

Tab 2	SB 508 by Jones; Identical to H 00423 Family Empowerment Scholarship Program						
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948812	A	S	RCS	AED, Jones	Delete L.18 - 29:	03/27 07:51 PM
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Tab 3	CS/SB 1402 by ED, Yarborough; Similar to CS/H 01079 Students Enrolled in Dropout Retrieval Programs						
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700282	A	S	RCS	AED, Yarborough	Delete L.57:	03/27 07:51 PM
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Tab 4	SPB 7030 by AED; Educational Scholarship Programs						
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The Florida Senate
COMMITTEE MEETING EXPANDED AGENDA

APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE ON PRE-K - 12
EDUCATION
Senator Burgess, Chair
Senator Pizzo, Vice Chair

MEETING DATE: Wednesday, March 26, 2025
TIME: 1:00—3:00 p.m.
PLACE: Mallory Horne Committee Room, 37 Senate Building

MEMBERS: Senator Burgess, Chair; Senator Pizzo, Vice Chair; Senators Bradley, Calatayud, Fine, Gaetz, Jones, Osgood, Simon, and Yarborough

TAB	BILL NO. and INTRODUCER	BILL DESCRIPTION and SENATE COMMITTEE ACTIONS	COMMITTEE ACTION
1	Review and Discussion of Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget Issues Relating to		Presented
2	SB 508 Jones (Identical H 423)	Family Empowerment Scholarship Program; Requiring private schools participating in the Family Empowerment Scholarship Program to provide specified information in writing to parents before student enrollment in the school, etc. ED 03/11/2025 Favorable AED 03/26/2025 Fav/CS RC	Fav/CS Yeas 9 Nays 0
3	CS/SB 1402 Education Pre-K - 12 / Yarborough (Similar CS/H 1079)	Students Enrolled in Dropout Retrieval Programs; Revising assessment and accountability requirements for a virtual instruction program provider; providing that dropout retrieval programs serve a specified group of students, etc. ED 03/17/2025 Fav/CS AED 03/26/2025 Fav/CS FP	Fav/CS Yeas 9 Nays 0
Consideration of proposed bill:			
4	SPB 7030	Educational Scholarship Programs; Creating an operating categorical fund for implementing the Family Empowerment Scholarship Program; creating the educational enrollment stabilization program to provide supplemental state funds to address changes in full-time equivalent student enrollment; requiring that specified data include a verification that certain full-time equivalent student membership survey data has been cross-checked by the department; renaming the Hope Scholarship Program as the Hope Program, etc.	Submitted and Reported Favorably as Committee Bill Yeas 8 Nays 1
5	Other Related Meeting Documents		



Senate Appropriations Committee on Pre-K - 12 Education

FY 2025-2026 Committee Budget Proposal

Budget Spreadsheet

Senator Burgess, Chair
Senator Pizzo, Vice Chair

March 26, 2025

2025-2026 FEFP - SPB 2500, MARCH 26, 2025
Public Schools Funding Summary, Comparison with 2024-2025 Third Calculation
STATEWIDE

	2024-2025 Third Calculation	2025-2026 SPB 2500 Calculation	Difference	Percentage Difference
	-1-	-2-	-3-	-4
Major FEFP Formula Components				
Unweighted Total FTE	3,181,118.76	3,241,868.84	60,750.08	1.91%
Unweighted District FTE	2,824,168.51	2,796,212.40	(27,956.11)	-0.99%
Unweighted Scholarship FTE	356,950.25	445,656.44	88,706.19	24.85%
Weighted Total FTE	3,531,596.88	3,533,850.67	2,253.79	0.06%
Weighted District FTE	3,143,808.70	3,049,555.03	(94,253.67)	-3.00%
Weighted Scholarship FTE	387,788.18	484,295.64	96,507.46	24.89%
School Taxable Value (Tax Roll)	3,633,728,396.941	3,835,299,661,042	201,571,264,101	5.55%
Required Local Effort Millage	3.087	3.087	0.000	0.00%
Discretionary Millage	0.748	0.748	0.000	0.00%
Total Millage	3.835	3.835	0.000	0.00%
Base Student Allocation	5,330.98	5,397.75	66.77	1.25%

FEFP Detail				
WFTE x BSA + CWF + SDF (Base FEFP)	19,062,644,416	16,683,344,411	(2,379,300,005)	-12.48%
<i>Classroom Teacher and Other Instructional Personnel Salary Increase</i>	1,254,607,800	1,503,189,629 *	248,581,829	19.81%
DJJ Supplemental Allocation	2,619,525	2,569,459	(50,066)	-1.91%
Educational Enrichment Allocation	833,448,236	731,821,571	(101,626,665)	-12.19%
ESE Guaranteed Allocation	1,293,529,266	1,081,909,611	(211,619,655)	-16.36%
Mental Health Assistance Allocation	180,000,000	180,000,000	0	0.00%
Safe Schools Allocation	290,000,000	290,000,000	0	0.00%
Student Transportation Allocation	556,584,049	567,213,179	10,629,130	1.91%
.748 Mill Discretionary Compression	446,455,416	479,435,095	32,979,679	7.39%
Federally-Connected Student Supplement	16,144,826	16,220,141	75,315	0.47%
State-Funded Discretionary Contribution	44,865,875	53,947,394	9,081,519	20.24%
Total FEFP	22,726,291,609	20,086,460,861	(2,639,830,748)	-11.62%
Less: Required Local Effort	10,377,115,280	10,809,414,792	432,299,512	4.17%

Gross State FEFP Funds	12,349,176,329	9,277,046,069	(3,072,130,260)	-24.88%
Proration to Appropriation	(230,930,211)	0	230,930,211	-100.00%
Educational Enrollment Stabilization Program	118,001,049	0	(118,001,049)	
Net State FEFP Funds	12,236,247,167	9,277,046,069	(2,959,201,098)	-24.18%

State Categorical Programs				
Class Size Reduction Allocation	2,752,103,988	2,724,177,497	(27,926,491)	-1.01%
State-Funded Discretionary Supplement	616,070,303	0	(616,070,303)	-100.00%
Scholarship Funding Allocation	3,368,174,291	4,010,639,782	642,465,491	19.08%
Total State Categorical Funding	6,726,348,582	6,734,817,279	8,468,697	0.13%
Total State Funding	15,604,421,458	16,011,863,348	407,441,890	2.61%

Local Funding				
Required Local Effort	10,377,115,280	10,809,414,792	432,299,512	4.17%
.748 Mill Discretionary Local Effort	2,609,307,687	2,754,051,978	144,744,291	5.55%
Total Local Funding	12,986,422,967	13,563,466,770	577,043,803	4.44%

Totals				
Total Funding	28,590,844,425	29,575,330,118	984,485,693	3.44%
Total Funds per FTE	8,987.67	9,122.93	135.26	1.50%
Percent State Funds	54.58%	54.14%		
Percent Local Funds	45.42%	45.86%		

* The Classroom Teacher and Other Instructional Personnel Salary Increase Allocation funding is included in the Base Funding Total.

Appropriations Committee on Pre-K - 12 Education

Appropriations Committee on Pre-K - 12 Education																		
BE CODE	Row#	ISSUE CODE	ISSUE TITLE	FTE	GR	NR GR	EETF	NR EETF	SSTF	NR SSTF	OTHER TF	NR OTHER TF	ALL FUNDS	NR ALL FUNDS	Row#			
	1	EARLY LEARNING SERVICES														1		
48220400	2	1100001	Startup (OPERATING)	98.00	603,292,519								824,800,067	1,428,092,586		2		
48220400	3	160E450	Realignment of Agency Spending Authority for Northwest Regional Data Center - Deduct		(21,556)								(29,101)	(50,657)		3		
48220400	4	3002105	School Readiness								60,000,000	60,000,000	60,000,000	60,000,000		4		
48220400	5	3002210	Voluntary Prekindergarten Program - Adjust Workload		(2,637,614)									(2,637,614)		5		
48220400	6	6P00060	Partnership for School Readiness Appropriations Projects		1,225,000	1,225,000								1,225,000	1,225,000	6		
48220400	7	7601200	Partnership for School Readiness - Home Instruction Program for Pre School Youngsters (HIPPIY)								2,500,000	2,500,000	2,500,000	2,500,000		7		
48220400	8	7601400	Partnership for School Readiness - Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H.)								7,000,000	7,000,000	7,000,000	7,000,000		8		
48220400	9	7601500	Partnership for School Readiness - Help Me Grow Florida								2,691,043	2,691,043	2,691,043	2,691,043		9		
48220400	10	7601600	School Readiness Gold Seal Differentials								75,000,000	75,000,000	75,000,000	75,000,000		10		
48220400	11	7601700	Pay Differential Program								45,000,000	45,000,000	45,000,000	45,000,000		11		
48220400	12	7601720	Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Program Assessments		2,095,525	2,095,525					2,847,075		4,942,600	2,095,525		12		
48220400	13	7601730	Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Summer Bridge		1,300,000	1,300,000							1,300,000	1,300,000		13		
48220400	14	7601800	Early Learning Match Program								40,000,000	30,000,000	40,000,000	30,000,000		14		
48220400	15	7602300	School Readiness Special Needs Differentials								3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000		15		
	16	EARLY LEARNING SERVICES			98.00	605,253,874	4,620,525							1,062,809,084	225,191,043	1,668,062,958	229,811,568	16
	17																	17
	18	FEFP STATE GRANTS																18
48250300	19	1100001	Startup (OPERATING)		14,616,034,698			609,096,864			266,600,000			15,491,731,562				19
48250300	20	3000800	Class Size Reduction		(47,121,866)									(47,121,866)				20
48250300	21	3000815	K-12 Scholarships		871,318,101									871,318,101				21
48250300	22	3003600	Florida Education Finance Program		(304,064,449)									(304,064,449)				22
48250300	23	3409040	Fund Shift from General Revenue to State School Trust Fund - Delete		(143,935,000)	(99,735,000)								(143,935,000)	(99,735,000)			23
48250300	24	3409050	Fund Shift from General Revenue to State School Trust Fund - Add						143,935,000	99,735,000				143,935,000	99,735,000			24
48250300	25	3409100	Fund Shift from Educational Enhancement Trust Fund to General Revenue - Add				19,860,812	29,673,969						19,860,812	29,673,969			25
48250300	26	3409150	Fund Shift from Educational Enhancement Trust Fund to General Revenue - Delete		(19,860,812)	(29,673,969)								(19,860,812)	(29,673,969)			26
48250300	27	6400235	Transfer Funding from the Florida Education Finance Program to K-12 Scholarships - Deduct		(3,139,321,681)									(3,139,321,681)				27
48250300	28	6400236	Transfer Funding from the Florida Education Finance Program to K-12 Scholarships - Add		3,139,321,681									3,139,321,681				28
	29	FEFP STATE GRANTS			- 14,972,370,672	(129,408,969)	628,957,676	29,673,969	410,535,000	99,735,000	-	-	-	- 16,011,863,348	-	-	-	29
	30																	30
	31	NON FEFP STATE GRANTS																31
48250400	32	1100001	Startup (OPERATING)		393,759,966						7,653,526			401,413,492				32
48250400	33	1800100	Transfer of the Intensive Reading Initiative from Non Fefp to Lastinger Center - Deduct		(2,530,645)									(2,530,645)				33
48250400	34	3006400	Adjustment to Workload		3,500,000	3,500,000								3,500,000	3,500,000			34
48250400	35	3008010	Regional Education Consortium Services		50,000									50,000				35
48250400	36	3008100	Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind		8,962,976						392,246			9,355,222				36
48250400	37	33H4000	Base Budget Reduction		(54,000,000)									(54,000,000)				37
48250400	38	33N0010	Replace Recurring Appropriations with Nonrecurring - Add		150,000,000	150,000,000								150,000,000	150,000,000			38
48250400	39	33N0011	Replace Recurring Appropriations with Nonrecurring - Deduct		(150,000,000)									(150,000,000)				39
48250400	40	33N0035	Replace Recurring Appropriations with Nonrecurring Regional Literacy Teams - Deduct		(2,500,000)									(2,500,000)				40

Appropriations Committee on Pre-K - 12 Education

Appropriations Committee on Pre-K - 12 Education															
BE CODE	Row#	ISSUE CODE	ISSUE TITLE	FTE	GR	NR GR	EETF	NR EETF	SSTF	NR SSTF	OTHER TF	NR OTHER TF	ALL FUNDS	NR ALL FUNDS	Row#
48250400	41	33N0036	Replace Recurring Appropriations with Nonrecurring Regional Literacy Teams - Add			2,500,000							2,500,000	2,500,000	41
48250400	42	33N0038	Replace Recurring Appropriations with Nonrecurring Computer Science Certification and Teacher Bonuses - Deduct			(7,000,000)							(7,000,000)	-	42
48250400	43	33N0039	Replace Recurring Appropriations with Nonrecurring Computer Science Certification and Teacher Bonuses - Add			7,000,000							7,000,000	7,000,000	43
48250400	44	33V9038	Reduce Recurring Appropriations - Computer Science Certification and Teacher Bonuses			(3,000,000)							(3,000,000)	-	44
48250400	45	4300040	School District Threat Management Coordinators			750,000							750,000	-	45
48250400	46	4700200	The Seed School of Miami			365,698							365,698	-	46
48250400	47	5100005	School District Exceptional Student Evaluation Grant Program			4,000,000							4,000,000	4,000,000	47
48250400	48	5300600	Jewish Day Schools Security Guard and Transportation Grant Program - Restore Nonrecurring			17,000,000							17,000,000	17,000,000	48
48250400	49	6P00070	Mentoring Or Student Assistance Initiatives Appropriations Projects			2,955,000							2,955,000	2,955,000	49
48250400	50	6P00075	Teacher Professional Development Appropriations Projects			1,196,727							1,196,727	1,196,727	50
48250400	51	6P00080	Strategic Statewide Initiatives Appropriations Projects			1,695,000							1,695,000	1,695,000	51
48250400	52	6P00085	School and Instructional Enhancements Appropriations Projects			16,293,395							16,293,395	16,293,395	52
48250400	53	6P00090	Exceptional Education Appropriations Projects			1,348,605					166,000	166,000	1,514,605	1,514,605	53
48250400	54	9B00130	Educational Enrollment Stabilization Program - Chapter 2024-231, Lof, Section 74			50,000,000							50,000,000	50,000,000	54
48250400	55	990R000	Education Capital Projects			67,243,848							67,243,848	67,243,848	55
	56		NON FEFP STATE GRANTS			509,590,570							517,802,342	324,898,575	56
	57														57
	58		FEDERAL GRANTS K12												58
48250500	59	1100001	Startup (OPERATING)										2,555,830,704	2,555,830,704	59
48250500	60	5304800	Restore Nonrecurring Grants and Aids Federal Grants and Aids								99,857,010	99,857,010	99,857,010	99,857,010	60
	61		FEDERAL GRANTS K12										2,655,687,714	99,857,010	61
	62														62
	63		PGM: ED MEDIA & TECH SERV												63
48250600	64	1100001	Startup (OPERATING)			11,038,156							11,038,156	-	64
	65		PGM: ED MEDIA & TECH SERV			11,038,156							11,038,156	-	65
	66														66
	67		STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION												67
48998000	68	1100001	Startup (OPERATING)	949.00		153,243,876							159,585,840	312,829,716	68
48998000	69	160E450	Realignment of Agency Spending Authority for Northwest Regional Data Center - Deduct			(217,970)						(611,686)	(829,656)	-	69
48998000	70	17C99C0	Realign Enterprise Cybersecurity Resiliency - Add			30,175					85,882		116,057	-	70
48998000	71	2503080	Direct Billing for Administrative Hearings			17,355							17,355	-	71
48998000	72	30002C0	Risk Mitigation Program			1,140,000							1,140,000	1,140,000	72
48998000	73	30005C0	School Choice Web Applications and Database Update			845,250							845,250	845,250	73
48998000	74	30012C0	School Choice Online Portal			1,800,000							1,800,000	1,800,000	74
48998000	75	30067C0	District Tools			3,000,000							3,000,000	3,000,000	75
48998000	76	30080C0	Transparency Tool			3,777,000							3,777,000	3,777,000	76
48998000	77	33N0030	Replace Recurring Appropriations with Nonrecurring Development of New Advance Courses Assessments - Deduct			(2,000,000)							(2,000,000)	-	77

Appropriations Committee on Pre-K - 12 Education

Appropriations Committee on Pre-K - 12 Education															
BE CODE	Row#	ISSUE CODE	ISSUE TITLE	FTE	GR	NR GR	EETF	NR EETF	SSTF	NR SSTF	OTHER TF	NR OTHER TF	ALL FUNDS	NR ALL FUNDS	Row#
48998000	78	33N0031	Replace Recurring Appropriations with Nonrecurring Development of New Advance Courses Assessments - Add		2,000,000	2,000,000							2,000,000	2,000,000	78
48998000	79	33N0032	Replace Recurring Appropriations with Nonrecurring College Entrance Assessments - Deduct		(8,000,000)								(8,000,000)	-	79
48998000	80	33N0033	Replace Recurring Appropriations with Nonrecurring College Entrance Assessments - Add		8,000,000	8,000,000							8,000,000	8,000,000	80
48998000	81	33V1600	Reduce Positions Vacant In Excess of 180 Days		(29,00)	(1,914,373)							(1,914,373)	-	81
48998000	82	3600PC0	Florida Planning, Accounting, and Ledger Management (PALM) Readiness		250,000	250,000							250,000	250,000	82
48998000	83	4000A30	Hope Navigators		1,142,828	64,370							1,142,828	64,370	83
48998000	84	4004630	Teachers Classroom Supply Program		500,000	500,000							500,000	500,000	84
48998000	85	5300PC0	Restore Nonrecurring - Florida Planning, Accounting, and Ledger Management (PALM) Readiness		1,450,000	1,450,000							1,450,000	1,450,000	85
	86	STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION		920.00	165,064,141	22,826,620	-	-	-	-	159,060,036	-	324,124,177	22,826,620	86
	87	Grand Total		1,018.00	16,263,317,413	222,770,751	628,957,676	29,673,969	410,535,000	99,735,000	3,885,768,606	325,214,053	21,188,578,695	677,393,773	87

Appropriation Committee on Pre-K - 12 Education Projects

Budget Entity	Appropriation Category	Project	Split	Operations	FCO	Total
EARLY LEARNING SERVICES	G/A-PRTNSHIP/SCHOOL READ	C.R.E.A.T.E. West Pasco Program for Children (SF 3239)	No	500,000	0	500,000
		Community & Family Building Early Learning Initiative (SF 1808)	No	350,000	0	350,000
		Preschool Emergency Alert Response Learning System (SF 1012)	No	375,000	0	375,000
	Sub-Total			1,225,000	0	1,225,000
EARLY LEARNING SERVICES Total				1,225,000	0	1,225,000
STATE GRANTS/K-12 PROGRAM - NON FEFP	G/A-MENTORING/STUDENT INIT	Best Buddies Jobs Project (SF 2379)	No	400,000	0	400,000
		Best Buddies Mentoring and Student Assistance Initiative (SF 2051)	No	350,000	0	350,000
		Big Brothers Big Sisters Bigs Inspiring Scholastic Success (BISS) Project (SF 2698)	No	1,750,000	0	1,750,000
		Let's Help Teen Girls BLOOM (SF 2128)	No	30,000	0	30,000
		Summer, Cameras, Action! Youth Summer Leadership Experience! (SF 3369)	No	75,000	0	75,000
		Youth Matters Mentorship Program (SF 2296)	No	350,000	0	350,000
	Sub-Total			2,955,000	0	2,955,000
	TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEV	Empowering Educators: A Resilience Initiative for Hillsborough and Pasco Counties (SF 1678)	No	350,000	0	350,000
		Personalized Learning Initiative for K-12 Education (SF 2700)	No	350,000	0	350,000
		Teacher Apprenticeship Program (SF 2106)	No	496,727	0	496,727
	Sub-Total			1,196,727	0	1,196,727
	G/A-STRAT STWD INITIATIVES	American History Live (SF 2770)	No	95,000	0	95,000
		Education Technology Inventory Dashboard & Clearinghouse (SF 1248)	No	350,000	0	350,000
		HAPCO Music & Culinary Education Programs (SF 3344)	No	200,000	0	200,000
		L.E.A.D. (Law Enforcement Against Drugs and Violence): Statewide Implementation (SF 3073)	No	350,000	0	350,000
		Preparing Florida's Workforce Through Agricultural Education (SF 2788)	No	350,000	0	350,000
		WIN Florida (SF 3016)	No	350,000	0	350,000
	Sub-Total			1,695,000	0	1,695,000
	G/A-SCHOOL/INSTRUCT ENHANC	After-School All-Stars (SF 1477)	No	350,000	0	350,000
		Alpert Jewish Family Service, Rales JFS & inSIGHT Through Education Traveling Holocaust Classroom (SF 1599)	No	165,000	0	165,000
		ARK Innovation Center at Pinellas County Schools (SF 2380)	Yes	350,000	0	350,000
		B. WRIGHT COMMUNITY UNDERSERVED LEADERSHIP STEAM PROGRAM (SF 1200)	No	150,000	0	150,000
BLUE Missions REACH Program (SF 2699)		No	350,000	0	350,000	
Breakthrough Miami (SF 2220)		No	350,000	0	350,000	
Busch Wildlife Sanctuary's Environmental Education Program (SF 1066)		No	500,000	0	500,000	
Campus Guardian Angel Program (SF 2169)		No	350,000	0	350,000	
Career Pathways - Building Florida's Workforce (SF 3345)		No	205,000	0	205,000	
Caregiving Youth Project (SF 3203)		No	250,000	0	250,000	
Citrus County Schools - Crystal River High Health Academy Expansion (SF 2732)		Yes	0	350,000	350,000	
City of Fort Lauderdale Education Enrichment Program (SF 1256)		No	350,000	0	350,000	
Construction Drawings and Ground Breaking for an Education and Social Service Center (SF 3221)		Yes	45,000	900,000	945,000	
Duval County Public Schools -expanding Elementary Career and Technical Education (CTE) Opportunities (SF 1991)		No	350,000	0	350,000	
Economic Job Growth: Cleared for takeoff: Rural Aviation STEM Program for High Schools (SF 2564)		No	337,200	0	337,200	
Empowered of Central Florida expansion of the Rock Program Into Lake, Citrus & Sumter Counties (SF 1351)		No	350,000	0	350,000	
Explicit Instruction for Emergent Bilingual Students--Osceola County (SF 3133)	No	350,000	0	350,000		

Appropriation Committee on Pre-K - 12 Education Projects

Budget Entity	Appropriation Category	Project	Split	Operations	FCO	Total		
STATE GRANTS/K-12 PROGRAM - NON FEFP	G/A-SCHOOL/INSTRUCT ENHANC	Florida Healthy Choices Sexual Risk Avoidance Program (SF 2946)	No	364,113	0	364,113		
		Greater Miami Jewish Federation's Holocaust Memorial (SF 2798)	No	1,500,000	0	1,500,000		
		Gulf District Schools Math and Reading Enhancement Program (SF 2575)	No	305,000	0	305,000		
		Hands of Mercy Everywhere Teen Moms and At-Risk Youth Vocational Training (SF 1723)	No	350,000	0	350,000		
		Helping Advance and Nurture the Development of Youth (Handy) (SF 2434)	No	475,000	0	475,000		
		High School Math Oncology Internship Program (SF 2135)	No	100,000	0	100,000		
		Holocaust Education Resource Council (SF 2962)	No	400,000	0	400,000		
		Holocaust Learning Center (HLC) at David Posnack Jewish Community Center (DPJCC) (SF 3342)	No	225,000	0	225,000		
		Holocaust Learning Experience Education Platform Expansion (SF 2401)	No	1,114,000	0	1,114,000		
		Jewish Day School Student Transportation Safety Initiative (SF 1202)	No	350,000	0	350,000		
		Jewish Federation Multicultural Campus: Lodge & Holocaust Education Center (SF 1032)	Yes	225,000	845,350	1,070,350		
		Junior Achievement of South Florida Youth Workforce Program Expansion (SF 1130)	No	350,000	0	350,000		
		K-12 Student Engagement at the Kennedy Space Center (SF 3290)	No	350,000	0	350,000		
		Links to Success (SF 3087)	Yes	400,000	150,000	550,000		
		Miami-Dade County Public Schools SpaceHUB @ Booker T. Washington High School (SF 2751)	Yes	200,000	150,000	350,000		
		National Flight Academy (SF 2995)	No	350,000	0	350,000		
		NEXT GENERATION LEADERSHIP SERVICES (SF 1855)	No	150,000	0	150,000		
		North Florida Worlds of Work (SF 3018)	No	350,000	0	350,000		
		Northeast Florida Career Readiness Catalyst Project for Future Economic Success (SF 2033)	No	365,000	0	365,000		
		One Hundred Black Men of South Florida - Dr. Harold Guinyard Leadership Academy (SF 1710)	No	200,000	0	200,000		
		Overtown Youth Center - College and Career Readiness (SF 1588)	No	500,000	0	500,000		
		Roosevelt Elementary School Program Enhancements (SF 2771)	Yes	329,000	21,000	350,000		
		Securing the Continuation of the State Science and Engineering Fair of Florida: Project Year 3 of 5 (SF 2162)	No	139,082	0	139,082		
		Seminole County Public Schools - Academy of Engineering Modernization & Expansion (SF 1476)	Yes	350,000	0	350,000		
		South Walton High School - Career Academy (SF 2683)	No	350,000	0	350,000		
		St. Augustine Airport Student Maintenance Training Program (SF 2543)	No	250,000	0	250,000		
		State Academic Tournament (SF 1649)	No	250,000	0	250,000		
		Student Wellness Center (SF 3358)	No	400,000	0	400,000		
		Teacher Safety Training Program (SF 1903)	No	350,000	0	350,000		
		United Way of Northeast Florida - Achievers for Life (SF 2848)	No	350,000	0	350,000		
		Workforce Development and Career Readiness Through STEM Education (SF 2772)	Yes	100,000	250,000	350,000		
		Sub-Total				16,293,395	2,666,350	18,959,745
			G/A-EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION	Live With LEV Beyond the Bell (SF 1083)	No	75,000	0	75,000
				Love Serving Autism Therapeutic Wellness Program (SF 1145)	No	350,000	0	350,000
				Miami Lighthouse Academy, LLC (SF 1843)	No	200,000	0	200,000
				The Family Cafe (SF 1196)	No	350,000	0	350,000
				Tree of Knowledge: Chabad/Jewish Students with Autism and Special Needs Learning Center (SF 1452)	No	373,605	0	373,605
				Very Special Arts Program (SF 2142)	No	166,000	0	166,000
			Sub-Total			1,514,605	0	1,514,605
			PUBLIC SCHOOL SPECIAL PROJ	Broward Schools McArthur High School Aquaponics Greenhouse (SF 2235)	No	0	100,000	100,000
				Jacksonville Classical Academy Expansion (SF 2587)	No	0	3,000,000	3,000,000
			Sub-Total			0	3,100,000	3,100,000

Appropriation Committee on Pre-K - 12 Education Projects

Budget Entity	Appropriation Category	Project	Split	Operations	FCO	Total
STATE GRANTS/K-12 PROGRAM - NON FEFP	FACIL REPAIRS/MAINT/CONST	Centro Mater Infant & Toddlers Facility (SF 1828)	No	0	350,000	350,000
		Children's Center for Education and Collaboration-The Historic Cocoa Village Playhouse, Inc. (SF 1049)	No	0	350,000	350,000
		Florence A. De George Teen Center/Facility Improvements (SF 1631)	No	0	350,000	350,000
		LiFT: Employment & Training for Students with Neurodiversity (SF 2388)	No	0	350,000	350,000
		MOSI's Digital Dome Theatre Classroom Expansion (SF 1234)	No	0	476,000	476,000
		Stranahan House Center of the Community Initiative (SF 1251)	No	0	350,000	350,000
		The Arc Gateway - Pearl Nelson Center (SF 3001)	No	0	400,000	400,000
		The Galileo Early Learning Center/Promoting Teacher Retention (SF 1491)	No	0	350,000	350,000
		Sub-Total			0	2,976,000
STATE GRANTS/K-12 PROGRAM - NON FEFP Total				23,654,727	8,742,350	32,397,077

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Appropriations Committee on Pre-K - 12 Education

BILL: CS/SB 508

INTRODUCER: Appropriations Committee on Pre-K - 12 Education and Senator Jones

SUBJECT: Family Empowerment Scholarship Program

DATE: March 28, 2025 **REVISED:** _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Palazesi</u>	<u>Bouck</u>	<u>ED</u>	Favorable
2.	<u>Gray</u>	<u>Elwell</u>	<u>AED</u>	Fav/CS
3.	_____	_____	<u>RC</u>	_____

Please see Section IX. for Additional Information:
COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE - Substantial Changes

I. Summary:

CS/SB 508 requires private schools participating in the Family Empowerment Scholarship program, to inform parents of students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Education Plan (EP), English Learner Plan (ELP), or a 504 plan about available specialized services and therapies offered at the school. Such notice must be before enrollment or grade level transitions.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2025.

The bill does not have fiscal impact to state revenues or expenditures. **See Section V. Fiscal Impact Statement.**

II. Present Situation:

Private School Requirements for the State Scholarship Programs

Florida offers several scholarship programs that allow parents of eligible students to register in and attend a private school that may better serve a student’s particular needs, or to provide educational options for students with disabilities or who are receiving parent-directed instruction. The three scholarship programs include:

- The Family Empowerment Scholarships, which include:
 - The Family Empowerment Scholarship for students attending a private school (FES-EO).

- The Family Empowerment Scholarship for students with disabilities (FES-UA).¹
- The Florida Tax Credit (FTC) Scholarship Program,² consisting of a scholarship for students attending private school and a scholarship for students in a personalized education program.³
- The Hope Scholarship Program (HSP).⁴

A private school is a nonpublic school defined as an as an individual, association, or corporation, that designates itself as an educational center that includes kindergarten or a higher grade or as an elementary, secondary, business, technical, or trade school below college level or any organization that provides instructional services.⁵ For a private school to be eligible to participate in the FTC and FES programs the school is required to:

- Comply with the antidiscrimination provisions of 42 U.S.C. s. 2000d.⁶
- Notify the department of its intent to participate in a scholarship program and if there is any change to the school's name, director, or mailing or physical address.
- Provide to the Department of Education (DOE) or Scholarship-Funding Organization (SFO) all documentation required for student participation, including attendance verification and fee schedule.
- Annually complete a notarized scholarship compliance form certifying school employees and contract personnel have completed the background screening requirements.
- Prohibit education support employees, instructional personnel, and school administrators from employment in a position that requires direct contact with students if the personnel or administrators are ineligible for such employment based on the background screening results.
- Demonstrate fiscal soundness and accountability.
- Employ teachers who hold baccalaureate or higher degrees, have at least three years of teaching experience in public or private schools, or have special skills, knowledge, or experience.
- Adopt policies establishing standards of ethical conduct for education support employees, instructional personnel, and school administrators.
- Maintain a physical location in the state.
- Publish on the school's website that a student placed in the private school does not have an individual right to receive some or all of the special education and related services that the student would receive if enrolled in a public school under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
- Provide quarterly updates on student progress and cooperate with parents who choose to have their student participate in the statewide assessment program.
- Provide a report from an independent certified public accountant if certain conditions are met.
- Not be owned or operated by an entity or person controlled by foreign country of concern.⁷

¹ Section 1002.394, F.S.; *see also* Rule 6A-6.0952, F.A.C.

² Section 1002.395, F.S.; *see also* Rule 6A-6.0960, F.A.C.

³ Section 1002.395(7), F.S.

⁴ Section 1002.40, F.S.; *see also* Rule 6A-6.0951, F.A.C.

⁵ Section 1002.01(3), F.S.

⁶ 42 U.S.C. s. 2000d. No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

⁷ Section 1002.421(1), F.S.

Private schools participating in the FES scholarship program must provide the SFO confirmation of the student's admission into the school, administer DOE approved norm-referenced assessments or administer the statewide assessment, and discuss with the parent, whose child is receiving the FES-UA scholarship, the school's academic programs and policies, specialized services, code of conduct, and attendance policies prior to the student enrolling.⁸

Specialized Educational Plans

Certain students in Florida are provided with specialized educational plans based on the students' individual educational needs. These plans may include an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Plan, Education Plan, English Language Learner plan, or 504 accommodations plan. An IEP is developed for students with disabilities and outlines the special education, related services, and supplementary aides and services to be provided to the student.⁹ An Education Plan is a written plan for each child who is identified as eligible for gifted education describing the student's educational needs and the services that will be provided to meet those needs.¹⁰ An English Language Learner (ELL) Plan details instructional programs (including non-English for Speakers of Other Languages programs), instructional time or schedule, identification date of limited English proficiency, assessment data for classification or reclassification as an ELL, and exit date with corresponding assessment data.¹¹ A 504 accommodations plan provides students with disabilities access to accommodations and modifications necessary for them to access the same education as their peers.¹²

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill amends s.1002.394, F.S., to require private schools participating in the Family Empowerment Scholarship to specify for parents which components of the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Education Plan (EP), English Learner Plan (ELP), or 504 Plan will be implemented. The bill also authorizes the private school to update the specialized services and therapies offered if the school district revises its list of equitable services or when a student transitions to a new grade level, whichever occurs first. Lastly, the bill requires that within 30 days of receiving a private school services plan from the district, the parent must be informed of which modifications, accommodations, and therapies included in the plan will be honored by the private school.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2025.

⁸ Section 1002.394(9), F.S.

⁹ 34 C.F.R. s.300.320.

¹⁰ Rule 6A-6.030191, F.A.C. Florida Department of Education, *Technical Assistance Paper: Development of Educational Plans for Students Who Are Gifted*, available at <http://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-7762/dps-2016-53.pdf> (last visited Mar. 19, 2025).

¹¹ Rule 6A-6.0901, F.A.C.

¹² U.S. Department of Education, *Frequently Asked Questions: Section 504 Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)*, available at <https://www.ed.gov/laws-and-policy/civil-rights-laws/disability-discrimination/frequently-asked-questions-section-504-fape>, (last visited Mar. 19, 2025).

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

This bill does not have an impact to state revenues or expenditures.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill substantially amends section 1002.394 of the Florida Statutes.

IX. Additional Information:

- A. **Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:**
(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

CS by Appropriations Committee on Pre-K - 12 Education on March 25, 2025:

The committee substitute:

- Requires private schools to clearly specify for parents which components of a student’s Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Education Plan (EP), English Learner Plan (ELP), or 504 Plan will be implemented.
- Authorizes private schools to update the specialized services and therapies they offer if the school district revises its list of equitable services or when a student transitions to a new grade level—whichever occurs first.
- Requires that within 30 days of receiving a private school services plan from the school district, the parent must be informed of which modifications, accommodations, and therapies included in the plan will be honored by the private school.

- B. **Amendments:**

None.



948812

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Senate	.	House
Comm: RCS	.	
03/27/2025	.	
	.	
	.	
	.	

The Appropriations Committee on Pre-K - 12 Education (Jones) recommended the following:

Senate Amendment (with title amendment)

Delete lines 18 - 29

and insert:

(d) Before a student with an Individualized Education Plan, Education Plan, English Learner Plan, or 504 plan's initial enrollment or grade level transition, provide to the parent, in writing, ~~For a student determined eligible pursuant to paragraph (3)(b), discuss the school's academic programs and policies, specialized services, code of conduct, and attendance policies,~~



948812

11 and specialized services and therapies offered at the school.
12 The private school must specifically delineate for the parent
13 which elements of the student's Individualized Education Plan,
14 Education Plan, English Learner Plan, or 504 plan will be met. A
15 private school may update specialized services and therapies
16 offered if a school district updates its list of equitable
17 services offered, or at a student's grade level transition,
18 whichever comes first. In addition, within 30 days of the school
19 district providing an eligible student with a private school
20 services plan, before enrollment with the parent must be
21 informed of what modifications, accommodations, and therapies
22 included in to determine which programs and services may meet
23 the student's plan will be honored by the private school
24 individual needs.

25
26 ===== T I T L E A M E N D M E N T =====

27 And the title is amended as follows:

28 Delete lines 6 - 7

29 and insert:

30 in writing to parents before certain students enroll
31 in the school; requiring that the parent of certain
32 students be informed of certain information within a
33 specified timeframe; providing an effective date.

