The Seton Sentinel

The Florida Catholic Conference Education Department Newsletter

With a new school year underway, we wanted to highlight key considerations for school leaders on expectations and requirements. We hope that having all of this information in one document is helpful.

Requirements of a Private School in Florida

All of our Catholic schools are required to:

- Submit an Annual Private School Survey to the Department of Education. If there has been a change in administration, name, or address of the school, a change form must be submitted to the FLDOE.
- Complete Level II fingerprinting and background screening for administration and staff.
- Maintain student records containing permanent information.
- Maintain a register of student enrollment and daily attendance, open for inspection by the designated school representative or the district school superintendent of the district in which the school is located.
- Set up a calendar with a minimum of 170 actual school days with the required instructional hours determined by grade level.
- Require students to present a certification of a school entry health examination.
- Require students to present a certification of immunization.
- Possess a current semi-annual Public/Private School Inspection Report regarding sanitation and safety.
- If the school facility possesses a well that serves 1 to 25 people, the school must possess a current and acceptable Limited Use Public/Private Drinking Water System Sanitation Survey & Inspection Report. Or if the school facility possesses a well that serves more than 25 people, the school must have worked with the local Department of Environmental Protection to meet their compliance regulations and received a Public Water System ID.

Requirements (continued)

All of our Catholic schools are required to:

- If the school stores, prepares, or serves food to students, possess a current and satisfactory quarterly Food Service Inspection Report.
- Possess a current and acceptable Mandatory Measurements Nonresidential Radon Measurement Report.
- Possess a current, violation free or satisfactory Fire Code Inspection and Compliance Report.

Scholarship Funding Organizations

There are two approved SFOs in Florida,

- Step Up for Students (www.stepupforstudents.org)

- AAA Scholarships (www.aaascholarships.org)

Parents and schools may work with either organization in obtaining the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship or the Personal Learning Scholarship Account.

The Florida Catholic Conference Education Department exists to assist you in the work of educating our young people.

In order to participate in a state scholarship program a school must:

- Maintain in this state a physical location where students regularly attend classes.
- Notify the Department of Education of their intent to participate.
- Demonstrate fiscal soundness by:
    - Being in operation for at least 3 school years, or
    - Filing with the Department of Education a surety bond or letter of credit for the amount equal to the scholarship funds for any quarter.
- Comply with the anti-discrimination provisions of 42 U.S.C. s. 2000d.
- Employ or contract only with teachers who hold a baccalaureate or higher degree, or have at least three years of teaching experience in public or private schools, or have special skills, knowledge, or expertise that qualifies them to provide instruction in subjects taught.
- Submit a signed and notarized Scholarship Compliance Form certifying that all school employees and contracted personnel with direct student contact have undergone the required background screening.
- Meet state and local health, safety, and welfare laws, codes, and rules

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Every year a school participating in a state scholarship program must:

- Comply with the requirements of individual scholarship programs, and be aware of all program deadlines.
- Timely respond to requests for information from the Department, including responses to Departmental inquiries based upon complaints against your school.
- Notify the Department of a change in the school's name, director, mailing address, or physical location within 15 days after the change.
- Timely submit any updates to the required documents which may have been affected by the change in director or change in location.
- Maintain current contact information on the Department's website, including e-mail addresses.
- Return any funds received for services that were not provided.
- Accurately report student withdrawal dates.
- Complete and submit the signed and notarized Private School Annual Survey required by section 1002.42, F.S.
- Annually complete and submit the signed and notarized Scholarship Compliance Form by March 1 of each school year. Any additional documentation must be submitted by May 1 of that school year.
- Annually meet scholarship compliance requirements and keep evidence and documentation demonstrating your school's compliance. We recommend keeping a binder of all important scholarship information.

Private school administrators may log in through the link below to access additional technical assistance on this topic and to notify the Department of Education of their intent to participate in the state scholarship programs. Private School Administrator Log-In

Please see the next page for specifics regarding the FTC and PLSA.

Faith. Academics. Service.

Catholic Schools

Nationally Norm-referenced Tests

For students in grades 3 through 10 participating in the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship or Personal Learning Scholarship Account programs, an eligible private school must annually administer one of the nationally norm-referenced tests identified by the Department of Education (or the statewide assessments pursuant to section 1008.22, F.S.). Below is the list of acceptable norm-referenced assessments.

