

Florida Scholarship Programs Newsletter

Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice

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Registration and Enrollment Tips



Special Points of Interest:

- **To be eligible for the September payment**, new students must have a valid intent filed by July 3rd and be enrolled by August 2. Returning or transferring students must be reenrolled by August 2.
- Requests for missed payments must be made by **June 1** of the fiscal year in which they are due.



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With the current school year coming to a close, now is the time for schools to ensure McKay enrollment for the upcoming school year is in order. Students who will be returning to the same school in August must be reenrolled. New students must be registered and enrolled. And students who will not be returning should be withdrawn.

In order to make the process less troublesome over the summer, students who have not been reenrolled in their current school by May 31st, will be available in the system to be picked up by another school, even if the student was not officially withdrawn from their current school.

Statutory deadlines—The McKay Scholarship enrollment deadline is **August 2**. Enrollment includes creating an individual student fee schedule and providing a first date of attendance. All current and new scholarship students must be enrolled by August 2 to be eligible for a September 1st payment.

Accurate information— It is important to enter accurate information. Please verify that students are enrolled in the correct **grade level** with the correct **parent Social Security Number (SSN)** and **contact information**. Incorrect parent SSNs may result in delay of scholarship payments.

Dates—Scholarship students must maintain continued attendance in a participating private school to remain eligible for payment; therefore, please be accurate when entering first dates of **attendance** or student **withdrawal** dates.

Withdrawal from public school—Advise parents of scholarship students, **especially new students**, to notify the public school district that their student is withdrawing from public school to attend a private school. Prior to payment, school districts are required to verify that scholarship students are not enrolled in public school. If the parent does not notify the district that the student is attending private school, the district may report the student as still enrolled in public school. The scholarship payment then will be delayed until a correction is made.

If you encounter problems or need assistance with a scholarship student, **DO NOT WAIT** until the deadline. Contact your Regional Manager promptly.

PLEASE NOTE:

- *Any student who filed intent after July 3 will not be eligible for a September 1 payment, regardless of their enrollment date.*
- *A student will forfeit the scholarship if enrolled in any summer program, such as Drivers Ed., that is funded through FEFP.*

2011 Legislative Changes



The 2011 Florida Legislative session has ended. Several bills related to scholarship programs passed both chambers. If approved by the Governor, these bills would go into effect July 1, 2011.

[House Bill 797, Interscholastic and Intra-scholastic Sports](#), would provide for a statewide program in which middle school and high school students attending certain private schools may be able to participate in athletics at a public school.

[House Bill 965, Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program](#), would expand the amount of tax credit allowed for a contribution made to an eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organization.

[House Bill 1255, Public School Accountability](#), would revise numerous provisions relating to the K-12 public education system, and would provide an exception to McKay Scholarship ineligibility for students who enter a Department of Juvenile Justice detention center for a period of no more than 21 days.

[House Bill 1329, McKay Scholarships](#), would provide eligibility for program participation to students with disabilities for whom a 504 accommodation plan has been established.

For more information or to contact your legislators, please visit [OnlineSunshine](#), the official site of the Florida Legislature.

Our office is working closely with the Bureau of Exceptional Education to develop guidance and processes that will assist school districts with implementation of HB 1329. Please watch for updates via e-mail over the next few weeks.



Spotlight on... David Girtman

The School Choice Office would like to introduce David Girtman, our new Web Specialist. David, a Tallahassee native, comes to us well qualified. He graduated from Florida State University with a major in graphic design, plus minors in music and communications, and most recently he worked in marketing.



Web Specialist,
David Girtman

As Web Specialist, David is responsible for managing and updating the School Choice website, and providing support to the Payment Specialist.

He is pleased to be working with the Department of Education and in particular, in school choice. According to David, "School choice is a great way for students to get the kind of learning and attention they might not be able to get anywhere else."

In his spare time, David works with acapella music groups throughout Florida, and looks forward to furthering his education in digital media communications.



Professional Development Opportunities

The 8th Annual Turn on the Light Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect – This one day regional conference brings together professionals in South Florida who are working with or on behalf of children for a full day of educational opportunities in workshop settings. The conference offers continuing education credits while creating public awareness of child abuse and neglect prevention, intervention, and advocacy. There will be six tracks with three workshops in each track. Nationally known speaker and author Darlene Ellison will be the keynote speaker. The conference will be held at the Palm Beach County Convention Center on **October 20, 2011**. For more information, please visit the Children's Healing Institute at www.childrenshealinginstitute.org/light or call Susan Santosus at (561) 585-1650.

Registration Open for the State University System Directors of Admission Tour 2011 – The State University System (SUS) admissions directors would like to announce that registration is now open for the SUS Directors of Admission Tour 2011. These regional admissions workshops, which will take place from September 7 – 14, are being provided for middle and high school counselors. For registration information, please contact Lynda A. Page at (850) 245-0466 or at Lynda.Page@flbog.edu.



In the News

Summer Literacy Adventure – Florida students have the opportunity to participate in the Summer Literacy Adventure by visiting the **Just Read, Florida!** Website at www.justreadflorida.com to take the reading pledge. Students may also utilize a free online tool to search for books based on their reading ability and interests. The FDOE, through MetaMetrics, offers a unique resource called “Find a Book, Florida” at <http://florida.lexile.com> that uses Lexile® measures, a widely adopted reading metric that can guide a reader to an appropriate level book.

Q & A on Serving Children with Disabilities Placed by Their Parents in Private Schools – In April 2011 the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services issued a Q&A document (<http://idea.ed.gov/explore/view/p/%2Croot%2Cdynamic%2CQaCorner%2C1%2C>) to address school districts’ obligations for ensuring equitable participation of private school students with disabilities in services provided under IDEA. The document supersedes previous guidance on the topic, and includes new and updated questions to reflect recent policy letters as well as the Department’s current thinking on the topic.

