



Florida Scholarship Parent Newsletter

April 2015

In This Issue

[Welcome](#)

[Summer Programs & McKay](#)

[Planning for Next Year](#)

[Re-Evaluation](#)

[Family Café](#)



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Welcome

We hope your school year has been successful so far. Whether your child is new to the McKay Scholarship Program or is a long-time participant, you may have questions about the program. This newsletter is designed to answer some of those questions and to provide parents with helpful information about scholarship requirements. You can reach us by calling toll free (800) 447-1636, send us an e-mail at schoolchoice@fldoe.org, or visiting online www.fldoe.org/schools/school-choice/

Summer Programs and McKay

With spring break behind us, summer and the end of the school year aren't far behind. Here are the answers to some questions parents frequently ask about summer programs and the McKay Scholarship.

Q. There is still some money left from my child's scholarship amount for this year. Can it be used towards a summer program for my child?

A. It may be possible for the remaining amount to be used towards a summer program at a participating private school. Summer school must be included as an option on the school's fee schedule. For specific questions, the school should contact their Regional Manager in our office.

Q. Can I enter my child in summer school provided by the local public school district to keep up her skills?

A. No. Enrollment in an academic public school summer class is considered a return to public school and would make your child ineligible for the

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McKay Scholarship.

Q. My son is ready for driving lessons. Can he take a drivers' ed course at the local high school if we pay the fee ourselves?

A. We recommend parents interested in drivers' ed or other non-academic courses conducted at a public school make sure that the program is not funded through the Florida Educational Finance Program (FEFP) and that the student will not be entered by the school district as returning to public school. You may even want to ask for this confirmation in writing as a precaution.

Q. My daughter wants to take Chinese, which is not offered at her private school. Can she take a course online over the summer?

A. Yes. A student may take up to two courses from Florida Virtual School (FLVS) without jeopardizing scholarship eligibility. However, taking courses from FLVS may reduce scholarship payments. Check with your school's director to find out about the impact FLVS courses would have on your child's scholarship amount.

Planning for next year

Once your child is a McKay student, his scholarship status will continue until he graduates, turns 22, or returns to public school, so there's no need to file a new Intent to continue in the scholarship program. And if you're planning on your student remaining at the same private school next fall, just be sure he is re-enrolled at his current school at the end of the school year.



If, however, you have concerns regarding your child's experience in her current private school, you do have options. If you wish, you can transfer your child to another participating private school. You may make the transfer at any time during the school year, but it may be simplest to do so at the end of the year. To be eligible for 100% of your child's scholarship amount next year, the new school must enroll her by August 2nd.

You also have the option of transferring your child back to public school, either as a public school McKay scholarship student or as a regular student. However, doing so will forfeit the private school scholarship. If you wish your child to return to

private school at a later time a new Intent must be filed, and the student will need to meet all eligibility criteria, including prior year public school attendance, as well as having an active IEP or 504 plan and being enrolled in public school at the time of filing.

Re-evaluation

If your child had an Individual Education Plan (IEP) developed in public school and has been in the McKay Scholarship Program for a while, you may have received an offer for a re-evaluation from your school district. Federal law requires school districts to offer re-evaluation to all Exceptional Student Education (ESE) students at least every three years. This applies to ESE students in private schools as well, including McKay Scholarship students. The district has to document that they have made the offer, but the parent has the option of agreeing or refusing to have a child re-evaluated.

Once a student is no longer in public school, the IEP is not active. Having your student re-evaluated will not result in a change to your child's matrix, funding, or McKay Scholarship status. However, a re-evaluation can provide you with a picture of your child's current learning needs. As with the IEP, a private school is not required to adhere to the recommendations of the re-evaluation, but it may be a helpful starting point in planning for the services and support that will help your child to achieve his best.



If you have questions about the re-evaluation process, or if you would like more information, we recommend that you contact your local public school district's ESE office.



The [17th Annual Family Cafe](#) is set for June 5-7, 2015 at the Caribe Royale in Orlando, Florida. This three-day event provides a venue for people with disabilities and their families to learn about available services, connect with policy makers and network with each other. It features dozens of breakout sessions, a full Exhibit Hall, a series of Keynotes and multiple opportunities to interact with other families informally.

There is no registration fee for individuals with disabilities and their family members or caregivers. Limited Financial Assistance is available to cover the cost of your hotel stay at the Caribe Royale. To apply for assistance, simply check the "Financial Assistance" box on the registration form. Recipients will be selected through a lottery process, with all applicants being notified of their status by May 1.

Rooms in The Family Cafe block at the Caribe Royale are available at the special event rate of \$109 per night. To make a reservation, call the Caribe Royale at 407/238-8000. Make sure to mention The Annual Family Cafe to secure the special rate.
