



Scholarship Compliance Renewal

Special Points of Interest:

- Attendance Verification for the April 2008 Scholarship Payments is available from **March 3-14, 2008**.
- Renewing private schools must resolve any outstanding compliance issues by **May 1, 2008**, in order to be eligible to participate for the 2008-09 school year.
- McKay Scholarship Payment discrepancies from the 2007-08 school year must be submitted by **April 14, 2008**.

We are pleased to announce that 97% of renewing schools submitted a signed and notarized Scholarship Compliance Form by the March 1st deadline!

Although this is great news, there is still work to be done for many participating private schools. Following the timely submission of the Scholarship Compliance Form, **renewing schools must resolve any outstanding compliance issues**, including the submission of inspection reports and fiscal soundness documentation (if applicable), **prior to May 1, 2008**.

Upon demonstration of compliance for the 2008-09 school year, the Department will send the private school a letter

confirming compliance along with a McKay Scholarship Program deadline chart for the upcoming school year.

The deadline chart for the 2008-09 school year is also on the back of this newsletter. As you may notice, **the intent and enrollment deadline dates do not change** from year to year (with the exception of the fourth quarter intent deadline due to the leap year). These deadlines are established in law and cannot be changed, extended, or waived by the Department of Education.

If you have any questions related to your school's compliance status, please contact your Regional Manager.

Private School Employee Fingerprinting



As private schools continue to resolve compliance related issues, it is important for both renewing schools and new participants to know and understand the employee fingerprinting requirements. **Every employee or contracted personnel with direct student contact must electronically submit a set of fingerprints** through the Florida Department of Law Enforcement for a state and national background screening. The screening results must be securely stored at the school's

location and be available for inspection by the Department of Education should your school be randomly selected for a site visit.

Please note that Department of Children and Families (DCF) background checks **do not** meet the statutory screening requirements for participation in the state scholarship programs because DCF does not provide the results to the private school for screening against [s. 435.04, F.S.](#). Only teachers with a valid Florida teaching certificate are exempt from this requirement according to [s. 1002.421\(2\)\(i\), F.S.](#)

If you have any questions about this requirement, please review the related [Technical Assistance Paper](#) available on the School Choice website.

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Website Password Requirements

There are several types of users that have login access to the School Choice website including private school administrators, department staff, school district personnel, and parents. All of these logins provide access to sensitive student information and it is important to ensure the information is protected. Therefore, the department will be instituting new password requirements for all users beginning in March.

Once the changes are in place, all users (including private schools) will be prompted to update their password when logging into the School Choice website.

The new password **must be alpha-numeric and at least eight characters in length.**



Once the password is changed, users will be prompted to **update the password once every six months.**

If you forget your password, you may request it via the “Forgot Password?” link on the Private School Login page. By clicking this link and entering your school’s four digit code, the password will be emailed to the director’s email address on record. Please note that

after **three** failed attempts to login, the system will lock the user’s account for ten minutes.

If you have any questions about the new password requirements, please contact your Regional Manager. We greatly appreciate your assistance in ensuring the security of our student data.

McKay Scholarship Payment Discrepancies

The fourth quarter McKay Scholarship payments for the 2007-08 school year will soon be distributed. It is very important for participating private schools to review these payments immediately, as well as other payment records from throughout the school year. Any discrepancies must be submitted to the Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice by **April 24, 2008**, for corrections to be reflected in the final payment of the school year that is scheduled for May.

A green sheet with additional instructions will be included in the April payment packet. If you have any questions, please contact our Payment Specialist, Sam Chaaban at sam.chaaban@fldoe.org.

Attendance Verification must be completed by **March 14, 2008**, to receive scholarship payments on April 1st.

CTC Norm-Referenced Testing

We would like to remind private schools participating in the Corporate Tax Credit (CTC) Scholarship Program that s. 220.187(8)(c)2., F.S. requires you to annually administer or make provisions for CTC students to take one of the nationally norm-referenced tests identified by the Department of Education.

