



Private School Scholarship Newsletter | April 2023

2023-24 K-12 Scholarship Program Updates – House Bill 1

Governor Ron DeSantis signed House Bill (HB) 1, which expands available school choice options for all students in Florida by eliminating financial eligibility restrictions and the current enrollment cap. While our office is eager to begin providing families with guidance in regard to the extended school choice options within HB1, the Department is currently in the implementation stages for the upcoming 2023-24 school year. As implementation is determined, further guidance will be provided through the School Choice [website](#).

Compliance Renewal Issues

Renewing private schools that met the Scholarship Compliance Form submission deadline of March 1 must address any outstanding compliance issues by **May 1, 2023**.

Please contact an assigned [Regional Manager](#) promptly if you have any questions concerning the review process. Please be mindful that due to the increasing volume of correspondence received, there may be a delay in response time. Regional managers will contact your school directly with a status update.

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.

- a. Check to see that the inspector completed the forms with your **school's correct name and complete address**.
- b. Fire and health inspections should be appropriate for a K-12 private school (**not for a daycare or business**)
- c. Inspections 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 Marshal** also requires your **local fire department** to enter your school's inspection information into a statewide database called the [Online Reporting System](#) in order to grant the Department of Education access to private school fire inspection reports electronically.

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 student 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 a letter from the diocese, court filing, etc. Additionally, any person signing the Annual Survey should be listed as an officer/director on the Sunbiz. If your name is not listed when the Regional Manager reviews the Sunbiz report, 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.

Agreed-Upon Procedures Guidelines

If your school collectively receives more than \$250,000 from the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship, Family Empowerment Scholarship Education Option, Family Empowerment Scholarship Unique Abilities, and Hope 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.

Norm-Referenced Testing

Private schools participating in the Florida Tax Credit (FTC) Scholarship, Family Empowerment Scholarship (Education Option), 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. Students awarded the Family Empowerment Scholarship (Unique Abilities) option for whom the tests are appropriate are also included in this requirement. **A list of approved assessments, specific instructions, and deadlines are available on the [School Choice website](#)**

Reporting Assessment Results

Participating private schools must report student's scores to the parent and must submit scholarship student's 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

2023 Scholarship Compliance Upcoming Deadlines

May 1

Date by which all Compliance Renewal issues must be resolved.

August 15

Date by which standardized testing results must be submitted.

September 15

Date by which Agreed Upon Procedure reports must be submitted.

Useful Links:

[Regional Managers](#)

[Application & Renewal Instructions](#)

[Compliance Resources](#)

[Update Notification Form](#)

Other Resources



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.

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