



District Bulletin | May – June 2019

McKay District Verification Deadlines

District enrollment verification of students to be funded through the McKay Scholarship is an important accountability safeguard built into the program to ensure funding is appropriately distributed. For each payment period, the McKay Verification File will be available to districts via the Northwest Regional Data Center (NWRDC) site on the date listed for district review and verification, and must be submitted by the submission deadline. Once payments have been issued, the NWRDC will post the list of paid students.

For questions regarding payments, please contact the School Choice Payment Specialist, Claire Padgett at Claire.Padgett@fldoe.org.

2019 Legislative Session

The 2019 Legislative Session officially ended on May 4, 2019. Following the 2019 Legislative Session, Governor Ron DeSantis signed SB-7070, which created the Family Empowerment Scholarship Program. This program is one of Florida's greatest victories for low-income and working-class families, and it is the first of its kind to extend support to middle-income families.

Prior to scholarship funds being awarded, the student must be accepted and enrolled in a participating private school. Additional information regarding the [Family Empowerment Scholarship](#) will become available as our office continues to implement the program.

District Contact Information

As the 2018-2019 school year comes to a close, please take a moment to check the contact information listed for your district on the School Choice website. You may edit or update the information by logging on to your [district page](#). Should you need additional assistance, please contact our office.

More Information

[Regional Managers](#)

[McKay Calendar](#)

[McKay Deadlines](#)

[District Verification Deadlines](#)

Florida Virtual School and McKay

As a reminder, section 1002.39, F.S., specifies that a McKay Scholarship student may take up to two (2) courses from Florida Virtual School without jeopardizing scholarship eligibility.

Students taking more than 2 Florida Virtual School courses will forfeit their McKay Scholarship. For additional information regarding the McKay Scholarship and FLVS, please contact our office.

McKay Eligibility for Pre-K

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

- Have been enrolled and reported for funding during the preceding October and February FEFPS surveys and have been eligible for services under section 1003.21(1)(e), F.S. (i.e., as a pre-k student with disabilities); or
- Have received specialized instructional services under the Voluntary Pre-kindergarten Education Program pursuant to section 1002.66, F.S. during the previous school year.

In addition, the student must have an Individual Education Plan or 504 Accommodation Plan.

If the 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 "IEP pending transition meeting." When the transition meeting is complete, the system will allow the district to assign the appropriate matrix or eligibility status.

Additional Resources



The Annual Family Café brings Floridians with all types of disabilities together, offering three days of information, training and networking opportunities. Attendees can expect a range of individual breakout sessions, a packed Exhibit Hall, and a series of special events including several keynote speakers and The Governors' Summit on Disabilities. The Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice's breakout session overviewing the available state-funded scholarship programs for students with disabilities will be held from 2:30-3:30 on June 8, 2019.

To find out more information or to register for the 21st Annual Family Café, please visit <https://www.familycafe.net/>.



The 2019 Florida Association of Management Information Systems Conference will be held June 24-26 in Orlando, FL. The purpose of this conference is to facilitate communication and cooperation among agencies, organizations, professions, and the public regarding the purposes and uses of information systems. For more information on how to register for this year's conference, please visit <https://famisonline.org/index.php/a-homepage-section/>.

Gardiner Student List

The Gardiner Scholarship Program was created in 2014 has been available to students since 2014 to provide the option for a parent to better meet the individual educational needs of their child by providing eligible students a scholarship that can be used to purchase approved services or products. The program is administered by Scholarship Funding Organizations, such as Step Up For Students and AAA Scholarship Foundation. Unlike McKay, students are not required to attend a public school prior to participating in Gardiner. Participating families may be enrolled in private schools or home education programs and use the funds to purchase approved services or products in order to design a customized educational program for the student.

When logged into our website, a Gardiner student list is available for your review. This list contains all students residing in your district whose *eligibility* has been confirmed by a Scholarship Funding Organization, however, these students may not yet have been funded. If a family requests a matrix review prior to, or after, being funded, use this list to report the new matrix. More information on the Gardiner Scholarship Program is available on [the School Choice website](#).

HOPE for HEALING

Last month, First Lady Casey DeSantis announced the establishment of Hope for Healing Florida, a new multi-agency mental health and substance abuse campaign. This coordinated effort will incorporate the combined resources of the Florida Department of Children and Families, the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, and the Florida Department of Education to better serve the needs of Floridians struggling with mental health and substance abuse.

The campaign will also leverage, in part, the resources of private sector partners to produce and distribute Mental Health and Substance Abuse Resource Guides throughout the state. Guides will include information on state partnered programs from crisis intervention to prevention, to on-going care to help support children and families suffering in Florida by providing meaningful help in a timely manner.

For more information on this program, or resources they may provide, please visit: <http://hopeforhealingfl.com/>.

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