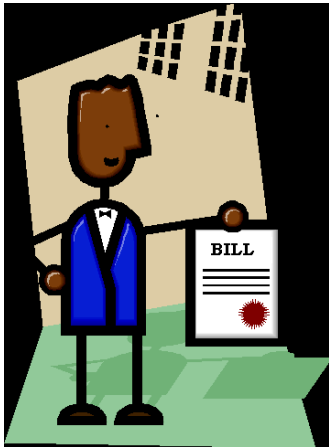
The statute also requires that a copy of the test scores be provided to the parent and a second copy must be provided to Professor David Figlio of the

University of Florida (the independent research organization selected by the Department).

Failure to comply with this requirement or administer an approved test may jeopardize your school’s eligibility to continue participating in the CTC Scholarship Program.

For a complete list of approved norm-referenced assessments, please review the detailed [Norm-Referenced Testing Technical Assistance Paper](#) on the School Choice website.

2008 Legislative Session



The 2008 Florida Legislature is in session from March 4—May 2, 2008. There are many bills proposed in both the House and the Senate that, if passed by both chambers and approved by the Governor, could affect Florida private schools in general and also those participating in the state scholarship programs.

We have prepared an extensive bill summary that includes proposed bills related to private schools generally and the state scholarship programs. The summary includes each bill number, sponsor, title, and a brief description. This summary is available on the School Choice website at:

www.floridaschoolchoice.org/PDF/Scholarship_Private_School_Bill_Summary.pdf

For those interested in monitoring the status of these bills, you can view the progress through the state legislature websites. On the left hand side of both the Senate website (<http://www.flsenate.gov/>) and the House of Representatives website (<http://www.myfloridahouse.gov/>) there are search functions. By entering either a number or related text into the search function, you will find a link to the text of the bill, staff analysis, and information relating to the bill history. You can also click on the bill number for a direct link to the bill's detail page.

For more information about the legislative session or to contact your legislators, please visit Online Sunshine, the official site of the Florida Legislature, at <http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Welcome/index.cfm>.

McKay Attendance Verification

All private schools participating in the McKay Scholarship Program **must complete attendance verification for each scholarship student by March 14, 2008**, in order to receive a fourth quarter scholarship payment. Failure to complete the attendance verification requirement will result in the postponement of scholarship payments.

If you have not done so already, please log in as a private school administrator with your school code and password and scroll down the main page to the attendance verification section. If you need assistance or are experiencing technical difficulties, please contact our Information Hotline at (800) 447-1636.

Employee Spotlight—Lakeysha Footman

This month's employee spotlight is on our Scholarship Programs Staff Assistant, Lakeysha Footman. Lakeysha previously worked in the Office of Admissions at the Florida State University and joined the Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice in June 2007. She is currently studying Business Administration.

Lakeysha plays a key role in supporting scholarship program operations by coordinating mailings and tracking notifications sent to participating private schools. She also assists in the preparation and distribution of the Scholarship Program Renewal Packets. Lakeysha also makes courtesy calls to remind participating private schools of upcoming program deadlines, so you may be hearing from her during the compliance renewal process.



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ON THE WEB AT:

WWW.FLORIDASCHOOLCHOICE.ORG

Current and previous newsletters are available in PDF format on the School Choice website when logged in as a private school administrator. Click on the "Newsletters" link on the Quick Navigation bar on the left hand side of the screen.

MCKAY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM IMPORTANT DEADLINES*

2008-2009 Payment Period	Payment Date	Parental Intent Deadline	Private School Enrollment Deadline	Attendance Verification Available Online	Attendance Verification Deadline
July 1 – Sept 30	September 1	July 3	August 2	N/A	N/A
Oct 1 – Dec 31	November 1	September 2	October 2	October 6	October 10
Jan 1 – Feb 28	February 1	December 3	January 2	January 5	January 9
Mar 1 – June 30	April 1	January 31	March 2	March 2	March 13

*Private schools participating in the Corporate Tax Credit Scholarship Program must meet the deadlines set by the Scholarship Funding Organizations to receive payment.

Please note that the deadlines for filing a parental intent and private school enrollment are statutory deadlines; therefore, the department cannot make exceptions if these deadlines are missed.

Failure to complete attendance verification will result in a postponement of scholarship payments until the next scheduled payment period.