By Senator Jones

34-00858-25

2025508__

1 A bill to be entitled
 2 An act relating to the Family Empowerment Scholarship
 3 Program; amending s. 1002.394, F.S.; requiring private
 4 schools participating in the Family Empowerment
 5 Scholarship Program to provide specified information
 6 in writing to parents before student enrollment in the
 7 school; providing an effective date.
 8
 9 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:
 10
 11 Section 1. Paragraph (d) of subsection (9) of section
 12 1002.394, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:
 13 1002.394 The Family Empowerment Scholarship Program.—
 14 (9) PRIVATE SCHOOL ELIGIBILITY AND OBLIGATIONS.—To be
 15 eligible to participate in the Family Empowerment Scholarship
 16 Program, a private school may be sectarian or nonsectarian and
 17 must:
 18 (d) Before a student's enrollment, provide to the parent in
 19 writing ~~For a student determined eligible pursuant to paragraph~~
 20 ~~(3)(b), discuss the school's academic programs and policies,~~
 21 specialized services, code of conduct, and attendance policies,
 22 and specialized services and therapies offered at the school. In
 23 addition, each parent of a student with an Individualized
 24 Education Plan, Education Plan, English Language Learner Plan,
 25 or 504 plan must be informed of what modifications,
 26 accommodations, and therapies included in the student's plan
 27 will be honored ~~before enrollment with the parent to determine~~
 28 ~~which programs and services may meet the student's individual~~
 29 ~~needs.~~

Page 1 of 2

CODING: Words ~~stricken~~ are deletions; words underlined are additions.

34-00858-25

2025508__

30
 31 If a private school fails to meet the requirements of this
 32 subsection or s. 1002.421, the commissioner may determine that
 33 the private school is ineligible to participate in the
 34 scholarship program.
 35 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.

Page 2 of 2

CODING: Words ~~stricken~~ are deletions; words underlined are additions.



The Florida Senate

Committee Agenda Request

To: Senator Danny Burgess, Chair
Appropriations Committee on Pre-K - 12 Education

Subject: Committee Agenda Request

Date: March 12, 2025

I respectfully request that **Senate Bill #508**, relating to Family Empowerment Scholarship Program, be placed on the:

- committee agenda at your earliest possible convenience.
- next committee agenda.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Shev", written over a horizontal line.

Senator Shevrin D. "Shev" Jones
Florida Senate, District 34

3/26/25

Meeting Date

The Florida Senate APPEARANCE RECORD

Deliver both copies of this form to
Senate professional staff conducting the meeting

508

Bill Number or Topic

Committee

Amendment Barcode (if applicable)

Name

Steve Hicks

Phone

813-695-1949

Address

29359 Grass Bunker Dr.

Email

Street

San Antonio

71 33526

City

State

Zip

Speaking:

For

Against

Information

OR

Waive Speaking:

In Support

Against

PLEASE CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

I am appearing without
compensation or sponsorship.

I am a registered lobbyist,
representing:

I am not a lobbyist, but received
something of value for my appearance
(travel, meals, lodging, etc.),
sponsored by:

While it is a tradition to encourage public testimony, time may not permit all persons wishing to speak to be heard at this hearing. Those who do speak may be asked to limit their remarks so that as many persons as possible can be heard. If you have questions about registering to lobby please see Fla. Stat. §11.045 and Joint Rule 1. [2020-2022 Joint Rules.pdf \(flsenate.gov\)](#)

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The Florida Senate

APPEARANCE RECORD

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3-26-25

Meeting Date

SB 508

Bill Number or Topic

App. Prek - 12

Committee

Amendment Barcode (if applicable)

Name Lois Farmer

Phone 321-722-9962

Address 1241 Salina St SE

Street

Email loshgkids@aol.com

Palm Bay

City

FL

State

32909

Zip

Speaking: For Against Information OR Waive Speaking: In Support Against

PLEASE CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

I am appearing without compensation or sponsorship.

I am a registered lobbyist, representing:

I am not a lobbyist, but received something of value for my appearance (travel, meals, lodging, etc.), sponsored by:

While it is a tradition to encourage public testimony, time may not permit all persons wishing to speak to be heard at this hearing. Those who do speak may be asked to limit their remarks so that as many persons as possible can be heard. If you have questions about registering to lobby please see Fla. Stat. §11.045 and Joint Rule 1. [2020-2022JointRules.pdf](#) [flsenate.gov](#)

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The Florida Senate

APPEARANCE RECORD

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SB 508

Bill Number or Topic

03-26-2025
Appropriation
Pre-K-12

Committee

Amendment Barcode (if applicable)

Name Florida PTA - Dannie McMillon

Phone 407-855-7604

Address 1747 Orlando Central Pkwy

Email mmillonaactivist@aol.com

Orlando FL 32809

Speaking: For Against Information OR Waive Speaking: In Support Against

PLEASE CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

- I am appearing without compensation or sponsorship.
- I am a registered lobbyist, representing:
- I am not a lobbyist, but received something of value for my appearance (travel, meals, lodging, etc.), sponsored by:

While it is a tradition to encourage public testimony, time may not permit all persons wishing to speak to be heard at this hearing. Those who do speak may be asked to limit their remarks so that as many persons as possible can be heard. If you have questions about registering to lobby please see Fla. Stat. §11.045 and Joint Rule 1. [2020-2022 Joint Rules.pdf \(flsenate.gov\)](#)

This form is part of the public record for this meeting.

The Florida Senate

APPEARANCE RECORD

508

3/26/25

Meeting Date

PreK APP

Committee

Deliver both copies of this form to Senate professional staff conducting the meeting

Bill Number or Topic

Amendment Barcode (if applicable)

Name Charman Postel (Florida PTA)

Phone 561-400-3127

Address 1747 Orlando Central Pkwy

Email education.committee@floridapta.org

Street

Orlando FL 33

City

State

Zip

Speaking: [] For [] Against [] Information OR Waive Speaking: [x] In Support [] Against

PLEASE CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

[] I am appearing without compensation or sponsorship.

[] I am a registered lobbyist, representing:

[x] I am not a lobbyist, but received something of value for my appearance (travel, meals, lodging, etc.), sponsored by:

Florida PTA

While it is a tradition to encourage public testimony, time may not permit all persons wishing to speak to be heard at this hearing. Those who do speak may be asked to limit their remarks so that as many persons as possible can be heard. If you have questions about registering to lobby please see Fla. Stat. §11.045 and Joint Rule 1. 2020-2022 Joint Rules.pdf (flsenate.gov)

This form is part of the public record for this meeting.

S-001 (08/10/2021)

The Florida Senate

APPEARANCE RECORD

3-26-25

Meeting Date

SJB-508

Bill Number or Topic

Appropriations Prek-12

Committee

Deliver both copies of this form to Senate professional staff conducting the meeting

Amendment Barcode (if applicable)

Name Crystal Etienne

Phone 305-496-0398

Address 14082 SW 176th TER

Street

Email crystal.etienne292@gmail.com

Miami FL 33177

City

State

Zip

Speaking: [X] For [] Against [] Information OR Waive Speaking: [] In Support [] Against

PLEASE CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

[X] I am appearing without compensation or sponsorship.

[] I am a registered lobbyist, representing:

[] I am not a lobbyist, but received something of value for my appearance (travel, meals, lodging, etc.), sponsored by:

While it is a tradition to encourage public testimony, time may not permit all persons wishing to speak to be heard at this hearing. Those who do speak may be asked to limit their remarks so that as many persons as possible can be heard. If you have questions about registering to lobby please see Fla. Stat. §11.045 and Joint Rule 1. 2020-2022 Joint Rules.pdf (flsenate.gov)

This form is part of the public record for this meeting.

S-001 (08/10/2021)

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Appropriations Committee on Pre-K - 12 Education

BILL: CS/CS/SB 1402

INTRODUCER: Appropriations Committee on Pre-K - 12 Education; Education Pre-K - 12 Committee;
and Senator Yarborough

SUBJECT: Students Enrolled in Dropout Retrieval Programs

DATE: March 28, 2025

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Palazesi</u>	<u>Bouck</u>	<u>ED</u>	<u>Fav/CS</u>
2.	<u>Gray</u>	<u>Elwell</u>	<u>AED</u>	<u>Fav/CS</u>
3.	_____	_____	<u>FP</u>	_____

Please see Section IX. for Additional Information:

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE - Substantial Changes

I. Summary:

CS/CS/SB 1402 defines dropout retrieval programs as programs that serve students who have officially withdrawn from high school and were not engaged in the education system at the time of enrollment in the dropout retrieval program. The bill also requires all dropout retrieval programs to choose between receiving a school improvement rating or a school grade.

The bill requires that each Virtual Instruction Provider (VIP) receives a school grade or school improvement rating for each district with which it contracts, based on the assessment scores of all students served within those districts. The bill also exempts a VIP operating as a dropout retrieval program from receiving a district grade.

This bill takes effect July 1, 2025.

This bill does not have a fiscal impact on state revenues or expenditures. **See Section V., Fiscal Impact Statement.**

II. Present Situation:

Virtual Instruction Programs

A virtual instruction program (VIP) is a program of instruction provided in an interactive learning environment created through technology in which students are separated from their teachers by time or space, or both.¹ Florida law establishes a variety of options to make virtual instruction accessible to K-12 students. These options include:

- Full-time or part-time enrollment in a school district virtual instruction program;²
- Full-time enrollment in a virtual charter school;³
- Enrollment in individual virtual courses offered by school districts and approved by the Department of Education (DOE);⁴ and
- Full-time and part-time enrollment in Florida Virtual Schools (FLVS) or school district FLVS franchises.⁵

The VIP providers that are approved by the DOE must meet the following requirements:

- Align virtual course curriculum and course content to the state academic standards.
- Offer instruction that is designed to enable a student to gain proficiency in each virtual instruction course of study.
- Provide each student enrolled in the virtual instruction program with all the necessary instructional materials.
- Provide each full-time student enrolled in the virtual instruction program who qualifies for free or reduced-price school lunches and who does not have a computer or internet access in his or her home with the equipment necessary for participants in the virtual instruction program.⁶

Accel Schools East, Connections Education of Florida, LLC, FLVS, Graduation Alliance, Imagine Learning, K12 Florida, Mater Virtual Academy, Optima Academy Online, and Somerset Virtual Academy are the current DOE-approved statewide VIP programs.⁷

Each approved VIP must participate in the statewide assessment program and receive a school grade or school improvement rating. Each statewide VIP provider's school improvement rating or school grade is based on the aggregated assessment scores of all students served by the provider statewide. Additionally, each approved virtual instruction program provider receives a district grade based upon the aggregated assessment scores of all students served by the VIP

¹ Section 1002.45(1), F.S.

² Section 1002.45, F.S.

³ Sections 1002.33(1) and 1002.45(1), F.S.

⁴ Section 1003.498, F.S.

⁵ Section 1002.45(2), F.S.; see also Florida Department of Education, List of Approved Program and Course Providers, <https://www.fldoe.org/schools/school-choice/virtual-edu/provider-resources/approved-providers/> (last visited March 19, 2025).

⁶ Section 1002.45(3) F.S.

⁷ Florida Department of Education, *List of Approved Program and Course Providers*, available at <https://www.fldoe.org/schools/school-choice/virtual-edu/provider-resources/approved-providers/> (last visited March 19, 2025).

statewide and a separate school grade for each school district with which it contracts based upon the assessment scores of all students served within the school district.⁸

Dropout Prevention and Academic Intervention

Dropout prevention and academic intervention programs differ from traditional educational programs and schools in scheduling, administrative structure, philosophy, curriculum, or setting and must employ alternative teaching methodologies, curricula, learning activities, and diagnostic and assessment procedures in order to meet the needs, interests, abilities, and talents of eligible students. Dropout prevention and academic intervention are required to provide curricula, character development and law education, and related services that support the program goals and lead to improved performance in the areas of academic achievement, attendance, and discipline.⁹ Educational alternative programs, disciplinary programs, dropout retrieval programs, alternative to expulsion programs, teenage parent programs, and city and county jail programs are considered dropout prevention programs.

Dropout retrieval programs are designed for students who have officially dropped out of school, re-enrolled and are persevering towards graduation with a primary focus on credit recovery and career planning. In the 2023-2024 school year, 3,095 students at all grade levels participated in a dropout retrieval program and the outcome data for students in dropout retrieval programs reveal the following:

- 530 (42.6 percent) of 1,244 students in grade 12 graduated with a high school diploma.
- 177 (6.3 percent) of 2,810 students in grades nine-12 dropped out of school.
- 1,851 (59.8 percent) of 3,095 students were promoted to a higher grade.
- 1,825 (59 percent) of 3,095 students missed 10 percent or more school days; and
- No students were suspended for more than 10 days or expelled.¹⁰

School Grades

School grades are used to explain a school's performance in a familiar, easy-to-understand manner for parents and the public.¹¹ School grades are also used to determine whether a school must select or implement a turnaround option¹² or whether a school is eligible for school recognition funds as appropriated by the Legislature.¹³

Elementary, middle and high schools each share a basic model for determining school grades, based on the percentage of total points earned by a school for each component in the model. Middle and high school models include additional components beyond the basic model. Combination school models include the additional components for the grades served (*e.g.*, a school serving grades k-12 would include the additional components for the middle and high

⁸ Section 1002.45(7) F.S.

⁹ Section 1003.53(1), F.S.

¹⁰ Florida Department of Education, *Dropout Prevention and Academic Intervention Programs 2023-2024 Annual Report*, available at <https://www.fldoe.org/file/5576/2324DropoutPreventReport.pdf>.

¹¹ Section 1008.34(1), F.S.

¹² Section 1008.33(4), F.S.

¹³ Section 1008.36, F.S.

school models). Each school must receive a school grade based on the school's performance in the following components:¹⁴

- The percentage of eligible students passing statewide, standardized assessments in ELA, mathematics, science, and social studies.
- The percentage of eligible students who make learning gains in ELA and mathematics as measured by statewide, standardized assessments.
- The percentage of eligible students in the lowest 25 percent in ELA and mathematics, as identified by prior year performance on statewide, standardized assessments, who make learning gains as measured by statewide, standardized ELA assessments.
- For schools comprised of grade levels that include grade three, the percentage of eligible students who score an achievement level three or higher on the grade three statewide, standardized ELA assessment.
- For schools comprised of middle grades six through eight or grades seven and eight, the percentage of eligible students passing high school level statewide, standardized end-of-course assessments or attaining national industry certifications identified in the CAPE Industry Certification Funding List pursuant to SBE rule.¹⁵

For a school comprised of grades nine-12, or 10-12, the school's grade includes the following components:

- The four-year high school graduation rate of the school.
- The percentage of students who were eligible to earn college and career credit in a specified acceleration mechanism, who earn a specified industry certification, or who participate in Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps courses and earn a qualifying score on the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery.¹⁶

School Improvement Ratings for Alternative Schools

An alternative school, for the purposes of school accountability, is a school that provides dropout prevention and academic intervention services. An alternative school may choose to receive a school improvement rating or a school grade. School improvement ratings are calculated using student learning gains on statewide, standardized English Language Arts and mathematics assessments for all eligible students who are enrolled in the school and who have assessment scores or comparable scores for the preceding school year.¹⁷ Schools that improve their ratings by at least one level or maintain a "commendable" rating are eligible for school recognition awards. The school improvement rating identifies an alternative school as having one of the following ratings:

- Commendable: a significant percentage of the students attending the school are making learning gains.
- Maintaining: a sufficient percentage of the students attending the school are making learning gains.

¹⁴ Section 1008.34(3)(b), F.S.¹⁵ Section 1008.34(3), F.S.; *See also* Rule 6A-1.09981(4)(a)-(c), F.A.C.

¹⁵ Section 1008.34(3), F.S.; *See also* Rule 6A-1.09981(4)(a)-(c), F.A.C.

¹⁶ Section 1008.34(3)(b), F.S.

¹⁷ Section 1008.341(3), F.S.

- Unsatisfactory: an insufficient percentage of the students attending the school are making learning gains.¹⁸

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

This bill amends section 1002.45, F.S., to require that each Virtual Instruction Provider (VIP) receive a school grade or school improvement rating for each district with which it contracts, based on the assessment scores of all students served within those districts. The bill also exempts VIP providers that operate as a dropout retrieval program from receiving a district grade.

The bill also amends s. 1003.53, F.S., to define a dropout retrieval program as a program serving students who have officially withdrawn from high school before graduation and were not engaged in the education system at the time of enrollment. The bill also requires all dropout retrieval programs to choose between receiving a school improvement rating or a school grade.

This act takes effect July 1, 2025.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

¹⁸ Section 1008.341(2), F.S.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

This bill does not have a fiscal impact on state revenues or expenditures.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill substantially amends the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 1002.45 and 1003.53.

IX. Additional Information:

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

CS/CS by Appropriations Committee on Pre-K - 12 Education on March 25, 2025:

The committee substitute requires all dropout retrieval programs to choose between receiving a school improvement rating or a school grade.

CS by Education Pre-K - 12 on March 17, 2025:

The committee substitute requires that each Virtual Instruction Provider (VIP) receive a school grade or school improvement rating for each district with which it contracts, based on the assessment scores of all students served within those districts. The committee substitute also exempts a VIP operating as a dropout retrieval program from receiving a district grade. Finally, the committee substitute moves the definition of a dropout retrieval program from the original bill to the dropout prevention and academic intervention statute.

B. Amendments:

None.



700282

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Senate	.	House
Comm: RCS	.	
03/27/2025	.	
	.	
	.	
	.	

The Appropriations Committee on Pre-K - 12 Education
(Yarborough) recommended the following:

Senate Amendment (with title amendment)

Delete line 57
and insert:
enrollment in the program. Each dropout retrieval program shall
choose to receive a school grade under s. 1008.34 or a school
improvement rating under s. 1008.341.

===== T I T L E A M E N D M E N T =====

And the title is amended as follows:



700282

11 Delete line 10
12 and insert:
13 a specified group of students; requiring a dropout
14 retrieval program to choose to receive a school grade
15 or school improvement rating; providing an effective

By the Committee on Education Pre-K - 12; and Senator Yarborough

581-02510-25

20251402c1

1 A bill to be entitled
 2 An act relating to students enrolled in dropout
 3 retrieval programs; amending s. 1002.45, F.S.;
 4 revising assessment and accountability requirements
 5 for a virtual instruction program provider; providing
 6 that a virtual instruction program provider operating
 7 exclusively as a dropout retrieval program is exempt
 8 from specified requirements; amending s. 1003.53,
 9 F.S.; providing that dropout retrieval programs serve
 10 a specified group of students; providing an effective
 11 date.
 12
 13 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:
 14
 15 Section 1. Paragraph (a) of subsection (7) of section
 16 1002.45, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:
 17 1002.45 Virtual instruction programs.-
 18 (7) ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY.-
 19 (a) Each approved virtual instruction program provider
 20 contracted pursuant to this section must:
 21 1. Participate in the statewide assessment program under s.
 22 1008.22 and in the state's education performance accountability
 23 system under s. 1008.31.
 24 2. Receive a school grade under s. 1008.34 or a school
 25 improvement rating under s. 1008.341, as applicable, for each
 26 district with which it contracts, based on the assessment scores
 27 of all students served within the school district. ~~The school~~
 28 improvement rating received by each approved virtual instruction
 29 program provider shall be based upon the aggregated assessment

Page 1 of 2

CODING: Words ~~stricken~~ are deletions; words underlined are additions.

581-02510-25

20251402c1

30 ~~scores of all students served by the provider statewide.~~ Each
 31 approved virtual instruction program provider shall receive a
 32 district grade pursuant to s. 1008.34 based upon the aggregated
 33 assessment scores of all students served by the provider
 34 statewide and a separate school grade or school improvement
 35 rating for each school district with which it contracts based
 36 upon the assessment scores of all students served within the
 37 school district. A virtual instruction program provider
 38 operating exclusively as a dropout retrieval program as
 39 described in s. 1003.53(7) is exempt from the district grade
 40 requirement of this paragraph. The department shall publish the
 41 school grade or school improvement rating received by each
 42 approved virtual instruction program provider on its Internet
 43 website. The department shall develop an evaluation method for
 44 providers of part-time programs which includes the percentage of
 45 students making learning gains, the percentage of students
 46 successfully passing any required end-of-course assessment, the
 47 percentage of students taking Advanced Placement examinations,
 48 and the percentage of students scoring 3 or higher on an
 49 Advanced Placement examination.
 50 Section 2. Present subsection (7) of section 1003.53,
 51 Florida Statutes, is redesignated as subsection (8), and a new
 52 subsection (7) is added to that section, to read:
 53 1003.53 Dropout prevention and academic intervention.-
 54 (7) Dropout retrieval programs serve students who have
 55 officially withdrawn from high school before graduation and who
 56 are not engaged in the education system at the time of
 57 enrollment in the program.
 58 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.

Page 2 of 2

CODING: Words ~~stricken~~ are deletions; words underlined are additions.



The Florida Senate

Committee Agenda Request

To: Senator Danny Burgess, Chair
Appropriations Committee on Pre-K - 12 Education

Subject: Committee Agenda Request

Date: March 18, 2025

I respectfully request that **Senate Bill #1402**, relating to Students Enrolled in Dropout Retrieval Programs, be placed on the:

- committee agenda at your earliest possible convenience.
- next committee agenda.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Clay Yarborough".

Senator Clay Yarborough
Florida Senate, District 4

The Florida Senate

APPEARANCE RECORD

3/26/25

1402

Meeting Date

Bill Number or Topic

Pre K App

Deliver both copies of this form to Senate professional staff conducting the meeting

Committee

Amendment Barcode (if applicable)

Name

Charman Postel (Florida PTA)

Phone

561 400-3127

Address

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Email

education.committee@floridapta.org

Street

Orlando

FL

City

State

Zip

Speaking:

For

Against

Information

OR

Waive Speaking:

In Support

Against

PLEASE CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

I am appearing without compensation or sponsorship.

I am a registered lobbyist, representing:

I am not a lobbyist, but received something of value for my appearance (travel, meals, lodging, etc.), sponsored by:

Florida PTA

While it is a tradition to encourage public testimony, time may not permit all persons wishing to speak to be heard at this hearing. Those who do speak may be asked to limit their remarks so that as many persons as possible can be heard. If you have questions about registering to lobby please see Fla. Stat. 511.045 and Joint Rule 1. [2020-2022 Joint Rules.pdf flsenate.gov](#)

This form is part of the public record for this meeting.

The Florida Senate

APPEARANCE RECORD

3/26/25

1402

Meeting Date

PreK-12 Approps.

Deliver both copies of this form to
Senate professional staff conducting the meeting

Bill Number or Topic

Committee

Amendment Barcode (if applicable)

Name **Lisa Hurley**

Phone **850.224.5081**

Address **311 E. Park Ave.**

Email **lhurley@sbmpartners.com**

Street

Tallahassee

Florida

32301

City

State

Zip

Speaking: For Against Information **OR** Waive Speaking: In Support Against

PLEASE CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

I am appearing without compensation or sponsorship.

I am a registered lobbyist, representing:

Graduation Alliance

I am not a lobbyist, but received something of value for my appearance (travel, meals, lodging, etc.), sponsored by:

While it is a tradition to encourage public testimony, time may not permit all persons wishing to speak to be heard at this hearing. Those who do speak may be asked to limit their remarks so that as many persons as possible can be heard. If you have questions about registering to lobby please see Fla. Stat. §11.045 and Joint Rule 1. [2020-2022 Joint Rules.pdf \(flsenate.gov\)](#)

This form is part of the public record for this meeting.

S-001 (08/10/2021)

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Appropriations Committee on Pre-K - 12 Education

BILL: SB 7030

INTRODUCER: Appropriations Committee on Pre-K - 12 Education

SUBJECT: Educational Scholarship Programs

DATE: March 27, 2025

REVISED: _____

ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
Gray	Elwell		AED Submitted as Comm. Bill/FAV

I. Summary:

SB 7030 makes substantial changes to education choice and school funding programs to improve student tracking, ensure the funding follows the student, enhance budget predictability, and create consistency across scholarship programs.

To ensure funding stability, the bill moves the Family Empowerment Scholarship (FES) into a separate categorical within the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP). The bill expands the use of the Educational Stabilization Fund to provide financial support for districts with changes in student enrollment and to ensure scholarships are funded for all eligible students. Additionally, scholarship payments will shift from quarterly to monthly.

The bill standardizes processes across all scholarship programs by establishing fall and spring application windows, requiring a single application, and requiring documentation to verify enrollment status. The bill requires the DOE to develop a standard withdrawal form for families leaving the public school to enroll in a scholarship program and requires families to verify continued eligibility before each payment. The first payment installment will occur in mid-August, and funds cannot be awarded retroactively for ineligible periods.

To address data accuracy, the bill requires additional documentation at the time of application, including residency verification and a birth certificate. The bill requires the Department of Education (DOE) to cross-check applicants against public school enrollment records and assign a student ID to all scholarship recipients to standardize data tracking. The DOE is required to implement a uniform reimbursement and invoicing process.

To enhance oversight, the bill requires an annual full-time equivalent (FTE) audit of scholarship programs by the Auditor General, with Scholarship Funding Organizations (SFOs) required to return any misallocated funds.

The bill repeals the New Worlds Scholarship Program and modifies the Hope Scholarship Program.

The bill has both negative and positive indeterminate fiscal impacts relating to multiple provisions in the bill. **See Section V., Fiscal Impact Statement.**

The bill is effective July 1, 2025.

II. Present Situation:

The present situation for the relevant portions of the bill is discussed under the Effect of Proposed Changes of this bill analysis.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Florida's Pre-K - 12 Scholarship Program

Florida offers several scholarship programs that allow parents of an eligible student to register their child to attend a private school that may better serve the student's particular needs, provide educational options for their student with a disability, or direct the education of their child. The three scholarship programs include:

- The Family Empowerment Scholarship (FES), which includes:
 - The Family Empowerment Scholarship for students attending a private school (FES-EO).
 - The Family Empowerment Scholarship for students with disabilities (FES-UA).¹
- The Florida Tax Credit (FTC) Scholarship Program,² for students attending a private school or for students in a personalized education program (PEP).³
- The Hope Scholarship Program (HSP).⁴
- Private schools must meet specific criteria in order to be eligible to participate in Florida's scholarship programs. The Department of Education (DOE) and Commissioner of Education⁵ are tasked with implementation and oversight responsibilities. Florida's scholarship programs are administered by scholarship funding organizations (SFOs) approved by the DOE.⁶

As of March 2025, a total of 494,238 students were funded in the scholarship program for school year 2024-2025 through Step Up for Students:

- 265,522 students were funded through FES-EO Scholarship;
- 115,417 students were funded through the FES-UA Scholarship;
- 54,356 students were funded through FTC Scholarship; and
- 58,943 students were funded through the PEP scholarship.⁷

¹ Section 1002.394, F.S.; *see also* Rule 6A-6.0952, F.A.C.

² Section 1002.395, F.S.; *see also* Rule 6A-6.0960, F.A.C.

³ Section 1002.395(7), F.S.

⁴ Section 1002.40, F.S.; *see also* Rule 6A-6.0951, F.A.C.

⁵ Section 1002.421, F.S.

⁶ *See* ss. 1002.394(11) and 1002.395(6) and (15), F.S.

⁷ Email, Step Up for Students (March 21, 2024)

State School Choice Scholarship Program Accountability and Oversight

Present Situation

Private School Requirements

Each scholarship program has unique requirements for private schools, but there are common criteria that each private school must meet in order to participate in any of the state's scholarship programs.⁸ All private schools in Florida may be sectarian or nonsectarian, must meet Florida's definition of a private school,⁹ be registered with the state, and be in compliance with all the requirements of a private school. A private school that participates in the scholarship program must also:

- Comply with 42 U.S.C. s. 2000d which prohibits excluding a person from participation in federally assisted programs on the grounds of race, color, or national origin.
- Notify the Department of Education (DOE) of its intent to participate in a scholarship program.
- Notify the DOE of any changes in the school's name, director, mailing address, or physical location within 15 days of the change.
- Provide the DOE or the SFO all required documentation for student registration and payment.
- Provide to the SFO the school's fee schedule.
- Annually complete and submit to the DOE a notarized scholarship compliance statement verifying compliance with background screening requirements.
- Demonstrate fiscal soundness in accordance with statutory requirements.
- Meet applicable state and local health, safety, and welfare laws, codes, and rules.
- Employ or contract with teachers that meet specified qualifications.
- Maintain a physical location in the state at which each student has regular and direct contact with teachers. Regular and direct contact with teachers may be satisfied for students enrolled in a personalized education program if students have regular and direct contact with teachers at the physical location at least two school days per week and the student learning plan addresses the remaining instructional time.
- Provide to parents information regarding the school's programs, services, classroom teacher qualifications, and a statement that a private school student with a disability does not have a right to all of the services that the student would receive if enrolled in a public school under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
- Provide the parent, at least on a quarterly basis, with a written report of the student's progress.
- Cooperate with a parent who wants a student to participate in Florida's statewide, standardized assessments.
- Adopt policies establishing standards of ethical conduct for educational support employees, instructional personnel, and school administrators.
- Not be owned or operated by a person or an entity domiciled in, owned by, or in any way controlled by a foreign country of concern or foreign principal, as identified in law.¹⁰

⁸ See s. 1002.421, F.S.

⁹ See s. 1002.01(3), F.S.

¹⁰ Section 1002.421(1), F.S.; see also Rule 6A-6.03315, F.A.C.

The DOE is required to annually verify the eligibility of private schools that meet the requirements of state law. The DOE must also:

- Establish a toll-free hotline that provides parents and private schools with information on participation in the scholarship programs.
- Establish a process by which individuals may notify the DOE of any violation by a parent, private school, or school district of state laws relating to program participation.
- Require an annual, notarized, sworn compliance statement from participating private schools certifying compliance with state laws.
- Coordinate with the entities conducting the health inspection for a private school to obtain copies of the inspection reports.
- Conduct site visits to private schools entering a scholarship program for the first time.
- Coordinate with the State Fire Marshal to obtain access to fire inspection reports for private schools.
- Upon the request of a participating private school authorized to administer statewide assessments, provide at no cost to the school, the statewide assessments.¹¹
- Maintain, and annually publish, a list of nationally norm-referenced tests identified for purposes of satisfying scholarship program assessment requirements.¹²

The Commissioner of Education (commissioner) is authorized to permanently deny or revoke the authority of an owner, officer or director to establish or operate a private school in the state and include such individual on the disqualification list¹³, if the commissioner decides that the owner, officer, or director:

- Is operating or has operated an educational institution in the state or another state or jurisdiction in a manner contrary to the health, safety, or welfare of the public.
- Has operated an educational institution that closed during the school year.¹⁴

Department of Education Enrollment Verification for the K-12 Scholarship Program

The DOE is required to notify all SFOs of the deadlines for submitting the verified list of scholarship students. Additionally, the DOE is required to cross-check the list of scholarship students submitted by the SFO with the full-time equivalent membership survey data to avoid duplication and adjust payments to eligible nonprofit SFOs. When the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) is recalculated based on full-time equivalent student membership, adjust the amount of state funds allocated to school districts through the FEFP based upon the results of the cross-check.¹⁵

To assist in this process, the DOE assigns Florida Education Identifier (FLEID) to each student funded through the FEFP, including FES scholarship students.¹⁶ However, students enrolled in the FTC scholarship program are not assigned an FLEID.

¹¹ Section 1002.421(2)(a), F.S.

¹² Sections 1002.394(8)(a) and 1002.395(9)(e), F.S.

¹³ See s. 1001.10(4), F.S.

¹⁴ Section 1002.421(3), F.S.

¹⁵ Section 1002.394(8)(a)2. and 13., F.S.

¹⁶ Section 1008.386; *see also*, Rule 6A-1.00141.

Florida Tax Credit (FTC) Scholarship Application and Payment Process

For the FTC private school scholarship program, an SFO must establish a process for parents who reapply for an FTC scholarship to renew their student’s scholarships. The renewal applications for the 2025-2026 school year and thereafter must provide for a renewal timeline beginning February 1 of the prior school year and ending April 30 of the prior school year. A student’s renewal is contingent upon an eligible private school providing confirmation of admission and a confirmation by the parent that the scholarship is being renewed or declined by May 31. Parents of students applying for a new FTC scholarship may apply throughout the school year, and the date by which the scholarship is accepted or declined is set by the SFO.¹⁷

For FTC scholarship students in a personalized education plan (PEP), an SFO must establish a process for parents to apply for a new scholarship or renew an existing scholarship for 2025-2026. The process must require that renewals and new applications be made between February 1 and April 30 of the prior school year. The process must require that parents confirm that the scholarship is being accepted, renewed, or declined, as appropriate, by May 31.¹⁸

The following table presents the new and renewal scholarship application deadlines required in law:

Type of Application	Scholarship Program	Application Window	Parent must Accept or Decline by
NEW	FTC PEP	Feb 1-April 30	May 31
	FTC-Full-time Private	None	Date set by the SFO
RENEWAL	FTC PEP	Feb 1-April 30	May 31

Payment of the FTC scholarship by the SFO must be by funds transfer, including, but not limited to, debit cards, electronic payment cards, or any other means of payment that the department deems to be commercially viable or cost-effective. The SFO must ensure that the parent has approved a funds transfer before any scholarship funds are deposited. If a scholarship student is attending an eligible private school full time, the initial payment must be made after the SFO’s verification of admission acceptance, and subsequent payments must be made upon verification of continued enrollment and attendance at the eligible private school.¹⁹

Family Empowerment Scholarship (FES) Application and Payment Process

For FES new scholarship applicants, the SFO must establish a process for, beginning with the 2025-2026 school year, parents to submit an application no earlier than February 1 of the prior school year until November 15. Applications received by the SFO after this date will be considered, on a first-come-first-served basis, for the following school year. The process must require that a parent confirm that the scholarship will be accepted or declined by December 15.²⁰ The SFO must verify the student’s eligibility to participate in the scholarship program at least 30 days before each payment. Upon receiving the verified list of eligible scholarship students, the DOE must release, from state funds only, funds to the SFO for deposit into the student’s account

¹⁷ Section 1002.395(6)(d), F.S.

¹⁸ Section 1002.395(6)(e), F.S.

¹⁹ Section 1002.395(11), F.S.

²⁰ Section 1002.394(11), F.S.

in quarterly payments no later than September 1, November 1, February 1, and April 1 of each school year in which the scholarship is in force.²¹

For FES renewal scholarship applicants, the SFO must establish a process for parents receiving a scholarship to renew their participation, beginning with the 2025-2026 school year, with a renewal timeline beginning February 1 and ending April 30 of the prior school year. Renewal must be contingent on confirmation of admission to an eligible private school. The process must require that a parent confirm by May 31 that the scholarship will be renewed or declined.²² The SFO must verify the student’s continued eligibility to participate in the scholarship program at least 30 days before each payment. Upon receiving the verified list of eligible scholarship students, the department must release, from state funds only, to the SFO for deposit into the student’s account in quarterly payments no later than August 1, November 1, February 1, and April 1 of each school year in which the scholarship is in force.²³

The following table presents the new and renewal scholarship application process required in law:

Type of Application	Scholarship Program	Application Window	Parent must Accept or Decline by
NEW	FES-EO and FES-UA	Feb 1 - Nov 15	December 15
RENEWAL	FES-EO and FES-UA	Feb 1-April 30	May 31

To maintain eligibility for the FES scholarship a parent must sign an agreement with the SFO and annually submit a sworn compliance statement to the SFO to satisfy or maintain program eligibility, including eligibility to receive and spend program payments by:

- Affirming that the student is enrolled in a program that meets regular school attendance requirements.
- Affirming that the program funds are used only for authorized purposes serving the student’s educational needs; that any prepaid college plan or college savings plan funds will not be transferred; and that the parent will not receive a payment, refund, or rebate of any funds provided under this section.
- Affirming that the parent is responsible for all eligible expenses in excess of the amount of the scholarship.²⁴

Family Empowerment Scholarship and Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Funding

The FES award for students attending a private school (FES-EO) and the FES award for students with disabilities (FES-UA) are funded through the FEFP.

The FTC scholarship is funded with contributions to SFOs from taxpayers who receive a tax credit for use against their liability for corporate income tax, insurance premium tax, severance taxes on oil and gas production, self-accrued sales tax liabilities of direct pay permit holders or

²¹ Section 1002.394(12)(a), F.S.
²² Section 1002.394(10), F.S.
²³ Section 1002.394(12)(a), F.S.
²⁴ Section 1002.394(10)(b), F.S.

alcoholic beverage taxes on beer, wine, and spirits and rental or license fees.²⁵ The tax credit is equal to 100 percent of the eligible contributions made.²⁶ In 2023 the Legislature expanded options for FTC scholarship participation by creating the PEP, a parent directed educational choice option that must be registered with an SFO that administers FTC scholarships.²⁷ Prior to the use of state funds for FES-EO scholarships, the SFO is required to exhaust the use of tax credit contributions to cover eligible FTC scholarships.²⁸

The FES-EO is funded through the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) with a scholarship awarded by the SFO.²⁹ An FES-EO scholarship award amount for a student to attend an eligible private school is calculated as 100 percent of the school district's funding per student, including specified categorical funds.³⁰ The department must notify the SFO that scholarships may not be awarded in a school district in which the scholarship award will exceed 99 percent of the school district's share of the state FEFP funds as calculated by the department.³¹

The FES-UA is funded through the FEFP with a scholarship awarded by an SFO.³² The FES-UA scholarship award amount is determined based on the student's matrix level of service³³. For a student who has a Level I to Level III matrix of services or a diagnosis by a physician or psychologist, an FES-UA scholarship award amount is calculated as 100 percent of the school districts funding per student in the basic exceptional student education (ESE) program, including specified categorical funds.³⁴ For a student who has a Level IV or Level V matrix of services, a FES-UA scholarship award amount is calculated as 100 percent of the school districts funding per student in the Level IV or Level V ESE program, including specified categorical funds.³⁵

²⁵ Section 1002.395(1) and (5) and s. 212.099(2), F.S.

