



Scholarship Newsletter | Winter 2023

2024 Scholarship Compliance Renewal

The 2024 compliance season is now underway! Your school's Scholarship Compliance Form must be submitted online, printed, signed, notarized, and a **hard copy mailed, postmarked by February 1, 2024**, if your school plans to renew participation in K-12 Scholarship programs for the **2024-2025 school year**.

Scholarship Compliance Technical Assistance

*The **2024 Compliance season began 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 also to 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 with 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.

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 onto 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.

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](#).

Useful Links:

[Regional Managers](#)

[Application & Renewal Instructions](#)

[Compliance Resources](#)

[Update Notification Form](#)