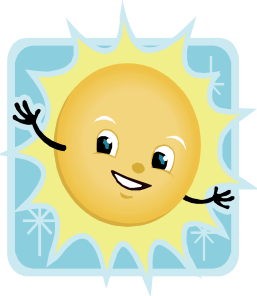




# McKay Scholarship News

Newsletter for Families of John M. McKay Scholarship Students



## Letter from the Editor

**D**ear McKay Parents,

Here it is, the fourth quarter of the school year! Did it seem like summer would never come? This month, we address a number of issues parents encounter at this time of year as you look forward to next school year and the sunny months ahead with your children at home.

As always, we welcome your thoughts and encourage you to get in touch with questions or suggestions. Enjoy your summer!

**Julia Somers-Arthur**  
 Customer Service Supervisor



## Spotlight on Success! A McKay parent shares her story

I have a daughter who is in 6th grade; my story is probably not much different than many other parents that have a child with an IEP. My daughter has been so afraid of going to school since she was in Kindergarten. I thought she'd grow out of it, and even home schooled her for a year . . . but nothing helped.

This year I heard about a special school that was "geared" for kids like her. We went to the open house; she was so afraid, but I will tell you that by the time we left, the teachers and supervisors made her feel so special and important she was ready to give this school a try.

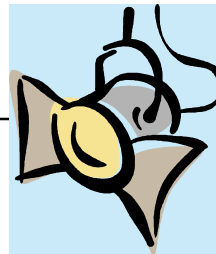
The first day of school came. I was very worried when I went to pick her up, dreading the outcome of the day. She came out of school **FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER WITH A HUGE SMILE ON HER FACE.** It made me cry. She asked me if I could come a little later the

next day because she had friends she wanted to hang out with. We have had a positive report every day since then.

**THANK YOU,** you have no idea. By giving us a McKay Scholarship, our daughter believes she can succeed here and that she is smart, and that kids like her, and that her teachers like her. . . she belongs. (We always knew she was bright, but she just couldn't believe it.)

Sadly, without the Scholarship we would not have been able to afford this... thank you so much; you've made a difference in our lives and I'm sure countless others. You were an answer to many years of prayer.

**M.P.**



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# Thinking of a Change?

## What are your transfer options?



**If** you have concerns regarding your child's experience in his or her current school, you have a number of options. You may want to begin by talking with your child's school. Explain your concerns to the teacher or administrator and discuss ways you and the school can work together towards solving the problem. Better communication may be all that is needed to improve your child's learning experience.

If you feel that a move is needed, you have the option of transferring your child to another participating private school.\* It is simplest to do this at the end of the school year, but you may also transfer at any time during the school year.



### Don't...

- Don't enroll in public school, register for home school or Virtual School, or enter a non-participating private school during the time your child is transferring. Any of these activities will result in your child losing eligibility for the McKay program.
- Don't withdraw your child and keep him or her out of school for any length of time. The law requires continuous attendance to maintain eligibility in the McKay Program. If your child is withdrawn from one participating school and is not registered and enrolled in another within a reasonable time, eligibility may be lost.

### Do...

- Do make sure any balance is paid before you leave. The school cannot refuse to withdraw your child, but they may refuse to release records if money is owed.
- Do discuss payment issues with both schools involved before making a decision. The first school that has your child enrolled for 10 days during the payment period will receive the quarterly scholarship payment. If a transfer is made after 10 days, it is up to the schools to come to an equitable arrangement regarding the funds. If that is not possible, you as the parent may be responsible for any amount owed.

Most important of all, **DO** prepare your child for the changes that will take place. Change can be difficult for everyone, so you may want to help your child become comfortable by visiting the new school ahead of time. Meet the teachers, tour the rooms, and show him or her where the lunch, playtime, and restroom areas are. Make that first day in the new school something to look forward to. With a little planning ahead, change can be a positive thing.