²⁶ Sections 220.1875(1), 212.099(2), and 1002.395(5), F.S.

²⁷ Section 1002.01(2), F.S.

²⁸ Section 1002.394(12)(a), F.S.

²⁹ Section 1002.394(8)(a), (11)(a), (11)(b), and (12)(a), F.S.

³⁰ Section 1002.394(12)(a)1., F.S.; see also Step Up For Students, *Basic Scholarship Amounts for 2024-25*, available at <https://go.stepupforstudents.org/hubfs/Scholarship%20Info/FTC-FES-EO-PEP-Award-Amounts.pdf> (last visited Mar. 21, 2025). The categoricals included in this calculation are the Discretionary Millage Compression Supplement, the Educational Enrichment Allocation, and the State-Funded Discretionary Supplement. Section 1011.62(5), (7)(a), and (16), F.S.

³¹ Section 1002.394(8)(a), F.S.

³² Section 1002.394(8)(a), (11)(a), (11)(b), and (12)(a), F.S. The department must notify the SFO that scholarships may not be awarded in a school district in which the scholarship award will exceed 99 percent of the school district's share of the state FEFP funds as calculated by the department. Section 1002.394(8)(a), F.S.

³³ Florida Department of Education, *Matrix of Services Handbook 2017 Edition*, available at <https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/2017MatrixServices.pdf> (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

³⁴ Section 1002.394(12)(b)2., F.S.; see also Step Up For Students, *Basic Scholarship Amounts for 2024-25*, available at <https://go.stepupforstudents.org/hubfs/Scholarship%20Info/FTC-FES-EO-PEP-Award-Amounts.pdf> (last visited Mar. 21, 2025). The FEFP categoricals included in this calculation are the Discretionary Millage Compression Supplement, the Educational Enrichment Allocation, the Exceptional Student Education Guaranteed Allocation, and the State-Funded Discretionary Supplement. Section 1011.62(5), (7)(a), (8), and (16), F.S.

³⁵ Section 1002.394(12)(b)3., F.S.; see also Step Up For Students, *Basic Scholarship Amounts for 2024-25*, available at <https://go.stepupforstudents.org/hubfs/Scholarship%20Info/FTC-FES-EO-PEP-Award-Amounts.pdf> (last visited Mar. 21, 2025). The categoricals included in this calculation are the Discretionary Millage Compression Supplement, the Educational Enrichment Allocation, and the State-Funded Discretionary Supplement. Section 1011.62(5), (7)(a), and (16), F.S.

School District Obligations

By January 1 of each year, a school district must inform all households within the district receiving free or reduced-priced meals under the National School Lunch Act of their eligibility to apply to the DOE for an FES. The form of such notice must be provided by the DOE, and the school district must include the provided form in any normal correspondence with eligible households. Additionally, school districts, upon the request of the DOE, must coordinate with the DOE to provide to a participating private school the statewide assessments administered.³⁶

Effect of Proposed Changes

The bill amends section 1002.421, F.S., to retitle the statute from “State school choice scholarship program accountability and oversight” to “State school choice scholarship programs.”

Current Provisions in Statute

The bill shifts the following provisions from sections 1002.394 and 1002.395, F.S., into section 1002.421, F.S.:

- Definitions.
- The prohibition on an SFO charging an application fee.
- How students are prioritized in the awarding of scholarships.
- The prohibition on a parent applying for multiple scholarships for an individual student at the same time.
- The requirement that an SFO may not restrict or reserve scholarships for use at a particular eligible private school or provide scholarships to a child of an owner or operator.
- The requirement that an SFO must notify each parent that participation in the scholarship program does not guarantee enrollment at an eligible private school.
- The requirement that an SFO may not further regulate, exercise control over, or require documentation beyond the requirements of the scholarship programs unless the regulation, control, or documentation is necessary for participation in the program.
- The requirement that the DOE notify an SFO of any of the SFO’s identified students who were submitted for a scholarship from another SFO and from which SFO the student receives funding.
- The requirements related to SFOs maintaining separate accounts for each enrolled student and transferring maximum scholarship account balances.
- Current assessment requirements for students receiving a scholarship and the requirement that DOE maintain a list of nationally norm-referenced tests.
- Authorization for a private school to be sectarian or nonsectarian.
- Current background screening requirements for private schools and SFOs.
- DOE requirements to investigate any written complaint of a violation of scholarship program.
- DOE requirements to publish and update, as necessary, information on the website about the educational scholarship programs, including, but not limited to, student eligibility criteria, parental responsibilities, and relevant data.

³⁶ Section 1002.394(7), F.S., *see also* s. 1002.395(10)

- DOE requirements to coordinate with each organization to develop a process to collect input and feedback from parents, private schools, and providers before an organization may implement substantial modifications or enhancements to the reimbursement process.
- School district requirements related to administering the statewide assessment to students receive a scholarship and notification of available scholarships.

Scholarship Application Process

The bill establishes a single application process for both the FTC and FES programs. in a manner that creates an electronic record of the application, which must include the date the application was submitted, the date the application was approved or denied, and the date the scholarship was accepted or declined.

The bill requires an SFO to provide the parent with information on each scholarship program available that clearly outlines the eligibility requirements of and authorized uses of funds for each program to enable the parent of a student to determine which program best fits the needs of each student.

The bill establishes two application approval windows each school year during which a parent of an eligible student, including renewal students, may apply for an educational scholarship, except for personalized education students who may only apply during the fall application window. The windows are created as follows:

- For the 2025-2026 school year, the application deadline for the fall application window must be no later than July 15.
- For the 2026-2027 school year and thereafter, the application deadline for the fall application window must be no later than May 31.
- The application deadline for the spring application window which must be no later than November 1.

Students in foster care or out-of-home care, students who are eligible for the Hope Program, or a dependent child of a parent of a member of the United States Armed Forces may apply for a scholarship at any time, but may only receive payments prospectively.

Enrollment Verification

The bill requires that the SFO must request from each student the following information:

- More than one form of proof of residency or proof that the student is the dependent of an active duty member of the United States Armed Forces who has received permanent change of station orders to this state or, at the time of renewal, whose home of record or state of legal resident is Florida.
- A copy of the student's birth certificate.
- For a student that was enrolled in public school in the school year prior to participation in the scholarship program, proof that the parent submitted the standard withdrawal form to the public school at which the student was previously enrolled.

- The following documentation from the parent attesting that while the student receives scholarship payments, the student will be enrolled in and in compliance with the applicable attendance requirements:
 - A copy of the notice of a parent's intent to establish and maintain a home education program;
 - A personalized education program and a copy of the student learning plan that has been reviewed and verified by the SFO; or
 - A letter of admission or enrollment from an eligible private school for the school year in which the student is applying.

The bill requires that the SFO submit to the DOE a list of verified eligible students by August 15 for the 2025-2026 school year for the fall application window and July 15 for the 2026-2027 school year and each school year thereafter for the fall application window. For the Spring application window the SFO must submit the list of verified eligible students by December 15.

The bill requires the DOE to assign each student on a verified list submitted by an SFO a Florida Education Identifier (FLEID). Once a student is assigned an FLEID, the SFO must use that number for the reporting and tracking of all scholarship data. After the verified list has been cross-checked and each student has been assigned a FLEID, the DOE must send the updated list to the SFO who may then fund students based on the DOE's verified list of eligible students.

Pre-Payment Verification

The bill requires that prior to the disbursement of each scholarship payment, the SFO must verify the student's continued eligibility based upon the requirements of the applicable student's scholarship program. For scholarship programs that require private school enrollment, the SFO must verify that the student is enrolled in and in attendance at an eligible participating private school. The bill clarifies that the SFO may not make any payment into a student's account upon notification that the student is enrolled in a public school until the SFO can verify the student's continued eligibility. An SFO is liable to the state for inappropriate payments and must reimburse the state for any amount of funds that were improperly awarded which cannot be recovered.

The bill also requires that prior to the receipt of each scholarship payment, a parent of the student must attest that the student is not enrolled full-time in a public school and is enrolled in and in attendance unless excused for illness or other good cause at:

- A home education program;
- A personalized education program; or
- An eligible private school.

Scholarship Award Amounts and Payment Schedule

The bill requires that, beginning in the 2025-2026 school year, the calculated scholarship program award amounts must be the amounts provided in the General Appropriations Act (GAA), which are based upon the amounts by basic program and program for exceptional students under the FEFP. This amount will be adjusted annually based upon the value of the percentage change increase in per student funding at the state level for public school districts as provided in the GAA.

The calculated scholarship amount for a student determined eligible for an FES-EO and FTC scholarship will be based upon the student's current grade level and county of residence. The calculated scholarship amount for a student determined eligible for an FES-UA will be based upon the student's current grade level, exceptional student program, and county of residence.

The bill changes scholarship disbursements from quarterly payments to ten equal installments. The SFO must make payments no later than August 20, except for the 2025-2026 school year, for which the first payment must be made no later than September 1, September 15, October 15, November 15, January 15, February 15, March 15, April 15, and May 15 of each school year in which the scholarship is in force and in accordance with the pre-payment verification process. The first payment must be for two installments.

DOE Obligations

The bill requires the DOE to develop a standard withdrawal form for parents who are withdrawing from public school to enroll in a scholarship program. The form must include the student's FLEID number, student's full name, student's date of birth, school or program from which the student is withdrawing, and date of withdrawal.

The bill also requires the DOE to develop a uniform reimbursement process that the SFO must use when processing reimbursement requests, including invoices. The SFO must process a reimbursement request within 30 days of receipt of such request.

School District Obligations

The bill requires a school district, upon the request of a parent, to provide the parent of a student enrolled in a school within the school district the standard withdrawal form developed by the DOE. The school district must sign a completed form within 10 days of receipt. The school district must also publish the withdrawal form on its website in a downloadable format.

Authorized Uses of FTC and FES Scholarships

Present Situation

Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Authorized Uses

Authorized uses of the Florida Tax Credit (FTC) scholarship funds include:

- Tuition and fees for enrollment in an eligible private school.³⁷
- Instructional materials, including digital materials and Internet resources.
- Curriculum, which is a complete course of study for a particular content area or grade level, including any required supplemental materials and associated online instruction.
- Tuition and fees associated with full- or part-time enrollment in a home education instructional program, an eligible postsecondary educational institution or a program offered by such institution, an approved preapprenticeship program, a private tutoring program, a virtual program offered by a Department of Education (DOE)-approved private online

³⁷ Students enrolled in the PEP program may only use funds to enroll in a private school that meets regular and direct contact with teachers, if students have regular and direct contact with teachers at the physical location at least 2 school days per week and the student learning plan addresses the remaining instructional time.

provider, the Florida Virtual School (FLVS) as a private paying student, or an approved online course.

- Fees for nationally standardized, norm-referenced achievement tests, Advanced Placement (AP) examinations, industry certification examinations, assessments related to postsecondary education, or other assessments.
- Contracted services provided by a public school or school district, including classes. A student who receives services under a contract is not considered enrolled in a public school for scholarship eligibility purposes but rather attending a public school on a part-time basis.
- Tuition and fees for part-time tutoring services or fees for services by a choice navigator.³⁸

Family Empowerment Scholarships – Authorized Uses

Authorized uses of the Florida Empowerment Scholarship for students attending a private school (FES-EO) in an education savings account include:

- Tuition and fees at an eligible private school.
- Instructional materials, including digital materials and Internet resources.
- Curriculum, which is a complete course of study for a particular content area or grade level, including any required supplemental materials and associated online instruction.
- Tuition and fees associated with full-time or part-time enrollment in an eligible postsecondary educational institution or a program offered by the postsecondary educational institution, an approved preapprenticeship program, a private tutoring program, a virtual program offered by a department-approved private online provider, the FLVS as a private paying student, or an approved online course.
- Fees for nationally standardized, norm-referenced achievement tests, AP examinations, industry certification examinations, assessments related to postsecondary education, or other assessments.
- Contracted services provided by a public school or school district, including classes. A student who receives services under a contract is not considered enrolled in a public school for scholarship eligibility purposes but rather attending a public school on a part-time basis.
- Tuition and fees for part-time tutoring services or fees for services by a choice navigator.³⁹

A Family Empowerment Scholarship for students with disabilities (FES-UA) for an eligible student with a disability may be used to cover the following expenses:

- Instructional materials, including digital devices, digital periphery devices, and assistive technology devices that allow a student to access instruction or instructional content and training on the use of and maintenance agreements for these devices.
- Curriculum, which is a complete course of study for a particular content area or grade level, including any required supplemental materials and associated online instruction.
- Specialized services by approved providers or by a hospital in this state which are selected by the parent. Specialized services may include, but are not limited to, applied behavior analysis services, services provided by speech-language pathologists, occupational therapy services, services provided by physical therapists, or services provided by listening and spoken language specialists.

³⁸ Section 1002.395(6)(d), F.S.

³⁹ Section 1002.394(4)(a), F.S.

- Tuition or fees associated with full-time or part-time enrollment in a home education program; an eligible private school; an eligible postsecondary educational institution or a program offered by the postsecondary educational institution; an approved preapprenticeship program; a private tutoring program authorized; a virtual program offered by an approved private online provider; the FLVS as a private paying student; or an approved online course.
- Fees for nationally standardized, norm-referenced achievement tests, AP examinations, industry certification examinations, assessments related to postsecondary education, or other assessments.
- Contributions to the Stanley G. Tate Florida Prepaid College Program or the Florida College Savings Program for the benefit of the eligible student.
- Contracted services provided by a public school or school district, including classes.⁴⁰
- Tuition and fees for part-time tutoring services or fees for services provided by a choice navigator.
- Fees for specialized summer education programs or specialized after-school education programs.
- Transition services provided by job coaches.
- Fees for a home education student's annual evaluation of educational progress by a state-certified teacher.
- Tuition and fees for a voluntary prekindergarten (VPK) program or school readiness program offered by an eligible provider.
- Fees for services provided at a center that is a member of the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International.
- Fees for services provided by a therapist who is certified by the Certification Board for Music Therapists or credentialed by the Art Therapy Credentials Board, Inc.⁴¹

Career and Technical Student Organizations

Career and technical student organizations (CTE student organizations) are a key component of Florida's plan under Perkins V to strengthen the employability skills of students.⁴² A CTE student organization is an organization for students enrolled in a CTE program that engages in CTE activities as an integral part of the instructional program.⁴³ These organizations are aligned with a respective career cluster and provide a unique program of career and leadership development, motivation, and recognition for middle, secondary and post-secondary students.⁴⁴

There are ten registered CTE student organizations in Florida.⁴⁵ State CTE student organizations may also be associated with nationally recognized CTE student organizations.

⁴⁰ While contracted services are considered part-time enrollment, a student who receives services under such a contract is not considered enrolled in a public school for scholarship eligibility purposes.

⁴¹ Section 1002.394(4)(b), F.S.

⁴² Florida Department of Education, *Perkins V: Florida's State Plan for the Strengthening Career and Technical Education For the 21st Century Act (Perkins V)*, available at <https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/18815/urlt/FloridaStatePlanPerkinsV.pdf>, at 28 (last visited Mar. 22, 2025).

⁴³ 20 USC s. 2302(5).

⁴⁴ Florida Department of Education, *Career and Technical Education Student Organization (CTSO) Request Form*, available at <https://www.fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/perkins/> (last visited Mar. 22, 2025).

⁴⁵ Florida Department of Education, *Career and Technical Student Organizations*, available at <https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7515/urlt/CareerTechStudentOrg.pdf> (last visited Mar. 22, 2025).

Effect of Proposed Changes

This bill amends sections 1002.394 and 1002.395, F.S., to align the authorized use of funds between Family Tax Credit (FTC) scholarship and Family Empowerment Scholarships. Specifically, the bill authorizes that FTC and FES-EO scholarship funds may be used to purchase digital devices, similar to the current authorized use of funds for FES-UA, and authorizes the use of scholarship funds to purchase membership dues and activity fees for participation in Career and Technical Student Organizations. The bill expands the requirements for tutors who are providing services under the FTC and FES scholarships, by authorizing that a tutor can be an approved provider if he or she has a bachelor's degree or a graduate degree in a related subject area.

The bill also provides that tuition and fees associated with full-time or part-time home education program may be used if the home education program meets all of the following requirements:

- Provides educational courses or activities.
- Has a publicly available description of courses and activities.
- Has a tuition and fee schedule.
- Makes the tuition and fees payable to a registered business entity.

The bill amends section 1002.421, F.S., to require that a home education program provider receiving tuition and fees from the FES or FTC scholarship must undergo a background screening similar to private school owners and operators.

Eligibility for K-12 Scholarships

Present Situation

Eligibility for the Florida Empowerment Scholarship for students attending a private school (FES-EO)

A student is eligible for a scholarship to attend private school if the student is a resident of Florida and is eligible to enroll in kindergarten through grade 12 in a Florida public school.⁴⁶

An FES-EO scholarship remains in force until the:

- Scholarship funding organization (SFO) determines that the student is not eligible for program renewal.
- Commissioner of Education (commissioner) suspends or revokes program participation or use of funds.
- Student's parent has forfeited participation in the program for failure to comply with statutorily required parental and student responsibilities.
- Student enrolls in a public school, however, if a student enters a Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) detention center for a period of no more than 21 days, the student is not considered to have returned to a public school on a full-time basis for that purpose.
- Student graduates from high school or attains 21 years of age, whichever occurs first.

⁴⁶ Section 1002.394(3)(a) F.S.

An FES-EO scholarship account must be closed and any remaining funds must be reverted to the state after:

- Denial or revocation of program eligibility by the commissioner for fraud or abuse, including, but not limited to, the student or student's parent accepting any payment, refund, or rebate, in any manner, from a provider of any services received;
- Two consecutive fiscal years in which an account has been inactive; or
- A student remains unenrolled in an eligible private school for 30 days while receiving a scholarship that requires full-time enrollment.⁴⁷

Family Empowerment Scholarship for students with disabilities (FES-UA) Eligibility

A student is eligible for an FES-UA scholarship if the student:

- Is a resident of Florida or the dependent child of an active duty member of the United States Armed Forces who has received permanent change of station orders to this state or, at the time of renewal, whose home of record or state of legal residence is Florida.
- Is three or four years of age during 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.
- Has a disability as provided for in law.
- Is the subject of an IEP written in accordance with rules of the State Board of Education (SBE) or with the applicable rules of another state or has received a diagnosis of a disability from a licensed physician, a licensed psychologist, or a physician with a specified out-of-state license.⁴⁸

An FES-UA scholarship remains in force until the:

- Parent does not renew program eligibility.
- SFO determines that the student is not eligible for program renewal.
- Commissioner suspends or revokes program participation or use of funds.
- Student's parent has forfeited participation in the program for failure to comply with statutorily required parental and student responsibilities.
- Student enrolls in a public school.
- Student graduates from high school or attains 22 years of age, whichever occurs first.

An FES-UA scholarship account must be closed and any remaining funds must be reverted to the state after:

- Denial or revocation of program eligibility by the commissioner for fraud or abuse, including, but not limited to, the student or student's parent accepting any payment, refund, or rebate, in any manner, from a provider of any services received pursuant to subsection (4);
- Any period of three consecutive years after high school completion or graduation during which the student has not been enrolled in an eligible postsecondary educational institution or a program offered by the institution; or
- Two consecutive fiscal years in which an account has been inactive.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Section 1002.394(5)(a), F.S.

⁴⁸ Section 1002.394(3)(b), F.S.

⁴⁹ Section 1002.394(5)(b), F.S.

Florida Tax Credit (FTC) Scholarship Eligibility

An FTC scholarship remains in force until the:

- SFO determines that the student is not eligible for program renewal.
- Commissioner suspends or revokes program participation or use of funds.
- Student's parent has forfeited participation in the program for failure to comply with statutorily required parental and student responsibilities.
- Student enrolls in a public school, except for a student who enters a Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) detention center for no more than 21 days.
- Student graduates from high school or attains 21 years of age, whichever occurs first.⁵⁰

A student is not eligible for an FTC scholarship while he or she is:

- Enrolled in a public school, including a three or four year old child who receives services funded through the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP).
- Enrolled in a school operating for the purpose of providing educational services to youth in a DJJ commitment program.
- Receiving any other state-sponsored K-12 educational choice scholarship.
- Not having regular and direct contact with his or her private school teachers unless he or she is enrolled in a personalized education program (PEP).
- Participating in a home education program.
- Participating in a private tutoring program unless he or she is enrolled in a PEP; or
- Participating in virtual instruction that receives state-funding for the student's participation.⁵¹

An FTC scholarship account must be closed and any remaining funds must be reverted to the state after:

- Denial or revocation of program eligibility by the commissioner for fraud or abuse, including, but not limited to, the student or student's parent accepting any payment, refund, or rebate, in any manner, from a provider of any services;
- Two consecutive fiscal years in which an account has been inactive; or
- The student remains unenrolled in an eligible private school for 30 days while receiving a scholarship that requires full-time enrollment.⁵²

Effect of Proposed Changes

This bill amends sections 1002.394 and 1002.395, F.S., to require that the FES-EO and FTC scholarships must be closed and the remaining funds reverted back to the state if the account has been inactive for one fiscal year, instead of the current two years, and if a student is determined ineligible based because of the following requirements in current law:

- The SFO determines that the student is not eligible for program renewal.
- The commissioner suspends or revokes program participation or use of funds.
- The student's parent has forfeited participation in the program for failure to comply with statutorily required parental and student responsibilities.

⁵⁰ Section 1002.395(11)(f), F.S.

⁵¹ Section 1002.395(4), F.S.

⁵² Section 1002.395(11), F.S.

- The student enrolls in a public school, except for a student who enters a Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) detention center for no more than 21 days.
- The student graduates from high school or attains 21 years of age, whichever occurs first.

The bill deletes the requirement that funds revert back to the state after two years of inactivity for students who are receiving an FES-UA. This provision allows more flexibility for parents whose child is receiving an FES-UA scholarship.

The bill requires the SFO to notify the parent prior to closing an FES scholarship account regarding the reason why the account will be closed and that the balance of the funds will revert back to the state. Additionally, the bill requires that, for FES-UA scholarships, the SFO must notify the parent, upon the student reaching the age of 16, that there is a balance in the student's account, the amount of the balance, and information regarding how the funds may be used. The bill also requires the SFO to report to the DOE the total number of scholarship accounts that were closed and the amount of funds by account that reverted to the state.

K-12 Funding

Present Situation

Florida Education Finance Program

The Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) establishes the state policy on equalized funding to guarantee to each student in the Florida public education system the availability of programs and services appropriate to his or her educational needs that are substantially equal to those available to any similar student notwithstanding geographic differences and varying local economic factors. To equalize educational opportunities, the FEFP formula recognizes:

- varying local property tax bases;
- varying education program costs;
- varying costs of living; and
- varying costs for equivalent educational programs due to sparsity and dispersion of the student population.⁵³

Allocation of State Funds for Each School District Operation

Under current law, if the program calculation exceeds the appropriation, the Department of Education (DOE) prorates the available funds by deducting from the districts' calculated funding in proportion to each district's relative share of state and local FEFP dollars. No school district will receive negative state funding due to this calculation.⁵⁴

If a district was over- or under-allocated funds in a prior year due to arithmetical errors, judicially required assessment roll changes, full-time equivalent (FTE) student membership errors, or audit findings, adjustments may be made subject to conditions.

⁵³ Florida Department of Education, *Funding for Florida School Districts 2024-25*, available at <https://www.fldoe.org/file/7507/Fefpdist.pdf> (last visited Mar. 22, 2025).

⁵⁴ Section 1011.62 (15), F.S.

The 2024-2025 FEFP Second Calculation includes a proration to available funds, reducing the calculated FEFP by \$23,754,669.⁵⁵ Under current law, only school district FEFP funding is prorated, FES scholarship awards are not impacted.

Educational Enrollment Stabilization Program

The educational enrollment stabilization program was created to provide supplemental state funds as needed to maintain the stability of the operations of public schools in each school district and to protect districts, including charter schools, from financial instability as a result of changes in full-time equivalent (FTE) student enrollment throughout the school year. The Legislature is required to annually appropriate funds in the General Appropriations Act (GAA) to the DOE for this program in an amount necessary to maintain a projected minimum balance of \$250 million at the beginning of the fiscal year.

The DOE is required to use funds as appropriated to ensure that based on each recalculation of the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) a school district's funds per unweighted full-time equivalent student are not less than the greater of either the school district's funds per unweighted FTE student as appropriated in the GAA or the school district's funds per unweighted FTE student as recalculated based upon the receipt of the certified taxable value for school purposes.⁵⁶

Declining Enrollment Supplement

Until it was repealed in 2021,⁵⁷ the FEFP included a categorical called the "Decline in Full-Time Equivalent Students Allocation" to assist districts that had an enrollment decline in unweighted FTE students from the current year compared to the prior year. The calculation provided districts with their base funding amount for twenty-five percent of the enrollment decline. In 2019-2020, the last year the categorical was funded, 21 of the 74 districts had enrollments that were less than the prior year and received a declining enrollment allocation.⁵⁸

Through the passage of HB 1 in 2023, school choice in Florida has expanded considerably, with the participation in the Family Empowerment Scholarship (FES) program growing from 155,182 students in 2022-2023⁵⁹ to an estimated 367,692 for 2024-2025.⁶⁰ In addition to enrolling in a public school, families have the option to enroll their children in a private school or home-school program and receive a scholarship.

For the 2024-2025 Third Calculation of the FEFP, 49 of 75 districts had a decline in public enrollment from the prior year. Additionally, 58 of the 75 districts had a total decline in public

⁵⁵ Florida Department of Education, *Funding for Florida School Districts 2024-25*, at 21 available at <https://www.fldoe.org/file/7507/Fefpdist.pdf> (last visited Mar. 22, 2025).

⁵⁶ Section 1011.62(18), F.S.

⁵⁷ Ch. 2021-44 s.3, L.O.F.

⁵⁸ Florida Department of Education, *Florida Education Finance Program 2019-20 Final Calculation*, available at, <https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7507/urlt/1920FEFPFinalcalc.pdf> (last visited Mar. 22, 2025).

⁵⁹ Office of Economic and Demographic Research, *Education Estimating Conference for PreK-12 Enrollment*, available at <https://edr.state.fl.us/Content/conferences/publicschools/archives/240221publicschools.pdf> (last visited Mar. 22, 2025).

⁶⁰ Office of Economic and Demographic Research, *Supplemental Conference Materials EDR Estimating Conference*, available at https://edr.state.fl.us/Content/conferences/publicschools/prek-12_scholarshipsummary.pdf (last visited Mar. 22, 2025).

FTE student membership of 32,412.80 from the district's forecasted enrollment for the current year.

FEFP Allocation Conference

Prior to the distribution of any funds appropriated in the GAA for the FEFP formula and categorical programs, the Commissioner of Education (commissioner) is required to conduct an allocation conference. The conference is required to include:

- Representatives of the DOE;
- The Executive Office of the Governor; and
- The appropriations committees of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

The conference members must agree on the method of computation to be used in calculating the FEFP and the categorical amounts for school districts for the fiscal year. After agreement among the conference members, the method of computation remains in effect until further agreements are reached at subsequent allocation conferences called by the commissioner. Prior to each recalculation of the FEFP and categorical allocations to school districts, the commissioner is required to provide conference principals with all data necessary to replicate those allocations precisely.⁶¹

State Funded Discretionary Supplement

Created by the legislature in 2023,⁶² the state-funded discretionary supplement includes equivalent funding for nonvoted discretionary millage⁶³ to support students receiving a Family Empowerment Scholarship (FES). This supplement ensures FES students receive funding comparable to district school students.⁶⁴ While the state funded discretionary supplement is a part of each school district's total FEFP amount, the allocation is purely state funded and does not get distributed to school districts.⁶⁵

Beginning in fiscal year 2024-2025 and thereafter, the supplement must be calculated by multiplying the maximum allowable nonvoted discretionary millage for operations by 96 percent of the taxable value of school district property for the district where the student is reported for the FEFP. This result is then divided by the district's total unweighted FTE membership and multiplied by the total FTE membership of FES students. The prior year's base amount is then adjusted based on changes in the number of eligible FES students to ensure funding reflects student enrollment changes.

The supplement is recalculated during the fiscal year as required, if the recalculated amount exceeds the appropriation in the GAA, the funding is prorated to fit within the available state budget.⁶⁶

⁶¹ Section 1011.65, F.S.

⁶² Ch. 2023-245, L.O.F.

⁶³ Section 1011.71(1) and (3), F.S.

⁶⁴ Section 1011.62(16), F.S.

⁶⁵ Florida Department of Education, *Funding for Florida School Districts 2024-25*, at 22, available at <https://www.fldoe.org/file/7507/Fefpdist.pdf> (last visited Mar. 22, 2025).

⁶⁶ Section 1011.62(16), F.S.

Audit of Student Enrollment:

The Auditor General must periodically examine the records of school districts, and other agencies as appropriate, to determine compliance with law and State Board of Education rules relating to the classification, assignment, and verification of FTE student enrollment and student transportation reported under the FEFP.⁶⁷ If it is determined that the approved criteria and procedures for the placement of students and the conduct of programs have not been followed by the district, appropriate adjustments in the FTE student count for that district must be made, and any excess funds must be deducted from subsequent allocations of state funds to that district.⁶⁸

Effect of Proposed Changes

Educational Scholarship Programs Operating fund

The bill creates section 1011.687, F.S., to establish an operating categorical fund for implementing the FES Program. The FES operating categorical fund would move funding of the FES scholarships out of the school district FEFP calculation and fund the FES scholarships separately.

The bill requires that the funds in the operating fund must be used to award FES scholarships and that the funds must be disbursed from the fund based on the FTE scholarship student forecasted or reported as participating in the program. The bill provides that a FTE for a student participating in the scholarship program consists of a student who receives all ten scholarship installments. A student who received less than all ten installments will generate a fraction of FTE proportional to the number of payments received.

The bill requires that the DOE release the funds to eligible non-profit scholarship organizations (SFO) on a quarterly basis. The bill requires the following release schedule:

- The first quarter release payment release must be based upon the amount of FTE membership forecasted as provided in the GAA.
- The second, third, and fourth quarter payment release shall be based upon the amount of full-time equivalent student membership reported and cross-checked by the DOE.

The bill authorizes the DOE to adjust the payment release amount in the third and fourth quarterly payment releases to the SFO if the funds released to the SFO exceed the funds certified to the DOE by the SFO.

The bill amends section 1011.61, F.S., to include the operating categorical fund for implementing the FES Program as part of the FEFP.

The bill amends s. 1011.62, F.S., to repeal the State-Funded Discretionary Supplement from the FEFP calculation because the funding for FES scholarships will be provided through the operating categorical fund for implementing the FES Program.

⁶⁷ Section 1010.305(1), F.S.

⁶⁸ Section 1010.305(2), F.S.

Educational Enrollment Stabilization Program

The bill establishes section 1011.689, F.S., shifting the Educational Enrollment Stabilization Program (Stabilization Fund) from current law into a new statute to modify how the Educational Scholarship and Stabilization Program (Stabilization Fund) funds may be used. The bill maintains the requirement that the Stabilization Fund provide supplemental state funds to address changes in FTE student enrollment throughout the school year in both the FEFP and state scholarship programs.

The bill expands the use of the Stabilization Fund to assist school districts in maintaining financial stability. It ensures that, following each FEFP recalculation, a school district's funding per unweighted FTE student does not fall below either the amount appropriated in the GAA or the recalculated amount based on certified taxable value for school purposes. Additionally, the bill provides supplemental payments to districts experiencing a decline in unweighted FTE students between the Legislative FEFP calculation in the GAA and the third FEFP recalculation within the same year. These payments are determined by multiplying a percentage of the decline by the Base Student Allocation and either the Comparable Wage Factor or Small District Factor, with fiscally constrained districts receiving a higher percentage than non-fiscally constrained districts. However, these supplemental funds may not be included in a district's total FEFP funds for future calculations.

The Stabilization Fund also ensures that there is sufficient funding to provide awards to all scholarship recipients. If FTE enrollment in state scholarship programs exceeds the amount appropriated in the GAA, the DOE is required to provide additional funding for scholarships from the Stabilization Fund. Similarly, if available funds in the Florida Tax Credit (FTC) Scholarship Program are insufficient to cover all eligible Personalized Education Program (PEP) students, the DOE must allocate additional funds to support these scholarships, up to the authorized limit.

The bill maintains the current requirement that the Legislature annually appropriate funds to ensure a minimum balance of \$250 million in the Stabilization Fund at the start of each fiscal year and that any unexpended funds may be carried forward for up to 10 years after the effective date of the original appropriation.

The bill amends section 1011.62, F.S., to remove the Educational Enrollment Stabilization from within the FEFP calculation.

The bill amends section 1002.45, F.S., to repeal a cross-reference to the Education Enrollment Stabilization.

FEFP Allocation Conference

The bill amends section 1011.65, F.S., to require the DOE provide verification that the DOE has cross-checked the FTE student membership survey data with the FTE student data for the educational scholarship programs to avoid duplication.

Audit of Student Enrollment:

The bill amends section 1010.305, F.S., to require the Auditor General to periodically examine the records of SFOs to determine compliance with laws and rules relating to relating to the classification, assignment, and verification of FTE student enrollment. The bill also provides that if it is determined that the approved criteria and procedures for the placement of students and the conduct of programs have not been followed by the SFO any excess funds may be deducted from the SFO.

The bill amends section 11.45, F.S., to update a cross-reference for the determination of the eligible nonprofit scholarship organization's compliance under the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship.

The Hope Scholarship Program*Present Situation*

In 2018, the Legislature created the HSP to provide the parent of a public school student subjected to a specified incident⁶⁹ at school the opportunity to transfer the child to another public school or to request a scholarship for the child to enroll in and attend an eligible private school.⁷⁰A parent may also choose to enroll their child in a public school located outside the district in which the student resides and request a transportation stipend.⁷¹

The district is required to upon receipt of an incident, the school principal, or his or her designee, shall:

- Provide a copy of the report to the parent and investigate the incident to determine if the incident must be reported.
- Within 24 hours after receipt of the report, the principal or designee shall provide a copy of the report to the parent of the alleged offender and to the superintendent.
- Upon conclusion of the investigation or within 15 days after the incident is reported, whichever occurs first, the district shall notify the parent of the program, offer the parent an opportunity to enroll his or her student in another public school that has capacity, and notify the parent of their eligibility to apply for a scholarship under the Family Empowerment Scholarship or Florida Tax Credit Scholarship programs.

Effect of Proposed Changes

The bill amends s. 1002.40, F.S., to rename the Hope Scholarship Program, the Hope Program.

The bill also amends s. 1002.421, F.S., to authorize that a student who is eligible for the Hope Program may apply for a scholarship at any time, but may only receive payments prospectively.

New Worlds Scholarship Accounts

⁶⁹ Section 1002.40(3), F.S. A specified incident includes: battery; harassment; hazing; bullying; kidnapping; physical attack; robbery; sexual offenses, harassment, assault, or battery; threat or intimidation; or fighting at school.

⁷⁰ Section 1002.40(1), F.S.

⁷¹ Section 1002.31(7), F.S.

Present Situation

The New Worlds Scholarship Accounts provide educational options for students enrolled in Voluntary Prekindergarten or a public school kindergarten through grade five who have a substantial deficiency in reading or mathematics or exhibit characteristics of dyslexia or dyscalculia, as assessed by the coordinated screening and progress monitoring (CSPM), or who scored below a Level three on the statewide, standardized ELA or mathematics assessment in the prior school year. An eligible student who is classified as an English Language Learner and is enrolled in a program or receives services that are specifically designed to meet the instructional needs of such students is given priority for the scholarship.⁷² For the 2024-2025 school year, the amount of the scholarship was \$1,200 per eligible student and is awarded on a first-come, first-served basis.⁷³

An eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organization (SFO) participating in the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program⁷⁴ may establish scholarship accounts for eligible students.⁷⁵ For an eligible student to receive a scholarship account, the student's parent must:

- Submit an application to an eligible nonprofit SFO by the deadline established by such organization; and
- Submit eligible expenses to the eligible nonprofit SFO for reimbursement of qualifying expenditures.

