

Volume 3, Issue 7

March 2009

Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice



## McKay Scholarship Intents

### Special points of interest:

- The McKay Verification File was posted on March 3, 2009. The deadline to submit the file is **March 13, 2009**.
- Please submit the Notification Verification Form by **April 10, 2009**, if you have not already. Submission of the form certifies that your school district has notified parents of students with disabilities about the McKay Scholarship Program.

Almost 25,000 intents have been filed for the 2009-10 school year, and we are happy to report that school districts have been entering matrices just fast as the intents are filed.



As a reminder, s. 1002.39(5)(b)2.b., F.S., requires the school district to complete a matrix of services for every student participating in the McKay Scholarship Program and notify the Department of the student's matrix level within 30 days after receiving notification of a request to participate in the scholarship program.

Please note that when an intent is filed for a student, the Department will verify that the student was reported in the prior year's FEFP surveys before the intent record is sent to the school district.

District staff must then confirm that the student is a public school student and has an Individual Education Plan.

Also as a reminder, the School Choice Web site will validate students not found in

both prior year surveys against the current October 2008 survey. Then we will rely upon the school district to verify the attendance of these students during the February 2009 survey week until this information is made available for upload into the School Choice Web site database (typically in May).

Thank you for your continued assistance in verifying student eligibility for the McKay Scholarship Program. If you have any questions, please contact your Regional Manager.

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## Pre-K Matrix Assignment

As you know, the McKay Scholarship may be awarded to eligible students beginning in their kindergarten year; therefore, a student may file intent and establish eligibility for the program in pre-kindergarten pursuant to section 1002.39(2)(a)3., F.S.

Please remember the following procedure when assigning matrix numbers to students that have established eligibility for the program as a Pre-K student:

*To be consistent with the funding levels currently calculated for the McKay Scholarship, school districts should convene an IEP team to review the prekindergarten child's current evaluations and academic progress and to develop a proposed IEP that identifies the services the student would receive upon transitioning to a public kindergarten program. A matrix of services must then be completed to reflect the services on the proposed IEP. This will be used to determine the student's scholarship amount for the McKay Scholarship.*

## District Notification Requirements

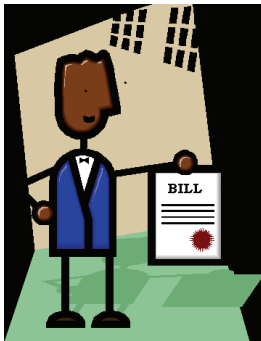
Last month, the Department issued a memorandum related to the requirement for public school districts to notify parents of students with disabilities about McKay Scholarship Program options. Parental notifications must be sent by April 1st of each school year and within 10 days of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) meeting. Providing the information to the parent during the IEP meeting is also acceptable.

Template letters in English, Spanish, and Haitian-Creole were attached to the memo and have also been posted on the School Choice Web site when logged in as a District Administrator.

Also posted on the School Choice Web site (and attached to the memo) is a Notification Verification Form that must be completed to confirm that your school district has complied with the notification requirement. If the form has not yet been submitted for your district, please fax it to our office by **April 10, 2009**, to document the number of notifications sent and methods of distribution.



## 2009 Legislative Session



The 2009 Florida Legislature is in session from March 3—May 1, 2009. 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 those participating in the state scholarship programs.

An extensive bill summary that includes proposed bills related to private schools generally and the state scholarship programs is available on the School Choice Web site at:

[www.floridaschoolchoice.org/PDF/Scholarship\\_Private\\_School\\_Bill\\_Summary.pdf](http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/PDF/Scholarship_Private_School_Bill_Summary.pdf).

The summary includes each bill number, sponsor, title, and a brief description.

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

## Scholarship Program Updates

We would like to notify district McKay contacts of the recent changes that have taken place in the Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice. Tera Teders, the newsletter's editor, has moved to the Charter School area of the office and will no longer be working with the Scholarship Programs.

Julia Somers-Arthur, previously the Customer Service Supervisor, has moved into a position as the School Choice Training Coordinator. Julia will continue to publish the District Newsletter, now on a bimonthly basis. Taking Julia's place as the Customer Service Supervisor is Pam London. Pam will now process Matrix Correction Forms and assist school districts with student issues. If you have any questions, please contact Pam via e-mail at [pamela.london@fldoe.org](mailto:pamela.london@fldoe.org), or via phone at (850) 245-0761.

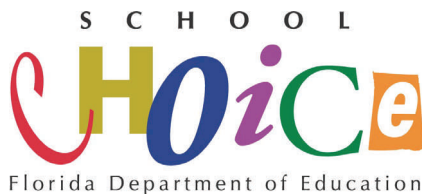
Finally, a new Regional Manager has joined the Scholarship team. Her name is Wendy Sikora and she will be working with the participating private schools in North Florida and the panhandle (Region 1). The Regional Manager map on the back of the newsletter has been updated to reflect Wendy's contact information.

**Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice**

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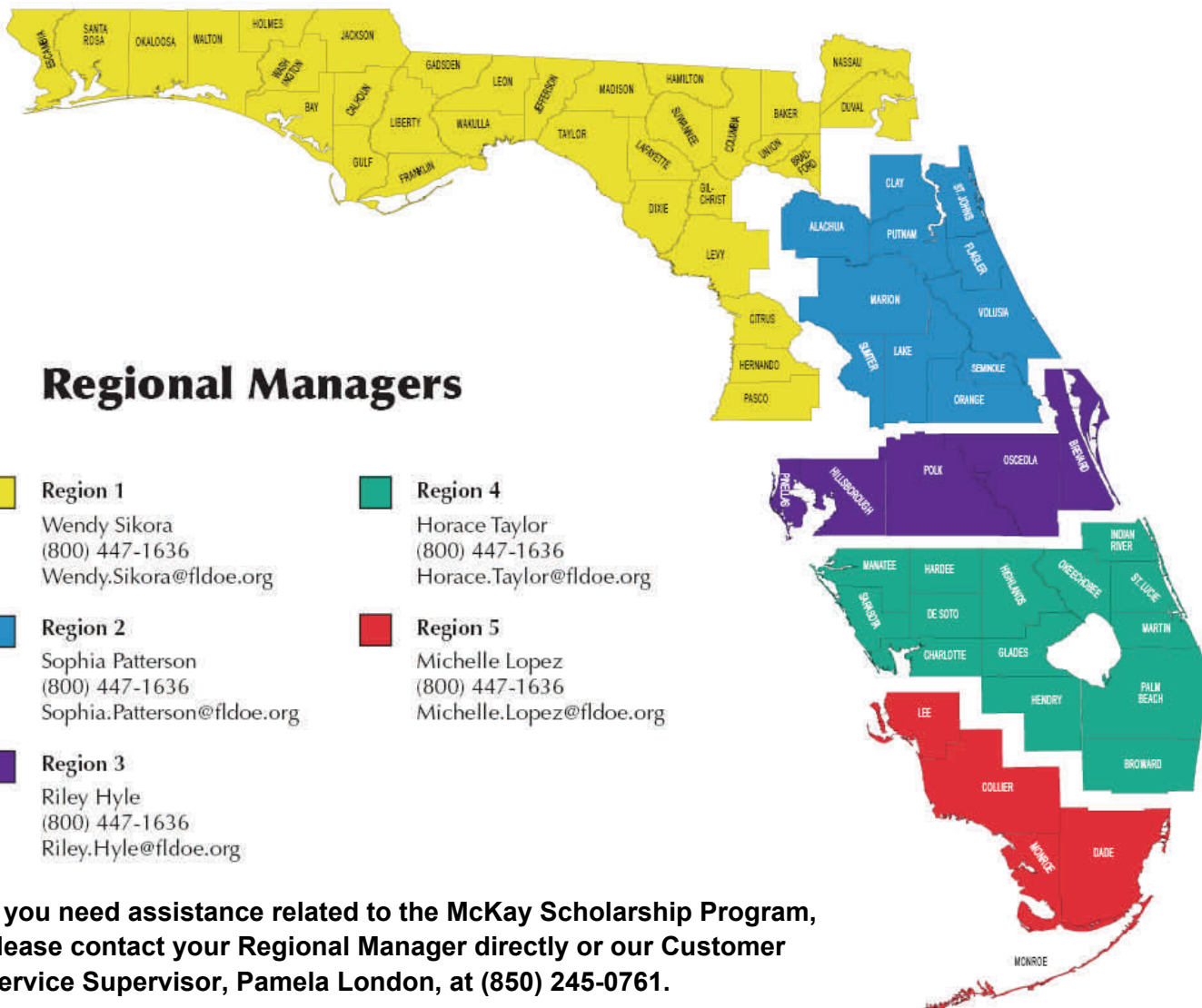
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**"Improving K-12 Educational Choice Options"**

**ON THE WEB AT: WWW.FLORIDASCHOOLCHOICE.ORG**

Current and previous newsletters are available in PDF format on the School Choice Web site when logged in as a district administrator. Click on the "Newsletters" link in the General Information (yellow) section of the screen.



**Regional Managers**

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**If you need assistance related to the McKay Scholarship Program, please contact your Regional Manager directly or our Customer Service Supervisor, Pamela London, at (850) 245-0761.**