Emergency Preparedness Self-Help List – Hurricane season is June 1 through November 30. Fires, floods, and other natural disasters and emergencies can strike at any time throughout the year. The Florida Alliance of Assistive Services and Technology (FAAST) developed a list of helpful websites, videos, articles, and other information about emergency preparedness for individuals with disabilities. The **Got A Plan** document can be downloaded from FAAST’s Web site at <http://www.faast.org/sites/default/files/Got%20A%20Plan.pdf>.

Scholarship Students on Oprah!

What do you do when you have seven deserving scholarship students and no prom dresses? If you are teacher Gaby Sullivan of **Father’s H.A.R.B.O.R. Academy** in Jacksonville, you write a letter to Oprah.

The result? A surprise visit from fashion mogul and recording artist Jessica Simpson, bringing with her prom dresses and accessories for the girls, along with an invitation for a 3-day visit to Chicago and a guest appearance on the **Oprah Winfrey Show**. The students’ appearance in their beautiful prom dresses may be viewed on **YouTube** at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZcwGHUwqvPs>.



Jessica Simpson with FHA students
From left to right, top: Shanae Lewis, Alex King, Paris Reed, Jessica Simpson, Eliza Smith, Bailey King. Bottom: Jakina Williams, Isabel Smith

Along with makeovers, each girl received a complete wardrobe, the opportunity to meet Johnny Depp and accompany him to the premier of his new movie, and—best of all—a \$10,000 scholarship from Dove. An additional scholarship was awarded in Ms. Sullivan’s name, a sum she is using to develop the school’s arts and performance programs. Congratulations, students!

Mark Your Calendar

June 1—Date that returning McKay students not reenrolled in their current school will become available in the system.

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

July 3—Intent filing deadline to be eligible for the first 2011-12 payment on September 1.

August 2—Date by which new and renewing McKay students must be registered and enrolled in order to receive the September 1 payment.

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.

Questions? Please contact your Regional Manager.

Checking Intent Status

After filing intent to participate in the McKay Scholarship Program, the parent is provided with a **confirmation number** that may be used to check the status of the intent, including the student’s intent date, eligibility, matrix number, and estimated scholarship amount.

Private schools may assist parents in [checking the intent status](#) on the School Choice Web site. Simply enter the student’s last name, birth date, and the intent confirmation number provided by the parent. Please note that the School Choice Information Hotline can provide student status information only to the parent or with the parent’s permission.

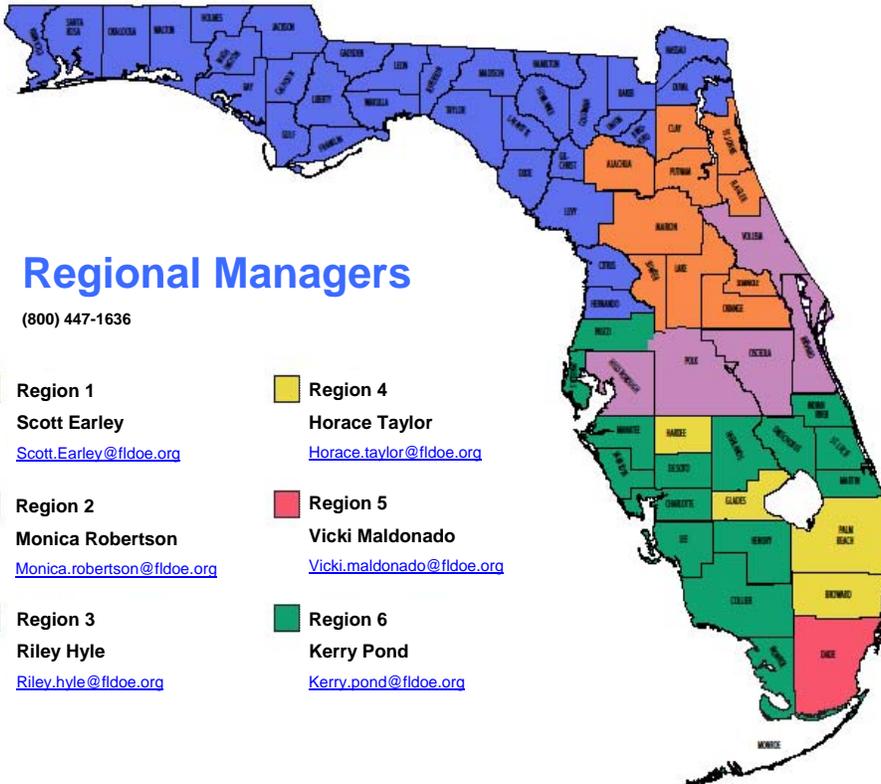
Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice

McKay Scholarship Program 2011 - 2012 IMPORTANT DEADLINES

| 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 | January 31 | March 2 | March 5 | March 14 |

Please note:

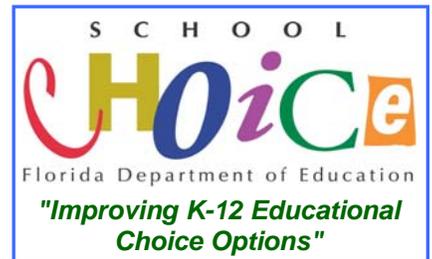
- Private schools participating in the **Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program** must meet the deadlines set by their Scholarship Funding Organizations to receive payment.
- The deadlines for filing a parental intent and private school enrollment are statutory deadlines. Therefore, the Department cannot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



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Current and previous newsletters are available on the School Choice Web Site.