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Florida Department of Education

Florida Scholarship Programs District Newsletter

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Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice

Scholarship Programs—Year in Review

It is hard to believe another school year has come to an end and the 2008-09 school year will soon begin. We would like to take this opportunity to summarize our activities and reflect on the changes and improvements to the scholarship programs during the 2007-08 school year.

★ Parent Information

In continuing our efforts to keep parents informed about the McKay Scholarship Program, we have improved the intent confirmation letter that is mailed to parents after they file intent by including a brochure that details the parent's next steps in obtaining a McKay Scholarship. The brochure is also accessible on the website at: www.floridaschoolchoice.org/information/mckay/files/intent_now_what.pdf.

In addition, parents that provide an e-mail address when filing intent are sent an automated e-mail with their intent confirmation number. Another automated e-mail is then sent when the school district enters a matrix code for the student.

★ District Technical Assistance

In the area of technical assistance, the department issued a memorandum outlining a procedure for assigning the appropriate matrix level to prekindergarten students applying for a McKay Scholarship. The memo was developed in response to requests for clarification from several school districts. It is posted in the General Information section of the School Choice website when logged in as a school district.

★ Website Updates

Finally, the department made several updates to the School Choice website that affect school district users. We took additional steps to secure the sensitive student information accessible through the website by updating the website's password requirements in March 2008. User passwords must now be alphanumeric, 8-10 characters in length, and updated once every six months.

The design of the School Choice website has also been modified to match the updated design and layout of the Florida Department of Education's website (www.fldoe.org). A majority of the changes were cosmetic in nature (colors, fonts, icons, etc.); however, a few information items have been moved to accommodate the new design. Specifically, a separate link for the October and February **Student Survey District** has been created on the Student Information page for each student record on the district's McKay Student List.

Special points of interest:

- The first McKay Verification file for the 2008-09 school year will be available on **August 4, 2008**, and must be completed by **August 13, 2008.**

- The deadline for parents to file intent for a private school McKay Scholarship and be eligible to receive 100% scholarship funding is **July 3, 2008**.

District Enrollment Verification File

The first McKay Scholarship District Verification File for the 2008-09 school year will be posted to the Northwest Regional Database Center on **August 4, 2008**. Each district must compare this file to the district's student enrollment and attendance records and indicate whether or not each student is enrolled in a public school in the district by **August 13, 2008**. More information will be distributed before the file is made available via the Department's Paperless Communication system.

A chart of the deadlines for the upcoming school year is posted below:

NOTE: For the August verification process, which concludes before school begins, if a student has not withdrawn from public school or has registered as a new public school student, then the district has every reason to believe the student is enrolled in a public school and should indicate such information on the enrollment verification. However, if a parent has notified the school district that his or her student is not returning to public school, please ensure the student is withdrawn in the public school records.

MCKAY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM
IMPORTANT DEADLINES

2008-2009	District Verification File		District FTE File
Payment Period	Available Date	Submission Deadline	Available Date
September	August 4th	August 13th	September 25th
November	October 3rd	October 15th	November 20th
February	January 5th	January 15th	February 19th
April	March 3rd	March 13th	May 8th

District Verification File: McKay pre-payment file which is exported to districts to verify students are not enrolled in public school system. This file contains all students the DOE *intends* on paying.

District FTE File: McKay post-payment file which identifies the students *who were* paid for the specified payment period and who will need to be reported to generate FTE funding.

Welcome New Scholarship Staff!

It has been busy month for the Office of Independent Education as we welcome the addition of Scott Lingo and Rajani Karri to the scholarship staff.

Scott is our new Payment Specialist and will be processing the McKay Scholarship payments. Scott retired from the United States Navy after 20 years in the submarine service. He worked with the Florida Department of Health prior to joining our team. The payment process is in good hands with Scott's detailed-oriented manner and positive attitude.

Welcome!

Rajani has filled our Web Specialist position. She previously worked with the Department of Children and Families as a Web Specialist and has additional experience as a Programmer. She came to the United States from India in 1997 and has lived in Tallahassee for 11 years. We are looking forward to putting her skills to good use maintaining and improving the functions of the School Choice website.

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"Increasing the Quantity and Improving the Quality of Education Options"

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 district administrator. Click on the "Newsletters" link in the General Information section of the screen.

Below are the McKay Scholarship Program Deadlines for the 2008-09 school year. Please note that these deadlines apply only to students choosing the private school McKay Scholarship option.

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