- ACT Aspire
- Basic Achievement Skills Inventory-Comprehensive Version
- Comprehensive Testing Program 4 (CTP 4)
- Educational Development Series (EDSERIES), Forms J and K
- Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS)-Core Battery, Forms A and B
- Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS)-Complete Battery, Form C
- Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS)-Core Battery, Form C
- Iowa Tests of Educational Development® (ITED®), Form C
- Iowa Assessments-Core Battery, Form E
- Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement-Second Edition, Comprehensive Form (KTEA-II)
- Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)-Goals Survey Tests
- PSAT/NMSQT®
- Stanford Achievement Test, Tenth Edition (Stanford 10)
- STAR (Math Enterprise, Reading Enterprise)
- TerraNova, Third Edition (TerraNova 3)

For more details on any of the items in this newsletter, please visit the following:

- Office of K-12 School Choice:
  http://www.fldoe.org/schools/school-choice
- The Office of Early Learning:
  http://www.floridaearlylearning.com/
- The Department of Children and Families:
  http://www.myflfamilies.com/

We compiled the latest available information. If you have questions, please contact your Diocesan Schools Office, one of the departments mentioned above, or the FCC Education Department.

McKay Scholarship Program

In addition to complying with the private school requirements for all state scholarship programs,, **a private school must:**

- Provide a program of instruction for a minimum of 170 actual school instruction days with the required instructional hours (determined by grade level per state board Rule 6A-1.09512) under the direct instruction of the private school teacher at the school's physical location with occasional off-site activities under the supervision of the private school teacher.
- Be academically accountable to the parent for meeting the educational needs of the student by providing a written explanation to the parent of the student's progress annually and cooperating with parents who choose to have the student participate in statewide assessments.
- Comply with all state laws relating to general regulation of private schools.
- Withdraw a student from their register of McKay Scholarship students when requested by the parent.
- Notify the Department when a scholarship student withdraws from the school.

Personal Learning Scholarship Account

The PLSA is a newly created program that is designed to provide the option for a parent to better meet the individual educational needs of his or her eligible child. The PLSA provides eligible students a scholarship that can be used to purchase approved services or products. The average for the 2015-16 school year is approximately $10,000. To be eligible to receive a scholarship a student must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Is a resident of this state;
- Is or will be 3 or 4 years old on or before September 1 of the year in which the student applies for program participation, or is eligible to enroll in kindergarten through grade 12 in a public school in this state;
- Is the subject of an IEP or has received a diagnosis of a disability from a physician:
  - Autism spectrum disorder
  - Cerebral palsy
  - Down syndrome
  - An intellectual disability, as defined in s.393.063(21), F.S.
  - Prader-Willi syndrome
  - Spina bifida

School Readiness Program
The School Readiness Program offers financial assistance to low-income families for early child education and care so families can become financially self-sufficient and their young children can be successful in school in the future.

Services vary based on individual need and range from extended day to extended year and school age care in some instances.

The program takes into account a child's physical, social, emotional and intellectual development; involves parents as their child's first teacher; prepares children to be ready for school; and gives parents information about child development and other topics of interest.

School readiness programs provide developmental screenings for children and referrals to health and educational specialists, and work in cooperation with other programs for young children such as Head Start, Early Head Start and the VPK program.

Voluntary Prekindergarten
The VPK Assessment will continue to be used during the 2015-16 program year alongside Teaching Strategies GOLD. VPK providers are still required to administer the VPK Assessment and submit pre- and post-assessment data in the Bright Beginnings Online Reporting System by the assessment period deadline.

Teaching Strategies® GOLD™ The Office of Early Learning (OEL) recently began rolling out the Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment for VPK. *During the 2015-16 program year, OEL will only require VPK providers to submit GOLD scores for the post-assessment*, which will allow additional time for training and practice using GOLD.

Rule 6A-1.09433, Voluntary Prekindergarten Pre- and Post-Assessments, Florida Administrative Code, states that assessors must complete required training before administering GOLD for VPK. Each assessor must also meet minimum qualifications to be a VPK instructor during the school-year program, regardless of program type (summer or school-year). Coalitions may encourage VPK providers to have staff complete GOLD training early; however, assessors are not required to complete the training until the program begins assessing children for the post-assessment. VPK providers may participate in either the GOLD Basic Course through the GOLD online system or the instructor-led GOLD Basic Course for Florida VPK. More than 16,000 individuals were recently granted access to the GOLD online system based on users active in the Bright Beginnings Online Reporting System. If you have questions about the online system for VPK Teaching Strategies GOLD, call the Help Desk at 844-838-4653. For complete details, please see the information on this page: http://www.floridaearlylearning.com/providers/provider_menu/vpk_pre-_and_post-assessments.aspx.
General information and forms: http://www.floridaearlylearning.com/providers.aspx