

FLORIDA SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice

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District Systems and McKay

With the end of the school year approaching, we would like to extend a reminder to school districts about the effect of automatic enrollment and withdrawal systems on McKay Scholarship students.

Automatic Enrollment

Some school districts have a system in place that automatically enrolls a student into his or her assigned public school when the student transitions from elementary to middle or middle to high school. Unfortunately, this creates a difficult situation when a McKay Scholarship student that has been participating in the program (sometimes for several school years) is reported as enrolled in public school in the fall, and his or her payment is cancelled. The time consuming process of completing a District Verification Form must then be undertaken for each affected student.



Therefore, in preparation for the 2012-13 school year, we ask that you take steps to ensure that matriculating students participating in the McKay Scholarship Program will not be automatically re-enrolled in public school.

Automatic Summer Withdrawal

In addition, some school districts have a system in place that automatically withdraws all public school students at the end the school year until they return to school in the fall. This may create problems for students applying for the McKay Scholarship Program during the summer months. Please note that for purposes of McKay Scholarship Program eligibility, a student who completes the school year continues to be a public school student over the summer unless the parent physically withdraws the student from public school. Therefore, please be mindful of public school withdrawal dates when determining the eligibility of students that file intent during the summer if your school district has an automated system in place.



Special points of interest:

- The district FTE file of students that received a McKay Scholarship payment for April 2012 will be made available on May 16, 2012.
- If your school district has not yet submitted a Notification Verification Form, please do so by April 9. The Department must receive a form from each district to certify compliance with parental notification requirements.



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Take Note

School Choice Resources

School district staff are often asked to assist parents by providing information about scholarship programs and other school choice options. A one-stop resource is the Department's [Parent Resources](#) page on the School Choice website. Here information may be found for each program administered by our office. One resource that may be particularly helpful is the School Choice Options booklet, which highlights the wide array of choices available to Florida families and students. We hope these tools will assist you in providing school choice information to parents.

McKay Eligibility for Pre-K Students

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

In order to be eligible to receive the McKay Scholarship in kindergarten, a student must have been enrolled and reported for funding during the preceding October and February FEFP surveys and have been eligible for services under [s. 1003.21\(1\)\(e\), F.S.](#) (i.e., as a pre-k student with disabilities). In addition, the student must have an Individual Education Plan or 504 Accommodation Plan and be a public school student at the time intent is filed.

If intent is filed for a rising Kindergarten student prior to their Pre-K transition meeting, the district may identify the student status in the system as "Eligibility pending transition meeting." When the transition meeting is complete, the system will allow the district to assign the matrix or eligibility status.



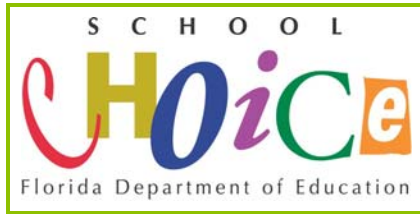
LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

The recently closed Florida legislative session resulted in the passage of House Bill 859 which, if signed into law by the Governor, will result in changes to the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship program. Among the changes, the bill would:

- Revise student eligibility requirements for the FTC program, eliminating the requirement that a student be enrolled in and counted as a full time student in a Florida public school for the previous year in order to receive a scholarship for all students K-5.
- Increase the tax credit cap to \$229 million for the 2012-2013 school year.
- Provide that a participating private school may offer state assessments at the private school at no cost to the private school, within the limits of the state contract for testing services. Establishes a deadline of March 1 for participating private schools to notify the Department of Education.
- Revise factors for which the Commissioner of Education may deny, suspend, or revoke a private school's participation in the FTC scholarship program and add factors for which the Commissioner may immediately suspend payment of scholarship funds.
- Revise s. 1002.20(6)(b)2., F.S., to align with existing provisions for allowing that a student who is currently placed, or during the previous state fiscal year was placed, in foster care may seek a scholarship from an eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organization.

For more information, please visit <http://www.flsenate.gov/Committees/BillSummaries/2012/html/182>.

Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice



"Improving K-12 Educational Choice Options"

Michael Kooi, Esq.
Executive Director

Florida Department of Education
325 W. Gaines Street, **Suite 1044**
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400



Toll-Free: (800) 447-1636
Fax: (850) 245-0875
Email: schoolchoice@fldoe.org

On the web at:
WWW.FLORIDASCHOOLCHOICE.ORG

1 Scott Earley
Scott.Earley@fldoe.org

- Baker
- Bay
- Bradford
- Calhoun
- Citrus
- Columbia
- Dixie
- Duval
- Escambia
- Franklin
- Gadsden
- Gilchrist
- Gulf
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- Leon
- Levy
- Liberty
- Madison
- Nassau
- Okaloosa
- Santa Rosa
- Suwannee
- Taylor
- Union
- Wakulla
- Walton
- Washington

2 Monica Garmon
Monica.Garmon@fldoe.org

- Alachua
- Clay
- Flagler
- Lake
- Marion
- Orange
- Putnam
- Seminole
- St. Johns
- Sumter

3 Riley Hyle
Riley.Hyle@fldoe.org

- Brevard
- Hillsborough
- Osceola
- Polk
- Volusia

4 Horace Taylor
Horace.Taylor@fldoe.org

- Broward
- Glades
- Hardee
- Palm Beach

5 Nicolle Leider
Nicolle.Leider@fldoe.org

- Dade

6 Raina Turner
Raina.Turner@fldoe.org

- Charlotte
- Collier
- Desoto
- Henry
- Highlands
- Indian River
- Lee
- Manatee
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