



McKay Scholarship Parent Bulletin | Spring 2021

Dear parents,

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. The purpose of this bulletin is to help answer some of those questions and to provide parents with helpful information about the McKay scholarship requirements. You can reach us by calling toll free (800) 447-1636, sending an email at schoolchoice@fldoe.org, or visiting online at <http://www.fldoe.org/schools/school-choice/>

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's scholarship. You can keep your address, email, and phone number up-to-date through the Parent Login on our main webpage at www.floridaschoolchoice.org. Once logged in, you'll see: **"Click here to Change your Contact Information."** Simply enter any changes and click "Save Changes."

McKay Payments: Restrictive Endorsement

The final 2021-22 regular payment disbursement for the McKay Scholarship Program was April 1st.

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 parent 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 current 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.



McKay Payment Coverage

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 will only affect future payments and will not be retroactive.

Parent Login - You can view your Student Fee Schedule by logging on to www.floridaschoolchoice.org, using the password sent to you at the time the private school completes your student's enrollment.

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 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?

First, it will 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, please arrange to discuss them with your school administrator.



Planning for Next School Year

Once your child is a McKay Scholarship student, their scholarship status will continue until they graduate, turn 22, or return to public school, so **there's no need to file a new Intent to continue in the scholarship program each year.** If you're planning on your student remaining at the same private school this fall, 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, 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.

McKay Student Transfer

A child may be transferred from one McKay private school to another at any time during the school year. The child must be withdrawn in our system from the first school before the new school can transfer the child into their record. **Parent must notify both schools to complete this process.**

Children must be enrolled by that pay period's enrollment deadline in order to be eligible for the current check. **If a child attends more than one McKay school during a pay period, the first school that the child attended for 10 school days is eligible to receive the check for that period.** If a child is transferred after the first school claims the child for 10 days, then the two schools may come to an equitable arrangement regarding the distribution of the funds.



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.



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 to 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 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 you contact your local public school district's ESE office.

Other Resources



The Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) provides an online tool called the Florida Navigator which is designed to empower and inform individuals with developmental disabilities, caregivers, and professionals about specific State of Florida services. If you are looking for state services, or you are already experienced working with government agencies, this tool is for you! For more information visit

<https://navigator.apd.myflorida.com/Default.aspx>



The 23rd Annual Family Café for individuals with disabilities and their family members is set for June 11-13, 2021 at the Hyatt Regency Orlando. This three-day event features dozens of breakout sessions, a full Exhibit Hall, a series of Keynote speakers and multiple opportunities to network with other families. There is no registration fee for individuals with disabilities and their family members or caregivers. For more information visit <https://www.familycafe.net/>



Family Network on Disabilities (FND) is a grassroots organization for persons with disabilities and their families that is family-centered and family-driven. FND is working in communities around Florida helping organize events, delivering free workshops, and providing one-on-one assistance to families who have children with special needs. To see what they have planned in your area, you can [register](https://www.fndusa.org) on their website at [fndusa.org](https://www.fndusa.org).

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](https://www.fcsua.org).