



Private School Scholarship Newsletter | Fall 2022

Private School Updates, Post-Hurricane Ian

Our thoughts are with those schools in central and south Florida areas that were affected and now recovering from Hurricane Ian. The Department is asking that schools directly impacted to please email schoolchoice@fldoe.org or a [regional manager](#) directly with the status of your school's operation as it relates to both closures and needs in general. Also, if you have any questions about students participating in state scholarship programs, please share those with us as well. Thank you to all the schools that have provided feedback thus far.

Purple Star Schools

Florida is committed to being the most military-friendly state in the nation. The Florida Purple Star School of Distinction program recognizes schools that have made a significant commitment to supporting the unique needs of military families and students of servicemen and women. District, charter and participating private schools are all eligible for the designation if they meet the following criteria. Schools can review the [Purple Star Distinction Application](#) or email PurpleStarSchools@fldoe.org to learn more about becoming a Purple Star School in the future.

Norm-Reference 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](#).

Scholarship Compliance Technical Assistance

The **2023 Compliance season begins early November!** Private schools that participate in state scholarship programs are responsible for complying with the laws and rules related to the programs every year. The Department will be emailing an instruction letter and checklist guide to all currently participating private schools selected for **full renewal**, which is required every three years, or for **standard renewal** required annually, so that you can immediately prepare the required documentation for submission.

Compliance – Is your school ready?

As you prepare for your school's compliance renewal, we want to also remind you of the additional expectations for private schools that participate in any of Florida's K-12 Scholarship Programs:

- **Posting of School Administration and Programs** - ALL participating private schools must publish on their school's website, or provide in written format, information for parents regarding the school, including but not limited to, programs, services, and the qualifications of classroom teachers.
- **Quarterly Progress Reports** - Each participating private school must provide parents a written explanation of a student's progress on a quarterly basis (e.g., report cards).
- **Notice of Change in Ownership** - Schools must notify parents, within 30 days, of any ownership change. Schools that have been deemed ineligible to participate in a scholarship program may not transfer ownership or management authority of the school to relatives.
- **Fingerprint Requirements for Owners/Operators/Board** - School owners, operators, and board members must also undergo level 2 background screening **regardless of direct contact with students**. A copy of the results must be given to the DOE. Every five years, the owner or operator shall request the Florida Department of Law Enforcement to forward the fingerprints to the FBI for the level 2 screening.

Take a few minutes to review the Private School Compliance Checklist below.

A "No" to any of these questions means your school may need to take steps now to correct the issue in order to be ready for compliance. Contact your Regional Manager if you have any questions.

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Has your school submitted an original 2022 Annual Private School Survey to the Department of Education?
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Do you have current VECHS Live Scan fingerprint results on file for ALL officers reported on Sunbiz, employees and contracted personnel?
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	3. Does your school employ and/or contract more than 3 employees, instructional and non-instructional? If so does the school have a Worker's Compensation policy reported to the Divisions of Worker's Compensation ?
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	4. Do the children attending your school maintain regular attendance for a minimum of 170 actual school days with the required instructional hours as determined by grade level?
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	5. Does your school require students to present certification of a school entry health examination ?
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	6. Does your school require students to present certification of immunization and scoliosis testing as appropriate?
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	7. Does your school possess a current semi-annual Public/Private School Health Inspection Report (DH 4160) ?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	8. Does your school possess a current and acceptable Mandatory Measurements Nonresidential Radon Measurement Report if applicable (DH 1777 and lab results)?
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	9. Does your school facility possess a current, violation free or satisfactory fire code inspection ?
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	10. Does your school adopt policies establishing standards of ethical conduct for instructional personnel, educational support employees, and school administrator ?

Additional Compliance Notes:

Employee Screening

Before employing instructional personnel, educational support employees, 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.

Useful Links:

[Regional Managers](#)

[Application & Renewal Instructions](#)

[Compliance Resources](#)

[Update Notification Form](#)

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