

Florida Scholarship Programs Newsletter

September 2012

Volume 7, Issue 2

In This Issue

Welcome

Payment Problems

Restrictive Endorsement

FTC Norm-referenced
Testing

Annual Survey

Fingerprint Requirement

Mark Your Calendar

Regional Managers Map

View 2012-2013 Deadlines

Contact Us

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

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

On the Web at:
www.floridaschoolchoice.org

Welcome

Everyone at the Office of Independent Education would like to welcome all scholarship participating schools to the 2012-13 school year. We hope you enjoyed your summer break, and have enjoyed your time with your students thus far. This September issue of our Scholarship Newsletter is full of information to help you remain compliant with Scholarship issues as we enter another year.

We would like to thank you for your work and dedication to these students and to their families as they chose what is best for their student's needs. If you have any questions or need help with any compliance issues, know that your Regional Manager is only a phone call away. We hope you all have a great school year.

Payment Problems?

Warrants for the first McKay payment were scheduled to arrive on or before September 1. Upon receipt, schools should immediately check to determine if all enrolled and eligible McKay students have been paid. If not, check the following issues:

Check the date of intent. For new McKay students, intents filed after July 3 of this year are not eligible for the first payment.

Check the date of enrollment or re-enrollment. Students enrolled after August 2 are not eligible for the first payment.

Check the parent/guardian Social Security Number (SSN). We must have a valid SSN. If the parent/guardian SSN is invalid or is the same as the student SSN, the payment cannot be processed.

Check that only ONE parent is listed as guardian. If two names are listed, a payment cannot be processed. The SSN must belong to the parent who is listed.

Check that the student's parent has officially withdrawn the student from public school. Prior to processing the McKay Scholarship payments each quarter, the Department sends a list of prospective scholarship students to the public school districts. Any student still registered as a public school student will be designated "EPS" (Enrolled in Public School), and the student's scholarship payment will be cancelled. Look on the scholarship payment **Reconciliation Report** to see if "EPS" is next to the student's name. If a student was reported as EPS in error, please complete a **McKay District Verification Form** as soon as possible in order that we may process a supplemental payment. If you have questions, please contact your Regional Manager.

Restrictive Endorsement--Requirements and guidelines

With the start of classes and the arrival of the first scholarship payments for the 2012-13 school year, we would like to review the restrictive endorsement requirements for McKay Scholarship payments.

Florida law requires the Department to make McKay Scholarship payments by individual warrant (check) payable to the student's parent or guardian. The warrants must be mailed by the Department to the private school of the parent's choice. Section 1002.39(9)(f), Florida Statutes, then requires the parent of a scholarship student to restrictively endorse the warrant to the private school for deposit into the account of the private school.



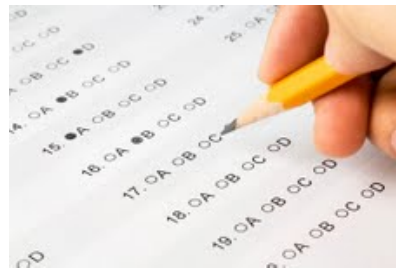
The Department is also required to review a sample of endorsed scholarship warrants after each payment period to confirm compliance with the restrictive endorsement requirements.

The following are a few guidelines to assist you in correctly complying with these requirements:

- When a private school receives the McKay scholarship checks, the school should immediately stamp the back of each check with the words "For Deposit Only" and include the school's name, and the name of the school's bank or account number.
- The private school should immediately notify parents that the checks have arrived and ask the parents to come to the school to restrictively endorse (sign) the warrant.
- It is strongly recommended that the scholarship checks not leave the possession of the private school, and students should not take scholarship checks home for a parent endorsement (signature).
- It is essential that the parent whose name is on the scholarship check be the individual that endorses the check. Under law, the parent cannot give power of attorney to the private school.

For additional details, please review the Restrictive Endorsement Technical Assistance Paper, available on our website.

FTC Norm-Referenced Testing



Private schools participating in the Florida Tax Credit (FTC) Scholarship Program are reminded of the requirement 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. Approved assessments and specific instructions are available on our website at

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 2012-13 school year, or the private school may request the use of an alternate assessment. Requests must be submitted to the Department **in writing by September 15, 2012**. If you have any questions related to this requirement, please review the Technical Assistance Paper posted on our website, or contact your Regional Manager.

Annual Survey

The 2012 **Annual Survey of Private Schools** will be available online September 1. By law, all private schools in Florida are required to submit the Annual Survey. It is also a requirement for participation in the state scholarship programs and must be completed as part of the Compliance process. **To submit the survey:**

1. Log on to the School Choice Web Site as a private school administrator.
2. Complete the information and submit online.
3. Print the signature page and have it signed by the private school's **owner/chief administrative officer**. Then have it notarized, and mail it to the Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice.



Benefits

Besides fulfilling a legal requirement, submitting the survey provides other benefits:

- Being listed on the School Choice Web Site, where parents can view your school's information
- Receiving timely updates on federal initiatives or changes affecting private schools
- Allowing eligible students in your school to qualify for a Bright Futures Scholarship
- Getting informational updates on issues or requirements affecting private schools including IDEA and Title I.

Please complete this important requirement promptly.

Fingerprint Requirement



Florida statute requires private schools participating in the McKay and FTC Scholarship Programs to ensure that all staff having contact with students pass a Level 2 background check through FDLE and to retain staff fingerprints in the Applicant Fingerprint Retention Notification Program (AFRNP).

FDLE sends invoices to private schools monthly for the retention of fingerprints in their database. Invoices must be paid as soon as possible.

If the invoice is not paid, the prints are deleted from the AFRNP.

Once fingerprints are deleted, they cannot be retrieved. To be in compliance with the law, your school employees will have to again submit their fingerprints for state and national checks and for retention; the fee for the state and national check of \$43.25 will be assessed.

Please contact FDLE's Volunteer and Employee Criminal History System (VECHS) with any questions.

Mark Your Calendar

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

October 2—Date by which students filing by September 2 must be enrolled to receive the second quarterly payment.

October 3-10—Attendance Verification week for the second payment period.

December 3—Date by which a new student must file intent in order to be eligible for the February 1 payment.



January 2—Date by which new students with a valid intent must be enrolled to receive the February 1 payment.

January 3-10—Attendance Verification week for the third payment period.

January 31—Last day to file an intent to participate for the 2012-13 school year.

February 1—First day for new students to file an intent for the 2013-14 school year.

March 2—Date by which a new student must be enrolled to receive the fourth quarterly payment.

March 4-11—Attendance Verification week for the final payment period.

Questions? Please contact your Regional Manager.
