



McKay Scholarship Parent Bulletin | Summer 2019

Help Choosing a Private School

The McKay private option gives parents the opportunity to choose a private school that is best suited to meet their child's educational needs. It is important to keep in mind that private (non-public) school educational programs are not regulated, controlled, approved, or accredited by the Florida Department of Education; therefore, we only have limited information on the curriculum, services, or programs offered by these private schools.

How to search for private schools

A private school directory is located at www.floridaschoolchoice.org in the K-12 Private Schools section. Although we are unable to recommend a private school that will be best suited to meet your child's needs, there are parent resources provided on the School Choice web site at <http://www.fldoe.org/schools/school-choice/private-schools/parent-info.stml>.

A list of questions that may be useful to ask a prospective private school is also available on the School Choice web site at <http://www.fldoe.org/schools/school-choice/private-schools/choosing-a-private-school.stml>.

Private School Enrollment Deadline

If your child is approved for the McKay Scholarship, then keep in mind that **August 2 is the deadline for your private school enroll your child in the online portal in order for the 1st payment to be released by September 1.**

You can view all the McKay deadlines on our website.

- Click on "McKay Scholarship,"
- click on "Parents," and
- click on "McKay Scholarship Payment Deadlines;"

McKay Scholarship Funding Amounts

The funding amounts for the various matrix levels are set annually by the legislature during the budget process, and may vary from year to year. The updated amounts for the upcoming school year is generally available around mid-July, and can be accessed when you login with your unique user id and password or confirmation number if you filed an intent after February 1, 2019. Keep in mind that students that qualified with an IEP and are matriculating from 3rd to 4th grade or from 8th to 9th grade usually see a reduction in their funding for the new school year, as do traditional public school students.

McKay Questions Answered

If you and your child are new to the McKay Scholarship Program, you may have questions about scholarship payments. Where does that money go? How does it get spent? For answers to those questions, you will want to have a look at your child's **Student Fee Schedule**. Once a private school enrolls your child on the School Choice website, they create a Student Fee Schedule for your particular child. The Fee Schedule can be modified throughout the year as needed, but keep in mind that changes during the school year would only affect future payments and would not be retroactive.

Parent Login - You can view the Student Fee Schedule by logging on, using the password sent to you at the time your child was enrolled by the private school. From www.floridaschoolchoice.org, select Parent Login in the Secured Login section. If you do not have your password, please contact us for help.

What does the McKay Scholarship Cover?

The services that you can see on your child's Student Fee Schedule are selected from the private school's School Fee Schedule, which includes all the services and fees offered by the school to all students. Think of the School Fee Schedule as a restaurant menu. Your child's Student Fee Schedule would be the meal check listing your selections from that menu. What might be on your child's Student Fee Schedule? It will, of course, list tuition. But it may also include a number of other academic items or services that relate to your child's education; You may see listed various fees, special programs, tutoring, therapy, or summer school. Schools may also charge for supplies, materials, transportation, uniforms, insurance, field trips, or other items or activities related to the child's education; (Non-academic items such as meals or extracurricular activities or before/after school care cannot be included on the Student Fee Schedule.) The Student Fee Schedule lists the total charges for your child for the school year. If this amount is less than your scholarship, the payment checks will be issued for the lesser amount. If the total comes to more than your scholarship, you will be responsible for coming to an arrangement with the school to deal with the difference; If you have any questions about your child's fee schedule, arrange to discuss them with your school administrator.

Parent Affidavit

Parents of participating students are required to have an approved [Parent Affidavit Form](#) on file with the Department in order to receive scholarship payments. The form, which is available through our website, must be signed and notarized to affirm the validity of your signature. If you have not yet completed an affidavit, check with your private school to find out if they have a notary available to assist you with this task.

McKay Payments – Restrictive Endorsement

When a private school receives McKay Scholarship checks, the school is required to stamp the back of each check "For Deposit Only" along with the name of the school and their bank account number. **Scholarship checks should not leave the possession of the private school, and students should not take scholarship checks home for your endorsement (signature)**. The private school should notify you that the checks have arrived and ask you to come in to the school to restrictively endorse (sign) the checks. It is essential that the parent whose name is on the scholarship check be the individual that endorses the check when received by the private school. Under law, power of attorney cannot be given from the parent to the private school.

You should make sure that the back of the scholarship check states that the money is to be deposited into the private school's account. If not, you should write the statement "For deposit only into the account of (name of private school)" before signing the check. You should also verify before signing that the information on the front of the check is correct.

Going Through Changes? Update Your Info!

If you have changes in your contact information, let us know right away so we can keep you informed on issues involving your child. You can keep your address, email, and phone number up-to-date through the Parent Login on our main webpage; Once logged in, you'll see: "Click here to Change your Contact Information;" Simply enter any changes and click "Save Changes;"

If you want to change or correct your name or Social Security Number, though, you'll need to get a Guardian Issue Form from your school. This is the same form that's used to change the person who will be signing the scholarship payment checks. Don't delay in reporting any changes to this critical information, or you just may miss a quarterly payment!

Summer Programs and McKay

Here are the answers to some questions parents frequently ask about summer programs and the McKay Scholarship.

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 **complete up to two courses from FLVS or a part-time district virtual program** without jeopardizing McKay scholarship eligibility.

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 any academic public school summer class is considered a return to public school and would make your child ineligible for the 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. There is still some money left over from my child's McKay 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 your child's participating private school. Summer school must be included as an option on the School Fee Schedule. For specific questions, the school should contact their Regional Manager in our office.

Planning for Next School Year

Once your child is a McKay Scholarship student, their scholarship status will continue until they graduate, turn 22, or returns to public school enrollment, so there's no need to file a new Intent to continue in the scholarship program each year. And, if you're planning on your student remaining at the same private school this fall, just be sure they are re-enrolled by the private school at the end of the school year. The deadline for re-enrollment is August 2 each year.

If, however, you have concerns regarding your child's experience in their 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 school year. To be eligible for 100% of your child's scholarship amount for next school year, the new school must enroll them by August 2.

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.

IEP 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, their 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 reevaluation can provide you with a picture of your child's current learning needs. As with the original 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 their best. If you have questions about the reevaluation process, or if you would like more information, we recommend that you contact your local public school district's ESE office.

McKay Upcoming Deadlines

July 3

Application of intent filing deadline for the September 1 McKay payment.

August 2

Private school enrollment deadline for the September 1 McKay payment.

September 2

Application of intent filing deadline for new students to be eligible for the November 1 McKay payment.

Other Resources

MyCareerShines

A service of FloridaShines

[MyCareerShines](#) is an age-appropriate online planning tool designed to help middle and high school students assess their interests, explore careers, plan for education and prepare for work. The online tools under [MyCareerShines](#) are available free to all Florida students and school personnel. To learn more about this new education and career planning system, please visit [MyCareerShines Learning Center](#).



[Florida Students Achieve](#) is a website that provides a central location where parents and families can access the information they need to make the best education decisions for their students. The site contains links to both traditional public school options as well as other school choice options.

Florida Center for Students with **UNIQUE ABILITIES**

The Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities was created by the Florida Legislature to provide financial support so students with intellectual disabilities have opportunities for on-campus college experiences and employment opportunities through degree, certificate, or non-degree programs. Support provided by the Center includes scholarship funding for students and grant funding to support postsecondary institutions as they develop new opportunities. For more information, go to fcsua.org.

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