Qualifying expenditures include:

- Instructional materials.
- Curriculum.
- Tuition and fees for part-time tutoring services provided by a person who holds a valid Florida educator's certificate, a person who holds a baccalaureate or graduate degree in the subject area, a person who holds an adjunct teaching certificate, or a person who has demonstrated a mastery of subject area knowledge.
- Fees for summer education programs designed to improve reading, literacy, or mathematics skills.
- Fees for after-school education programs designed to improve reading, literacy, or mathematics skills.⁷⁶

Each year, the school district and private prekindergarten provider is required to notify the parent of each eligible student of the process to request and receive a scholarship.⁷⁷

In the 2023-2024 school year 31,764 students were funded, of that:

- 2,045 students spent all funds
- 9,451 students spent partial funds

⁷² Section 1002.411(2), F.S.

⁷³ Florida Department of Education, *New Worlds Reading Scholarship Accounts*, <https://www.fldoe.org/schools/school-choice/k-12-scholarship-programs/reading/> (last visited March 22, 2025).

⁷⁴ Section 1002.395, F.S.

⁷⁵ Section 1002.411(4), F.S.

⁷⁶ Section 1002.411(3), F.S.

⁷⁷ Section 1002.411(6)(a), F.S.

- 20,268 students did not spend any funds.⁷⁸

Effect of Proposed Changes

The bill repeals s. 1002.411, F.S., to remove the New Worlds Scholarship program. The bill also amends ss. 1008.25 and 1003.485, F.S., to remove references to the New Worlds Scholarship program.

The bill is effective July 1, 2025.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The bill has both negative and positive indeterminate fiscal impacts as follows:

⁷⁸ Email, Step Up for Students, (February 10, 2025).

The bill requires Scholarship Funding Organizations (SFO) to process payments on a monthly rather than a quarterly basis. If this frequency increases the number of transaction fees assessed by the SFO, it may result in an indeterminate fiscal impact on the SFO.

The bill requires the Auditor General to periodically complete full-time enrollment (FTE) audits for scholarships and SFOs. These audits may result in a negative indeterminate fiscal impact on state expenditures due to an increased workload for the Auditor General.

The bill requires additional types of providers to obtain backgrounds screenings. The cost of these screenings may result in a negative indeterminate fiscal impact on the providers who were not previously required to have a background screening.

The bill allows PEP students, up the statutory the enrollment cap, who are unable to be funded under the Florida Tax Credit (FTC) contributions to be funded out of state funds from the Education Enrollment Stabilization Fund. This would result in an indeterminate fiscal impact on state revenues and expenditures.

The bill provides supplemental payments to school districts that experience a decline in unweighted FTE students between the Legislative FEFP calculation in the GAA and the third FEFP recalculation within the same year. The estimated cost of these payments is approximately \$20 million.

The bill provides a couple of positive indeterminate impacts on state revenues and expenditures. Specifically, the bill modifies timeframes for when a scholarship account is considered inactive and when the remaining funds should be returned to the state. These changes should increase the frequency by which the state would recover funds from unused scholarship funds. In addition, the bill repeals the New Worlds Scholarship Accounts, which results in a reduction of \$4 million in recurring funds.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill substantially amends the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 11.45, 212.099, 1002.394, 1002.395, 1002.40, 1002.421, 1002.45, 1003.485, 1008.25, 1010.305, 1011.61, 1011.62 and 1011.65.

This bill creates sections 1011.687 and 1011.689 of the Florida Statutes.

This bill repeals section 1002.411 of the Florida Statutes.

IX. Additional Information:

- A. **Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:**
(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

- B. **Amendments:**

None.

This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.

FOR CONSIDERATION By the Appropriations Committee on Pre-K - 12 Education

602-02541A-25

20257030pb

1 A bill to be entitled
 2 An act relating to educational scholarship programs;
 3 creating s. 1011.687, F.S.; creating an operating
 4 categorical fund for implementing the Family
 5 Empowerment Scholarship Program; providing
 6 requirements for the use and disbursement of funds;
 7 defining the term "full-time equivalent student";
 8 requiring the Department of Education to release funds
 9 if certain criteria are met; providing requirements
 10 for the release of each payment; providing
 11 requirements for excess funds; creating s. 1011.689,
 12 F.S.; creating the educational enrollment
 13 stabilization program to provide supplemental state
 14 funds to address changes in full-time equivalent
 15 student enrollment; requiring the department to use
 16 funds to ensure that a school district's funds are not
 17 lower than a specified calculation; requiring the
 18 department to use funds to provide a supplements
 19 payment to school districts that have a decline in
 20 enrollment; providing for the calculation of the
 21 supplemental payment; requiring the department to
 22 ensure funding is available for certain scholarship
 23 programs; requiring the department to appropriate
 24 funds from the General Appropriations Act to keep the
 25 educational enrollment stabilization program at a
 26 minimum balance; amending s. 1011.65, F.S.; requiring
 27 that specified data include a verification that
 28 certain full-time equivalent student membership survey
 29 data has been cross-checked by the department;

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30 amending s. 1002.40, F.S.; renaming the Hope
 31 Scholarship Program as the Hope Program; repealing s.
 32 1002.411, F.S., relating to New Worlds Scholarship
 33 Accounts; amending s. 1002.421, F.S.; defining terms;
 34 requiring an eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding
 35 organization to provide a parent with certain
 36 information on scholarship programs; requiring an
 37 eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organization to
 38 create a single application for all educational
 39 scholarship programs; providing requirements for such
 40 application; prohibiting an eligible nonprofit
 41 scholarship-funding organization from charging a fee
 42 for the application; requiring an eligible nonprofit
 43 scholarship-funding organization to establish two
 44 application approval windows; providing deadlines for
 45 such application approval windows; requiring an
 46 eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organization to
 47 review applications and award scholarships in a
 48 specified order of priority; requiring an eligible
 49 nonprofit scholarship-funding organization to award
 50 scholarships to newly eligible students on a first-
 51 come, first-served basis; requiring a parent to notify
 52 the eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding
 53 organization within a specified timeframe if a
 54 scholarship offer is accepted or declined within a
 55 specified timeframe; prohibiting a parent from
 56 applying for multiple scholarships for an individual
 57 student at the same time; authorizing specified
 58 students to apply for a scholarship at any time but

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59 only receive payments prospectively; prohibiting an
 60 eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organization
 61 from restricting or reserving scholarships for use at
 62 a particular school; requiring such organization to
 63 notify each parent of a scholarship applicant that
 64 participation in the program does not guarantee
 65 enrollment at an eligible private school; providing
 66 that a parent who submitted an application by a
 67 specified date need not submit a new application;
 68 authorizing a parent to withdraw their application and
 69 reapply; prohibiting an eligible nonprofit
 70 scholarship-funding organization from requiring
 71 documentation beyond the requirements of the
 72 scholarship program; requiring an eligible nonprofit
 73 scholarship-funding organization to verify a student's
 74 eligibility upon receipt of an application; requiring
 75 an eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organization
 76 to send a list of verified eligible students to the
 77 department by specified dates; requiring the
 78 department to assign each verified eligible student a
 79 Florida student identification number; requiring the
 80 department to use such number for tracking and
 81 reporting scholarship data; requiring the department
 82 to cross-check each list of verified eligible students
 83 with certain other lists; requiring the department to
 84 send the cross-checked list to the eligible nonprofit
 85 scholarship-funding organization; requiring the
 86 department to notify an eligible nonprofit
 87 scholarship-funding organization of specified

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88 information; requiring an eligible nonprofit
 89 scholarship-funding organization to verify a student's
 90 continued eligibility before disbursing each payment;
 91 providing criteria for verifying continued
 92 eligibility; requiring parents of students receiving
 93 scholarship payments to verify specified information;
 94 providing criteria for verifying continued
 95 eligibility; requiring parents of students receiving
 96 scholarship payments to verify specified information;
 97 providing that the scholarship program award amounts
 98 are the amounts provided in the General Appropriations
 99 Act; providing parameters for the calculation of the
 100 scholarship amounts for certain students; requiring an
 101 eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organization to
 102 establish and maintain a scholarship account for each
 103 student; providing methods for the transfer of funds;
 104 providing requirements for such accounts; providing
 105 that accrued interest is in addition to and not part
 106 of a student's account; providing that program funds
 107 include awarded funds and accrued interest and are
 108 available only for authorized expenditures; requiring
 109 eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organizations
 110 to make payments by funds transfer; providing
 111 requirements for such funds transfer; prohibiting a
 112 student's scholarship award from being reduced to
 113 cover certain fees; requiring that commodities or
 114 services related to the funds transfer system be
 115 procured by a specified method; providing an
 116 exception; prohibiting an eligible nonprofit

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117 scholarship-funding organization from transferring
 118 funds to an account that has a balance in excess of a
 119 specified amount; authorizing students in a
 120 scholarship program to take specified tests and
 121 certain assessments; providing an exception; requiring
 122 a participating private school to administer or
 123 provide for students to take specified tests and
 124 assessments; requiring a participating private school
 125 to submit a certain written request to the department
 126 by a specified date; requiring a school district to
 127 administer tests and assessments at a participating
 128 private school; requiring an owner or operator to
 129 undergo a background screening; providing requirements
 130 for the submission of fingerprints; requiring the
 131 Department of Law Enforcement to retain such
 132 fingerprints in a specified manner and to enter such
 133 fingerprints into the statewide automated biometric
 134 identification system; requiring that such
 135 fingerprints be available for certain purposes and
 136 uses; requiring the Department of Law Enforcement to
 137 run a certain search of such fingerprints; prohibiting
 138 an owner or operator who fails the background
 139 screening from participating in a scholarship program;
 140 prohibiting such owner or operator from transferring
 141 ownership or management authority to a relative;
 142 defining the term "relative"; requiring an eligible
 143 nonprofit scholarship-funding organization to report
 144 the annual audit of background screening results to
 145 the Department of Education; providing that a

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146 participating private school may be sectarian or
 147 nonsectarian; revising information required to be
 148 provided to the department by an eligible private
 149 school; deleting obsolete language; providing
 150 construction; requiring the department to publish and
 151 update information on its website relating to
 152 scholarship programs; requiring the department to
 153 investigate complaints; requiring the department to
 154 maintain and annually publish a list of tests that
 155 satisfy a specified requirement; requiring the
 156 department to develop a standard withdrawal form for
 157 parents withdrawing a student from public school;
 158 providing requirements for such form; requiring the
 159 department to develop a uniform reimbursement process;
 160 requiring an organization, by a specified date, to
 161 approve, deny, or request more information relating to
 162 a reimbursement request; requiring the department to
 163 coordinate with each organization to provide a
 164 participating private school with statewide
 165 assessments; deleting the definition of the term
 166 "owner or operator"; requiring a school district, by a
 167 specified date, to inform certain households of
 168 eligibility to apply for a scholarship program;
 169 requiring the school district to coordinate with the
 170 department to provide a participating private school
 171 with statewide assessments; requiring a school
 172 district to publish information about a scholarship
 173 program on its website; requiring a school district to
 174 provide a parent with the withdrawal form upon

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175 request; deleting obsolete language; amending s.
 176 1002.394, F.S.; deleting obsolete language; providing
 177 that authorized uses of program funds include digital
 178 devices; providing that authorized uses of program
 179 funds include membership dues and activity fees for
 180 Career and Technical Student Organizations; providing
 181 that tuition and fees that meet certain requirements
 182 are eligible for program funds; revising conditions
 183 under which a student is no longer eligible for
 184 scholarship funding; requiring an eligible nonprofit
 185 scholarship-funding organization to notify a parent
 186 before closing a student's account; requiring an
 187 eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organization to
 188 report certain information to the Department of
 189 Education regarding scholarship accounts closed under
 190 certain circumstances; requiring an eligible nonprofit
 191 scholarship-funding organization to notify a parent
 192 if, upon a student reaching a specified age, a balance
 193 exists in the student's account, the amount of the
 194 balance, and how the funds may be used; deleting a
 195 provision allowing a public school student to receive
 196 a scholarship for transportation; deleting obsolete
 197 language; amending s. 1002.395, F.S.; deleting
 198 obsolete language; deleting provisions related to
 199 scholarship priority; deleting a provision allowing a
 200 public school student to receive a scholarship for
 201 transportation; revising a provision requiring
 202 eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organizations
 203 to verify that scholarship funds are used for

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204 specified purposes; requiring an eligible nonprofit
 205 scholarship-funding organization to report to the
 206 department the total number of scholarship accounts
 207 closed due to certain reasons; amending s. 1003.485,
 208 F.S.; deleting language relating to the purpose of the
 209 New Worlds Reading Initiative; conforming a cross-
 210 reference; amending s. 1008.25, F.S.; making a
 211 conforming change; amending s. 1010.305, F.S.;
 212 requiring the Auditor General to periodically examine
 213 the records of eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding
 214 organizations; providing for appropriate adjustments
 215 to be made and excess funds to be deducted if criteria
 216 and procedures have not been followed by an eligible
 217 nonprofit scholarship-funding organization; amending
 218 s. 1011.61, F.S.; conforming a cross-reference;
 219 amending s. 1011.62, F.S.; deleting obsolete language
 220 relating to the state-funded discretionary supplement;
 221 amending ss. 11.45, 212.099, and 1002.45, F.S.;
 222 conforming cross-references; providing an effective
 223 date.

224
 225 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

226
 227 Section 1. Section 1011.687, Florida Statutes, is created
 228 to read:

229 1011.687 Educational scholarship programs; operating
 230 category fund.-

231 (1) There is created an operating category fund for
 232 implementing the Family Empowerment Scholarship Program pursuant

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233 to s. 1002.394. These funds shall be in the amount provided in
 234 the General Appropriations Act and any additional funds
 235 transferred from the Educational Enrollment Stabilization Fund
 236 pursuant to s. 1011.689.

237 (2) Educational scholarship funding operating categorical
 238 funds shall be used to award scholarships as required in s.
 239 1002.394 and in accordance with s. 1002.421. Funds shall be
 240 disbursed from this fund based on the full-time equivalent
 241 scholarship students forecasted or reported as participating in
 242 the program.

243 (3) A "full-time equivalent student" for a student
 244 participating in a scholarship program under s. 1002.394 or s.
 245 1002.395 means a student who receives all 10 scholarship
 246 payments, that are distributed on a monthly basis. A student who
 247 receives less than 10 payments shall generate a fraction of
 248 full-time equivalent student membership proportional to the
 249 number of payments received.

250 (4) For the purposes of calculating a scholarship award
 251 amount, a full-time equivalent student shall be based upon the
 252 student's county of residence.

253 (5) Contingent upon verification that the organization is
 254 in compliance with s. 1002.395(6) (i), the department shall
 255 release funds from the operating categorical fund on a quarterly
 256 basis to the organization with the first quarter payment
 257 released no later than July 30. The funds shall be held by the
 258 organization for deposit into the students' accounts in
 259 accordance with the payment schedules.

260 (a) The first quarter release payment shall be based upon
 261 the amount of full-time equivalent student membership forecasted

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262 as provided in the General Appropriations Act.

263 (b) The second, third, and fourth quarter release payments
 264 shall be based upon the amount of full-time equivalent student
 265 membership reported and cross-checked by the department pursuant
 266 to s. 1002.421(3).

267 (c) If the funds released to the organization are in excess
 268 of the funds certified to the department by the organization as
 269 the amount distributed for student scholarships in accordance
 270 with scholarship program requirements, the department is
 271 authorized to adjust the amount of the overpayment in the third
 272 and fourth quarter payment releases.

273 Section 2. Section 1011.689, Florida Statutes, is created
 274 to read:

275 1011.689 Educational enrollment stabilization program.—The
 276 educational enrollment stabilization program is created to
 277 provide supplemental state funds as needed to address changes in
 278 full-time equivalent student enrollment throughout the school
 279 year in both the Florida Finance Education Program and the
 280 educational scholarship programs created pursuant to chapter
 281 1002.

282 (1) SCHOOL DISTRICT STABILIZATION.—To maintain the
 283 stability of the operations of public schools, including charter
 284 schools, in each school district, the department shall use funds
 285 as appropriated to ensure that based on each recalculation of
 286 the Florida Education Finance Program, a school district's funds
 287 per unweighted full-time equivalent student are not less than
 288 the greater of either the school district's funds per unweighted
 289 full-time equivalent student as appropriated in the General
 290 Appropriations Act or the school district's funds per unweighted

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291 full-time equivalent student as recalculated based upon the
 292 receipt of the certified taxable value for school purposes
 293 pursuant to s. 1011.62(4).

294 (2) SCHOOL DISTRICT DECLINING ENROLLMENT.—To maintain the
 295 stability of the operations of public schools, the department
 296 shall use funds as appropriated to provide a supplemental
 297 payment to school districts that have a decline in unweighted
 298 full-time equivalent students between the legislative
 299 calculation provided in the General Appropriations Act and the
 300 third calculation of the Florida Education Finance Program
 301 within the same year. The supplemental payment shall be computed
 302 by multiplying a percentage of the decline in the unweighted
 303 full-time equivalent students as determined by the Legislature
 304 by the base student allocation and by the comparable wage factor
 305 or the small district factor. The percentage used for districts
 306 that are fiscally constrained must be greater than the
 307 percentage used for non-fiscally constrained districts. The
 308 supplemental funds may not be added to the district's total
 309 Florida Education Finance Program funds for any future
 310 calculations.

311 (3) FAMILY EMPOWERMENT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM.—To maintain
 312 scholarship award amounts, the department shall use funds as
 313 appropriated to ensure that funding is available if the number
 314 of full-time equivalent students enrolled in the scholarship
 315 program is greater than the amount appropriated in the General
 316 Appropriations Act in the educational scholarship funding
 317 operating categorical established under s. 1011.687.

318 (4) FLORIDA TAX CREDIT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM.—If available
 319 funds in the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program are

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320 insufficient to cover eligible applicants who are personalized
 321 education program students, the department shall use funds as
 322 appropriated to award scholarships to such eligible applicants
 323 up to the number authorized in s. 1002.395.

324 (5) MINIMUM BALANCE.—The Legislature shall annually
 325 appropriate funds in the General Appropriations Act to the
 326 department for the educational stabilization program in an
 327 amount necessary to maintain a projected minimum balance of \$250
 328 million at the beginning of the upcoming fiscal year.
 329 Notwithstanding s. 216.301 and pursuant to s. 216.351, the
 330 unexpended balance of funds appropriated pursuant to this
 331 subsection which is not disbursed by June 30 of the fiscal year
 332 in which the funds are appropriated may be carried forward for
 333 up to 10 years after the effective date of the original
 334 appropriation.

335 Section 3. Section 1011.65, Florida Statutes, is amended to
 336 read:

337 1011.65 Florida Education Finance Program Appropriation
 338 Allocation Conference.—Prior to the distribution of any funds
 339 appropriated in the General Appropriations Act for the K-12
 340 Florida Education Finance Program formula and for the formula-
 341 funded categorical programs, the Commissioner of Education shall
 342 conduct an allocation conference. Conference principals shall
 343 include representatives of the Department of Education, the
 344 Executive Office of the Governor, and the appropriations
 345 committees of the Senate and the House of Representatives.
 346 Conference principals shall discuss and agree to all
 347 conventions, including rounding conventions, and methods of
 348 computation to be used to calculate Florida Education Finance

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349 Program and categorical entitlements of the districts for the
 350 fiscal year for which the appropriations are made. These
 351 conventions and calculation methods shall remain in effect until
 352 further agreements are reached in subsequent allocation
 353 conferences called by the commissioner for that purpose. The
 354 commissioner shall also, prior to each recalculation of Florida
 355 Education Finance Program and categorical allocations of the
 356 districts, provide conference principals with all data necessary
 357 to replicate those allocations precisely. This data shall
 358 include a matrix by district by program of all full-time
 359 equivalent changes made by the department as part of its
 360 administration of state full-time equivalent caps. This data
 361 must include verification that the department has cross-checked
 362 the full-time equivalent student membership survey data with the
 363 full-time equivalent student data for the educational
 364 scholarship programs established under chapter 1002 to avoid
 365 duplication.

366 Section 4. Section 1002.40, Florida Statutes, is amended to
 367 read:

368 1002.40 The Hope ~~Scholarship~~ Program.—

369 (1) PURPOSE.—The Hope ~~Scholarship~~ Program is established to
 370 provide the parent of a public school student who was subjected
 371 to an incident listed in subsection (3) an opportunity to
 372 transfer the student to another public school or to request a
 373 scholarship for the student to enroll in and attend an eligible
 374 private school.

375 (2) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section, the term:

376 (a) "Parent" means a resident of this state who is a
 377 parent, as defined in s. 1000.21, and whose student reported an

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378 incident in accordance with subsection (4).

379 (b) "Program" means the Hope ~~Scholarship~~ Program.

380 (c) "School" means any educational program or activity
 381 conducted by a public K-12 educational institution, any school-
 382 related or school-sponsored program or activity, and riding on a
 383 school bus, as defined in s. 1006.25(1), including waiting at a
 384 school bus stop.

385 (3) PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY.—A student enrolled in a Florida
 386 public school in kindergarten through grade 12 is eligible for
 387 the educational options described in subsection (4) if the
 388 student reported an incident in accordance with that subsection.
 389 For purposes of this section, the term "incident" means battery;
 390 harassment; hazing; bullying; kidnapping; physical attack;
 391 robbery; sexual offenses, harassment, assault, or battery;
 392 threat or intimidation; or fighting at school, as defined by the
 393 department in accordance with s. 1006.09(6).

394 (4) SCHOOL DISTRICT OBLIGATIONS; PARENTAL OPTIONS.—Upon
 395 receipt of a report of an incident, the school principal, or his
 396 or her designee, shall provide a copy of the report to the
 397 parent and investigate the incident to determine if the incident
 398 must be reported as required by s. 1006.09(6). Within 24 hours
 399 after receipt of the report, the principal or his or her
 400 designee shall provide a copy of the report to the parent of the
 401 alleged offender and to the superintendent. Upon conclusion of
 402 the investigation or within 15 days after the incident was
 403 reported, whichever occurs first, the school district shall
 404 notify the parent of the program, offer the parent an
 405 opportunity to enroll his or her student in another public
 406 school that has capacity, and notify the parent of their

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407 eligibility to apply for a scholarship to attend an eligible
408 private school under ss. 1002.394 and 1002.395.

409 (5) RULES.—The State Board of Education shall adopt rules
410 to administer this section.

411 Section 5. Section 1002.411, Florida Statutes, is repealed.

412 Section 6. Section 1002.421, Florida Statutes, is amended
413 to read:

414 1002.421 State school choice scholarship programs ~~program~~
415 ~~accountability and oversight.~~—

416 (1) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section, s. 1002.394, and
417 1002.395, the term:

418 (a) “Approved provider” means a provider approved by the
419 Agency for Persons with Disabilities, a health care practitioner
420 as defined in s. 456.001, or a provider approved by the
421 department pursuant to s. 1002.66.

422 (b) “Choice navigator” means an individual who meets the
423 requirements of s. 1002.395(6)(d)8. and who provides
424 consultations, at a mutually agreed upon location, on the
425 selection of, application for, and enrollment in educational
426 options addressing the academic needs of a student; curriculum
427 selection; and advice on career and postsecondary education
428 opportunities. However, this section does not authorize a choice
429 navigator to oversee or exercise control over the curricula or
430 academic programs of a personalized education program.

431 (c) “Curriculum” means a complete course of study for a
432 particular content area or grade level, including any required
433 supplemental materials and associated online instruction.

434 (d) “Disability” means, for a 3- or 4-year-old child or for
435 a student in kindergarten to grade 12, autism spectrum disorder

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436 as defined in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental
437 Disorders, Fifth Edition, published by the American Psychiatric
438 Association; cerebral palsy as defined in s. 393.063; Down
439 syndrome as defined in s. 393.063; an intellectual disability as
440 defined in s. 393.063; a speech impairment; a language
441 impairment; an orthopedic impairment; any other health
442 impairment; an emotional or a behavioral disability; a specific
443 learning disability, including, but not limited to, dyslexia,
444 dyscalculia, or developmental aphasia; Phelan-McDermid syndrome
445 as defined in s. 393.063; Prader-Willi syndrome as defined in s.
446 393.063; spina bifida as defined in s. 393.063; being a high-
447 risk child as defined in s. 393.063(22)(a); muscular dystrophy;
448 Williams syndrome; rare diseases that affect patient populations
449 of fewer than 200,000 individuals in the United States, as
450 defined by the National Organization for Rare Disorders;
451 anaphylaxis; a hearing impairment, including deafness; a visual
452 impairment, including blindness; traumatic brain injury;
453 hospital or homebound; or identification as dual sensory
454 impaired, as defined by rules of the State Board of Education
455 and evidenced by reports from local school districts. The term
456 “hospital or homebound” includes a student who has a medically
457 diagnosed physical or psychiatric condition or illness, as
458 defined by the state board in rule, and who is confined to the
459 home or hospital for more than 6 months.

460 (e) “Eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organization”
461 or “organization” means a state university; or an independent
462 college or university that is eligible to participate in the
463 William L. Boyd, IV, Effective Access to Student Education Grant
464 Program; is located and chartered in this state; is not for

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465 profit; is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the
 466 Southern Association of Colleges and Schools; or is a charitable
 467 organization that:

468 1. Is exempt from federal income tax pursuant to s.
 469 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code;

470 2. Is a Florida entity formed under chapter 605, chapter
 471 607, or chapter 617 and whose principal office is located in
 472 this state; and

473 3. Complies with 1002.395(6) and (15).

474 (f) "Eligible postsecondary educational institution" means
 475 a Florida College System institution; a state university; a
 476 school district technical center; a school district adult
 477 general education center; an independent college or university
 478 that is eligible to participate in the William L. Boyd, IV,
 479 Effective Access to Student Education Grant Program under s.
 480 1009.89; or an accredited independent postsecondary educational
 481 institution as defined in s. 1005.02 which is licensed to
 482 operate in this state under part III of chapter 1005 or is
 483 approved to participate in a reciprocity agreement as defined in
 484 s. 1000.35(2).

485 (g) "Eligible private school" means a private school as
 486 defined in s. 1002.01 which is located in Florida and which
 487 offers an education to students in any grades K-12 and meets the
 488 requirements in this section.

489 (h) "Household income" has the same meaning as the term
 490 "income" as defined in the Income Eligibility Guidelines for
 491 free and reduced price meals under the National School Lunch
 492 Program in 7 C.F.R. part 210 as published in the Federal
 493 Register by the United States Department of Agriculture.

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494 (i) "IEP" means an individual education plan, regardless of
 495 whether the plan has been reviewed or revised within the last 12
 496 months.

497 (j) "Inactive" means that no eligible expenditures have
 498 been made from an account.

499 (k) "Job coach" means an individual employed to help people
 500 with disabilities learn, accommodate to, and perform their work
 501 duties.

502 (l) "Law enforcement officer" has the same meaning as
 503 provided in s. 943.10(1).

504 (m) "Owner or operator" includes:

505 1. An owner, a president, an officer, or a director of an
 506 eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organization or a person
 507 with equivalent decisionmaking authority over an eligible
 508 nonprofit scholarship-funding organization; or

509 2. An owner, an operator, a superintendent, or a principal
 510 of an eligible private school or a person with equivalent
 511 decisionmaking authority over an eligible private school.

512 (n) "Parent" means a resident of this state who is a parent
 513 as defined in s. 1000.21.

514 (o) "Personalized education program" has the same meaning
 515 as in s. 1002.01.

516 (p) "Personalized education student" means a student whose
 517 parent applies to an eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding
 518 organization for participation in a personalized education
 519 program.

520 (q) "Student learning plan" means a customized learning
 521 plan developed by a parent at least annually to guide
 522 instruction for his or her student and to identify the goods and

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523 services needed to address the academic needs of his or her
 524 student.
 525 (2) SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION PROCESS.—
 526 (a) An eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organization
 527 must provide the parent with information on each scholarship
 528 program established pursuant to this chapter which clearly
 529 outlines the eligibility requirements of and authorized uses of
 530 funds for each program to enable the parent of a student to
 531 determine which program best fits the needs of each student.
 532 Specifically, for a student applying based on eligibility
 533 pursuant to s. 1002.394(3) (b) or s. 1002.395, except for
 534 students eligible pursuant to a personalized education program,
 535 a participating private school must discuss the school’s
 536 academic programs and policies, specialized services, code of
 537 conduct, and attendance policies before enrollment with the
 538 parent to determine which programs and services may meet the
 539 student’s individual needs.
 540 (b) The organization must create a single application for
 541 all educational scholarship programs established pursuant to
 542 this chapter in a manner that creates an electronic record of
 543 the application, which must include the date the application was
 544 submitted, the date the application was approved or denied, and
 545 the date the scholarship was accepted or declined. The
 546 organization may not charge a fee for the application.
 547 (c) The organization must establish two application
 548 approval windows each school year during which a parent of an
 549 eligible student, including renewal students, may apply for an
 550 educational scholarship program pursuant to this chapter, except
 551 for personalized education students, who may only apply during

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552 the fall application window.
 553 1.a. For the 2025-2026 school year, the application
 554 deadline for the fall application window must be no later than
 555 July 15.
 556 b. For the 2026-2027 school year and thereafter, the
 557 application deadline for the fall application window must be no
 558 later than May 31.
 559 2. The application deadline for the spring application
 560 window must be no later than November 1.
 561 (d) An organization must review applications and award
 562 scholarships using the following priorities:
 563 1. An application for a student who is eligible pursuant to
 564 s. 1002.394(3) (a) or s. 1002.395 and:
 565 a. Whose household income level does not exceed 185 percent
 566 of the federal poverty level or who is in foster care or out-of-
 567 home care; and then
 568 b. Whose household income level exceeds 185 percent of the
 569 federal poverty level but does not exceed 400 percent of the
 570 federal poverty level.
 571 2. An application for a student who is eligible and
 572 received a scholarship during the previous school year.
 573 3. An application for a student who was affected by the
 574 disapproval of an organization’s participation by the department
 575 pursuant to s. 1002.395 during the previous school year.
 576 The organization must award scholarships to newly eligible
 577 students on a first-come, first-served basis unless the student
 578 is seeking priority pursuant to this paragraph.
 579 (e) A parent must notify the organization within 30 days,
 580

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581 except for the 2025-2026 school year for which the parent must
 582 notify the organization within 15 days, of the application
 583 window deadline whether the scholarship offer is accepted or
 584 declined. A failure to respond within the timeframe established
 585 results in an automatic declination of the scholarship. A parent
 586 of a student who is awarded funds during the fall does not need
 587 to reapply during the spring application window. A parent of a
 588 student who is awarded funds during the spring window may only
 589 receive five of the 10 payment installments for the school year.

590 (f) A parent may not apply for multiple scholarships under
 591 s. 1002.394 or s. 1002.395 for an individual student at the same
 592 time.

593 (g) Notwithstanding the application window deadlines, a
 594 student in foster care or out-of-home care who is a dependent
 595 child of a member of the United States Armed Forces or who
 596 reported an incident pursuant to s. 1002.40 may apply for a
 597 scholarship at any time but may only receive payments
 598 prospectively.

599 (h) An organization may not restrict or reserve
 600 scholarships for use at a particular eligible private school or
 601 provide scholarships to a child of an owner or operator of such
 602 school. The organization must notify each parent of a
 603 scholarship applicant that participation in the scholarship
 604 program does not guarantee enrollment at an eligible private
 605 school.

606 (i) For the 2025-2026 school year, a parent who applies for
 607 a scholarship by April 30, 2025, does not need to submit a new
 608 application pursuant to the requirements of this section but
 609 must, by the time the organization is required to send its

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610 verified list to the department, provide the documentation
 611 required for eligibility. However, a parent may withdraw their
 612 application and reapply pursuant to the requirements of this
 613 section.

614
 615 An eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organization may not
 616 further regulate, exercise control over, or require
 617 documentation beyond the requirements of the scholarship
 618 programs unless the regulation, control, or documentation is
 619 necessary for participation in the program.

620 (3) ENROLLMENT VERIFICATION.—Upon receipt of an
 621 application, the eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding
 622 organization must verify each student's initial or continuing
 623 eligibility. Each student must apply for a scholarship each
 624 academic year. An organization may not grant multiyear
 625 scholarships in one approval process.

626 (a) To verify eligibility the organization must request for
 627 each student and include in each student's file all of the
 628 following information:

629 1. More than one form of proof of residency or proof that
 630 the student is the dependent of an active duty member of the
 631 United States Armed Forces who has received permanent change of
 632 station orders to this state or, at the time of renewal, whose
 633 home of record or state of legal residence is Florida.

634 2. A copy of the student's birth certificate.

635 3. For a student who was enrolled in public school in the
 636 school year prior to participation in the scholarship program,
 637 proof that the parent submitted the standard withdrawal form to
 638 the public school at which the student was previously enrolled.

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- 639 4. The following documentation from the parent attesting
 640 that while the student receives scholarship payments, the
 641 student will be enrolled in and in compliance with the
 642 applicable attendance requirements under ss. 1003.01(16) and
 643 1003.21(1):
- 644 a. A copy of the notice of a parent's intent to establish
 645 and maintain a home education program pursuant to s. 1002.41;
 646 b. A personalized education program and a copy of the
 647 student learning plan that has been reviewed and verified by the
 648 organization pursuant to s. 1002.395(7)(c); or
 649 c. A letter of admission or enrollment from an eligible
 650 private school for the school year in which the student is
 651 applying.
- 652 (b) In addition, if the student:
- 653 1. Previously participated in a scholarship program, the
 654 organization must request for each student the assessment
 655 results necessary to verify compliance with subsection (7).
- 656 2. Is seeking priority eligible based upon household
 657 income, the parent of the student must authorize the
 658 organization to access information needed for income eligibility
 659 determination and verification held by other state or federal
 660 agencies, including the Department of Revenue, the Department of
 661 Children and Families, the Department of Education, the
 662 Department of Commerce, and the Agency for Health Care
 663 Administration.
- 664 (c) An organization must send to the department a list of
 665 verified eligible students and any information necessary for the
 666 department to review the list by:
- 667 1. August 15 for the 2025-2026 school year for the fall

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- 668 application window.
- 669 2. July 15 for the 2026-2027 school year and each school
 670 year thereafter for the fall application window.
- 671 3. December 15 for the spring application window.
- 672 (d) The department must assign each verified eligible
 673 student a Florida student identification number. Once a student
 674 is assigned a Florida student identification number, the
 675 organization must use that number for the reporting and tracking
 676 of all scholarship data.
- 677 (e) The department must cross-check each list of verified
 678 eligible students with the most recent public school enrollment
 679 lists and each list of verified eligible students applying to
 680 receive a scholarship award before an organization makes any
 681 payments to avoid duplication between organizations and between
 682 the organizations and the public schools.
- 683 (f) The department, after the list of verified eligible
 684 students has been cross-checked and each student has been
 685 assigned a Florida student identification number, shall send the
 686 updated list to the organization who may then fund students
 687 based on the department's list of verified eligible students.
 688 The department must notify an organization of any of the
 689 organization's identified students who were submitted for a
 690 scholarship from another organization and which organization the
 691 student shall receive funding from.
- 692 (4) PRE-PAYMENT VERIFICATION.—Prior to the disbursement of
 693 each scholarship payment, the organization must verify the
 694 student's continued eligibility based upon the requirements of
 695 the applicable student's scholarship program.
- 696 (a) For scholarship programs that require private school

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697 enrollment, the organization must verify that the student is
 698 enrolled in and in attendance at an eligible participating
 699 private school.

700 (b) Prior to the receipt of each scholarship payment, a
 701 parent of the student must attest that the student is not
 702 enrolled full-time in a public school and is enrolled in and in
 703 attendance at, unless excused for illness or other good cause:

704 1. A home education program;
 705 2. A personalized education program; or
 706 3. An eligible private school.

707 (c) The organization may not make any payment into a
 708 student's account upon notification that the student is enrolled
 709 in a public school unless the organization can verify the
 710 student's continued eligibility. An organization is liable to
 711 the state for payments made in violation of this subsection and
 712 must reimburse the state for funds that were improperly awarded
 713 which cannot be recovered.

714 (5) SCHOLARSHIP AWARD AMOUNTS AND PAYMENT SCHEDULE.—
 715 (a) Beginning in the 2025-2026 school year, the calculated
 716 scholarship program award amounts shall be the amounts provided
 717 in the General Appropriations Act which are based upon the
 718 amounts by basic program and program for exceptional students
 719 under the Florida Education Finance Program. These amounts shall
 720 be adjusted annually based upon the value of the percentage
 721 change increase in per student funding at the state level for
 722 public school districts as provided in the General
 723 Appropriations Act.

