

Joe York

MEMORANDUM

TO: School District Superintendents
FROM: Jacob Oliva
DATE: March 18, 2022
SUBJECT: McKay Scholarship Program and Family Empowerment Scholarship for Students with Unique Abilities

Contact Information:
Cathy Russell
850-245-0502
Cathy.Russell@fldoe.org
DPS: 202222

House Bill 7045, signed into law in May 2021, expanded eligibility in the Family Empowerment Scholarship Program to include students with disabilities. Effective July 1, 2022, students currently participating in the McKay Scholarship Program will join the Family Empowerment Scholarship Program under the Unique Abilities category (FES-UA). For the 2022-23 school year, students who have been receiving the McKay Scholarship to attend a private school have the option to transition to FES-UA, without interruption in funding. Current McKay Scholarship students are grandfathered into this new program and will not need to requalify to participate in FES-UA. They will need to select a Scholarship Funding Organization (SFO) to work with for continued participation.

We have previously provided to your district McKay contact template letter (attached) that will be helpful in informing families of their options. Going forward, the Department will no longer provide an avenue for new families to apply. They should be directed to one of our two state approved SFOs to make an application for the 2022-23 school year. For the 2022-23 school year, those entities are [Step Up for Students](#) and [AAA Scholarship Foundation](#).

Further, those students currently utilizing the McKay Scholarship public school option will be able to continue doing so under the FES-UA public school option, again without interruption. We ask that you continue to work with both your prior McKay and your new FES-UA families continuing or finding the appropriate public school choice options. Similar to McKay, the FES-UA option notification must occur within 10 days of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) meeting.

Exceptional Student Education offices will have parents seeking to apply to the FES-UA program who do not have an IEP or who seek a reevaluation of an existing IEP in order to receive a matrix of services. As per section 1002.394(7)(b), Florida Statutes, school districts are required to notify a parent who has made a request for an IEP. Each district must complete the IEP and matrix of services within 30 days after the request. Additionally, the school district shall conduct a meeting to develop an IEP and a matrix of services within 30 days of the request. Under the Florida State Board of Education rules, in some instances, the district

McKay Scholarship Program and Family Empowerment Scholarship for Students with Unique Abilities

March 1 , 2022

PageTwo

must accept a diagnosis and consider the opinion of the licensed professional providing the diagnosis when developing the IEP and matrix of services.

For more information about the McKay to FES-UA transition, the D