

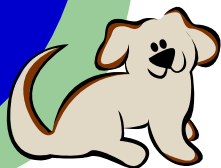


FLORIDA SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice

Volume 6, Issue 3

January-February 2012



Happy
Valentines
Day!

Special points of interest:

- The McKay Verification File will be posted on March 5, 2012. The file must be submitted by March 9, 2012.
- **Reminder:** Intents must be completed with an assigned matrix number, 504 eligibility, or ineligibility code within 30 days of filing.



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McKay Intent Process

For the current school year: 2011-2012

The last day to file intent for the 2011-12 school year is February 1, 2012. Any new scholarship students who file intent by this date must be enrolled in a participating private school by March 2, 2012, to be eligible to receive a fourth quarter scholarship payment on April 30, 2012. Intents for the current school year will not be valid after April 1. If the parent has not utilized the scholarship by this date, a new intent should be filed for the 2012-13 school year.

For the upcoming school year: 2012-13

Intents filed after February 1, 2012 will be for the 2012-13 school year. Although a student is not eligible for payment during the current school year if the intent is filed after February 1, a parent with a valid 2012-13 intent may choose to enroll a student in a participating private school for the remainder of the 2011-12 school year at his/her own expense. Of course, parents also have the option of keeping the student in public school for the rest of the 2011-12 school year.

For intents filed for the 2012-13 school year, we will use the following process to verify a student's prior year in attendance in public school:

1. If the intent is filed prior to the receipt of the February 2012 survey data by the Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice, the system verifies the student's attendance based on the October and February surveys from the **previous school year** (2010-11) per statute.
2. A student that is **not** found in the previous year's October and February FTE data will be verified against the current year's October survey. If the student was reported in October 2011, a red flag by the student's name will prompt the district to verify the student's attendance in public school during the February 2012 survey week.
3. After the receipt of the February 2012 survey data, the system will verify that the student is found in the October 2011 and February 2012 survey data only. If the student is not found in both surveys, the student is ineligible and the intent cannot be completed.

Our records indicate only a small number of intents filed each year require manual verification of attendance as described in step 2. We greatly appreciate your continued assistance in effectively determining student eligibility for the McKay Scholarship.

Parent Notification Requirements

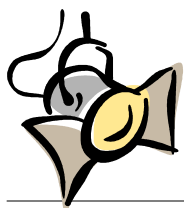


Districts are required by [Section 1002.39\(5\)\(a\)1., Florida Statutes](#), to notify parents of public school students with disabilities of all available school choice options **by April 1 of each year and within 10 days of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Accommodation Plan meeting**. Districts may comply with the IEP meeting or 504 Plan notification requirement by providing the parent with information at the end of an IEP or 504 Plan meeting or by mail after the meeting. The information must include availability of the Department's toll-free information hotline and School Choice Website, and must offer the student's parent an opportunity to enroll the student in another public school within the district.

Please document the method and number of notifications provided for the April 1 distribution. The Department will request verification of compliance through the submission of a District Notification Verification Form, which must be faxed back to the Department by April 9th.

A memorandum including the reporting form and sample notification letters will be distributed to districts via e-mail on February 6, 2012.

MCKAY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM IMPORTANT DEADLINES				
2011-2012	District Verification File			District FTE File
Payment Period	Available Date	Submission Deadline	Final Update	Available Date
September	August 3	August 8	August 10	September 30
November	October 3	October 7	October 11	November 21
February	January 3	January 6	January 10	February 20
April	March 5	March 9	March 12	May 16



In the Spotlight— **Scholarship Programs Manager, Cathy Russell**



Cathy Russell, Scholarship Programs Manager

The School Choice Office asks you to please welcome our new Scholarship Programs Manager, Cathy Russell. Cathy comes to the position with four years in the Choice office, serving in the home education, virtual and charter programs before moving into scholarships as a program analyst three years ago. Prior to coming to the Department of Education, she worked at Tallahassee Community College as Writing Center Coordinator.

Cathy's interest in school choice is of long standing, having home educated her three children for over ten years. Now all grown and in college, Cathy's children represent the value of educational choices. Cathy moved to Tallahassee from northeastern Pennsylvania, where she enjoyed a more rural lifestyle.