724 1. The calculated scholarship amount for a student
 725 determined eligible pursuant to s. 1002.394(3)(a) or s. 1002.395

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726 shall be based upon the student's current grade level and county
 727 of residence.

728 2. The calculated scholarship amount for a student
 729 determined eligible pursuant to s. 1002.394(3)(b) must be based
 730 upon the student's current grade level, exceptional student
 731 program, and county of residence.

732 a. The calculated scholarship amount for a student who
 733 received a Gardiner Scholarship pursuant to former s. 1002.385
 734 in the 2020-2021 school year shall be the greater of the amount
 735 calculated pursuant to this subsection or the amount the student
 736 received for the 2020-2021 school year.

737 b. The calculated scholarship amount for a student who
 738 received a John M. McKay Scholarship pursuant to former s.
 739 1002.39 in the 2020-2021 school year shall be the greater of the
 740 amount calculated pursuant to this subsection or the amount the
 741 student received for the 2020-2021 school year.

742 (b) The scholarship award shall be divided into 10 equal
 743 installments. The organization must make payments no later than
 744 August 20, except for the 2025-2026 school year for which the
 745 first payment must be made no later than September 1, September
 746 15, October 15, November 15, January 15, February 15, March 15,
 747 April 15, and May 15 of each school year in which the
 748 scholarship is in force and in accordance with the pre-payment
 749 verification process. The first payment must be for two
 750 installments.

751 (6) SCHOLARSHIP ACCOUNTS.—The organization must establish
 752 and maintain a separate scholarship account for each student
 753 enrolled in a scholarship program. For each account, the
 754 organization must maintain a record of accrued interest which is

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755 retained in the student's account. Accrued interest in the
 756 student's account is in addition to, and not part of, the
 757 awarded funds. Program funds include both the awarded funds and
 758 accrued interest and are available only for authorized program
 759 expenditures.

760 (a) Payment of the scholarship by the eligible nonprofit
 761 scholarship-funding organization shall be by funds transfer,
 762 including, but not limited to, debit cards, electronic payment
 763 cards, or any means of payment the department deems commercially
 764 viable or cost-effective. A student's scholarship award may not
 765 be reduced to cover debit card or electronic payment fees.
 766 Commodities or services related to the development of such
 767 transfer system must be procured by competitive solicitation
 768 unless purchased from a state term contract pursuant to s.
 769 287.056.

770 (b) For students eligible pursuant to s. 1002.394(3) (a) or
 771 s. 1002.395, except for those students enrolled in a
 772 personalized education program:

773 1. The organization must commit scholarship funds on behalf
 774 of the student for tuition and fees that the parent must pay at
 775 a participating private school before scholarship account funds
 776 may be used for additional authorized uses under s.
 777 1002.394(4) (a) or s. 1002.395(4) (d). A parent is responsible for
 778 all eligible expenses in excess of the scholarship amount. An
 779 eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organization shall ensure
 780 that the parent has approved a funds transfer before any
 781 scholarship funds are deposited. The parent may not designate
 782 any entity or individual associated with a participating private
 783 school as the parent's attorney in fact to approve a funds

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784 transfer.

785 2. After funds have been committed pursuant to subparagraph
 786 1., funds may be used as authorized in s. 1002.394(4) (a) and as
 787 authorized in the organization's purchasing handbook by paying
 788 for the authorized use directly and then submitting a
 789 reimbursement request to the organization. An organization may
 790 require the use of an online platform for direct purchases of
 791 products if such use does not limit a parent's choice of
 792 curriculum or academic programs. If a parent purchases a product
 793 identical to one offered by an organization's online platform
 794 for a lower price, the organization must reimburse the parent
 795 the cost of the product.

796 3. The initial payment shall be made after the
 797 organization's verification of admission acceptance, and
 798 subsequent payments shall be made upon verification of continued
 799 enrollment and attendance at a participating private school.
 800 Payments for tuition and fees for full-time enrollment shall be
 801 made within 7 business days after approval by the parent and the
 802 private school.

803 4. An organization may not transfer any funds to an account
 804 of a student which has a balance in excess of \$24,000.

805 (c) For students eligible pursuant to s. 1002.394(3) (b):
 806 1. The organization must verify qualifying educational
 807 expenditures pursuant to the requirements of s. 1002.394(4) (b).
 808 The organization must verify any expenditures made pursuant to
 809 s. 1002.394(4) (b)1. and 2. before the distribution of funds.
 810 Review of expenditures made for services specified in s.
 811 1002.394(4) (b)3.-16. may be completed after the purchase is
 812 made.

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813 2. An organization may not transfer any funds to an account
814 of a student which has a balance in excess of \$50,000.

815 (d) The parent of a student who fails to comply with this
816 subsection forfeits the scholarship. An organization must notify
817 the parent when a scholarship account is closed and program
818 funds revert to the state.

819 (7) TESTING REQUIREMENTS.—A student participating in a
820 scholarship program in grades 3 through 10 may take the
821 nationally norm-referenced tests that are identified by the
822 department or take the statewide assessments pursuant to s.
823 1008.22. Students with disabilities for whom standardized
824 testing is not appropriate are exempt from this requirement.

825 (a) A participating private school must annually administer
826 or make provision for students participating in the program in
827 grades 3 through 10 to take one of the nationally norm-
828 referenced tests or cooperate with a student whose parent
829 chooses to participate in the statewide assessments pursuant to
830 s. 1008.22. A parent must require his or her student
831 participating in the program to take the norm-referenced tests
832 offered by the participating private school. The parent may also
833 choose to have the student participate in the statewide
834 assessments pursuant to s. 1008.22.

835 (b)1. If the participating private school chooses to offer
836 and administer the statewide assessments pursuant to s. 1008.22
837 to all students who attend the private school in grades 3
838 through 10, it must submit a request in writing to the
839 department by March 1 of each year in order to administer the
840 statewide assessments in the subsequent school year. In turn,
841 upon the request of the department, a school district shall

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842 coordinate with the department to provide to a participating
843 private school the statewide assessments and any related
844 materials for administering the assessments.

845 2. A school district is responsible for administering tests
846 at a participating private school, including:

847 a. Providing training for private school staff on test
848 security and assessment administration procedures;

849 b. Distributing testing materials to a private school;

850 c. Retrieving testing materials from a private school;

851 d. Providing the required format for a private school to
852 submit information to the district for test administration and
853 enrollment purposes; and

854 e. Providing any required assistance, monitoring, or
855 investigation related to administering tests and assessments at
856 a private school.

857 3. A participating private school shall report a student's
858 scores to his or her parent. By August 15 of each year, a
859 participating private school must report the scores of all
860 participating students to a state university as described in s.
861 1002.395(9)(b)3.

862 4. If a parent requests that the student participating in
863 the program take statewide assessments pursuant to s. 1008.22
864 and the participating private school has not chosen to offer and
865 administer the statewide assessments, the district in which the
866 participating private school is located must provide locations
867 and times for the student to take the assessments. The parent is
868 responsible for transporting the student to the assessment site
869 designated by the school district.

870 5. For students determined eligible pursuant to s.

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871 1002.395(7)(b), an organization must receive eligible student
 872 test scores, and beginning with the 2027-2028 school year, by
 873 August 15, annually report test scores for such students to a
 874 state university pursuant to s. 1002.395(9)(b)3.

875 (8) BACKGROUND SCREENING REQUIREMENTS.-

876 (a) Each owner or operator or an individual providing
 877 services under s. 1002.394(4)(b)4. or s. 1002.395(6)(d)4., prior
 878 to employment or engagement to provide services, to undergo
 879 level 2 background screening as provided under chapter 435. The
 880 fingerprints for the background screening must be electronically
 881 submitted to the Department of Law Enforcement and may be taken
 882 by an authorized law enforcement agency or a private company
 883 that is trained to take fingerprints. However, the complete set
 884 of fingerprints of an owner or operator or service provider may
 885 not be taken by the owner or operator or service provider. The
 886 owner or operator or service provider shall provide a copy of
 887 the results of the state and national criminal history check to
 888 the Department of Education. The cost of the background
 889 screening may be borne by the owner or operator or service
 890 provider.

891 1. Every 5 years following employment or engagement to
 892 provide services, an owner or operator or service provider must
 893 meet level 2 screening standards as described in s. 435.04, at
 894 which time the owner or operator or service provider shall
 895 request the Department of Law Enforcement to forward the
 896 fingerprints to the Federal Bureau of Investigation for level 2
 897 screening. If the fingerprints of an owner or operator or
 898 service provider are not retained by the Department of Law
 899 Enforcement under subparagraph 2., the owner or operator or

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900 service provider must electronically file a complete set of
 901 fingerprints with the Department of Law Enforcement. Upon
 902 submission of fingerprints for this purpose, the owner or
 903 operator or service provider shall request that the Department
 904 of Law Enforcement forward the fingerprints to the Federal
 905 Bureau of Investigation for level 2 screening, and the
 906 fingerprints shall be retained by the Department of Law
 907 Enforcement under subparagraph 2.

908 2. Fingerprints submitted to the Department of Law
 909 Enforcement as required by this paragraph must be retained by
 910 the Department of Law Enforcement in a manner approved by rule
 911 and entered in the statewide automated biometric identification
 912 system authorized by s. 943.05(2)(b). The fingerprints must
 913 thereafter be available for all purposes and uses authorized for
 914 arrest fingerprints entered in the statewide automated biometric
 915 identification system pursuant to s. 943.051.

916 3. The Department of Law Enforcement shall run a search of
 917 all arrest fingerprints received under s. 943.051 against the
 918 fingerprints retained in the statewide automated biometric
 919 identification system under subparagraph 2. Any arrest record
 920 that is identified with an owner's or operator's fingerprints
 921 must be reported to the owner or operator or service provider,
 922 who must report to the Department of Education. Any costs
 923 associated with the search shall be borne by the owner or
 924 operator or service provider.

925 4. An owner or operator who fails the level 2 background
 926 screening is not eligible to participate in a scholarship
 927 program under this chapter. A service provider must submit a
 928 notarized attestation to the organization and make the

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929 background screening results available upon request. A person
 930 that fails to make the background screening results available
 931 upon request to either the parent or organization is
 932 disqualified from participating in the program. No later than
 933 December 1, 2025, an organization may not provide scholarship
 934 funds to a person or provider that has not submitted the
 935 notarized attestation.

936 5. In addition to the offenses listed in s. 435.04, a
 937 person required to undergo background screening pursuant to this
 938 part or authorizing statutes may not have an arrest awaiting
 939 final disposition for, must not have been found guilty of, or
 940 entered a plea of nolo contendere to, regardless of
 941 adjudication, and must not have been adjudicated delinquent for,
 942 and the record must not have been sealed or expunged for, any of
 943 the following offenses or any similar offense of another
 944 jurisdiction:

- 945 a. Any authorizing statutes, if the offense was a felony.
- 946 b. This chapter, if the offense was a felony.
- 947 c. Section 409.920, relating to Medicaid provider fraud.
- 948 d. Section 409.9201, relating to Medicaid fraud.
- 949 e. Section 741.28, relating to domestic violence.
- 950 f. Section 817.034, relating to fraudulent acts through
 951 mail, wire, radio, electromagnetic, photoelectronic, or
 952 photooptical systems.
- 953 g. Section 817.234, relating to false and fraudulent
 954 insurance claims.
- 955 h. Section 817.505, relating to patient brokering.
- 956 i. Section 817.568, relating to criminal use of personal
 957 identification information.

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- 958 j. Section 817.60, relating to obtaining a credit card
 959 through fraudulent means.
- 960 k. Section 817.61, relating to fraudulent use of credit
 961 cards, if the offense was a felony.
- 962 l. Section 831.01, relating to forgery.
- 963 m. Section 831.02, relating to uttering forged instruments.
- 964 n. Section 831.07, relating to forging bank bills, checks,
 965 drafts, or promissory notes.
- 966 o. Section 831.09, relating to uttering forged bank bills,
 967 checks, drafts, or promissory notes.
- 968 p. Section 831.30, relating to fraud in obtaining medicinal
 969 drugs.
- 970 q. Section 831.31, relating to the sale, manufacture,
 971 delivery, or possession with the intent to sell, manufacture, or
 972 deliver any counterfeit controlled substance, if the offense was
 973 a felony.
- 974 6. At least 30 calendar days before a transfer of ownership
 975 of a private school, the owner or operator shall notify the
 976 parent of each scholarship student.
- 977 7. The owner or operator of a private school that has been
 978 deemed ineligible to participate in a scholarship program
 979 pursuant to this chapter may not transfer ownership or
 980 management authority of the school to a relative in order to
 981 participate in a scholarship program as the same school or a new
 982 school. For purposes of this subparagraph, the term "relative"
 983 means father, mother, son, daughter, grandfather, grandmother,
 984 brother, sister, uncle, aunt, cousin, nephew, niece, husband,
 985 wife, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law,
 986 brother-in-law, sister-in-law, stepfather, stepmother, stepson,

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987 stepdaughter, stepbrother, stepsister, half brother, or half
 988 sister.

989 (b) An organization must report the annual audit of
 990 background screening results required under this subsection to
 991 the department.

992 (9) PRIVATE SCHOOL ELIGIBILITY AND OBLIGATIONS.—A private
 993 school participating in an educational scholarship program
 994 established pursuant to this chapter ~~may be sectarian or~~
 995 nonsectarian and must be a private school as defined in s.
 996 1002.01 in this state, be registered, and be in compliance with
 997 all requirements of this section in addition to private school
 998 requirements outlined in s. 1002.42, specific requirements
 999 identified within respective scholarship program laws, and other
 1000 provisions of Florida law that apply to private schools.
 1001 Additionally, a private school participating in an educational
 1002 scholarship program pursuant to this chapter, ~~and~~ must:

1003 (a) Comply with the antidiscrimination provisions of 42
 1004 U.S.C. s. 2000d.

1005 (b) Notify the department of its intent to participate in a
 1006 scholarship program.

1007 (c) Notify the department of any change in the school's
 1008 name, school director, mailing address, or physical location
 1009 within 15 days after the change.

1010 (d) Provide to the department or ~~scholarship-funding~~
 1011 organization all documentation required for a student's
 1012 participation or required by the organization to process a
 1013 scholarship payment, including the private school's and
 1014 student's individual fee schedule, and attendance verification
 1015 as required by the department or ~~scholarship-funding~~

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1016 organization, prior to scholarship payment. Such information
 1017 must be provided by the deadlines established by the
 1018 organization and in accordance with the requirements of this
 1019 section or ss. 1002.394 and 1002.395. A student is not eligible
 1020 to receive a scholarship payment if the private school fails to
 1021 meet the deadlines.

1022 (e) Annually complete and submit to the department a
 1023 notarized scholarship compliance statement certifying that all
 1024 school employees and contracted personnel with direct student
 1025 contact have undergone background screening pursuant to s.
 1026 435.12 and have met the screening standards as provided in s.
 1027 435.04.

1028 (f) Demonstrate fiscal soundness and accountability by:

1029 1. Being in operation for at least 3 school years or
 1030 obtaining a surety bond or letter of credit for the amount equal
 1031 to the scholarship funds for any quarter and filing the surety
 1032 bond or letter of credit with the department.

1033 2. Requiring the parent of each scholarship student to
 1034 personally restrictively endorse the scholarship warrant to the
 1035 school or to approve a funds transfer before any funds are
 1036 deposited for a student. The school may not act as attorney in
 1037 fact for the parent of a scholarship student under the authority
 1038 of a power of attorney executed by such parent, or under any
 1039 other authority, to endorse a scholarship warrant or approve a
 1040 funds transfer on behalf of such parent.

1041 (g) Meet applicable state and local health, safety, and
 1042 welfare laws, codes, and rules, including:

- 1043 1. Firesafety.
- 1044 2. Building safety.

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1045 (h) Employ or contract with teachers who hold baccalaureate
 1046 or higher degrees, have at least 3 years of teaching experience
 1047 in public or private schools, or have special skills, knowledge,
 1048 or expertise that qualifies them to provide instruction in
 1049 subjects taught.

1050 (i) Maintain a physical location in the state at which each
 1051 student has regular and direct contact with teachers. Regular
 1052 and direct contact with teachers may be satisfied for students
 1053 enrolled in a personalized education program if students have
 1054 regular and direct contact with teachers at the physical
 1055 location at least 2 school days per week and the student
 1056 learning plan addresses the remaining instructional time.

1057 (j) Publish on the school's website, or provide in a
 1058 written format, information for parents regarding the school,
 1059 including, but not limited to, programs, services, the
 1060 qualifications of classroom teachers, and a statement that a
 1061 parentally placed private school student with a disability does
 1062 not have an individual right to receive some or all of the
 1063 special education and related services that the student would
 1064 receive if enrolled in a public school under the Individuals
 1065 with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), as amended.

1066 (k) At a minimum, provide the parent of each scholarship
 1067 student with a written explanation of the student's progress on
 1068 a quarterly basis.

1069 (l) Cooperate with a student whose parent chooses to
 1070 participate in the statewide assessments pursuant to s. 1008.22.

1071 (m) Require each employee and contracted personnel with
 1072 direct student contact, upon employment or engagement to provide
 1073 services, to undergo a state and national background screening,

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1074 pursuant to s. 943.0542, by electronically filing with the
 1075 Department of Law Enforcement a complete set of fingerprints
 1076 taken by an authorized law enforcement agency or an employee of
 1077 the private school, a school district, or a private company who
 1078 is trained to take fingerprints and deny employment to or
 1079 terminate an employee if he or she fails to meet the screening
 1080 standards under s. 435.04. Results of the screening shall be
 1081 provided to the participating private school. For purposes of
 1082 this paragraph:

1083 1. An "employee or contracted personnel with direct student
 1084 contact" means any employee or contracted personnel who has
 1085 unsupervised access to a scholarship student for whom the
 1086 private school is responsible.

1087 2. The costs of fingerprinting and the background check
 1088 shall not be borne by the state.

1089 3. Continued employment of an employee or contracted
 1090 personnel after notification that he or she has failed the
 1091 background screening under this paragraph shall cause a private
 1092 school to be ineligible for participation in a scholarship
 1093 program.

1094 4. An employee or contracted personnel holding a valid
 1095 Florida teaching certificate who has been fingerprinted pursuant
 1096 to s. 1012.32 is not required to comply with the provisions of
 1097 this paragraph.

1098 5. All fingerprints submitted to the Department of Law
 1099 Enforcement as required by this section shall be retained by the
 1100 Department of Law Enforcement in a manner provided by rule and
 1101 entered in the statewide automated biometric identification
 1102 system authorized by s. 943.05(2)(b). Such fingerprints shall

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1103 thereafter be available for all purposes and uses authorized for
 1104 arrest fingerprints entered in the statewide automated biometric
 1105 identification system pursuant to s. 943.051.

1106 6. The Department of Law Enforcement shall search all
 1107 arrest fingerprints received under s. 943.051 against the
 1108 fingerprints retained in the statewide automated biometric
 1109 identification system under subparagraph 5. Any arrest record
 1110 that is identified with the retained fingerprints of a person
 1111 subject to the background screening under this section shall be
 1112 reported to the employing school with which the person is
 1113 affiliated. Each private school participating in a scholarship
 1114 program is required to participate in this search process by
 1115 informing the Department of Law Enforcement of any change in the
 1116 employment or contractual status of its personnel whose
 1117 fingerprints are retained under subparagraph 5. The Department
 1118 of Law Enforcement shall adopt a rule setting the amount of the
 1119 annual fee to be imposed upon each private school for performing
 1120 these searches and establishing the procedures for the retention
 1121 of private school employee and contracted personnel fingerprints
 1122 and the dissemination of search results. The fee may be borne by
 1123 the private school or the person fingerprinted.

1124 7. Employees and contracted personnel whose fingerprints
 1125 are not retained by the Department of Law Enforcement under
 1126 subparagraphs 5. and 6. are required to be refingerprinted and
 1127 must meet state and national background screening requirements
 1128 upon reemployment or reengagement to provide services in order
 1129 to comply with the requirements of this section.

1130 8. Every 5 years following employment or engagement to
 1131 provide services with a private school, employees or contracted

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1132 personnel required to be screened under this section must meet
 1133 screening standards under s. 435.04, at which time the private
 1134 school shall request the Department of Law Enforcement to
 1135 forward the fingerprints to the Federal Bureau of Investigation
 1136 for national processing. If the fingerprints of employees or
 1137 contracted personnel are not retained by the Department of Law
 1138 Enforcement under subparagraph 5., employees and contracted
 1139 personnel must electronically file a complete set of
 1140 fingerprints with the Department of Law Enforcement. Upon
 1141 submission of fingerprints for this purpose, the private school
 1142 shall request that the Department of Law Enforcement forward the
 1143 fingerprints to the Federal Bureau of Investigation for national
 1144 processing, and the fingerprints shall be retained by the
 1145 Department of Law Enforcement under subparagraph 5.

1146 (n) Adopt policies establishing standards of ethical
 1147 conduct for educational support employees, instructional
 1148 personnel, and school administrators. The policies must require
 1149 all educational support employees, instructional personnel, and
 1150 school administrators, as defined in s. 1012.01, to complete
 1151 training on the standards; establish the duty of educational
 1152 support employees, instructional personnel, and school
 1153 administrators to report, and procedures for reporting, alleged
 1154 misconduct by other educational support employees, instructional
 1155 personnel, and school administrators which affects the health,
 1156 safety, or welfare of a student; and include an explanation of
 1157 the liability protections provided under ss. 39.203 and 768.095.
 1158 A private school, or any of its employees, may not enter into a
 1159 confidentiality agreement regarding terminated or dismissed
 1160 educational support employees, instructional personnel, or

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1161 school administrators, or employees, personnel, or
 1162 administrators who resign in lieu of termination, based in whole
 1163 or in part on misconduct that affects the health, safety, or
 1164 welfare of a student, and may not provide the employees,
 1165 personnel, or administrators with employment references or
 1166 discuss the employees', personnel's, or administrators'
 1167 performance with prospective employers in another educational
 1168 setting, without disclosing the employees', personnel's, or
 1169 administrators' misconduct. Any part of an agreement or contract
 1170 that has the purpose or effect of concealing misconduct by
 1171 educational support employees, instructional personnel, or
 1172 school administrators which affects the health, safety, or
 1173 welfare of a student is void, is contrary to public policy, and
 1174 may not be enforced.

1175 (o) Before employing a person in any position that requires
 1176 direct contact with students, conduct employment history checks
 1177 of previous employers, screen the person through use of the
 1178 screening tools described in s. 1001.10(5), and document the
 1179 findings. If unable to contact a previous employer, the private
 1180 school must document efforts to contact the employer. The
 1181 private school may not employ a person whose educator
 1182 certificate is revoked, who is barred from reapplying for an
 1183 educator certificate, or who is on the disqualification list
 1184 maintained by the department pursuant to s. 1001.10(4)(b).

1185 ~~(p) Require each owner or operator of the private school,~~
 1186 ~~prior to employment or engagement to provide services, to~~
 1187 ~~undergo level 2 background screening as provided under chapter~~
 1188 ~~435. For purposes of this paragraph, the term "owner or~~
 1189 ~~operator" means an owner, operator, superintendent, or principal~~

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1190 ~~of, or a person with equivalent decisionmaking authority over, a~~
 1191 ~~private school participating in a scholarship program~~
 1192 ~~established pursuant to this chapter. The fingerprints for the~~
 1193 ~~background screening must be electronically submitted to the~~
 1194 ~~Department of Law Enforcement and may be taken by an authorized~~
 1195 ~~law enforcement agency or a private company who is trained to~~
 1196 ~~take fingerprints. However, the complete set of fingerprints of~~
 1197 ~~an owner or operator may not be taken by the owner or operator.~~
 1198 ~~The owner or operator shall provide a copy of the results of the~~
 1199 ~~state and national criminal history check to the Department of~~
 1200 ~~Education. The cost of the background screening may be borne by~~
 1201 ~~the owner or operator.~~

1202 ~~1. Every 5 years following employment or engagement to~~
 1203 ~~provide services, each owner or operator must meet level 2~~
 1204 ~~screening standards as described in s. 435.04, at which time the~~
 1205 ~~owner or operator shall request the Department of Law~~
 1206 ~~Enforcement to forward the fingerprints to the Federal Bureau of~~
 1207 ~~Investigation for level 2 screening. If the fingerprints of an~~
 1208 ~~owner or operator are not retained by the Department of Law~~
 1209 ~~Enforcement under subparagraph 2., the owner or operator must~~
 1210 ~~electronically file a complete set of fingerprints with the~~
 1211 ~~Department of Law Enforcement. Upon submission of fingerprints~~
 1212 ~~for this purpose, the owner or operator shall request that the~~
 1213 ~~Department of Law Enforcement forward the fingerprints to the~~
 1214 ~~Federal Bureau of Investigation for level 2 screening, and the~~
 1215 ~~fingerprints shall be retained by the Department of Law~~
 1216 ~~Enforcement under subparagraph 2.~~

1217 ~~2. Fingerprints submitted to the Department of Law~~
 1218 ~~Enforcement as required by this paragraph must be retained by~~

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1219 the Department of Law Enforcement in a manner approved by rule
 1220 and entered in the statewide automated biometric identification
 1221 system authorized by s. 943.05(2)(b). The fingerprints must
 1222 thereafter be available for all purposes and uses authorized for
 1223 arrest fingerprints entered in the statewide automated biometric
 1224 identification system pursuant to s. 943.051.

1225 ~~3. The Department of Law Enforcement shall search all~~
 1226 ~~arrest fingerprints received under s. 943.051 against the~~
 1227 ~~fingerprints retained in the statewide automated biometric~~
 1228 ~~identification system under subparagraph 2. Any arrest record~~
 1229 ~~that is identified with an owner's or operator's fingerprints~~
 1230 ~~must be reported to the owner or operator, who must report to~~
 1231 ~~the Department of Education. Any costs associated with the~~
 1232 ~~search shall be borne by the owner or operator.~~

1233 ~~4. An owner or operator who fails the level 2 background~~
 1234 ~~screening is not eligible to participate in a scholarship~~
 1235 ~~program under this chapter.~~

1236 ~~5. In addition to the offenses listed in s. 435.04, a~~
 1237 ~~person required to undergo background screening pursuant to this~~
 1238 ~~part or authorizing statutes may not have an arrest awaiting~~
 1239 ~~final disposition for, must not have been found guilty of, or~~
 1240 ~~entered a plea of nolo contendere to, regardless of~~
 1241 ~~adjudication, and must not have been adjudicated delinquent for,~~
 1242 ~~and the record must not have been sealed or expunged for, any of~~
 1243 ~~the following offenses or any similar offense of another~~
 1244 ~~jurisdiction:~~

- 1245 ~~a. Any authorizing statutes, if the offense was a felony.~~
- 1246 ~~b. This chapter, if the offense was a felony.~~
- 1247 ~~c. Section 409.920, relating to Medicaid provider fraud.~~

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1248 ~~d. Section 409.9201, relating to Medicaid fraud.~~

1249 ~~e. Section 741.28, relating to domestic violence.~~

1250 ~~f. Section 817.034, relating to fraudulent acts through~~
 1251 ~~mail, wire, radio, electromagnetic, photoelectronic, or~~
 1252 ~~photooptical systems.~~

1253 ~~g. Section 817.234, relating to false and fraudulent~~
 1254 ~~insurance claims.~~

1255 ~~h. Section 817.505, relating to patient brokering.~~

1256 ~~i. Section 817.568, relating to criminal use of personal~~
 1257 ~~identification information.~~

1258 ~~j. Section 817.60, relating to obtaining a credit card~~
 1259 ~~through fraudulent means.~~

1260 ~~k. Section 817.61, relating to fraudulent use of credit~~
 1261 ~~cards, if the offense was a felony.~~

1262 ~~l. Section 831.01, relating to forgery.~~

1263 ~~m. Section 831.02, relating to uttering forged instruments.~~

1264 ~~n. Section 831.07, relating to forging bank bills, checks,~~
 1265 ~~drafts, or promissory notes.~~

1266 ~~o. Section 831.09, relating to uttering forged bank bills,~~
 1267 ~~checks, drafts, or promissory notes.~~

1268 ~~p. Section 831.30, relating to fraud in obtaining medicinal~~
 1269 ~~drugs.~~

1270 ~~q. Section 831.31, relating to the sale, manufacture,~~
 1271 ~~delivery, or possession with the intent to sell, manufacture, or~~
 1272 ~~deliver any counterfeit controlled substance, if the offense was~~
 1273 ~~a felony.~~

1274 ~~6. At least 30 calendar days before a transfer of ownership~~
 1275 ~~of a private school, the owner or operator shall notify the~~
 1276 ~~parent of each scholarship student.~~

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1277 7. ~~The owner or operator of a private school that has been~~
 1278 ~~deemed ineligible to participate in a scholarship program~~
 1279 ~~pursuant to this chapter may not transfer ownership or~~
 1280 ~~management authority of the school to a relative in order to~~
 1281 ~~participate in a scholarship program as the same school or a new~~
 1282 ~~school. For purposes of this subparagraph, the term "relative"~~
 1283 ~~means father, mother, son, daughter, grandfather, grandmother,~~
 1284 ~~brother, sister, uncle, aunt, cousin, nephew, niece, husband,~~
 1285 ~~wife, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law,~~
 1286 ~~brother-in-law, sister-in-law, stepfather, stepmother, stepson,~~
 1287 ~~stepdaughter, stepbrother, stepsister, half brother, or half~~
 1288 ~~sister.~~

1289 (p)(q) Provide a report from an independent certified
 1290 public accountant who performs the agreed-upon procedures
 1291 developed pursuant to s. 1002.395(6)(1) ~~s. 1002.395(6)(q)~~ if the
 1292 private school receives more than \$250,000 in funds from
 1293 scholarships awarded under this chapter in a state fiscal year.
 1294 A private school subject to this subsection must annually submit
 1295 the report by September 15 to the scholarship-funding
 1296 organization that awarded the majority of the school's
 1297 scholarship funds. The agreed-upon procedures must be conducted
 1298 in accordance with attestation standards established by the
 1299 American Institute of Certified Public Accountants.

1300 (q)(r) Prohibit education support employees, instructional
 1301 personnel, and school administrators from employment in any
 1302 position that requires direct contact with students if the
 1303 personnel or administrators are ineligible for such employment
 1304 pursuant to this section or s. 1012.315, or have been terminated
 1305 or have resigned in lieu of termination for sexual misconduct

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1306 with a student. If the prohibited conduct occurs subsequent to
 1307 employment, the private school must report the person and the
 1308 disqualifying circumstances to the department for inclusion on
 1309 the disqualification list maintained pursuant to s.
 1310 1001.10(4)(b).

1311 (r)(s) Not be owned or operated by a person or an entity
 1312 domiciled in, owned by, or in any way controlled by a foreign
 1313 country of concern or foreign principal as defined in s.
 1314 288.860. A violation of this paragraph constitutes an imminent
 1315 threat to the health, safety, and welfare of the school's
 1316 students and to the public, sufficient to justify immediate
 1317 suspension of payment of scholarship funds under paragraph
 1318 (11)(e) ~~(3)(e)~~, as well as denial, suspension, or revocation of
 1319 a school's participation in a scholarship program under
 1320 paragraph (11)(b) ~~(3)(b)~~.

1321 (s) The inclusion of eligible private schools within
 1322 options available to Florida public school students does not
 1323 expand the regulatory authority of the state, its officers, or
 1324 any school district to impose any additional regulation of
 1325 private schools beyond that reasonably necessary to enforce
 1326 requirements expressly set forth in this section.

1327
 1328 The department shall suspend the payment of funds to a private
 1329 school that knowingly fails to comply with this subsection or
 1330 subsection (8), and shall prohibit the school from enrolling new
 1331 scholarship students, for 1 fiscal year and until the school
 1332 complies. If a private school fails to meet the requirements of
 1333 this subsection or subsection (8) or has consecutive years of
 1334 material exceptions listed in the report required under

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1335 paragraph (p) ~~(q)~~, the commissioner may determine that the
 1336 private school is ineligible to participate in a scholarship
 1337 program.

1338 ~~(10)(2)~~ DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION OBLIGATIONS.—

1339 (a) The Department of Education shall:

1340 1. Annually verify the eligibility of private schools that
 1341 meet the requirements of this section, specific requirements
 1342 identified within respective scholarship program laws, and other
 1343 provisions of state law that apply to private schools.

1344 2. Establish a toll-free hotline that provides parents and
 1345 private schools with information on participation in the
 1346 scholarship programs.

1347 3. Publish and update, as necessary, information on the
 1348 department website about the educational scholarship programs
 1349 established under this chapter, including, but not limited to,
 1350 student eligibility criteria, parental responsibilities, and
 1351 relevant data. The information must include a list of approved
 1352 providers as required by s. 1002.66, eligible postsecondary
 1353 educational institutions, eligible private schools, and eligible
 1354 organizations and may identify or provide links to lists of
 1355 other approved providers.

1356 ~~4.3-~~ Establish a process by which individuals may notify
 1357 the department of any violation by a parent, private school, or
 1358 school district of state laws relating to program participation.
 1359 If the department has reasonable cause to believe that a
 1360 violation of this section or any rule adopted by the State Board
 1361 of Education has occurred, it shall conduct an inquiry or make a
 1362 referral to the appropriate agency for an investigation. A
 1363 department inquiry is not subject to the requirements of chapter

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1364 120.

1365 5. Investigate any written complaint of a violation of this
 1366 section by a parent, a student, a participating private school,
 1367 a public school, a school district, an organization, a provider,
 1368 or another appropriate party in accordance with the process
 1369 established under s. 1002.421.

1370 ~~6.4-~~ Require an annual, notarized, sworn compliance
 1371 statement from participating private schools certifying
 1372 compliance with state laws, and retain such records.

1373 ~~7.5-~~ Coordinate with the entities conducting the health
 1374 inspection for a private school to obtain copies of the
 1375 inspection reports.

1376 ~~8.6-~~ Conduct site visits to private schools entering a
 1377 scholarship program for the first time. Beginning with the 2019-
 1378 2020 school year, a private school is not eligible to receive
 1379 scholarship payments until a satisfactory site visit has been
 1380 conducted and the school is in compliance with all other
 1381 requirements of this section.

1382 ~~9.7-~~ Coordinate with the State Fire Marshal to obtain
 1383 access to fire inspection reports for private schools. The
 1384 authority conducting the fire safety inspection shall certify to
 1385 the State Fire Marshal that the annual inspection has been
 1386 completed and that the school is in full compliance. The
 1387 certification shall be made electronically or by such other
 1388 means as directed by the State Fire Marshal.

1389 ~~10.8-~~ Upon the request of a participating private school
 1390 authorized to administer statewide assessments, provide at no
 1391 cost to the school the statewide assessments administered under
 1392 s. 1008.22 and any related materials for administering the

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1393 assessments. Students at a private school may be assessed using
 1394 the statewide assessments if the addition of those students and
 1395 the school does not cause the state to exceed its contractual
 1396 caps for the number of students tested and the number of testing
 1397 sites. The state shall provide the same materials and support to
 1398 a private school that it provides to a public school. A private
 1399 school that chooses to administer statewide assessments under s.
 1400 1008.22 shall follow the requirements set forth in ss. 1008.22
 1401 and 1008.24, rules adopted by the State Board of Education to
 1402 implement those sections, and district-level testing policies
 1403 established by the district school board.

1404 11. Maintain and annually publish a list of nationally
 1405 norm-referenced tests identified for purposes of satisfying the
 1406 testing requirements in subsection (7). The tests must meet
 1407 industry standards of quality in accordance with state board
 1408 rule.

1409 12. Develop a standard withdrawal form for parents who are
 1410 withdrawing their students from public school to enroll in a
 1411 scholarship program under this chapter. The form must include
 1412 the student's Florida Education Identification number, full
 1413 name, date of birth, school or program from which the student is
 1414 withdrawing, and date of withdrawal.

1415 (b) The department may conduct site visits to any private
 1416 school participating in a scholarship program pursuant to this
 1417 chapter that has received a complaint about a violation of state
 1418 law or state board rule pursuant to subparagraph (a)4. ~~(a)3.~~ or
 1419 has received a notice of noncompliance or a notice of proposed
 1420 action within the previous 2 years.

1421 (c) Annually, by December 15, the department shall report

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1422 to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of
 1423 the House of Representatives its actions in implementing
 1424 accountability in the scholarship programs under this section,
 1425 any substantiated allegations or violations of law or rule by an
 1426 eligible private school under this section, and the corrective
 1427 action taken.

1428 (d) The department shall develop a uniform reimbursement
 1429 process that organizations must use when processing
 1430 reimbursement requests, including invoices, pursuant to s.
 1431 1002.394(11)(b)6. or s. 1002.395(6)(u). An organization must
 1432 approve, deny, or request more information relating to a
 1433 reimbursement request within 30 days after receipt of such
 1434 request. The department shall coordinate with each organization
 1435 to develop a process to collect input and feedback from parents,
 1436 private schools, and providers before an organization may
 1437 implement substantial modifications or enhancements to the
 1438 reimbursement process.

