



# FLORIDA SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS NEWSLETTER

Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice

Volume 6, Issue 8

March 2012



## Special Points of Interest:

- **Intents** are currently being filed for the 2012-2013 school year.
- **Attendance Verification** for the April 2012 scholarship payment must be submitted March 5-14, 2012.



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## Private School Employee Fingerprinting

As private schools continue to resolve compliance related issues, it is important for both renewing schools and new participants to understand the employee fingerprinting requirements. Every employee or contracted personnel with direct student contact must electronically submit a set of fingerprints through the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) for a state and national background screening. The screening results must be securely stored at the school's location and be available for inspection by the Department of Education should your school be selected for a site visit.



**Q. What about personnel who only participate in before- or after-school programs?**

**A.** A level 2 background screening is required only if all the answers to the questions below are Yes.

- Is the person an employee or contracted personnel of the private school?
- Does the person have unsupervised access to or direct contact with a scholarship student?
- Is the private school responsible for the scholarship student?

Please note that Department of Children and Families (DCF) background checks do not meet the statutory screening requirements for participation in the state scholarship programs because DCF does not provide the results to the private school for screening against [s.435.04 and 1012.315, F.S.](#) Only teachers with a valid Florida teaching certificate are exempt per [s.1002.421\(2\)\(i\), F.S.](#)

If you have any questions about these requirements, please review the related [Technical Assistance Paper](#) on the School Choice website.

### Make a Note

#### Our new mailing address:

Florida Department of Education  
Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice  
325 W. Gaines Street, **Suite 1044**  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400



Office staff continue to be available at their current phone numbers and e-mail addresses.

## FTC Norm-referenced Testing



This is a reminder to private schools participating in the Florida Tax Credit (FTC) Scholarship Program to administer or make provisions for FTC students in grades 3-10 to take one of the nationally norm-referenced tests identified by

the Department of Education. The approved assessments and specific instructions are available on the School Choice Website at

[www.floridaschoolchoice.org/Information/CTC/norm\\_referenced\\_assessment.asp](http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/Information/CTC/norm_referenced_assessment.asp).

Participating private schools must make arrangements to administer one of the approved listed tests during the 2011-12 school year, unless the private school has requested and received approval to use an alternate assessment. If you have any questions related to this requirement, please contact your regional manager.

## McKay Payment Discrepancies

The third quarter McKay Scholarship payments for the 2011-12 school year were recently distributed. It is very important for participating private schools to review these payments immediately, as well as other payment records from throughout the school year.

**Any discrepancies must be submitted to the Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice by March 5, 2012**, for corrections to be reflected in the final payment of the school year that is scheduled for April 1. Any further payment correction requests for the current school year must be submitted to the Department no later than June 1, 2012 in order to receive payment.

If you have any questions, please contact your regional manager.



## Mark Your Calendar

**March 1**— Date by which Scholarship Compliance Form must be postmarked, after being submitted online, printed, signed and notarized.

**March 2**—Date by which students filing intent by February 1 must be enrolled to receive the April 1 payment.

**March 5-14**—Attendance Verification week for the final payment period.

**May 1**—Date by which all Compliance issues must be resolved.

**June 1**—Date by which requests for missing payments must be submitted.

**July 3**—Intent filing deadline for the September 1 payment.

**August 2**— Enrollment deadline for the September 1 payment.

**September 2**—Intent filing deadline to be eligible for the November 1 payment.

**October 2**—Enrollment deadline for the November 1 payment.

Please contact your Regional Manager with questions regarding these deadlines.

# HAPPY ST. PATRICK'S DAY

## Compliance Renewal

### *60 Days to Resolve Outstanding Issues*

March 1st is the deadline for submission of the Compliance Form. On or before March 1st, the form must be:

1. submitted online,
2. printed, signed and notarized, and
3. mailed to the School Choice Office.

Compliance forms must be postmarked by the deadline to be eligible to participate in the Scholarships Program for the 2012-2013 school year.



May 1st is the deadline for resolving any outstanding issues. Following the timely submission of the Scholarship Compliance Form, renewing schools must resolve any outstanding compliance issues, including the submission of inspection reports and fiscal soundness documentation (if applicable), on or before May 1st. Schools unable to resolve compliance issues by May 1st will not be eligible to participate in the scholarship programs for the 2012-2013 school year.

Upon demonstration of compliance for the 2012-13 school year, the Department will send the private school a letter confirming compliance. If you have any questions related to your school's compliance status, please contact your regional manager.



## In the News

### FLORIDA'S MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORTS WEBSITE

Visit Florida's new MTSS website at <http://www.florida-rti.org/> to browse for new materials, updates, and resources to assist you in implementing MTSS in your organization, district or school, with a common language and a common understanding of Florida's system. This website provides a central, comprehensive location for Florida-specific information and resources that promote system-wide practices to ensure highest possible student achievement in both academic and behavioral pursuits. The new site is organized around four sections including Florida's MTSS, One System, Educator Resources and Parent Resources. Go to <http://www.florida-rti.org/>, mark as a favorite, and spread the word!