With master's degrees in humanities and education, Cathy is ready to take on the challenges of the Scholarship Program.

There is always a lot to learn, but she says, "I appreciate the opportunity to work with IEPC staff and private school administrators to improve school choice options for parents."



Take Note

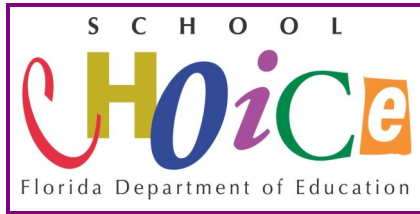
Mismatched StudentID

Prior to each quarterly payment, a McKay Verification File is posted for the districts to verify each student's enroll date (into public school) or withdraw date (from public school). When a McKay intent is filed, the StudentID assigned to the student at that time is the one which will appear in the quarterly Verification File. If the StudentID on the quarterly Verification File does not match the ID the district has on record, the payment can only be processed after considerable delay and unnecessary work on the part of the McKay Office and the district to verify the student. In order to avoid this, please contact our office to correct mismatched StudentIDs as you become aware of them. E-mail correction information to our Payment Specialist, David Girtman at david.girtman@fldoe.org.

Feedback Welcome

As the Scholarship Office administers McKay processes, we are always looking for ways to improve. If you have a suggestion for ways that we can improve our accuracy, efficiency or communications with stakeholders, please get in touch. We welcome your input.

Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice



"Improving K-12 Educational Choice Options"

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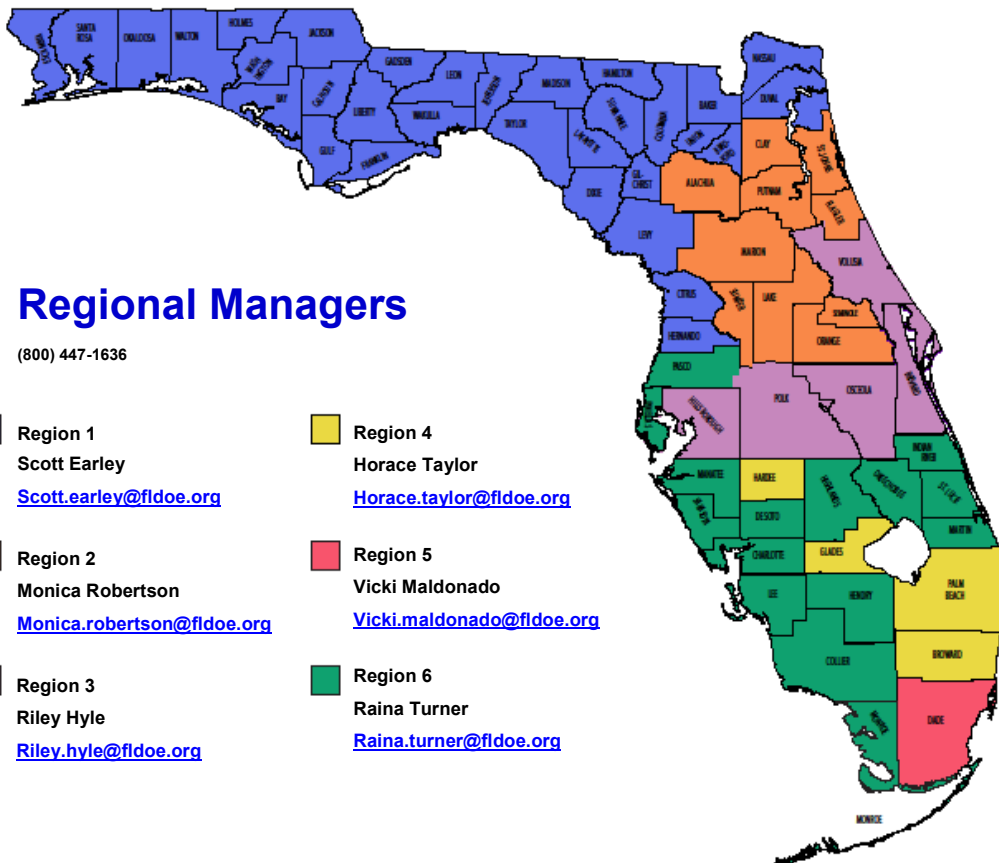
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