1439 (11)-~~3~~ COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION AUTHORITY AND
 1440 OBLIGATIONS.—The Commissioner of Education:

1441 (a) Shall deny, suspend, or revoke a private school's
 1442 participation in a scholarship program if it is determined that
 1443 the private school has failed to comply with this section or
 1444 exhibits a previous pattern of failure to comply. However, if
 1445 the noncompliance is correctable within a reasonable amount of
 1446 time, not to exceed 45 days, and if the health, safety, or
 1447 welfare of the students is not threatened, the commissioner may
 1448 issue a notice of noncompliance which provides the private
 1449 school with a timeframe within which to provide evidence of
 1450 compliance before taking action to suspend or revoke the private

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1451 school's participation in the scholarship program.

1452 (b) May deny, suspend, or revoke a private school's
1453 participation in a scholarship program if the commissioner
1454 determines that an owner or operator of the private school is
1455 operating or has operated an educational institution in this
1456 state or in another state or jurisdiction in a manner contrary
1457 to the health, safety, or welfare of the public or if the owner
1458 or operator has exhibited a previous pattern of failure to
1459 comply with this section or specific requirements identified
1460 within respective scholarship program laws. ~~For purposes of this~~
1461 ~~subsection, the term "owner or operator" has the same meaning as~~
1462 ~~provided in paragraph (1)(p).~~

1463 (c) May permanently deny or revoke the authority of an
1464 owner, officer, or director to establish or operate a private
1465 school in the state and include such individual on the
1466 disqualification list maintained by the department pursuant to
1467 s. 1001.10(4)(b) if the commissioner decides that the owner,
1468 officer, or director:

1469 1. Is operating or has operated an educational institution
1470 in the state or another state or jurisdiction in a manner
1471 contrary to the health, safety, or welfare of the public; or

1472 2. Has operated an educational institution that closed
1473 during the school year. An individual may be removed from the
1474 disqualification list if the individual reimburses the
1475 department or eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding
1476 organization the amount of scholarship funds received by the
1477 educational institution during the school year in which it
1478 closed.

1479 (d)1. In making such a determination, may consider factors

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1480 that include, but are not limited to, acts or omissions by an
1481 owner or operator which led to a previous denial, suspension, or
1482 revocation of participation in a state or federal education
1483 scholarship program; an owner's or operator's failure to
1484 reimburse the department or scholarship-funding organization for
1485 scholarship funds improperly received or retained by a school;
1486 the imposition of a prior criminal sanction related to an
1487 owner's or operator's management or operation of an educational
1488 institution; the imposition of a civil fine or administrative
1489 fine, license revocation or suspension, or program eligibility
1490 suspension, termination, or revocation related to an owner's or
1491 operator's management or operation of an educational
1492 institution; or other types of criminal proceedings in which an
1493 owner or operator was found guilty of, regardless of
1494 adjudication, or entered a plea of nolo contendere or guilty to,
1495 any offense involving fraud, deceit, dishonesty, or moral
1496 turpitude.

1497 2. The commissioner's determination is subject to the
1498 following:

1499 a. If the commissioner intends to deny, suspend, or revoke
1500 a private school's participation in the scholarship program, the
1501 department shall notify the private school of such proposed
1502 action in writing by certified mail and regular mail to the
1503 private school's address of record with the department. The
1504 notification shall include the reasons for the proposed action
1505 and notice of the timelines and procedures set forth in this
1506 paragraph.

1507 b. The private school that is adversely affected by the
1508 proposed action shall have 15 days after receipt of the notice

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1509 of proposed action to file with the department's agency clerk a
 1510 request for a proceeding pursuant to ss. 120.569 and 120.57. If
 1511 the private school is entitled to a hearing under s. 120.57(1),
 1512 the department shall forward the request to the Division of
 1513 Administrative Hearings.

1514 c. Upon receipt of a request referred pursuant to this
 1515 subparagraph, the director of the Division of Administrative
 1516 Hearings shall expedite the hearing and assign an administrative
 1517 law judge who shall commence a hearing within 30 days after the
 1518 receipt of the formal written request by the division and enter
 1519 a recommended order within 30 days after the hearing or within
 1520 30 days after receipt of the hearing transcript, whichever is
 1521 later. Each party shall be allowed 10 days in which to submit
 1522 written exceptions to the recommended order. A final order shall
 1523 be entered by the agency within 30 days after the entry of a
 1524 recommended order. The provisions of this sub-subparagraph may
 1525 be waived upon stipulation by all parties.

1526 (e) May immediately suspend payment of scholarship funds if
 1527 it is determined that there is probable cause to believe that
 1528 there is:

1529 1. An imminent threat to the health, safety, or welfare of
 1530 the students;

1531 2. A previous pattern of failure to comply with this
 1532 section; or

1533 3. Fraudulent activity on the part of the private school.
 1534 Notwithstanding s. 1002.22, in incidents of alleged fraudulent
 1535 activity pursuant to this section, the department's Office of
 1536 Inspector General is authorized to release personally
 1537 identifiable records or reports of students to the following

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1538 persons or organizations:

1539 a. A court of competent jurisdiction in compliance with an
 1540 order of that court or the attorney of record in accordance with
 1541 a lawfully issued subpoena, consistent with the Family
 1542 Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. s. 1232g.

1543 b. A person or entity authorized by a court of competent
 1544 jurisdiction in compliance with an order of that court or the
 1545 attorney of record pursuant to a lawfully issued subpoena,
 1546 consistent with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act,
 1547 20 U.S.C. s. 1232g.

1548 c. Any person, entity, or authority issuing a subpoena for
 1549 law enforcement purposes when the court or other issuing agency
 1550 has ordered that the existence or the contents of the subpoena
 1551 or the information furnished in response to the subpoena not be
 1552 disclosed, consistent with the Family Educational Rights and
 1553 Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. s. 1232g, and 34 C.F.R. s. 99.31.

1554
 1555 The commissioner's order suspending payment pursuant to this
 1556 paragraph may be appealed pursuant to the same procedures and
 1557 timelines as the notice of proposed action set forth in
 1558 subparagraph (d)2.

1559 (12) SCHOOL DISTRICT OBLIGATIONS.—

1560 (a) By January 1 of each year, a school district shall
 1561 inform all households within the district receiving free or
 1562 reduced-priced meals under the National School Lunch Act of
 1563 their eligibility to apply for a scholarship program established
 1564 under this chapter. The form of such notice shall be provided by
 1565 the department, and the school district shall include the
 1566 provided form in any normal correspondence with eligible

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1567 households. If an organization requests a special communication
 1568 to be issued to households within the district receiving free or
 1569 reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch Act, the
 1570 organization shall reimburse the district for the cost of
 1571 postage. Such notice is limited to once a year.

1572 (b) Upon the request of the department, a school district
 1573 shall coordinate with the department to provide to a
 1574 participating private school the statewide assessments
 1575 administered under s. 1008.22 and any related materials for
 1576 administering the assessments. For a student participating in a
 1577 scholarship program established under this chapter whose parent
 1578 requests that the student take the statewide assessments under
 1579 s. 1008.22, the district in which the student attends a
 1580 participating private school shall provide locations and times
 1581 to take all statewide assessments. A school district is
 1582 responsible for implementing test administrations at a
 1583 participating private school, including:

- 1584 1. Providing training for private school staff on test
- 1585 security and assessment administration procedures;
- 1586 2. Distributing testing materials to a private school;
- 1587 3. Retrieving testing materials from a private school;
- 1588 4. Providing the required format for a private school to
- 1589 submit information to the district for test administration and
- 1590 enrollment purposes; and
- 1591 5. Providing any required assistance, monitoring, or
- 1592 investigation at a private school.

1593 (c) Each school district must publish information about a
 1594 scholarship program established under this chapter on the
 1595 district's website homepage. At a minimum, the published

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1596 information must include a website link to the scholarship
 1597 programs published on the department's website as well as a
 1598 telephone number and e-mail address that students and parents
 1599 may use to contact relevant personnel in the school district to
 1600 obtain information about the scholarship.

1601 (d) A school district, upon the request of a parent, must
 1602 provide the parent of a student enrolled in a school in the
 1603 school district the standard withdrawal form developed by the
 1604 department. The school district must sign a completed form
 1605 within 10 days after receipt. The school district must also
 1606 publish the withdrawal form on its website in a downloadable
 1607 format

1608 ~~(4) The inclusion of eligible private schools within~~
 1609 ~~options available to Florida public school students does not~~
 1610 ~~expand the regulatory authority of the state, its officers, or~~
 1611 ~~any school district to impose any additional regulation of~~
 1612 ~~private schools beyond those reasonably necessary to enforce~~
 1613 ~~requirements expressly set forth in this section.~~

1614 ~~(13)(5) RULEMAKING.—~~The State Board of Education shall
 1615 adopt rules pursuant to ss. 120.536(1) and 120.54 to administer
 1616 this section, including rules to establish a deadline for
 1617 private school applications for participation and timelines for
 1618 the department to conduct site visits.

1619 Section 7. Subsections (2) through (12) of section
 1620 1002.394, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

1621 1002.394 The Family Empowerment Scholarship Program.—

1622 (2) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section, the term:

1623 (a) ~~"Approved provider" means a provider approved by the~~
 1624 ~~Agency for Persons with Disabilities, a health care practitioner~~

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1625 as defined in s. 456.001, or a provider approved by the
 1626 department pursuant to s. 1002.66.
 1627 (b) ~~"Choice navigator" has the same meaning as in s.~~
 1628 ~~1002.395(2).~~
 1629 (c) ~~"Curriculum" means a complete course of study for a~~
 1630 ~~particular content area or grade level, including any required~~
 1631 ~~supplemental materials and associated online instruction.~~
 1632 (d) ~~"Department" means the Department of Education.~~
 1633 (e) ~~"Disability" means, for a 3- or 4-year-old child or for~~
 1634 ~~a student in kindergarten to grade 12, autism spectrum disorder,~~
 1635 ~~as defined in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental~~
 1636 ~~Disorders, Fifth Edition, published by the American Psychiatric~~
 1637 ~~Association; cerebral palsy, as defined in s. 393.063; Down~~
 1638 ~~syndrome, as defined in s. 393.063; an intellectual disability,~~
 1639 ~~as defined in s. 393.063; a speech impairment; a language~~
 1640 ~~impairment; an orthopedic impairment; any other health~~
 1641 ~~impairment; an emotional or a behavioral disability; a specific~~
 1642 ~~learning disability, including, but not limited to, dyslexia,~~
 1643 ~~dyscalculia, or developmental aphasia; Phelan-McDermid syndrome,~~
 1644 ~~as defined in s. 393.063; Prader-Willi syndrome, as defined in~~
 1645 ~~s. 393.063; spina bifida, as defined in s. 393.063; being a~~
 1646 ~~high-risk child, as defined in s. 393.063(22)(a); muscular~~
 1647 ~~dystrophy; Williams syndrome; rare diseases which affect patient~~
 1648 ~~populations of fewer than 200,000 individuals in the United~~
 1649 ~~States, as defined by the National Organization for Rare~~
 1650 ~~Disorders; anaphylaxis; a hearing impairment, including~~
 1651 ~~deafness; a visual impairment, including blindness; traumatic~~
 1652 ~~brain injury; hospital or homebound; or identification as dual~~
 1653 ~~sensory impaired, as defined by rules of the State Board of~~

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1654 ~~Education and evidenced by reports from local school districts.~~
 1655 ~~The term "hospital or homebound" includes a student who has a~~
 1656 ~~medically diagnosed physical or psychiatric condition or~~
 1657 ~~illness, as defined by the state board in rule, and who is~~
 1658 ~~confined to the home or hospital for more than 6 months.~~
 1659 (f) ~~"Eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organization"~~
 1660 ~~or "organization" has the same meaning as in s. 1002.395(2).~~
 1661 (g) ~~"Eligible postsecondary educational institution" means~~
 1662 ~~a Florida College System institution; a state university; a~~
 1663 ~~school district technical center; a school district adult~~
 1664 ~~general education center; an independent college or university~~
 1665 ~~that is eligible to participate in the William L. Boyd, IV,~~
 1666 ~~Effective Access to Student Education Grant Program under s.~~
 1667 ~~1009.89; or an accredited independent postsecondary educational~~
 1668 ~~institution, as defined in s. 1005.02, which is licensed to~~
 1669 ~~operate in this state under part III of chapter 1005 or is~~
 1670 ~~approved to participate in a reciprocity agreement as defined in~~
 1671 ~~s. 1000.35(2).~~
 1672 (h) ~~"Eligible private school" has the same meaning as in s.~~
 1673 ~~1002.395(2).~~
 1674 (i) ~~"IEP" means an individual education plan, regardless of~~
 1675 ~~whether the plan has been reviewed or revised within the last 12~~
 1676 ~~months.~~
 1677 (j) ~~"Inactive" means that no eligible expenditures have~~
 1678 ~~been made from an account funded pursuant to paragraph (12)(b).~~
 1679 (k) ~~"Job coach" means an individual employed to help people~~
 1680 ~~with disabilities learn, accommodate to, and perform their work~~
 1681 ~~duties.~~
 1682 (l) ~~"Law enforcement officer" has the same meaning as~~

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1683 ~~provided in s. 943.10(1).~~

1684 ~~(m) "Parent" means a resident of this state who is a~~

1685 ~~parent, as defined in s. 1000.21.~~

1686 ~~(b) (a)~~ "Program" means the Family Empowerment Scholarship

1687 Program.

1688 (3) SCHOLARSHIP ELIGIBILITY.—

1689 ~~(a) 1-~~ A parent of a student may apply pursuant to s.

1690 1002.421 for and receive from the state a scholarship for the

1691 purposes specified in paragraph (4) (a) if the student:

1692 1. a- Is a resident of this state or the dependent child of

1693 an active duty member of the United States Armed Forces who has

1694 received permanent change of station orders to this state; and

1695 2. b- Is eligible to enroll in kindergarten through grade 12

1696 in a public school in this state or received a scholarship under

1697 the Hope ~~Scholarship~~ Program in the 2023-2024 school year.

1698 ~~2. Priority must be given in the following order:~~

1699 ~~a. A student whose household income level does not exceed~~

1700 ~~185 percent of the federal poverty level or who is in foster~~

1701 ~~care or out-of-home care.~~

1702 ~~b. A student whose household income level exceeds 185~~

1703 ~~percent of the federal poverty level, but does not exceed 400~~

1704 ~~percent of the federal poverty level.~~

1705 (b) A parent of a student with a disability may apply

1706 pursuant to s. 1002.421 for and receive from the state a

1707 scholarship for the purposes specified in paragraph (4) (b) if

1708 the student:

1709 1. Is a resident of this state or the dependent child of an

1710 active duty member of the United States Armed Forces who has

1711 received permanent change of station orders to this state or, at

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1712 the time of renewal, whose home of record or state of legal

1713 residence is Florida;

1714 2. Is 3 or 4 years of age during the year in which the

1715 student applies for program participation or is eligible to

1716 enroll in kindergarten through grade 12 in a public school in

1717 this state;

1718 3. Has a disability ~~as defined in subsection (2);~~ and

1719 4. Is the subject of an IEP written in accordance with

1720 rules of the State Board of Education or with the applicable

1721 rules of another state or has received a diagnosis of a

1722 disability from a physician who is licensed under chapter 458 or

1723 chapter 459, a psychologist who is licensed under chapter 490,

1724 or a physician who holds an active license issued by another

1725 state or territory of the United States, the District of

1726 Columbia, or the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

1727 (4) AUTHORIZED USES OF PROGRAM FUNDS.—

1728 (a) Program funds awarded to a student determined eligible

1729 pursuant to paragraph (3) (a) may be used for:

1730 1. Tuition and fees at an eligible private school.

1731 2. Instructional materials, including digital materials,

1732 digital devices, and Internet resources.

1733 3. Curriculum ~~as defined in subsection (2).~~

1734 4. Tuition and fees associated with full-time or part-time

1735 enrollment in an eligible postsecondary educational institution

1736 or a program offered by the postsecondary educational

1737 institution, unless the program is subject to s. 1009.25 or

1738 reimbursed pursuant to s. 1009.30; an approved preapprenticeship

1739 program as defined in s. 446.021(5) which is not subject to s.

1740 1009.25 and complies with all applicable requirements of the

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1741 department pursuant to chapter 1005; a private tutoring program
 1742 authorized under s. 1002.43; a virtual program offered by a
 1743 department-approved private online provider that meets the
 1744 provider qualifications specified in s. 1002.45(2)(a); the
 1745 Florida Virtual School as a private paying student; or an
 1746 approved online course offered pursuant to s. 1003.499 or s.
 1747 1004.0961.

1748 5. Fees for nationally standardized, norm-referenced
 1749 achievement tests, Advanced Placement Examinations, industry
 1750 certification examinations, assessments related to postsecondary
 1751 education, or other assessments.

1752 6. Contracted services provided by a public school or
 1753 school district, including classes. A student who receives
 1754 contracted services under this subparagraph is not considered
 1755 enrolled in a public school for eligibility purposes as
 1756 specified in subsection (6) but rather attending a public school
 1757 on a part-time basis as authorized under s. 1002.44.

1758 7. Tuition and fees for part-time tutoring services or fees
 1759 for services provided by a choice navigator. Such services must
 1760 be provided by a person who holds a valid Florida educator's
 1761 certificate pursuant to s. 1012.56, a person who holds an
 1762 adjunct teaching certificate pursuant to s. 1012.57, a person
 1763 who has a bachelor's degree or a graduate degree in the subject
 1764 area or related subject area in which instruction is given, a
 1765 person who has demonstrated a mastery of subject area knowledge
 1766 pursuant to s. 1012.56(5), or a person certified by a nationally
 1767 or internationally recognized research-based training program as
 1768 approved by the department. As used in this subparagraph, the
 1769 term "part-time tutoring services" does not qualify as regular

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1770 school attendance as defined in s. 1003.01(16)(e).

1771 8. Membership dues and related activity fees for
 1772 participation in Career and Technical Student Organizations.

1773 (b) Program funds awarded to a student with a disability
 1774 determined eligible pursuant to paragraph (3)(b) may be used for
 1775 the following purposes:

1776 1. Instructional materials, including digital devices,
 1777 digital periphery devices, and assistive technology devices that
 1778 allow a student to access instruction or instructional content
 1779 and training on the use of and maintenance agreements for these
 1780 devices.

1781 2. Curriculum ~~as defined in subsection (2).~~

1782 3. Specialized services by approved providers or by a
 1783 hospital in this state which are selected by the parent. These
 1784 specialized services may include, but are not limited to:

1785 a. Applied behavior analysis services as provided in ss.
 1786 627.6686 and 641.31098.

1787 b. Services provided by speech-language pathologists as
 1788 defined in s. 468.1125(8).

1789 c. Occupational therapy as defined in s. 468.203.

1790 d. Services provided by physical therapists as defined in
 1791 s. 486.021(8).

1792 e. Services provided by listening and spoken language
 1793 specialists and an appropriate acoustical environment for a
 1794 child who has a hearing impairment, including deafness, and who
 1795 has received an implant or assistive hearing device.

1796 4. Tuition and fees associated with full-time or part-time
 1797 enrollment in a home education program that meets all of the
 1798 following requirements:

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1799 a. Provides educational courses or activities.
 1800 b. Has a publicly available description of courses and
 1801 activities.
 1802 c. Has a tuition and fee schedule.
 1803 d. Makes the tuition and fees payable to a registered
 1804 business entity.
 1805 5. Tuition and fees associated with full-time or part-time
 1806 enrollment in an eligible private school; an eligible
 1807 postsecondary educational institution or a program offered by
 1808 the postsecondary educational institution, unless the program is
 1809 subject to s. 1009.25 or reimbursed pursuant to s. 1009.30; an
 1810 approved preapprenticeship program as defined in s. 446.021(5)
 1811 which is not subject to s. 1009.25 and complies with all
 1812 applicable requirements of the department pursuant to chapter
 1813 1005; a private tutoring program authorized under s. 1002.43; a
 1814 virtual program offered by a department-approved private online
 1815 provider that meets the provider qualifications specified in s.
 1816 1002.45(2) (a); the Florida Virtual School as a private paying
 1817 student; or an approved online course offered pursuant to s.
 1818 1003.499 or s. 1004.0961.
 1819 ~~6.5-~~ Fees for nationally standardized, norm-referenced
 1820 achievement tests, Advanced Placement Examinations, industry
 1821 certification examinations, assessments related to postsecondary
 1822 education, or other assessments.
 1823 ~~7.6-~~ Contributions to the Stanley G. Tate Florida Prepaid
 1824 College Program pursuant to s. 1009.98 or the Florida College
 1825 Savings Program pursuant to s. 1009.981 for the benefit of the
 1826 eligible student.
 1827 ~~8.7-~~ Contracted services provided by a public school or

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1828 school district, including classes. A student who receives
 1829 services under a contract under this paragraph is not considered
 1830 enrolled in a public school for eligibility purposes as
 1831 specified in subsection (6) but rather attending a public school
 1832 on a part-time basis as authorized under s. 1002.44.
 1833 ~~9.8-~~ Tuition and fees for part-time tutoring services or
 1834 fees for services provided by a choice navigator. Such services
 1835 must be provided by a person who holds a valid Florida
 1836 educator's certificate pursuant to s. 1012.56, a person who
 1837 holds an adjunct teaching certificate pursuant to s. 1012.57, a
 1838 person who has a bachelor's degree or a graduate degree in the
 1839 subject area or related subject area in which instruction is
 1840 given, a person who has demonstrated a mastery of subject area
 1841 knowledge pursuant to s. 1012.56(5), or a person certified by a
 1842 nationally or internationally recognized research-based training
 1843 program as approved by the department. As used in this
 1844 subparagraph, the term "part-time tutoring services" does not
 1845 qualify as regular school attendance as defined in s.
 1846 1003.01(16) (e).
 1847 ~~10.9-~~ Fees for specialized summer education programs.
 1848 ~~11.10-~~ Fees for specialized after-school education
 1849 programs.
 1850 ~~12.11-~~ Transition services provided by job coaches.
 1851 Transition services are a coordinated set of activities which
 1852 are focused on improving the academic and functional achievement
 1853 of a student with a disability to facilitate the student's
 1854 movement from school to postschool activities and are based on
 1855 the student's needs.
 1856 ~~13.12-~~ Fees for an annual evaluation of educational

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1857 progress by a state-certified teacher under s. 1002.41(1)(f), if
1858 this option is chosen for a home education student.

1859 ~~14.13.~~ Tuition and fees associated with programs offered by
1860 Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program providers approved
1861 pursuant to s. 1002.55, school readiness providers approved
1862 pursuant to s. 1002.88, and prekindergarten programs offered by
1863 an eligible private school.

1864 ~~15.14.~~ Fees for services provided at a center that is a
1865 member of the Professional Association of Therapeutic
1866 Horsemanship International.

1867 ~~16.15.~~ Fees for services provided by a therapist who is
1868 certified by the Certification Board for Music Therapists or
1869 credentialed by the Art Therapy Credentials Board, Inc.

1870 17. Membership dues and related activity fees for
1871 participation in Career and Technical Student Organizations.

1872 (5) TERM OF SCHOLARSHIP.—For purposes of continuity of
1873 educational choice:

1874 (a)1. A scholarship funded to an eligible student pursuant
1875 to paragraph (3)(a) shall remain in force until:

1876 a. The organization determines that the student is not
1877 eligible for program renewal;

1878 b. The Commissioner of Education suspends or revokes
1879 program participation or use of funds;

1880 c. The student's parent has forfeited participation in the
1881 program for failure to comply with the scholarship program
1882 requirements subsection (10);

1883 d. The student, who uses the scholarship for tuition and
1884 fees pursuant to subparagraph (4)(a)1., enrolls in a public
1885 school. However, if a student enters a Department of Juvenile

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1886 Justice detention center for a period of no more than 21 days,
1887 the student is not considered to have returned to a public
1888 school on a full-time basis for that purpose; or

1889 e. The student graduates from high school or attains 21
1890 years of age, whichever occurs first.

1891 ~~2.a.~~ The student's scholarship account must be closed and
1892 any remaining funds shall revert to the state after:

1893 ~~a.(I)~~ Denial or revocation of program eligibility by the
1894 commissioner for fraud or abuse, including, but not limited to,
1895 the student or student's parent accepting any payment, refund,
1896 or rebate, in any manner, from a provider of any services
1897 received pursuant to paragraph (4)(a);

1898 ~~b.(II)~~ One fiscal year ~~Two consecutive fiscal years~~ in
1899 which an account has been inactive; ~~or~~

1900 ~~c.(III)~~ A student remains unenrolled in an eligible private
1901 school for 30 days while receiving a scholarship that requires
1902 full-time enrollment; or

1903 d. A student's scholarship no longer remains in force due
1904 to any of the reasons provided in subparagraph 1.

1905 3. An organization must notify the parent prior to closing
1906 a student's account regarding the reason the account will be
1907 closed and that the balance of funds will revert upon closure.

1908 4. An organization must annually report to the department
1909 the total number of scholarship accounts that were closed
1910 pursuant to this subparagraph and the amount of funds by account
1911 which reverted to the state

1912 ~~b. Reimbursements for program expenditures may continue~~
1913 ~~until the account balance is expended or remaining funds have~~
1914 ~~reverted to the state.~~

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1915 (b)1. A scholarship funded to an eligible student pursuant
 1916 to paragraph (3) (b) shall remain in force until:

1917 a. The parent does not renew program eligibility;

1918 b. The organization determines that the student is not
 1919 eligible for program renewal;

1920 c. The Commissioner of Education suspends or revokes
 1921 program participation or use of funds;

1922 d. The student's parent has forfeited participation in the
 1923 program for failure to comply with the scholarship requirements
 1924 subsection (10);

1925 e. The student enrolls full time in a public school; or

1926 f. The student graduates from high school or attains 22
 1927 years of age, whichever occurs first.

1928 2. Reimbursements for program expenditures may continue
 1929 until the account balance is expended or the account is closed.

1930 3. A student's scholarship account must be closed and any
 1931 remaining funds, including, but not limited to, contributions
 1932 made to the Stanley G. Tate Florida Prepaid College Program or
 1933 earnings from or contributions made to the Florida College
 1934 Savings Program using program funds pursuant to subparagraph
 1935 (4) (b) 7. ~~(4) (b) 6.~~, shall revert to the state after:

1936 a. Denial or revocation of program eligibility by the
 1937 commissioner for fraud or abuse, including, but not limited to,
 1938 the student or student's parent accepting any payment, refund,
 1939 or rebate, in any manner, from a provider of any services
 1940 received pursuant to subsection (4); or

1941 b. Any period of 3 consecutive years after high school
 1942 completion or graduation during which the student has not been
 1943 enrolled in an eligible postsecondary educational institution or

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1944 a program offered by the institution; ~~or~~

1945 e. ~~Two consecutive fiscal years in which an account has~~
 1946 ~~been inactive.~~

1947 4. An organization must notify the parent prior to closing
 1948 a student's account regarding the reason the account will be
 1949 closed and that the balance of funds will revert upon closure.

1950 5. Upon a student reaching the age of 16, the organization
 1951 must notify the parent if there is a balance in the student's
 1952 account and provide the amount of the balance and information
 1953 regarding how the funds may be used.

1954 6. An organization must report to the department the total
 1955 number of scholarship accounts that were closed pursuant to this
 1956 paragraph and the amount of funds by account that reverted to
 1957 the state.

1958 (c) Upon reasonable notice to the organization and the
 1959 school district, the student's parent may remove the student
 1960 from the participating private school and place the student in a
 1961 public school in accordance with this section.

1962 (d) Upon reasonable notice to the organization, the
 1963 student's parent may move the student from one participating
 1964 private school to another participating private school.

1965 (6) SCHOLARSHIP PROHIBITIONS.—A student is not eligible for
 1966 a Family Empowerment Scholarship while he or she is:

1967 (a) Enrolled full time in a public school, including, but
 1968 not limited to, the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind,
 1969 the College-Preparatory Boarding Academy, the Florida School for
 1970 Competitive Academics, the Florida Virtual School, the Florida
 1971 Scholars Academy, a developmental research school authorized
 1972 under s. 1002.32, or a charter school authorized under this

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1973 chapter. For purposes of this paragraph, a 3- or 4-year-old
 1974 child who receives services funded through the Florida Education
 1975 Finance Program is considered to be a student enrolled in a
 1976 public school;

1977 (b) Enrolled in a school operating for the purpose of
 1978 providing educational services to youth in a Department of
 1979 Juvenile Justice commitment program;

1980 (c) Receiving any other educational scholarship pursuant to
 1981 this chapter. ~~However, an eligible public school student~~
 1982 ~~receiving a scholarship under s. 1002.411 may receive a~~
 1983 ~~scholarship for transportation pursuant to subparagraph~~
 1984 ~~(4)(a)2.;~~

1985 (d) Not having regular and direct contact with his or her
 1986 private school teachers pursuant to s. 1002.421(1)(i), unless he
 1987 or she is eligible pursuant to paragraph (3)(b) ~~and enrolled in~~
 1988 ~~the participating private school's transition-to-work program~~
 1989 ~~pursuant to subsection (16) or a home education program pursuant~~
 1990 ~~to s. 1002.41;~~

1991 (e) Participating in a private tutoring program pursuant to
 1992 s. 1002.43 unless he or she is determined eligible pursuant to
 1993 paragraph (3)(b); or

1994 (f) Participating in virtual instruction pursuant to s.
 1995 1002.455 that receives state funding pursuant to the student's
 1996 participation.

1997 (7) SCHOOL DISTRICT OBLIGATIONS.—

1998 (a) ~~By January 1 of each year, a school district shall~~
 1999 ~~inform all households within the district receiving free or~~
 2000 ~~reduced priced meals under the National School Lunch Act of~~
 2001 ~~their eligibility to apply to the department for a Family~~

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2002 ~~Empowerment Scholarship. The form of such notice shall be~~
 2003 ~~provided by the department, and the school district shall~~
 2004 ~~include the provided form in any normal correspondence with~~
 2005 ~~eligible households. Such notice is limited to once a year.~~

2006 ~~(b)~~1. The parent of a student with a disability who does
 2007 not have an IEP in accordance with subparagraph (3)(b)4. or who
 2008 seeks a reevaluation of an existing IEP may request an IEP
 2009 meeting and evaluation from the school district in order to
 2010 obtain or revise a matrix of services. The school district shall
 2011 notify a parent who has made a request for an IEP that the
 2012 district is required to complete the IEP and matrix of services
 2013 within 30 days after receiving notice of the parent's request.
 2014 The school district shall conduct a meeting and develop an IEP
 2015 and a matrix of services within 30 days after receipt of the
 2016 parent's request in accordance with State Board of Education
 2017 rules. The district must accept the diagnosis and consider the
 2018 service plan of the licensed professional providing the
 2019 diagnosis pursuant to subparagraph (3)(b)4. The school district
 2020 must complete a matrix that assigns the student to one of the
 2021 levels of service as they existed before the 2000-2001 school
 2022 year. For a nonpublic school student without an IEP, the school
 2023 district is authorized to use evaluation reports and plans of
 2024 care developed by the licensed professionals under subparagraph
 2025 (4)(b)3. to complete the matrix of services.

2026 2.a. The school district must provide the student's parent
 2027 and the department with the student's matrix level within 10
 2028 calendar days after its completion.

2029 ~~b.~~ ~~The department shall notify the parent and the~~
 2030 ~~organization of the amount of the funds awarded within 10 days~~

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2031 ~~after receiving the school district's notification of the~~
2032 ~~student's matrix level.~~

2033 ~~b.e.~~ A school district may change a matrix of services only
2034 if the change is a result of an IEP reevaluation or to correct a
2035 technical, typographical, or calculation error.

2036 (b)1.~~(e)1.~~ Within 10 days after an IEP meeting is held, a
2037 school district shall notify the parent of a student of all
2038 options available pursuant to this section and offer that
2039 student's parent an opportunity to enroll the student in another
2040 public school in the school district.

2041 2. The parent is not required to accept the offer of
2042 enrolling the student in another public school in lieu of
2043 requesting a scholarship. However, if the parent chooses the
2044 public school option, the student may continue attending the
2045 public school chosen by the parent until the student graduates
2046 from high school.

2047 3. The parent may choose another public school in the
2048 school district, and the school district shall provide
2049 transportation to the public school selected by the parent.

2050 4. The parent may choose, as an alternative, to enroll the
2051 student in and transport the student to a public school in an
2052 adjacent school district that has available space and has a
2053 program with the services agreed to in the student's IEP already
2054 in place, and that school district shall accept the student and
2055 report the student for purposes of the school district's funding
2056 pursuant to the Florida Education Finance Program.

2057 ~~(d) Upon the request of the department, a school district~~
2058 ~~shall coordinate with the department to provide to a~~
2059 ~~participating private school the statewide assessments~~

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2060 administered under s. 1008.22 and any related materials for
2061 administering the assessments. For a student who participates in
2062 the Family Empowerment Scholarship Program whose parent requests
2063 ~~that the student take the statewide assessments under s.~~
2064 ~~1008.22, the district in which the student attends a~~
2065 ~~participating private school shall provide locations and times~~
2066 ~~to take all statewide assessments. A school district is~~
2067 ~~responsible for implementing test administrations at a~~
2068 ~~participating private school, including the:~~

- 2069 1. ~~Provision of training for private school staff on test~~
- 2070 ~~security and assessment administration procedures;~~
- 2071 2. ~~Distribution of testing materials to a private school;~~
- 2072 3. ~~Retrieval of testing materials from a private school;~~
- 2073 4. ~~Provision of the required format for a private school to~~
- 2074 ~~submit information to the district for test administration and~~
- 2075 ~~enrollment purposes; and~~
- 2076 5. ~~Provision of any required assistance, monitoring, or~~
- 2077 ~~investigation at a private school.~~

2078 ~~(e) Each school district must publish information about the~~
2079 ~~Family Empowerment Scholarship Program on the district's website~~
2080 ~~homepage. At a minimum, the published information must include a~~
2081 ~~website link to the Family Empowerment Scholarship Program~~
2082 ~~published on the Department of Education website as well as a~~
2083 ~~telephone number and e-mail that students and parents may use to~~
2084 ~~contact relevant personnel in the school district to obtain~~
2085 ~~information about the scholarship.~~

2086 (8) DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION OBLIGATIONS.—

2087 (a) The department shall:

- 2088 1. ~~Publish and update, as necessary, information on the~~

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2089 ~~department website about the Family Empowerment Scholarship~~
 2090 ~~Program, including, but not limited to, student eligibility~~
 2091 ~~criteria, parental responsibilities, and relevant data.~~
 2092 ~~2. Report, as part of the determination of full-time~~
 2093 ~~equivalent membership pursuant to s. 1011.62(1)(a), all~~
 2094 ~~scholarship students funded through the Florida Education~~
 2095 ~~Finance Program, and cross-check the list of scholarship~~
 2096 ~~students submitted by the eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding~~
 2097 ~~organization with the full-time equivalent student membership~~
 2098 ~~survey data to avoid duplication.~~
 2099 ~~3. Maintain and annually publish a list of nationally norm-~~
 2100 ~~referenced tests identified for purposes of satisfying the~~
 2101 ~~testing requirement in subparagraph (9)(c)1. The tests must meet~~
 2102 ~~industry standards of quality in accordance with state board~~
 2103 ~~rule.~~
 2104 ~~4. Notify eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding~~
 2105 ~~organizations of the deadlines for submitting the verified list~~
 2106 ~~of eligible scholarship students.~~
 2107 ~~(a)5-~~ Deny or terminate program participation upon a
 2108 parent's failure to comply with the scholarship program
 2109 requirements subsection (10).
 2110 ~~6. Notify the parent and the organization when a~~
 2111 ~~scholarship account is closed and program funds revert to the~~
 2112 ~~state.~~
 2113 ~~7. Notify an eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding~~
 2114 ~~organization of any of the organization's or other~~
 2115 ~~organization's identified students who are receiving~~
 2116 ~~scholarships under this chapter.~~
 2117 (b)8- Maintain on its website a list of approved providers

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2118 as required by s. 1002.66, eligible postsecondary educational
 2119 institutions, eligible private schools, and eligible
 2120 organizations and may identify or provide links to lists of
 2121 other approved providers.
 2122 ~~9. Require each organization to verify eligible~~
 2123 ~~expenditures before the distribution of funds for any~~
 2124 ~~expenditures made pursuant to subparagraphs (4)(b)1. and 2.~~
 2125 ~~Review of expenditures made for services specified in~~
 2126 ~~subparagraphs (4)(b)3.-15. may be completed after the purchase~~
 2127 ~~is made.~~
 2128 (c)10- Investigate any written complaint of a violation of
 2129 this section by a parent, a student, a participating private
 2130 school, a public school, a school district, an organization, a
 2131 provider, or another appropriate party in accordance with the
 2132 process established under s. 1002.421.
 2133 (d)11- Require quarterly reports by an organization, which
 2134 must include, at a minimum, the number of students participating
 2135 in the program; the demographics of program participants; the
 2136 disability category of program participants; the matrix level of
 2137 services, if known; the program award amount per student; the
 2138 total expenditures for the purposes specified in paragraph
 2139 (4)(b); the types of providers of services to students; the
 2140 number of scholarship applications received, the number of
 2141 applications processed within 30 days after receipt, and the
 2142 number of incomplete applications received; data related to
 2143 reimbursement submissions, including the average number of days
 2144 for a reimbursement to be reviewed and the average number of
 2145 days for a reimbursement to be approved; any parent input and
 2146 feedback collected regarding the program; and any other

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2147 information deemed necessary by the department.