**\* Note:** You also have the option of transferring your child back to public school at any time, either as a public school McKay Scholarship student or as a regular student. However, doing so will forfeit the private school scholarship. If you wish your child to return to private school at a later time, a new Intent to Participate must be filed, and the student will need to meet all eligibility criteria, including prior year public school attendance, as well as having an active IEP and being enrolled in public school at the time of filing.

# Your Questions Answered: Summer Programs and McKay



**W**ith the last day of school fast approaching, our School Choice Office has received many calls from parents planning summer activities for their children. Here are some frequently asked questions.

**Q. *There is still some money left from my child's scholarship amount for this year. Can it be used towards a summer program for my child?***

- A.** Yes, the remaining amount can be used towards a summer program – **IF** . . .
- The program is provided by a private school that participates in the McKay Program, and
  - The activity is on the school's General Fee Schedule and available to all the school's students.

**Q. *I am concerned that during the summer, my daughter could lose a lot of the progress we've made this year. Can I enter her in summer school provided by the local public school district so she can keep up her skills?***

- A.** No. Enrollment in an academic public school summer class is regarded as a return to public school and would make your child ineligible for the McKay Scholarship.

**Q. *My child is ready to take driving lessons. They are offered at the local high school over the summer. There is a fee, but we could pay it ourselves. Can we do that?***

- A.** We recommend parents interested in a non-academic summer program conducted at the public school ensure that the program is not funded through the Florida Educational Finance Program (FEFP) and the student

will not be entered by the school district as returning to public school. It is even wise to verify this in writing with the district as a protection for the parent and student.

**Q. *My son failed Algebra One this year. Can he take the course online over the summer?***

- A.** Yes. As long as a child takes no more than two virtual school classes per year, it will not affect his scholarship status.

**Q. *My son is currently in a McKay private school. Will I need to file another Intent to keep him in the program for next year?***

- A.** No, there is no need to file a new Intent to Participate each year. Once your child is a McKay student, his scholarship status will continue as long as he remains enrolled in a participating school and either graduates with a Standard Diploma, or turns 22 years old, whichever comes first. At the end of each school year, you just need to be sure he is re-enrolled in his current school or, if you wish, you can transfer and enroll him in another participating McKay school. 🖐️





## Contact us at *McKay Scholarship News*

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*(Please put "Scholarship News" in the subject line.)*

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For general information about the McKay Scholarship Program, call our **School Choice Information Hotline** at 1-800-447-1636, or visit us online at [www.floridaschoolchoice.org](http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org).

## Scholarship Program Deadlines

**D**eadlines are a necessary part of the McKay Program. Be aware that your child must be enrolled or re-enrolled in your chosen private school by **August 2, 2008**, in order to receive the first Scholarship payment of the 2008-2009 school year, scheduled for September 1.

If you know a family who is thinking of entering their child in the McKay Scholarship Program for the first time, you may want to remind them that their Intent must be filed by July 3, 2008, to receive their first scholarship payment on September 1.



**For the 2008-09 school year . . .**

<b>The deadlines for intent filing, private school enrollment, and quarterly payments are set by Florida Statute.</b>				
<b>If you filed intent by:</b>	July 3	Sept. 2	Dec. 3	Jan. 31
<b>Your child must be enrolled by:</b>	Aug. 2	Oct. 2	Jan. 2	Mar. 2
<b>For the school to receive payment on:</b>	Sept. 1	Nov. 1	Feb. 1	April 1
<b>Maximum scholarship amount for the rest of the school year:</b>	100%	75%	50%	25%
<b>Payment Period:</b>	July 1 – Sept 30	Oct 1 – Dec 31	Jan 1 – Feb 28	March 1 – June 30

*The scholarship amount is the state maximum amount or the private school tuition and fees, whichever is less. The scholarship amount is divided into four quarterly payments for the school year. If intent is filed or the student is enrolled after a deadline, the student will not be eligible to receive that quarter's scholarship payment, but the student will have met the deadline to receive payment for the next quarter.*