



McKay Scholarship News

Newsletter for Families of John M. McKay Scholarship Students

Letter from the Editor

Dear McKay Parents,

Welcome to a new school year and the first issue of **McKay Scholarship News**, the newsletter just for parents and guardians of students in Florida's John M. McKay Scholarship Program.

With the launch of this publication, we hope to offer a new forum for communication between our office and the children and parents we serve. We will try to answer your most pressing questions, and we hope that we will hear from you about your concerns and interests.

In upcoming issues, we would love to include your ideas and questions, as well as your stories of your children's successes. Get in touch!

Julia Somers-Arthur
Customer Service Supervisor

Has McKay Helped Your Family?

If you are reading this, you probably have one or more children in the McKay Scholarship Program. We hope that it has been a positive experience for you and your family, and we would like to hear about it.

Has the McKay Scholarship helped your child? Have you seen your child grow and learn? What hurdles have been overcome? What successes have been achieved along the way?

In **Scholarship News**, we want to share the successes of our McKay families as an inspiration to others facing similar challenges. If you would like us to consider your story for publication, please send it to SchoolChoice@fldoe.org with "**Scholarship News**" in the subject line. We look forward to hearing from you!



Office of Independent
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Inside this issue:

Your Questions Answered	2
Parent Login	3
Off to a Good Start	3
Contact Information	4
Scholarship Deadlines	4

Your Questions Answered:

Signing your Scholarship Checks



The first of September is here, and along with it, the arrival of the first of four quarterly scholarship payments Florida sends to the parents of McKay students. The others will arrive on November 1, February 1 and April 1. Many rules guide the issuing and handling of the checks. Below are some frequently asked questions.

Q. How do you figure the amount my child will receive?

A. The scholarship amount on your child's check is one fourth of the total scholarship amount for the year OR one fourth of the annual tuition and fees indicated on his or her Individual Fee Schedule – whichever is less. You may view your child's fee schedule by visiting the McKay Scholarships page of our website, www.floridaschoolchoice.org, and logging in, or you may request a copy from your school.

Q. Who may sign the check?

A. When you receive the check, you should see on the back, "For Deposit Only," along with the name of the school's bank and account number. Only the parent or guardian whose name is on the front of the check may sign it. That person must come to the school to sign it, since the checks should not leave the school premises.

Q. What if the person named on the check is unable to come to the school to sign it?

A. If a change in the household requires a different person to sign the check, you should request the school to submit a **McKay Guardian Change Form** so that the check may be issued in the appropriate name. Under no circumstances may a student sign the check for his or her scholarship payment. Also under no circumstances may a power of attorney be issued to anyone associated with the school to sign the check.

Q. What if there are reasons why I don't want to sign the check?

A. While there may be issues which need to be resolved with the school, failure of the designated parent to sign may cause the child to lose his or her scholarship eligibility.

Q. How does receiving the scholarship affect my income reporting?

A. Funds for the McKay Scholarship should not be reported by the parent as income. These are monies that would normally go the school district for your child's education. Instead, they are going to a private school for the same purpose, and are not regarded as parental income. The school will keep the stub that arrives with the check for their records, but you may request a copy or a receipt if you wish.

Q. What happens to future payments if I want to transfer my child to another McKay participating school during the year?

A. You may transfer your child to another McKay school at any time during the school year. However, whichever school first reports your child as attending for 10 school days during a payment period will receive the check for that period. It is then up to the two schools to come to an equitable arrangement regarding the distribution of the funds. Please see the chart on page 4 for enrollment deadlines.

Remember...

Your child must meet regular attendance requirements each quarter in order to remain eligible to receive the scholarship payments.

School Choice Website

Parent Login Feature



A new parent login feature has recently been added to the School Choice website. The feature allows parents of scholarship students to log in and view information about their student's scholarship such as the student's fee schedule and scholarship amount. Parents will also be able to view a payment checklist and update contact information.

When a child is enrolled, an email notification with a case-sensitive password and login instructions is sent to the email address on record. The parent Social Security Number will also be required for login.

We recommend you check with your student's private school to ensure the correct parent Social Security Number and email address are in your student's record.

Get off to a good start - Be an involved parent!

A new school year is up and running. Pencils are sharpened, and lunch bags are packed. Teachers, parents - and even students - are looking forward to the next nine months of learning with a mixture of excitement and hope.

How can you keep that positive energy flowing throughout the year? The key lies in a strong parent-school partnership. As an involved McKay parent, what are some ways that you can help make your child's school year a successful one?

- At the beginning of the year, meet with your child's teachers to discuss your child's learning and social needs. Work together to develop a plan. While private schools are not required to follow the IEP (Individual Education Plan) developed by your school district, it may be a useful starting point for discussing the kinds of teaching and support your child could benefit from.
- Get to know your child's teachers, and stay in touch with them throughout the year through notes or scheduled meetings to resolve problems and follow your child's progress.
- Talk with the other parents in your child's class and get to know the children. You and the other parents may be able to work together to support the teaching and learning that takes place.

- Listen to your child and observe how he or she feels about school. Join in his or her enthusiasms, and be alert for signs of frustration or problems.
- Show your child that you are interested in their school by becoming involved in school activities, attending parent meetings and providing supplies as your resources permit.
- At home, designate a time and a place for school work to be done daily. This "homework center" should be located away from distractions, and supplied with items such as paper, pencils, crayons, a dictionary and a ruler.
- Make sure your child is prepared for school each day. Children get their best start to the day if they are well rested, they've had breakfast, and arrive on time with homework completed.

The start of a new school year is a time full of promise. By becoming an involved parent, you and your school can help your child achieve a year full of success.





Contact us at *Scholarship News*

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Email: SchoolChoice@fldoe.org

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

Write to us at:

Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice

*Florida Department of Education
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 Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400*

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.

Scholarship Program Deadlines

Deadlines are sometimes difficult to meet, but they are a necessary part of the McKay Program. Be aware that your child must have been enrolled or re-enrolled in your chosen private school by August 2, 2007, in order to receive the first Scholarship payment of the 2007-2008 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 September 2, and the child must be enrolled by October 2, to receive the next scholarship payment on November 1.

The deadlines for intent filing, private school enrollment, and quarterly payments are set by Florida Statute.

For the 2007-08 school year....

If you filed Intent by:	July 3	Sept. 2	Dec. 3	Feb. 1
Your child must be enrolled by:	Aug. 2	Oct. 2	Jan. 2	March 2
For the school to receive payment on:	Sept. 1	Nov. 1	Feb. 1	April 1