2148 ~~12. Notify eligible nonprofit scholarship funding~~
 2149 ~~organizations that scholarships may not be awarded in a school~~
 2150 ~~district in which the award will exceed 99 percent of the school~~
 2151 ~~district's share of state funding through the Florida Education~~
 2152 ~~Finance Program as calculated by the department.~~

2153 ~~13. Adjust payments to eligible nonprofit scholarship~~
 2154 ~~funding organizations and, when the Florida Education Finance~~
 2155 ~~Program is recalculated, adjust the amount of state funds~~
 2156 ~~allocated to school districts through the Florida Education~~
 2157 ~~Finance Program based upon the results of the cross-check~~
 2158 ~~completed pursuant to subparagraph 2.~~

2159 ~~(b) At the direction of the Commissioner of Education, the~~
 2160 ~~department may:~~

2161 ~~1. Suspend or revoke program participation or use of~~
 2162 ~~program funds by the student or participation or eligibility of~~
 2163 ~~an organization, eligible postsecondary educational institution,~~
 2164 ~~approved provider, or other party for a violation of this~~
 2165 ~~section.~~

2166 ~~2. Determine the length of, and conditions for lifting, a~~
 2167 ~~suspension or revocation specified in this paragraph.~~

2168 ~~3. Recover unexpended program funds or withhold payment of~~
 2169 ~~an equal amount of program funds to recover program funds that~~
 2170 ~~were not authorized for use.~~

2171
 2172 ~~In determining whether to suspend or revoke participation or~~
 2173 ~~lift a suspension or revocation in accordance with this~~
 2174 ~~paragraph, the department may consider factors that include, but~~
 2175 ~~are not limited to, acts or omissions that led to a previous~~

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2176 ~~suspension or revocation of participation in a state or federal~~
 2177 ~~program or an education scholarship program; failure to~~
 2178 ~~reimburse the organization for funds improperly received or~~
 2179 ~~retained; failure to reimburse government funds improperly~~
 2180 ~~received or retained; imposition of a prior criminal sanction~~
 2181 ~~related to the person or entity or its officers or employees;~~
 2182 ~~imposition of a civil fine or administrative fine, license~~
 2183 ~~revocation or suspension, or program eligibility suspension,~~
 2184 ~~termination, or revocation related to a person's or entity's~~
 2185 ~~management or operation; or other types of criminal proceedings~~
 2186 ~~in which the person or entity or its officers or employees were~~
 2187 ~~found guilty of, regardless of adjudication, or entered a plea~~
 2188 ~~of nolo contendere or guilty to, any offense involving fraud,~~
 2189 ~~deceit, dishonesty, or moral turpitude.~~

2190 (e)(e) The department shall Notify each school district of
 2191 the full-time equivalent student consensus estimate of students
 2192 participating in the program developed pursuant to s.
 2193 216.136(4) (a) .

2194 (f)(d) The department may Provide guidance to a
 2195 participating private school that submits a transition-to-work
 2196 program plan pursuant to subsection (15) ~~(16)~~.

2197 ~~(9) PRIVATE SCHOOL ELIGIBILITY AND OBLIGATIONS. To be~~
 2198 ~~eligible to participate in the Family Empowerment Scholarship~~
 2199 ~~Program, a private school may be sectarian or nonsectarian and~~
 2200 ~~must:~~

2201 ~~(a) Comply with all requirements for private schools~~
 2202 ~~participating in state school choice scholarship programs~~
 2203 ~~pursuant to s. 1002.421.~~

2204 ~~(b) Provide to the organization all documentation required~~

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2205 ~~for a student's participation, including confirmation of the~~
 2206 ~~student's admission to the private school, the private school's~~
 2207 ~~and student's fee schedules, and any other information required~~
 2208 ~~by the organization to process scholarship payment under~~
 2209 ~~subparagraph (12) (a) 4. Such information must be provided by the~~
 2210 ~~deadlines established by the organization and in accordance with~~
 2211 ~~the requirements of this section. A student is not eligible to~~
 2212 ~~receive a quarterly scholarship payment if the private school~~
 2213 ~~fails to meet the deadline.~~

2214 ~~(c)1. Annually administer or make provision for students~~
 2215 ~~participating in the program in grades 3 through 10 to take one~~
 2216 ~~of the nationally norm referenced tests that are identified by~~
 2217 ~~the department pursuant to paragraph (8) (a) or to take the~~
 2218 ~~statewide assessments pursuant to s. 1008.22. Students with~~
 2219 ~~disabilities for whom the physician or psychologist who issued~~
 2220 ~~the diagnosis or the IEP team determines that standardized~~
 2221 ~~testing is not appropriate are exempt from this requirement. A~~
 2222 ~~participating private school shall report a student's scores to~~
 2223 ~~his or her parent. By August 15 of each year, a participating~~
 2224 ~~private school must report the scores of all participating~~
 2225 ~~students to a state university as described in s.~~
 2226 ~~1002.395(9) (f).~~

2227 ~~2. Administer the statewide assessments pursuant to s.~~
 2228 ~~1008.22 if the private school chooses to offer the statewide~~
 2229 ~~assessments. A participating private school may choose to offer~~
 2230 ~~and administer the statewide assessments to all students who~~
 2231 ~~attend the private school in grades 3 through 10 and must submit~~
 2232 ~~a request in writing to the department by March 1 of each year~~
 2233 ~~in order to administer the statewide assessments in the~~

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2234 ~~subsequent school year.~~

2235 ~~(d) For a student determined eligible pursuant to paragraph~~
 2236 ~~(3) (b), discuss the school's academic programs and policies,~~
 2237 ~~specialized services, code of conduct, and attendance policies~~
 2238 ~~before enrollment with the parent to determine which programs~~
 2239 ~~and services may meet the student's individual needs.~~

2240
 2241 ~~If a private school fails to meet the requirements of this~~
 2242 ~~subsection or s. 1002.421, the commissioner may determine that~~
 2243 ~~the private school is ineligible to participate in the~~
 2244 ~~scholarship program.~~

2245 (9) (10) PARENT AND STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PROGRAM
 2246 PARTICIPATION.-

2247 (a) A parent who applies for a scholarship under paragraph
 2248 (3) (a) whose student will be enrolled full time in an eligible
 2249 private school must:

2250 1. Select an eligible private school and apply for the
 2251 admission of his or her student.

2252 2. Request the scholarship by the date established by the
 2253 organization in a manner that creates a written or electronic
 2254 record of the request and the date of receipt of the request.

2255 ~~3.a. Beginning with new applications for the 2025-2026~~
 2256 ~~school year and thereafter, notify the organization by December~~
 2257 ~~15 that the scholarship is being accepted or declined.~~

2258 ~~b. Beginning with renewal applications for the 2025-2026~~
 2259 ~~school year and thereafter, notify the organization by May 31~~
 2260 ~~that the scholarship is being renewed or declined.~~

2261 2.4. Inform the applicable school district when the parent
 2262 withdraws his or her student from a public school to attend an

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2263 eligible private school using the standard withdrawal form
 2264 developed by the department pursuant to s. 1002.421.

2265 ~~3.5-~~ Require his or her student participating in the
 2266 program to remain in attendance at the eligible private school
 2267 throughout the school year unless excused by the school for
 2268 illness or other good cause.

2269 ~~4.6-~~ Meet with the eligible private school's principal or
 2270 the principal's designee to review the school's academic
 2271 programs and policies, specialized services, code of student
 2272 conduct, and attendance policies before enrollment.

2273 ~~7-~~ Require his or her student participating in the program
 2274 to take the norm referenced assessment offered by the eligible
 2275 private school. The parent may also choose to have the student
 2276 participate in the statewide assessments pursuant to paragraph
 2277 (7)(d). If the parent requests that the student participating in
 2278 the program take all statewide assessments required pursuant to
 2279 s. 1008.22, the parent is responsible for transporting the
 2280 student to the assessment site designated by the school
 2281 district.

2282 ~~8-~~ Approve each payment before the scholarship funds may be
 2283 deposited by funds transfer pursuant to subparagraph (12)(a)3.
 2284 The parent may not designate any entity or individual associated
 2285 with the participating private school as the parent's attorney
 2286 in fact to approve a funds transfer. A participant who fails to
 2287 comply with this paragraph forfeits the scholarship.

2288 ~~9-~~ Agree to have the organization commit scholarship funds
 2289 on behalf of his or her student for tuition and fees for which
 2290 the parent is responsible for payment at the eligible private
 2291 school before using scholarship account funds for additional

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2292 authorized uses under paragraph (4)(a). A parent is responsible
 2293 for all eligible expenses in excess of the amount of the
 2294 scholarship.

2295 ~~10-~~ Comply with the scholarship application and renewal
 2296 processes and requirements established by the organization.

2297 (b) A parent who applies for a scholarship under paragraph
 2298 (3)(b) is exercising his or her parental option to determine the
 2299 appropriate placement or the services that best meet the needs
 2300 of his or her child and must:

2301 ~~1-~~ Apply to an eligible nonprofit scholarship funding
 2302 organization to participate in the program by a date set by the
 2303 organization. The request must be communicated directly to the
 2304 organization in a manner that creates a written or electronic
 2305 record of the request and the date of receipt of the request.

2306 ~~2.a-~~ Beginning with new applications for the 2025-2026
 2307 school year and thereafter, notify the organization by December
 2308 15 that the scholarship is being accepted or declined.

2309 ~~b-~~ Beginning with renewal applications for the 2025-2026
 2310 school year and thereafter, notify the organization by May 31
 2311 that the scholarship is being renewed or declined.

2312 ~~3-~~ sign an agreement with the organization and annually
 2313 submit a sworn compliance statement to the organization to
 2314 satisfy or maintain program eligibility, including eligibility
 2315 to receive and spend program payments by:

2316 ~~1.a-~~ Affirming that the student is enrolled in a program
 2317 that meets regular school attendance requirements as provided in
 2318 s. 1003.01(16)(b), (c), or (d).

2319 ~~2.b-~~ Affirming that the program funds are used only for
 2320 authorized purposes serving the student's educational needs, as

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2321 described in paragraph (4) (b); that any prepaid college plan or
 2322 college savings plan funds contributed pursuant to subparagraph
 2323 (4) (b) 7. ~~subparagraph (4) (b) 6.~~ will not be transferred to
 2324 another beneficiary while the plan contains funds contributed
 2325 pursuant to this section; and that they will not receive a
 2326 payment, refund, or rebate of any funds provided under this
 2327 section.

2328 3.e- Affirming that the parent is responsible for all
 2329 eligible expenses in excess of the amount of the scholarship and
 2330 for the education of his or her student by, as applicable:

2331 a.(I) Requiring the student to take an assessment in
 2332 accordance with s. 1002.421(7) paragraph (9)(c);

2333 b.(II) Providing an annual evaluation in accordance with s.
 2334 1002.41(1) (f); or

2335 c.(III) Requiring the child to take any preassessments and
 2336 postassessments selected by the provider if the child is 4 years
 2337 of age and is enrolled in a program provided by an eligible
 2338 Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program provider. A student
 2339 with disabilities for whom the physician or psychologist who
 2340 issued the diagnosis or the IEP team determines that a
 2341 preassessment and postassessment is not appropriate is exempt
 2342 from this requirement. A participating provider shall report a
 2343 student's scores to the parent.

2344 4.d- Affirming that the student remains in good standing
 2345 with the provider or school if those options are selected by the
 2346 parent.

2347 5.e- Enrolling his or her child in a program from a
 2348 Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program provider authorized
 2349 under s. 1002.55, a school readiness provider authorized under

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2350 s. 1002.88, a prekindergarten program offered by an eligible
 2351 private school, or an eligible private school if selected by the
 2352 parent.

2353 6.f- Comply with the scholarship application and renewal
 2354 processes and requirements established by the organization. A
 2355 student whose participation in the program is not renewed may
 2356 continue to spend scholarship funds that are in his or her
 2357 account from prior years unless the account must be closed
 2358 pursuant to subparagraph (5) (b) 3. Notwithstanding any changes to
 2359 the student's IEP, a student who was previously eligible for
 2360 participation in the program shall remain eligible to apply for
 2361 renewal. However, for a high-risk child to continue to
 2362 participate in the program in the school year after he or she
 2363 reaches 6 years of age, the child's application for renewal of
 2364 program participation must contain documentation that the child
 2365 has a disability ~~defined in paragraph (2) (c)~~ other than high-
 2366 risk status.

2367 7.g- Procuring the services necessary to educate the
 2368 student. If such services include enrollment in an eligible
 2369 private school, the parent must meet with the private school's
 2370 principal or the principal's designee to review the school's
 2371 academic programs and policies, specialized services, code of
 2372 student conduct, and attendance policies before his or her
 2373 student is enrolled. ~~The parent must also approve each payment~~
 2374 ~~to the eligible private school before the scholarship funds may~~
 2375 ~~be deposited by funds transfer pursuant to subparagraph~~
 2376 ~~(12) (a) 4. The parent may not designate any entity or individual~~
 2377 ~~associated with the eligible private school as the parent's~~
 2378 ~~attorney in fact to approve a funds transfer. When the student~~

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2379 receives a scholarship, the district school board is not
 2380 obligated to provide the student with a free appropriate public
 2381 education. For purposes of s. 1003.57 and the Individuals with
 2382 Disabilities in Education Act, a participating student has only
 2383 those rights that apply to all other unilaterally parentally
 2384 placed students, except that, when requested by the parent,
 2385 school district personnel must develop an IEP or matrix level of
 2386 services.

2387 (c) ~~A parent may not apply for multiple scholarships under~~
 2388 ~~this section and s. 1002.395 for an individual student at the~~
 2389 ~~same time.~~

2390 ~~(d)~~ A participant who fails to comply with this subsection
 2391 forfeits the scholarship.

2392 (10)(11) OBLIGATIONS OF ELIGIBLE SCHOLARSHIP-FUNDING
 2393 ORGANIZATIONS.—

2394 ~~(a)~~ An eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organization
 2395 awarding scholarships to eligible students pursuant to this
 2396 section paragraph (3) (a) shall:

2397 ~~1. Establish a process for parents who are in compliance~~
 2398 ~~with paragraph (10) (a) to renew their students' scholarships.~~
 2399 ~~Renewal applications for the 2025-2026 school year and~~
 2400 ~~thereafter must provide for a renewal timeline beginning~~
 2401 ~~February 1 of the prior school year and ending April 30 of the~~
 2402 ~~prior school year. A student's renewal is contingent upon an~~
 2403 ~~eligible private school providing confirmation of student~~
 2404 ~~admission pursuant to subsection (9). The process must require~~
 2405 ~~that parents confirm that the scholarship is being renewed or~~
 2406 ~~declined by May 31.~~

2407 ~~2. Establish a process that allows a parent to apply for a~~

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2408 ~~new scholarship. The process may begin no earlier than February~~
 2409 ~~1 of the prior school year and must authorize submission of~~
 2410 ~~applications until November 15. The process must be in a manner~~
 2411 ~~that creates a written or electronic record of the application~~
 2412 ~~request and the date of receipt of the application request.~~
 2413 ~~Applications received after the deadline may be considered for~~
 2414 ~~scholarship award in the subsequent fiscal year. The process~~
 2415 ~~must require that parents confirm that the scholarship is being~~
 2416 ~~accepted or declined by December 15.~~

2417 (a)3. Verify the household income level of students seeking
 2418 priority eligibility and submit the verified list of students to
 2419 the department.

2420 ~~4. Award scholarships in priority order pursuant to~~
 2421 ~~paragraph (3) (a).~~

2422 ~~5. Establish and maintain separate scholarship accounts for~~
 2423 ~~each eligible student. For each account, the organization must~~
 2424 ~~maintain a record of accrued interest that is retained in the~~
 2425 ~~student's account and available only for authorized program~~
 2426 ~~expenditures.~~

2427 ~~6. Permit eligible students to use program funds for the~~
 2428 ~~purposes specified in paragraph (4) (a), as authorized in the~~
 2429 ~~organization's purchasing handbook, by paying for the authorized~~
 2430 ~~use directly, then submitting a reimbursement request to the~~
 2431 ~~eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organization. However, an~~
 2432 ~~eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organization may require~~
 2433 ~~the use of an online platform for direct purchases of products~~
 2434 ~~so long as such use does not limit a parent's choice of~~
 2435 ~~curriculum or academic programs. If a parent purchases a product~~
 2436 ~~identical to one offered by an organization's online platform~~

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2437 for a lower price, the organization must reimburse the parent
2438 the cost of the product.

2439 ~~7. In a timely manner, submit the verified list of students~~
2440 ~~and any information requested by the department relating to the~~
2441 ~~scholarship under this section.~~

2442 ~~8. Notify the department about any violation of this~~
2443 ~~section.~~

2444 ~~9. Document each student's eligibility for a fiscal year~~
2445 ~~before granting a scholarship for that fiscal year. A student is~~
2446 ~~ineligible for a scholarship if the student's account has been~~
2447 ~~inactive for 2 consecutive fiscal years.~~

2448 ~~10. Notify each parent that participation in the~~
2449 ~~scholarship program does not guarantee enrollment.~~

2450 ~~11. Commit scholarship funds on behalf of the student for~~
2451 ~~tuition and fees for which the parent is responsible for payment~~
2452 ~~at the participating private school before using scholarship~~
2453 ~~account funds for additional authorized uses under paragraph~~
2454 ~~(4)(a).~~

2455 (b) For students An eligible nonprofit scholarship funding
2456 organization awarding scholarships to eligible students pursuant
2457 to paragraph (3)(b) shall:

2458 ~~1. Establish a process for parents who are in compliance~~
2459 ~~with paragraph (10)(b) to renew their students' scholarships.~~
2460 ~~Renewal applications for the 2025-2026 school year and~~
2461 ~~thereafter must provide for a renewal timeline beginning~~
2462 ~~February 1 of the prior school year and ending April 30 of the~~
2463 ~~prior school year. A student's renewal is contingent upon an~~
2464 ~~eligible private school providing confirmation of student~~
2465 ~~admission pursuant to subsection (9), if applicable. The process~~

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2466 must require that parents confirm that the scholarship is being
2467 renewed or declined by May 31.

2468 ~~2. Establish a process that allows a parent to apply for a~~
2469 ~~new scholarship. The process may begin no earlier than February~~
2470 ~~1 of the prior school year and must authorize the submission of~~
2471 ~~applications until November 15. The process must be in a manner~~
2472 ~~that creates a written or electronic record of the application~~
2473 ~~request and the date of receipt of the application request.~~
2474 ~~Applications received after the deadline may be considered for~~
2475 ~~scholarship award in the subsequent fiscal year. The process~~
2476 ~~must require that parents confirm that the scholarship is being~~
2477 ~~accepted or declined by December 15.~~

2478 ~~3. Review applications and award scholarships using the~~
2479 ~~following priorities:~~

2480 ~~a. Renewing students from the previous school year.~~

2481 ~~b. An eligible student who meets the criteria for an~~
2482 ~~initial award pursuant to paragraph (3)(b) on a first-come,~~
2483 ~~first-served basis.~~

2484 ~~4. Establish and maintain separate accounts for each~~
2485 ~~eligible student. For each account, the organization must~~
2486 ~~maintain a record of accrued interest that is retained in the~~
2487 ~~student's account and available only for authorized program~~
2488 ~~expenditures.~~

2489 ~~5. Verify qualifying educational expenditures pursuant to~~
2490 ~~the requirements of paragraph (4)(b).~~

2491 ~~6. Return any remaining program funds to the department~~
2492 ~~pursuant to paragraph (6)(b).~~

2493 1.7. Notify the parent about the availability of, and the
2494 requirements associated with requesting, an initial IEP or IEP

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2495 reevaluation every 3 years for each student participating in the
2496 program.

2497 ~~2.8-~~ Notify the parent of available state and local
2498 services, including, but not limited to, services under chapter
2499 413.

2500 ~~9. In a timely manner, submit to the department the~~
2501 ~~verified list of eligible scholarship students and any~~
2502 ~~information requested by the department relating to the~~
2503 ~~scholarship under this section.~~

2504 ~~(c)10-~~ Notify the department of any violation of this
2505 section.

2506 ~~11. Document each scholarship student's eligibility for a~~
2507 ~~fiscal year before granting a scholarship for that fiscal year~~
2508 ~~pursuant to paragraph (3)(b). A student is ineligible for a~~
2509 ~~scholarship if the student's account has been inactive for 2~~
2510 ~~consecutive fiscal years.~~

2511 ~~(d)(c) An eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding~~
2512 ~~organization may, from eligible contributions received pursuant~~
2513 ~~to s. 1002.395(6)(1)1., Use an amount, from eligible~~
2514 ~~contributions received pursuant to s. 1002.395(6)(1)1., not to~~
2515 ~~exceed 2.5 percent of the total amount of all scholarships~~
2516 ~~funded under this section for administrative expenses associated~~
2517 ~~with performing functions under this section. An organization~~
2518 ~~that, for the prior fiscal year, has complied with the~~
2519 ~~expenditure requirements of s. 1002.395(6)(i)3. ~~s-~~~~
2520 ~~1002.395(6)(1)3- may use an amount not to exceed 3 percent. Such~~
2521 ~~administrative expense amount is considered within the 3-percent~~
2522 ~~limit on the total amount an organization may use to administer~~
2523 ~~scholarships under this chapter.~~

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2524 ~~(d) An eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organization~~
2525 ~~shall establish a process to collect input and feedback from~~
2526 ~~parents, private schools, and providers before implementing~~
2527 ~~substantial modifications or enhancements to the reimbursement~~
2528 ~~process.~~

2529 ~~(11)(12) SCHOLARSHIP FUNDING AND PAYMENT.-~~

2530 ~~(a)1. The calculated scholarship amount for a participating~~
2531 ~~student determined eligible pursuant to paragraph (3)(a) shall~~
2532 ~~be based upon the grade level and school district in which the~~
2533 ~~student was assigned as 100 percent of the funds per unweighted~~
2534 ~~full-time equivalent in the Florida Education Finance Program~~
2535 ~~for a student in the basic program established pursuant to s.~~
2536 ~~1011.62(1)(c)1., plus a per full-time equivalent share of funds~~
2537 ~~for the categorical programs established in s. 1011.62(5),~~
2538 ~~(7)(a), and (16), as funded in the General Appropriations Act.~~

2539 ~~2.a. For renewing scholarship students, the organization~~
2540 ~~must verify the student's continued eligibility to participate~~
2541 ~~in the scholarship program at least 30 days before each payment.~~
2542 ~~Upon receiving the verified list of eligible scholarship~~
2543 ~~students, the department shall release, from state funds only,~~
2544 ~~the amount calculated pursuant to subparagraph 1. to the~~
2545 ~~organization for deposit into the student's account in quarterly~~
2546 ~~payments no later than August 1, November 1, February 1, and~~
2547 ~~April 1 of each school year in which the scholarship is in~~
2548 ~~force.~~

2549 ~~b. For new scholarship students, the organization must~~
2550 ~~verify the student's eligibility to participate in the~~
2551 ~~scholarship program at least 30 days before each payment. Upon~~
2552 ~~receiving the verified list of eligible scholarship students,~~

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2553 the department shall release, from state funds only, the amount
 2554 calculated pursuant to subparagraph 1. to the organization for
 2555 deposit into the student's account in quarterly payments no
 2556 later than September 1, November 1, February 1, and April 1 of
 2557 each school year in which the scholarship is in force. For a
 2558 student exiting a Department of Juvenile Justice commitment
 2559 program who chooses to participate in the scholarship program,
 2560 the amount calculated pursuant to subparagraph 1. must be
 2561 transferred from the school district in which the student last
 2562 attended a public school before commitment to the Department of
 2563 Juvenile Justice.

2564 c. The department is authorized to release the state funds
 2565 contingent upon verification that the organization will comply
 2566 with s. 1002.395(6)(l) based upon the organization's submitted
 2567 verified list of eligible scholarship students pursuant to s.
 2568 1002.395.

2569 3. The initial payment shall be made after the
 2570 organization's verification of admission acceptance, and
 2571 subsequent payments shall be made upon verification of continued
 2572 enrollment and attendance at the participating private school.
 2573 Payments for tuition and fees for full-time enrollment shall be
 2574 made within 7 business days after approval by the parent
 2575 pursuant to paragraph (10)(a) and the private school pursuant to
 2576 paragraph (9)(b). Payment must be by funds transfer or any other
 2577 means of payment that the department deems to be commercially
 2578 viable or cost-effective. An organization shall ensure that the
 2579 parent has approved a funds transfer before any scholarship
 2580 funds are deposited.

2581 4. An organization may not transfer any funds to an account

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2582 of a student determined eligible pursuant to paragraph (3)(a)
 2583 which has a balance in excess of \$24,000.

2584 ~~(b)1.~~ For the 2024-2025 school year, the maximum number of
 2585 scholarships funded under paragraph (3)(b) shall be 72,615.
 2586 Beginning in the 2025-2026 school year, the maximum number of
 2587 scholarships funded under paragraph (3)(b) shall annually
 2588 increase by 5 percent of the state's total exceptional student
 2589 education full-time equivalent student membership, not including
 2590 gifted students. The maximum number of scholarships funded shall
 2591 increase by 1 percent of the state's total exceptional student
 2592 education full-time equivalent student membership, not including
 2593 gifted students, in the school year following any school year in
 2594 which the number of scholarships funded exceeds 95 percent of
 2595 the number of available scholarships for that school year. An
 2596 eligible student who meets any of the following requirements
 2597 shall be excluded from the maximum number of students if the
 2598 student:

2599 (a)a- Received specialized instructional services under the
 2600 Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program pursuant to s.
 2601 1002.66 during the previous school year and the student has a
 2602 current IEP developed by the district school board in accordance
 2603 with rules of the State Board of Education;

2604 (b)b- Is a dependent child of a law enforcement officer or
 2605 a member of the United States Armed Forces, a foster child, or
 2606 an adopted child; or

2607 (c)e- Spent the prior school year in attendance at a
 2608 Florida public school or the Florida School for the Deaf and the
 2609 Blind. For purposes of this subparagraph, the term "prior school
 2610 year in attendance" means that the student was enrolled and

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2611 reported by:

2612 ~~1.(I)~~ A school district for funding during either the
 2613 preceding October or February full-time equivalent student
 2614 membership surveys in kindergarten through grade 12, which
 2615 includes time spent in a Department of Juvenile Justice
 2616 commitment program if funded under the Florida Education Finance
 2617 Program;

2618 ~~2.(II)~~ The Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind during
 2619 the preceding October or February full-time equivalent student
 2620 membership surveys in kindergarten through grade 12;

2621 ~~3.(III)~~ A school district for funding during the preceding
 2622 October or February full-time equivalent student membership
 2623 surveys, was at least 4 years of age when enrolled and reported,
 2624 and was eligible for services under s. 1003.21(1)(e); or

2625 ~~4.(IV)~~ Received a John M. McKay Scholarship for Students
 2626 with Disabilities in the 2021-2022 school year.

2627 ~~2. For a student who has a Level I to Level III matrix of~~
 2628 ~~services or a diagnosis by a physician or psychologist, the~~
 2629 ~~calculated scholarship amount for a student participating in the~~
 2630 ~~program must be based upon the grade level and school district~~
 2631 ~~in which the student would have been enrolled as the total funds~~
 2632 ~~per unweighted full-time equivalent in the Florida Education~~
 2633 ~~Finance Program for a student in the basic exceptional student~~
 2634 ~~education program pursuant to s. 1011.62(1)(c) and (d), plus a~~
 2635 ~~per full-time equivalent share of funds for the categorical~~
 2636 ~~programs established in s. 1011.62(5), (7)(a), (8), and (16), as~~
 2637 ~~funded in the General Appropriations Act. For the categorical~~
 2638 ~~program established in s. 1011.62(8), the funds must be~~
 2639 ~~allocated based on the school district's average exceptional~~

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2640 ~~student education guaranteed allocation funds per exceptional~~
 2641 ~~student education full-time equivalent student.~~

2642 ~~3. For a student with a Level IV or Level V matrix of~~
 2643 ~~services, the calculated scholarship amount must be based upon~~
 2644 ~~the school district to which the student would have been~~
 2645 ~~assigned as the total funds per full-time equivalent for the~~
 2646 ~~Level IV or Level V exceptional student education program~~
 2647 ~~pursuant to s. 1011.62(1)(c)2.a. or b., plus a per full-time~~
 2648 ~~equivalent share of funds for the categorical programs~~
 2649 ~~established in s. 1011.62(5), (7)(a), and (16), as funded in the~~
 2650 ~~General Appropriations Act.~~

2651 ~~4. For a student who received a Gardiner Scholarship~~
 2652 ~~pursuant to former s. 1002.385 in the 2020-2021 school year, the~~
 2653 ~~amount shall be the greater of the amount calculated pursuant to~~
 2654 ~~subparagraph 2. or the amount the student received for the 2020-~~
 2655 ~~2021 school year.~~

2656 ~~5. For a student who received a John M. McKay Scholarship~~
 2657 ~~pursuant to former s. 1002.39 in the 2020-2021 school year, the~~
 2658 ~~amount shall be the greater of the amount calculated pursuant to~~
 2659 ~~subparagraph 2. or the amount the student received for the 2020-~~
 2660 ~~2021 school year.~~

2661 ~~6. The organization must verify the student's eligibility~~
 2662 ~~to participate in the scholarship program at least 30 days~~
 2663 ~~before each payment.~~

2664 ~~7.a. For renewing scholarship students, upon receiving the~~
 2665 ~~verified list of eligible scholarship students, the department~~
 2666 ~~shall release, from state funds only, the amount calculated~~
 2667 ~~pursuant to subparagraph 1. to the organization for deposit into~~
 2668 ~~the student's account in quarterly payments no later than August~~

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2669 1, November 1, February 1, and April 1 of each school year in
2670 which the scholarship is in force.

2671 ~~b. For new scholarship students, upon receiving the~~
2672 ~~verified list of eligible scholarship students, the department~~
2673 ~~shall release, from state funds only, the amount calculated~~
2674 ~~pursuant to subparagraph 1. to the organization for deposit into~~
2675 ~~the student's account in quarterly payments no later than~~
2676 ~~September 1, November 1, February 1, and April 1 of each school~~
2677 ~~year in which the scholarship is in force.~~

2678 ~~8. If a scholarship student is attending an eligible~~
2679 ~~private school full time, the initial payment shall be made~~
2680 ~~after the organization's verification of admission acceptance,~~
2681 ~~and subsequent payments shall be made upon verification of~~
2682 ~~continued enrollment and attendance at the eligible private~~
2683 ~~school. Payments for tuition and fees for full-time enrollment~~
2684 ~~shall be made within 7 business days after approval by the~~
2685 ~~parent pursuant to paragraph (10) (b) and the private school~~
2686 ~~pursuant to paragraph (9) (b).~~

2687 ~~9. Accrued interest in the student's account is in addition~~
2688 ~~to, and not part of, the awarded funds. Program funds include~~
2689 ~~both the awarded funds and accrued interest.~~

2690 ~~10. The organization may develop a system for payment of~~
2691 ~~benefits by funds transfer, including, but not limited to, debit~~
2692 ~~cards, electronic payment cards, or any other means of payment~~
2693 ~~which the department deems to be commercially viable or cost-~~
2694 ~~effective. A student's scholarship award may not be reduced for~~
2695 ~~debit card or electronic payment fees. Commodities or services~~
2696 ~~related to the development of such a system must be procured by~~
2697 ~~competitive solicitation unless they are purchased from a state~~

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2698 ~~term contract pursuant to s. 287.056.~~

2699 ~~11. An organization may not transfer any funds to an~~
2700 ~~account of a student determined to be eligible pursuant to~~
2701 ~~paragraph (3) (b) which has a balance in excess of \$50,000.~~

2702 ~~12. Moneys received pursuant to this section do not~~
2703 ~~constitute taxable income to the qualified student or the parent~~
2704 ~~of the qualified student.~~

2705 ~~(c) An organization may not submit a new scholarship~~
2706 ~~student for funding after February 1.~~

2707 ~~(d) Within 30 days after the release of state funds~~
2708 ~~pursuant to paragraphs (a) and (b), the eligible scholarship-~~
2709 ~~funding organization shall certify to the department the amount~~
2710 ~~of funds distributed for student scholarships. If the amount of~~
2711 ~~funds released by the department is more than the amount~~
2712 ~~distributed by the organization, the department is authorized to~~
2713 ~~adjust the amount of the overpayment in the subsequent quarterly~~
2714 ~~payment release.~~

2715 Section 8. Subsections (2), (3), (4), and (6) through (11),
2716 and paragraph (e) of subsection (15) of section 1002.395,
2717 Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

2718 1002.395 Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program.—

2719 (2) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section, the term:

2720 (a) "Annual tax credit amount" means, for any state fiscal
2721 year, the sum of the amount of tax credits approved under
2722 paragraph (5) (b), including tax credits to be taken under s.
2723 220.1875 or s. 624.51055, which are approved for a taxpayer
2724 whose taxable year begins on or after January 1 of the calendar
2725 year preceding the start of the applicable state fiscal year.

2726 ~~(b) "Choice navigator" means an individual who meets the~~

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2727 ~~requirements of sub-subparagraph (6) (d) 4.g. and who provides~~
 2728 ~~consultations, at a mutually agreed upon location, on the~~
 2729 ~~selection of, application for, and enrollment in educational~~
 2730 ~~options addressing the academic needs of a student; curriculum~~
 2731 ~~selection; and advice on career and postsecondary education~~
 2732 ~~opportunities. However, nothing in this section authorizes a~~
 2733 ~~choice navigator to oversee or exercise control over the~~
 2734 ~~curricula or academic programs of a personalized education~~
 2735 ~~program.~~

2736 (b) ~~(e)~~ "Department" means the Department of Revenue.

2737 (c) ~~(d)~~ "Direct certification list" means the certified list
 2738 of children who qualify for the food assistance program, the
 2739 Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Program, or the Food
 2740 Distribution Program on Indian Reservations provided to the
 2741 Department of Education by the Department of Children and
 2742 Families.

2743 (d) ~~(e)~~ "Division" means the Division of Alcoholic Beverages
 2744 and Tobacco of the Department of Business and Professional
 2745 Regulation.

2746 (e) ~~(f)~~ "Eligible contribution" means a monetary
 2747 contribution from a taxpayer, subject to the restrictions
 2748 provided in this section, to an eligible nonprofit scholarship-
 2749 funding organization pursuant to this section and ss. 212.099,
 2750 212.1831, and 212.1832. The taxpayer making the contribution may
 2751 not designate a specific child as the beneficiary of the
 2752 contribution.

2753 (f) ~~(g)~~ "Eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding
 2754 organization" means a state university; or an independent
 2755 college or university that is eligible to participate in the

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2756 William L. Boyd, IV, Effective Access to Student Education Grant
 2757 Program, located and chartered in this state, is not for profit,
 2758 and is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern
 2759 Association of Colleges and Schools; or is a charitable
 2760 organization that:

2761 1. Is exempt from federal income tax pursuant to s.
 2762 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code;

2763 2. Is a Florida entity formed under chapter 605, chapter
 2764 607, or chapter 617 and whose principal office is located in the
 2765 state; and

2766 3. Complies with subsections (6) and (13) ~~(15)~~.

2767 ~~(h)~~ "Eligible postsecondary educational institution" means
 2768 a Florida College System institution; a state university; a
 2769 school district technical center; a school district adult
 2770 general education center; an independent college or university
 2771 eligible to participate in the William L. Boyd, IV, Effective
 2772 Access to Student Education Grant Program under s. 1009.89; or
 2773 an accredited independent postsecondary educational institution,
 2774 as defined in s. 1005.02, which is licensed to operate in this
 2775 state under part III of chapter 1005 or is approved to
 2776 participate in a reciprocity agreement as defined in s.
 2777 1000.35(2).

