



## Scholarship Bulletin | March 2021

### 2021 Legislative Session

The 2021 Legislative Session is currently underway. Please stay tuned for future updates on the outcome of the 2021 Legislative Session in future bulletins from our office.

### McKay & Family Empowerment: Attendance Verification & Payments

The final 2020-21 regular payment disbursement for the McKay and FES Scholarship Program is April 1. March 10<sup>th</sup> was the deadline for private schools to submit their online Attendance Verification in order to qualify for the April 1 scholarship payment.

#### *Parent Information*

Remember that each McKay and FES student must have a valid social security number on file for the parent. For McKay ONLY, a [Parent Affidavit Form](#) 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](mailto:parentaffidavit@fldoe.org).

#### *Missing Payments*

To request payments missed for other reasons, please submit a [Scholarship Issue Form](#) along with all documents noted on page 2 of the form. If you are unsure why a student has not received a payment, please contact your [Regional Manager](#) first. Private schools should make an effort to resolve any outstanding payment issues for the 2020-21 school year by June 1.

### Scholarship Students and Virtual Schools

Only **McKay, Florida Tax Credit or Hope Scholarship** students 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. Parents should contact their scholarship funding organization for more information.

### 2021 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, 2021**, in order to remain eligible to participate in the state scholarship programs for the 2021-2022 school year. Schools having unresolved issues after that date may not be able to participate in 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 is 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 will be retained by FDLE in the Applicant Fingerprint Retention and Notification Program. The retained fingerprints will be 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 will be invoiced by FDLE for the annual fee of \$6 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.

## Requirements for Owners/Operators:

Section 1002.421(p), Florida Statutes (F.S.), requires private schools that intend to participate in state scholarship programs have **each owner/chief administrator, operator, officer, and board member** reported to the Division of Corporations ([www.sunbiz.org](http://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 found [here](#).

## Agreed-Upon 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), F.S. 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.



### **Agreed Upon Procedures - 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, 2021**.

### **Norm-Reference Testing**

Private schools participating in scholarship Programs are statutorily required to administer, or make provisions for students in grades 3-10 to take one of the nationally norm-referenced tests identified by the Department of Education. Participating private schools must arrange to administer one of the approved tests during the 2020-21 school year, unless the private school has requested and received approval to use an alternate assessment or has been approved to participate in Statewide Standardized Assessments. The approved assessments and specific instructions are available on the [School Choice website](https://fldoe.org/school-choice).

In preparation for testing students on campus, private schools should consider ways to administer assessments by providing flexibility for students and alternative methods to implement a safe testing environment. For example, consider administering in smaller groups, different time slots, or in different rooms of your school's facility. At this time, we advise reaching out to the testing company of your chosen assessment to learn more about their COVID-19 testing practices.

### **Reporting Assessment Results**

Participating private schools must report a student's scores to the parent and must submit FTC students' scores to the independent research organization selected by the Department of Education by August 15 of each year. Please send copies of score sheets with name, testing date, and national percentile ranking to:

**Melissa Dyehouse**

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

**Participating private schools must report a FES, Hope, and Gardiner student scores to the parent.**



## 2020-21 Scholarship Upcoming Deadlines

### **March 3 - 10**

McKay and FES Attendance Verification week for the final **2020-21** payment period.

### **April 1**

Fourth quarter McKay and FES Scholarship payments are disbursed for **2020-21**.

### **May 1**

Date by which all **2021** Compliance Renewal issues must be resolved.

### **June 1**

Date by which requests for **2021-22** missing payments must be submitted.

### **July 3**

McKay **2021-22** Intent filing deadline for the September 1 payment.

### **August 2**

McKay and FES **2021-22** Enrollment deadline for the September 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



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](https://fcsua.org).