### THE FAMILY CAFÉ CONFERENCE REGISTRATION OPENS

The 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Family Café registration opens on **February 14, 2012**. The conference will be held on June 15–17, at the Hilton Orlando. For additional information or to register go to <http://familycafe.net/>.

### 5<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL PROMISING PATHWAYS: ROAD TO BEST PRACTICE IN AUTISM CONFERENCE

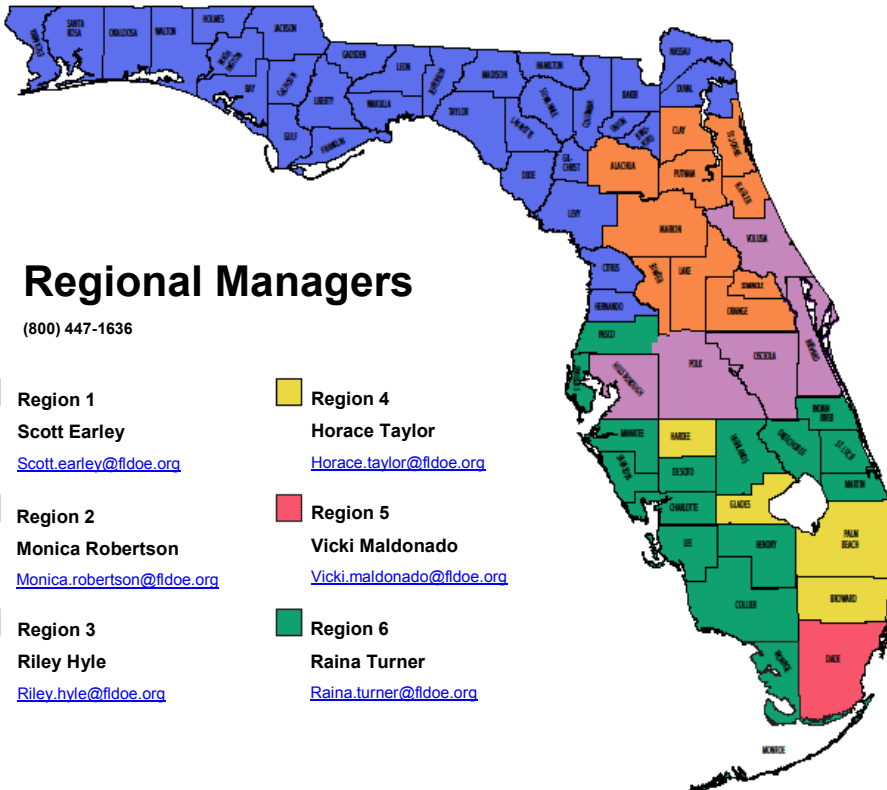
The Promising Pathways Committee at Florida Gulf Coast University is pleased to announce registration is open for the 5th Annual Promising Pathways: Road to Best Practice in Autism Conference will be held on **April 14, 2012**. The conference is for families, educators, and health care professionals addressing autism spectrum disorders. Keynote speakers this year are Dr. Temple Grandin and Dr. Tristram Smith, the conference brochure is attached. This free event is providing continuing education units for a number of professions. Online registration is available at: <http://www.fgcu.edu/events/promisingpathways/>. For additional information please contact us at [PromisingPathways@fgcu.edu](mailto:PromisingPathways@fgcu.edu).

# Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice

<h2 style="text-align: center;">McKay Scholarship Program</h2> <h3 style="text-align: center;">2011 - 2012 IMPORTANT DEADLINES</h3>					
Payment Periods	Payment Date	Parental Intent Deadline	Private School Enrollment Deadline	Attendance Verification	
				Available Online	Submission 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 3	October 10
Jan 1 – Feb 28	February 1	December 3	January 2	January 3	January 9
Mar 1 – June 30	April 1	February 1	March 2	March 5	March 14

**Please note:**

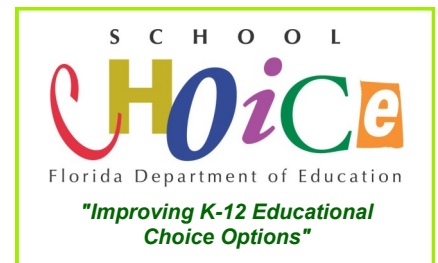
- Private schools participating in the **Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program** must meet the deadlines set by their Scholarship Funding Organizations to receive payment.
- The deadlines for filing a parental intent and private school enrollment are statutory deadlines. Therefore, the Department cannot make exceptions if these deadlines are missed.



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