at your school. Remember parents of McKay private school students are required to have an approved Parent Affidavit Form on file with the Department in order to receive scholarship payments. Moving forward, please submit Parent Affidavit Forms (PDF Preferred) **ONLY** to [parentaffidavit@fldoe.org](mailto:parentaffidavit@fldoe.org). Our office will no longer be accepting picture format images. This email domain is **ONLY** for parent affidavits; **please avoid sending any other documentation**.

### How to Check the Affidavit Status

To find out which of your enrolled students do not have a valid Parent Affidavit on file or a Parent Mismatch:

1. Click on the **“McKay Student List”** link when logged in to our website and look at the “Affidavit Status” column.
2. If the column is blank, then our office has not yet received a Parent Affidavit for the student and one will be required to receive future payments.
3. If the column has a “Denied” status, then the parent name on the affidavit does not match the parent name associated with the student in our records.
4. Please compare the parent name in our system with the name on the affidavit you submitted for the student. **If the parent name in the system is incorrect, then submit a [Guardian Issue Form](#) and supporting documents to our office along with a new [Parent Affidavit Form](#) signed by the correct parent.**

### Please be sure that every parent affidavit includes the following:

- a. County in which the school is located
- b. Printed name and signature of parent on file
- c. Students full name
- d. Notary signature and stamp

If the affidavit does not include all of the above, our office will not accept it. This may delay McKay payments.

**PLEASE DO NOT SEND A COPY OF PARENT DRIVER’S LICENSE – this item is not required.**

***Note: Only if a scanner is not available for you, please fax or mail the parent affidavit.***



### **McKay Student List and Withdrawal Procedures**

Now that a new school year is well under way, please take a moment to ensure your Student List is accurate. If a McKay student is no longer enrolled or attending your school, the student should be immediately **withdrawn** from your 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. In the case of a student who enrolled but never attended class, the first date of attendance should be recorded 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 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 school may not refuse to withdraw the student for these unresolved obligations.**

Any payments you received for students not in attendance at your school should be returned to our office at the address below. If you have questions, please contact your Regional Manager.

Florida Department of Education  
Office of Independent Education & Parental Choice  
325 W. Gaines Street, Suite 1044  
Tallahassee, FL 32399



## Attendance Verification

Please note, students attending a private school must satisfy the compulsory school attendance requirement of maintaining regular attendance during the school term of **either** 180 actual school days **or** a minimum of 170 actual school days and the hourly equivalent of 180 actual school days, as stated in [Rule](#)

- Kindergarten, this requires 540 net instructional hours;
- Grades 1 - 3, 720 net instructional hours;
- Grades 4 – 12, 900 net instructional hours.

## Norm-Referenced Testing

Private schools participating in the Florida Tax Credit (FTC) Scholarship, Family Empowerment Scholarship (FES), or Hope Scholarship Program must make provisions for students in grades 3-10 to take one of the nationally norm-referenced tests identified by the Department of Education. FES-UA students for whom the tests are appropriate are also included in this requirement. Approved assessments and specific instructions are available [on our website](#).

## 2021-22 Scholarship Upcoming Deadlines

### October 1

Deadline for all new participating private schools to submit a signed and notarized Scholarship Compliance Form to participate in K-12 Scholarship Programs for the current school year.

### October 2

Enrollment deadline for the November 1 McKay payment.

### October 4 - 11

McKay Attendance Verification window for the 2nd payment period.

### December 3

Date by which a new McKay student intent must be filed in order to be eligible for the February 1 payment.

### January 2

Date by which a new McKay student intent must be enrolled in the online portal in order to be eligible for the February 1 payment.





### Additional Information:

- [McKay Deadlines](#)
- [Regional Managers](#)
- [McKay Parent Affidavit](#)
- [McKay Student Technical Assistance](#)
- [Application & Renewal Instructions](#)
- [Compliance Resources](#)
- [Update Notification Form](#)

### Other Resources:

#### U.S. Blue Ribbon Schools

U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cadona has officially announced the **2021 National Blue Ribbon Schools**. A total of 23 private schools around the country received this distinguished recognition. The [National Blue Ribbon Schools](#) program recognizes public and private schools each year.

Eligibility [details](#) are located on the National Blue Ribbon Schools webpage.

**The Council for American Private Education (CAPE)** nominates private schools, including parochial and independent schools. CAPE may nominate up to 50 private schools. Current application requirements are available on [CAPE's website](#).



[CPALMS](#) is a free, online toolbox of information, resources, and interactive tools based on Florida's teaching standards.