2778 ~~(i)~~ "Eligible private school" means a private school, as
 2779 defined in s. 1002.01, located in Florida which offers an
 2780 education to students in any grades K-12 and that meets the
 2781 requirements in subsection ~~(8)~~.

2782 ~~(j)~~ "Household income" has the same meaning as the term
 2783 "income" as defined in the Income Eligibility Guidelines for
 2784 free and reduced price meals under the National School Lunch

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2785 Program in 7 C.F.R. part 210 as published in the Federal
 2786 Register by the United States Department of Agriculture.
 2787 ~~(k) "Owner or operator" includes:~~
 2788 ~~1. An owner, president, officer, or director of an eligible~~
 2789 ~~nonprofit scholarship funding organization or a person with~~
 2790 ~~equivalent decisionmaking authority over an eligible nonprofit~~
 2791 ~~scholarship funding organization.~~
 2792 ~~2. An owner, operator, superintendent, or principal of an~~
 2793 ~~eligible private school or a person with equivalent~~
 2794 ~~decisionmaking authority over an eligible private school.~~
 2795 ~~(l) "Personalized education program" has the same meaning~~
 2796 ~~as in s. 1002.01.~~
 2797 ~~(m) "Personalized education student" means a student whose~~
 2798 ~~parent applies to an eligible nonprofit scholarship funding~~
 2799 ~~organization for participation in a personalized education~~
 2800 ~~program.~~
 2801 ~~(n) "Student learning plan" means a customized learning~~
 2802 ~~plan developed by a parent, at least annually, to guide~~
 2803 ~~instruction for his or her student and to identify the goods and~~
 2804 ~~services needed to address the academic needs of his or her~~
 2805 ~~student.~~
 2806 (g)(e) "Tax credit cap amount" means the maximum annual tax
 2807 credit amount that the department may approve for a state fiscal
 2808 year.
 2809 (h)(p) "Unweighted FTE funding amount" means the statewide
 2810 average total funds per unweighted full-time equivalent funding
 2811 amount that is incorporated by reference in the General
 2812 Appropriations Act, or any subsequent special appropriations
 2813 act, for the applicable state fiscal year.

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2814 (3) PROGRAM; INITIAL SCHOLARSHIP ELIGIBILITY.-
 2815 ~~(a)~~ The Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program is
 2816 established.
 2817 ~~(b)1.~~ A student is eligible for a Florida tax credit
 2818 scholarship under this section if the student:
 2819 (a)a- Is a resident of this state or the dependent child of
 2820 an active duty member of the United States Armed Forces who has
 2821 received permanent change of station orders to this state or, at
 2822 the time of renewal, whose home of record or state of legal
 2823 residence is Florida; and
 2824 (b)b- Is eligible to enroll in kindergarten through grade
 2825 12 in a public school in this state or received a scholarship
 2826 under the Hope Scholarship Program in the 2023-2024 school year.
 2827 ~~2. Priority must be given in the following order:~~
 2828 ~~a. A student whose household income level does not exceed~~
 2829 ~~185 percent of the federal poverty level or who is in foster~~
 2830 ~~care or out-of-home care.~~
 2831 ~~b. A student whose household income level exceeds 185~~
 2832 ~~percent of the federal poverty level, but does not exceed 400~~
 2833 ~~percent of the federal poverty level.~~
 2834 (4) SCHOLARSHIP PROHIBITIONS.-A student is not eligible for
 2835 a scholarship while he or she is:
 2836 (a) Enrolled full time in a public school, including, but
 2837 not limited to, the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind,
 2838 the College-Preparatory Boarding Academy, the Florida School for
 2839 Competitive Academics, the Florida Virtual School, the Florida
 2840 Scholars Academy, a developmental research school authorized
 2841 under s. 1002.32, or a charter school authorized under this
 2842 chapter. For purposes of this paragraph, a 3- or 4-year-old

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2843 child who receives services funded through the Florida Education
2844 Finance Program is considered a student enrolled full time in a
2845 public school;

2846 (b) Enrolled in a school operating for the purpose of
2847 providing educational services to youth in a Department of
2848 Juvenile Justice commitment program;

2849 (c) Receiving any other educational scholarship pursuant to
2850 this chapter. ~~However, an eligible public school student~~
2851 ~~receiving a scholarship under s. 1002.411 may receive a~~
2852 ~~scholarship for transportation pursuant to subparagraph~~
2853 ~~(6)(d)4.;~~

2854 (d) Not having regular and direct contact with his or her
2855 private school teachers pursuant to s. 1002.421(1)(i) unless he
2856 or she is enrolled in a personalized education program;

2857 (e) Participating in a home education program as defined in
2858 s. 1002.01(1);

2859 (f) Participating in a private tutoring program pursuant to
2860 s. 1002.43 unless he or she is enrolled in a personalized
2861 education program; or

2862 (g) Participating in virtual instruction pursuant to s.
2863 1002.455 that receives state funding pursuant to the student's
2864 participation.

2865 (6) OBLIGATIONS OF ELIGIBLE NONPROFIT SCHOLARSHIP-FUNDING
2866 ORGANIZATIONS.—An eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding
2867 organization:

2868 (a) Must comply with the antidiscrimination provisions of
2869 42 U.S.C. s. 2000d.

2870 ~~(b) Must comply with the following background check~~
2871 ~~requirements:~~

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2872 ~~1. All owners and operators as defined in subparagraph~~
2873 ~~(2)(k)1. are, before employment or engagement to provide~~
2874 ~~services, subject to level 2 background screening as provided~~
2875 ~~under chapter 435. The fingerprints for the background screening~~
2876 ~~must be electronically submitted to the Department of Law~~
2877 ~~Enforcement and can be taken by an authorized law enforcement~~
2878 ~~agency or by an employee of the eligible nonprofit scholarship-~~
2879 ~~funding organization or a private company who is trained to take~~
2880 ~~fingerprints. However, the complete set of fingerprints of an~~
2881 ~~owner or operator may not be taken by the owner or operator. The~~
2882 ~~results of the state and national criminal history check shall~~
2883 ~~be provided to the Department of Education for screening under~~
2884 ~~chapter 435. The cost of the background screening may be borne~~
2885 ~~by the eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organization or~~
2886 ~~the owner or operator.~~

2887 ~~2. Every 5 years following employment or engagement to~~
2888 ~~provide services or association with an eligible nonprofit~~
2889 ~~scholarship-funding organization, each owner or operator must~~
2890 ~~meet level 2 screening standards as described in s. 435.04, at~~
2891 ~~which time the nonprofit scholarship-funding organization shall~~
2892 ~~request the Department of Law Enforcement to forward the~~
2893 ~~fingerprints to the Federal Bureau of Investigation for level 2~~
2894 ~~screening. If the fingerprints of an owner or operator are not~~
2895 ~~retained by the Department of Law Enforcement under subparagraph~~
2896 ~~3., the owner or operator must electronically file a complete~~
2897 ~~set of fingerprints with the Department of Law Enforcement. Upon~~
2898 ~~submission of fingerprints for this purpose, the eligible~~
2899 ~~nonprofit scholarship-funding organization shall request that~~
2900 ~~the Department of Law Enforcement forward the fingerprints to~~

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2901 the Federal Bureau of Investigation for level 2 screening, and
 2902 the fingerprints shall be retained by the Department of Law
 2903 Enforcement under subparagraph 3.

2904 ~~3. Fingerprints submitted to the Department of Law~~
 2905 ~~Enforcement as required by this paragraph must be retained by~~
 2906 ~~the Department of Law Enforcement in a manner approved by rule~~
 2907 ~~and entered in the statewide automated biometric identification~~
 2908 ~~system authorized by s. 943.05(2)(b). The fingerprints must~~
 2909 ~~thereafter be available for all purposes and uses authorized for~~
 2910 ~~arrest fingerprints entered in the statewide automated biometric~~
 2911 ~~identification system pursuant to s. 943.051.~~

2912 ~~4. The Department of Law Enforcement shall search all~~
 2913 ~~arrest fingerprints received under s. 943.051 against the~~
 2914 ~~fingerprints retained in the statewide automated biometric~~
 2915 ~~identification system under subparagraph 3. Any arrest record~~
 2916 ~~that is identified with an owner's or operator's fingerprints~~
 2917 ~~must be reported to the Department of Education. The Department~~
 2918 ~~of Education shall participate in this search process by paying~~
 2919 ~~an annual fee to the Department of Law Enforcement and by~~
 2920 ~~informing the Department of Law Enforcement of any change in the~~
 2921 ~~employment, engagement, or association status of the owners or~~
 2922 ~~operators whose fingerprints are retained under subparagraph 3.~~
 2923 ~~The Department of Law Enforcement shall adopt a rule setting the~~
 2924 ~~amount of the annual fee to be imposed upon the Department of~~
 2925 ~~Education for performing these services and establishing the~~
 2926 ~~procedures for the retention of owner and operator fingerprints~~
 2927 ~~and the dissemination of search results. The fee may be borne by~~
 2928 ~~the owner or operator of the nonprofit scholarship funding~~
 2929 ~~organization.~~

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2930 ~~5. A nonprofit scholarship funding organization whose owner~~
 2931 ~~or operator fails the level 2 background screening is not~~
 2932 ~~eligible to provide scholarships under this section.~~

2933 ~~6. A nonprofit scholarship funding organization whose owner~~
 2934 ~~or operator in the last 7 years has filed for personal~~
 2935 ~~bankruptcy or corporate bankruptcy in a corporation of which he~~
 2936 ~~or she owned more than 20 percent shall not be eligible to~~
 2937 ~~provide scholarships under this section.~~

2938 ~~7. In addition to the offenses listed in s. 435.04, a~~
 2939 ~~person required to undergo background screening pursuant to this~~
 2940 ~~part or authorizing statutes must not have an arrest awaiting~~
 2941 ~~final disposition for, must not have been found guilty of, or~~
 2942 ~~entered a plea of nolo contendere to, regardless of~~
 2943 ~~adjudication, and must not have been adjudicated delinquent, and~~
 2944 ~~the record must not have been sealed or expunged for, any of the~~
 2945 ~~following offenses or any similar offense of another~~
 2946 ~~jurisdiction:~~

- 2947 ~~a. Any authorizing statutes, if the offense was a felony.~~
- 2948 ~~b. This chapter, if the offense was a felony.~~
- 2949 ~~c. Section 409.920, relating to Medicaid provider fraud.~~
- 2950 ~~d. Section 409.9201, relating to Medicaid fraud.~~
- 2951 ~~e. Section 741.28, relating to domestic violence.~~
- 2952 ~~f. Section 817.034, relating to fraudulent acts through~~
- 2953 ~~mail, wire, radio, electromagnetic, photoelectronic, or~~
- 2954 ~~photooptical systems.~~
- 2955 ~~g. Section 817.234, relating to false and fraudulent~~
- 2956 ~~insurance claims.~~
- 2957 ~~h. Section 817.505, relating to patient brokering.~~
- 2958 ~~i. Section 817.568, relating to criminal use of personal~~

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2959 identification information.

2960 ~~j. Section 817.60, relating to obtaining a credit card~~
 2961 ~~through fraudulent means.~~

2962 ~~k. Section 817.61, relating to fraudulent use of credit~~
 2963 ~~cards, if the offense was a felony.~~

2964 ~~l. Section 831.01, relating to forgery.~~

2965 ~~m. Section 831.02, relating to uttering forged instruments.~~

2966 ~~n. Section 831.07, relating to forging bank bills, checks,~~
 2967 ~~drafts, or promissory notes.~~

2968 ~~o. Section 831.09, relating to uttering forged bank bills,~~
 2969 ~~checks, drafts, or promissory notes.~~

2970 ~~p. Section 831.30, relating to fraud in obtaining medicinal~~
 2971 ~~drugs.~~

2972 ~~q. Section 831.31, relating to the sale, manufacture,~~
 2973 ~~delivery, or possession with the intent to sell, manufacture, or~~
 2974 ~~deliver any counterfeit controlled substance, if the offense was~~
 2975 ~~a felony.~~

2976 (b)(e) Must not have an owner or operator, ~~as defined in~~
 2977 ~~subparagraph (2)(k)1.,~~ who owns or operates an eligible private
 2978 school that is participating in the scholarship program.

2979 (c)(d)1. For the 2023-2024 school year, may fund no more
 2980 than 20,000 scholarships for students who are enrolled pursuant
 2981 to subsection (7) paragraph (7)(b). The number of scholarships
 2982 funded for such students may increase by 40,000 in each
 2983 subsequent school year. This paragraph ~~subparagraph~~ is repealed
 2984 July 1, 2027.

2985 ~~2. Shall establish a process for parents who are in~~
 2986 ~~compliance with paragraph (7)(a) to renew their students'~~
 2987 ~~scholarships. Renewal applications for the 2025-2026 school year~~

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2988 and thereafter must provide for a renewal timeline beginning
 2989 February 1 of the prior school year and ending April 30 of the
 2990 prior school year. A student's renewal is contingent upon an
 2991 ~~eligible private school providing confirmation of admission~~
 2992 ~~pursuant to subsection (8). The process must require that~~
 2993 ~~parents confirm that the scholarship is being renewed or~~
 2994 ~~declined by May 31.~~

2995 ~~3. Shall establish a process that allows a parent to apply~~
 2996 ~~for a new scholarship. The process must be in a manner that~~
 2997 ~~creates a written or electronic record of the application~~
 2998 ~~request and the date of receipt of the application request. The~~
 2999 ~~process must require that parents confirm that the scholarship~~
 3000 ~~is being accepted or declined by a date set by the organization.~~

3001 4. Must establish and maintain separate scholarship
 3002 accounts from eligible contributions for each eligible student.
 3003 For each account, the organization must maintain a record of
 3004 accrued interest retained in the student's account. The
 3005 organization

3006 (d) Must verify that scholarship funds are used for:

3007 1.a. Tuition and fees for full-time or part-time enrollment
 3008 in an eligible private school.

3009 2.b. Instructional materials, including digital materials,
 3010 digital devices, and Internet resources.

3011 3.e. Curriculum as defined in s. 1002.394(2).

3012 4.d. Tuition and fees associated with full-time or part-
 3013 time enrollment in a home education instructional program that
 3014 meets all of the following requirements:

3015 a. Provides educational courses or activities.

3016 b. Has a publicly available description of courses and

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3017 activities.3018 c. Has a tuition and fee schedule.3019 d. Makes the tuition and fees payable to a registered
3020 business entity.

3021 5. Tuition and fees associated with full-time or part-time
3022 enrollment in an eligible postsecondary educational institution
3023 or a program offered by the postsecondary educational
3024 institution, unless the program is subject to s. 1009.25 or
3025 reimbursed pursuant to s. 1009.30; an approved preapprenticeship
3026 program as defined in s. 446.021(5) which is not subject to s.
3027 1009.25 and complies with all applicable requirements of the
3028 Department of Education pursuant to chapter 1005; a private
3029 tutoring program authorized under s. 1002.43; a virtual program
3030 offered by a department-approved private online provider that
3031 meets the provider qualifications specified in s. 1002.45(2)(a);
3032 the Florida Virtual School as a private paying student; or an
3033 approved online course offered pursuant to s. 1003.499 or s.
3034 1004.0961.

3035 6.e. Fees for nationally standardized, norm-referenced
3036 achievement tests, Advanced Placement Examinations, industry
3037 certification examinations, assessments related to postsecondary
3038 education, or other assessments.

3039 7.f. Contracted services provided by a public school or
3040 school district, including classes. A student who receives
3041 contracted services under this subparagraph ~~sub-subparagraph~~ is
3042 not considered enrolled in a public school for eligibility
3043 purposes as specified in subsection (9) ~~(11)~~ but rather
3044 attending a public school on a part-time basis as authorized
3045 under s. 1002.44.

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3046 ~~8.g.~~ Tuition and fees for part-time tutoring services or
3047 fees for services provided by a choice navigator. Such services
3048 must be provided by a person who holds a valid Florida
3049 educator's certificate pursuant to s. 1012.56, a person who
3050 holds an adjunct teaching certificate pursuant to s. 1012.57, a
3051 person who has a bachelor's degree or a graduate degree in the
3052 subject area in which instruction is given, a person who has
3053 demonstrated a mastery of subject area knowledge pursuant to s.
3054 1012.56(5), or a person certified by a nationally or
3055 internationally recognized research-based training program as
3056 approved by the Department of Education. As used in this
3057 paragraph, the term "part-time tutoring services" does not
3058 qualify as regular school attendance as defined in s.
3059 1003.01(16)(e).

3060 9. Membership dues and related activity fees for
3061 participation in Career and Technical Student Organizations.

3062 (e) For students determined eligible pursuant to subsection
3063 (7) paragraph (7)(b), must:

3064 ~~1. Establish a process for parents who are in compliance~~
3065 ~~with subparagraph (7)(b)1. to apply for a new scholarship. New~~
3066 ~~scholarship applications for the 2025-2026 school year and~~
3067 ~~thereafter must provide for an application timeline beginning~~
3068 ~~February 1 of the prior school year and ending April 30 of the~~
3069 ~~prior school year. The process must require that parents confirm~~
3070 ~~that the scholarship is being accepted or declined by May 31.~~

3071 ~~2. Establish a process for parents who are in compliance~~
3072 ~~with paragraph (7)(b) to renew their students' scholarships.~~
3073 ~~Renewal scholarship applications for the 2025-2026 school year~~
3074 ~~and thereafter must provide for a renewal timeline beginning~~

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3075 ~~February 1 of the prior school year and ending April 30 of the~~
 3076 ~~prior school year. The process must require that parents confirm~~
 3077 ~~that the scholarship is being renewed or declined by May 31.~~

3078 ~~1.3-~~ Maintain a signed agreement from the parent which
 3079 constitutes compliance with the attendance requirements under
 3080 ss. 1003.01(16) and 1003.21(1).

3081 ~~2.4-~~ Receive eligible student test scores and, beginning
 3082 with the 2027-2028 school year, by August 15, annually report
 3083 test scores for students pursuant to subsection (7) paragraph
 3084 ~~(7)(b)~~ to a state university pursuant to paragraph (8) (d)
 3085 ~~(9) (f)~~.

3086 ~~3.5-~~ Provide parents with information, guidance, and
 3087 support to create and annually update a student learning plan
 3088 for their student. The organization must maintain the plan and
 3089 allow parents to electronically submit, access, and revise the
 3090 plan continuously.

3091 ~~4.6-~~ Upon submission by the parent of an annual student
 3092 learning plan, fund a scholarship for a student determined
 3093 eligible.

3094 ~~(f) Must give first priority to eligible renewal students~~
 3095 ~~who received a scholarship from an eligible nonprofit~~
 3096 ~~scholarship-funding organization during the previous school~~
 3097 ~~year. The eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organization~~
 3098 ~~must fully apply and exhaust all funds available under this~~
 3099 ~~section for renewal scholarship awards before awarding any~~
 3100 ~~initial scholarships.~~

3101 ~~(g) Must provide a new scholarship to an eligible student~~
 3102 ~~on a first come, first served basis unless the student is~~
 3103 ~~seeking priority eligibility pursuant to subsection (3).~~

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3104 ~~(g)(h)~~ Must refer any student eligible for a scholarship
 3105 pursuant to this section who did not receive a renewal or
 3106 initial scholarship based solely on the lack of available funds
 3107 under this section to another eligible nonprofit scholarship-
 3108 funding organization that may have funds available.

3109 ~~(i) May not restrict or reserve scholarships for use at a~~
 3110 ~~particular eligible private school or provide scholarships to a~~
 3111 ~~child of an owner or operator as defined in subparagraph~~
 3112 ~~(2)(k)1.~~

3113 ~~(j) Must allow a student in foster care or out-of-home care~~
 3114 ~~or a dependent child of a parent who is a member of the United~~
 3115 ~~States Armed Forces to apply for a scholarship at any time.~~

3116 ~~(h)(k)~~ Must allow an eligible student to attend any
 3117 eligible private school and must allow a parent to transfer a
 3118 scholarship during a school year to any other eligible private
 3119 school of the parent's choice.

3120 ~~(i)1.(1)1.~~ May use eligible contributions received pursuant
 3121 to this section and ss. 212.099, 212.1831, and 212.1832 during
 3122 the state fiscal year in which such contributions are collected
 3123 for administrative expenses if the organization has operated as
 3124 an eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organization for at
 3125 least the preceding 3 fiscal years and did not have any findings
 3126 of material weakness or material noncompliance in its most
 3127 recent audit under paragraph (k) (e) or is in good standing in
 3128 each state in which it administers a scholarship program and the
 3129 audited financial statements for the preceding 3 fiscal years
 3130 are free of material misstatements and going concern issues.
 3131 Administrative expenses from eligible contributions may not
 3132 exceed 3 percent of the total amount of all scholarships and

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3133 stipends funded by an eligible scholarship-funding organization
 3134 under this chapter. Such administrative expenses must be
 3135 reasonable and necessary for the organization's management and
 3136 distribution of scholarships funded under this chapter.
 3137 Administrative expenses may include developing or contracting
 3138 with rideshare programs or facilitating carpool strategies for
 3139 recipients of a transportation scholarship under s. 1002.394. No
 3140 funds authorized under this subparagraph shall be used for
 3141 lobbying or political activity or expenses related to lobbying
 3142 or political activity. Up to one-third of the funds authorized
 3143 for administrative expenses under this subparagraph may be used
 3144 for expenses related to the recruitment of contributions from
 3145 taxpayers. ~~An eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding~~
 3146 ~~organization may not charge an application fee.~~
 3147 2. Must expend for annual or partial-year scholarships 100
 3148 percent of any eligible contributions from the prior fiscal
 3149 year.
 3150 3. Must expend for annual or partial-year scholarships an
 3151 amount equal to or greater than 75 percent of all net eligible
 3152 contributions, ~~as defined in subsection (2)~~, remaining after
 3153 administrative expenses during the state fiscal year in which
 3154 such eligible contributions are collected. No more than 25
 3155 percent of such net eligible contributions may be carried
 3156 forward to the following state fiscal year. All amounts carried
 3157 forward, for audit purposes, must be specifically identified for
 3158 particular students, by student name and the name of the school
 3159 to which the student is admitted, subject to the requirements of
 3160 ss. 1002.22 and 1002.221 and 20 U.S.C. s. 1232g, and the
 3161 applicable rules and regulations issued pursuant thereto. Any

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3162 amounts carried forward shall be expended for annual or partial-
 3163 year scholarships in the following state fiscal year. Eligible
 3164 contributions remaining on June 30 of each year that are in
 3165 excess of the 25 percent that may be carried forward shall be
 3166 used to provide scholarships to eligible students or transferred
 3167 to other eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organizations to
 3168 provide scholarships for eligible students. All transferred
 3169 funds must be deposited by each eligible nonprofit scholarship-
 3170 funding organization receiving such funds into its scholarship
 3171 account. All transferred amounts received by any eligible
 3172 nonprofit scholarship-funding organization must be separately
 3173 disclosed in the annual financial audit required under paragraph
 3174 (k) ~~(e)~~.
 3175 4. ~~Must, before granting a scholarship for an academic~~
 3176 ~~year, document each scholarship student's eligibility for that~~
 3177 ~~academic year. A scholarship-funding organization may not grant~~
 3178 ~~multiyear scholarships in one approval process.~~
 3179 ~~(m) Must maintain separate accounts for scholarship funds~~
 3180 ~~and operating funds.~~
 3181 (j) ~~(n)~~ With the prior approval of the Department of
 3182 Education, may transfer funds to another eligible nonprofit
 3183 scholarship-funding organization if additional funds are
 3184 required to meet scholarship demand at the receiving nonprofit
 3185 scholarship-funding organization. A transfer is limited to the
 3186 greater of \$500,000 or 20 percent of the total contributions
 3187 received by the nonprofit scholarship-funding organization
 3188 making the transfer. All transferred funds must be deposited by
 3189 the receiving nonprofit scholarship-funding organization into
 3190 its scholarship accounts. All transferred amounts received by

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3191 any nonprofit scholarship-funding organization must be
 3192 separately disclosed in the annual financial and compliance
 3193 audit required in this section.

3194 ~~(k)(e)~~ Must provide to the Auditor General and the
 3195 Department of Education a report on the results of an annual
 3196 financial audit of its accounts and records conducted by an
 3197 independent certified public accountant in accordance with
 3198 auditing standards generally accepted in the United States,
 3199 government auditing standards, and rules promulgated by the
 3200 Auditor General. The audit report must include a report on
 3201 financial statements presented in accordance with generally
 3202 accepted accounting principles. Audit reports must be provided
 3203 to the Auditor General and the Department of Education within
 3204 180 days after completion of the eligible nonprofit scholarship-
 3205 funding organization's fiscal year. The Auditor General shall
 3206 review all audit reports submitted pursuant to this paragraph.
 3207 The Auditor General shall request any significant items that
 3208 were omitted in violation of a rule adopted by the Auditor
 3209 General. The items must be provided within 45 days after the
 3210 date of the request. If the scholarship-funding organization
 3211 does not comply with the Auditor General's request, the Auditor
 3212 General shall notify the Legislative Auditing Committee.

3213 ~~(p) Must prepare and submit quarterly reports to the~~
 3214 ~~Department of Education pursuant to paragraph (9)(i). In~~
 3215 ~~addition, an eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organization~~
 3216 ~~must submit in a timely manner the verified list of eligible~~
 3217 ~~scholarship students and any information requested by the~~
 3218 ~~Department of Education relating to the scholarship program.~~

3219 (l)1.a.(q)1.a. Must participate in the joint development of

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3220 agreed-upon procedures during the 2009-2010 state fiscal year.
 3221 The agreed-upon procedures must uniformly apply to all private
 3222 schools and must determine, at a minimum, whether the private
 3223 school has been verified as eligible by the Department of
 3224 Education under s. 1002.421; has an adequate accounting system,
 3225 system of financial controls, and process for deposit and
 3226 classification of scholarship funds; and has properly expended
 3227 scholarship funds for education-related expenses. During the
 3228 development of the procedures, the participating scholarship-
 3229 funding organizations shall specify guidelines governing the
 3230 materiality of exceptions that may be found during the
 3231 accountant's performance of the procedures. The procedures and
 3232 guidelines shall be provided to private schools and the
 3233 Commissioner of Education by March 15, 2011.

3234 b. Must participate in a joint review of the agreed-upon
 3235 procedures and guidelines developed under sub-subparagraph a.,
 3236 by February of each biennium, if the scholarship-funding
 3237 organization provided more than \$250,000 in scholarship funds
 3238 under this chapter during the state fiscal year preceding the
 3239 biennial review. If the procedures and guidelines are revised,
 3240 the revisions must be provided to private schools and the
 3241 Commissioner of Education by March 15 of the year in which the
 3242 revisions were completed. The revised agreed-upon procedures and
 3243 guidelines shall take effect the subsequent school year.

3244 c. Must monitor the compliance of a participating private
 3245 school with s. 1002.421(9)(p) ~~s. 1002.421(1)(q)~~ if the
 3246 scholarship-funding organization provided the majority of the
 3247 scholarship funding to the school. For each participating
 3248 private school subject to s. 1002.421(9)(p) ~~s. 1002.421(1)(q)~~,

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3249 the appropriate scholarship-funding organization shall annually
3250 notify the Commissioner of Education by October 30 of:

3251 (I) A private school's failure to submit a report required
3252 under s. 1002.421(9)(p) ~~s. 1002.421(1)(g)~~; or

3253 (II) Any material exceptions set forth in the report
3254 required under s. 1002.421(9)(p) ~~s. 1002.421(1)(g)~~.

3255 2. Must seek input from the accrediting associations that
3256 are members of the Florida Association of Academic Nonpublic
3257 Schools and the Department of Education when jointly developing
3258 the agreed-upon procedures and guidelines under sub-subparagraph
3259 1.a. and conducting a review of those procedures and guidelines
3260 under sub-subparagraph 1.b.

3261 (m) ~~(#)~~ Must maintain the surety bond or letter of credit
3262 required by subsection (13) ~~(15)~~. The amount of the surety bond
3263 or letter of credit may be adjusted quarterly to equal the
3264 actual amount of undisbursed funds based upon submission by the
3265 organization of a statement from a certified public accountant
3266 verifying the amount of undisbursed funds. The requirements of
3267 this paragraph are waived if the cost of acquiring a surety bond
3268 or letter of credit exceeds the average 10-year cost of
3269 acquiring a surety bond or letter of credit by 200 percent. The
3270 requirements of this paragraph are waived for a state
3271 university; or an independent college or university which is
3272 eligible to participate in the William L. Boyd, IV, Effective
3273 Access to Student Education Grant Program, located and chartered
3274 in this state, is not for profit, and is accredited by the
3275 Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges
3276 and Schools.

3277 (n) ~~(s)~~ Must provide to the Auditor General any information

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3278 or documentation requested in connection with an operational
3279 audit of a scholarship-funding organization conducted pursuant
3280 to s. 11.45.

3281 (o) ~~(t)~~1. Must develop a purchasing handbook that includes
3282 policies for authorized uses of scholarship funds under
3283 paragraph (d) and s. 1002.394(4)(a). The handbook must include,
3284 at a minimum, a routinely updated list of prohibited items and
3285 services, and items or services that require preauthorization or
3286 additional documentation. By August 1, 2024, and by each July 1
3287 thereafter, the purchasing handbook must be provided to the
3288 Commissioner of Education and published on the eligible
3289 nonprofit scholarship-funding organization's website. Any
3290 revisions must be provided to the commissioner and published on
3291 the organization's website within 30 days after such revisions.

3292 2. The organization shall assist the Florida Center for
3293 Students with Unique Abilities established under s. 1004.6495
3294 with the development of purchasing guidelines, which must
3295 include a routinely updated list of prohibited items and
3296 services, and items or services for which preauthorization or
3297 additional documentation is required, for authorized uses of
3298 scholarship funds under s. 1002.394(4)(b) and publish the
3299 guidelines on the organization's website.

3300 3. If the organization fails to submit the purchasing
3301 handbook required by subparagraph 1., the Department of
3302 Education may assess a financial penalty, not to exceed \$10,000,
3303 as prescribed by State Board of Education rule. This
3304 subparagraph expires July 1, 2026.

3305 (p) ~~(u)~~ May permit eligible students to use program funds
3306 for the purposes specified in paragraph (d), as authorized in

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3307 the organization's purchasing handbook, by paying for the
 3308 authorized use directly, then submitting a reimbursement request
 3309 to the eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organization.
 3310 However, an eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organization
 3311 may require the use of an online platform for direct purchases
 3312 of products so long as such use does not limit a parent's choice
 3313 of curriculum or academic programs. If a parent purchases a
 3314 product identical to one offered by an organization's online
 3315 platform for a lower price, the organization shall reimburse the
 3316 parent the cost of the product.

3317 ~~(v) Must notify each parent that participation in the~~
 3318 ~~scholarship program does not guarantee enrollment.~~

3319 ~~(w) Shall commit scholarship funds on behalf of the student~~
 3320 ~~for tuition and fees for which the parent is responsible for~~
 3321 ~~payment at the participating private school before using~~
 3322 ~~scholarship account funds for additional authorized uses under~~
 3323 ~~paragraph (d).~~

3324 ~~(q) (x) Beginning September 30, 2023,~~ Must submit to the
 3325 department quarterly reports that provide the estimated and
 3326 actual amounts of the net eligible contributions, ~~as defined in~~
 3327 ~~subsection (2), and all funds carried forward from the prior~~
 3328 ~~state fiscal year.~~

3329 ~~(r) (y) Must establish a process to collect input and~~
 3330 ~~feedback from parents, private schools, and providers before~~
 3331 ~~implementing substantial modifications or enhancements to the~~
 3332 ~~reimbursement process.~~

3333
 3334 Information and documentation provided to the Department of
 3335 Education and the Auditor General relating to the identity of a

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3336 taxpayer that provides an eligible contribution under this
 3337 section shall remain confidential at all times in accordance
 3338 with s. 213.053.

3339 (7) PARENT AND STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PROGRAM
 3340 PARTICIPATION.-

3341 ~~(a) A parent who applies for a scholarship whose student~~
 3342 ~~will be enrolled full time in an eligible private school must:~~
 3343 ~~1. Select an eligible private school and apply for the~~
 3344 ~~admission of his or her child.~~

3345 ~~2. Request the scholarship by the date established by the~~
 3346 ~~organization in a manner that creates a written or electronic~~
 3347 ~~record of the request and the date of receipt of the request.~~

3348 ~~3.a. Beginning with new applications for the 2025-2026~~
 3349 ~~school year and thereafter, notify the organization by a date~~
 3350 ~~set by the organization that the scholarship is being accepted~~
 3351 ~~or declined.~~

3352 ~~b. Beginning with renewal applications for the 2025-2026~~
 3353 ~~school year and thereafter, notify the organization by May 31~~
 3354 ~~that the scholarship is being renewed or declined.~~

3355 ~~4. Inform the applicable school district when the parent~~
 3356 ~~withdraws his or her student from a public school to attend an~~
 3357 ~~eligible private school.~~

3358 ~~5. Require his or her student participating in the program~~
 3359 ~~to remain in attendance at the eligible private school~~
 3360 ~~throughout the school year unless excused by the school for~~
 3361 ~~illness or other good cause and comply with the private school's~~
 3362 ~~published policies.~~

3363 ~~6. Meet with the eligible private school's principal or the~~
 3364 ~~principal's designee to review the school's academic programs~~

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3365 and policies, specialized services, code of student conduct, and
3366 attendance policies before enrollment.

3367 ~~7. Require his or her student participating in the program~~
3368 ~~to take the norm-referenced assessment offered by the~~
3369 ~~participating private school. The parent may also choose to have~~
3370 ~~the student participate in the statewide assessments pursuant to~~
3371 ~~s. 1008.22. If the parent requests that the student~~
3372 ~~participating in the program take statewide assessments pursuant~~
3373 ~~to s. 1008.22 and the participating private school has not~~
3374 ~~chosen to offer and administer the statewide assessments, the~~
3375 ~~parent is responsible for transporting the student to the~~
3376 ~~assessment site designated by the school district.~~

3377 ~~8. Approve each payment before the scholarship funds may be~~
3378 ~~deposited by funds transfer. The parent may not designate any~~
3379 ~~entity or individual associated with the participating private~~
3380 ~~school as the parent's attorney in fact to approve a funds~~
3381 ~~transfer. A participant who fails to comply with this paragraph~~
3382 ~~forfeits the scholarship.~~

3383 ~~9. Authorize the nonprofit scholarship funding organization~~
3384 ~~to access information needed for income eligibility~~
3385 ~~determination and verification held by other state or federal~~
3386 ~~agencies, including the Department of Revenue, the Department of~~
3387 ~~Children and Families, the Department of Education, the~~
3388 ~~Department of Commerce, and the Agency for Health Care~~
3389 ~~Administration, for students seeking priority eligibility.~~

3390 ~~10. Agree to have the organization commit scholarship funds~~
3391 ~~on behalf of his or her student for tuition and fees for which~~
3392 ~~the parent is responsible for payment at the participating~~
3393 ~~private school before using scholarship account funds for~~

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3394 ~~additional authorized uses under paragraph (6)(d). A parent is~~
3395 ~~responsible for all eligible expenses in excess of the amount of~~
3396 ~~the scholarship.~~

3397 ~~11. Comply with the scholarship application and renewal~~
3398 ~~processes and requirements established by the organization.~~

3399 ~~(b) A parent whose student is participating in the~~
3400 ~~personalized education program and will not be enrolled full~~
3401 ~~time in a public or private school must:~~

3402 ~~1. Apply to an eligible nonprofit scholarship funding~~
3403 ~~organization to participate in the program as a personalized~~
3404 ~~education student by a date set by the organization. The request~~
3405 ~~must be communicated directly to the organization in a manner~~
3406 ~~that creates a written or electronic record of the request and~~
3407 ~~the date of receipt of the request. Beginning with new and~~
3408 ~~renewal applications for the 2025-2026 school year and~~
3409 ~~thereafter, a parent must notify the organization by May 31 that~~
3410 ~~the scholarship is being accepted, renewed, or declined.~~

3411 ~~2. sign an agreement with the organization and annually~~
3412 ~~submit a sworn compliance statement to the organization to~~
3413 ~~satisfy or maintain program eligibility, including eligibility~~
3414 ~~to receive and spend program payments, by:~~

3415 ~~(a) Affirming that the program funds are used only for~~
3416 ~~authorized purposes serving the student's educational needs, as~~
3417 ~~described in paragraph (6)(d), and that they will not receive a~~
3418 ~~payment, refund, or rebate of any funds provided under this~~
3419 ~~section.~~

3420 ~~(b) Affirming that the parent is responsible for all~~
3421 ~~eligible expenses in excess of the amount of the scholarship and~~
3422 ~~for the education of his or her student.~~

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3423 (c)~~e~~- Submitting a student learning plan to the
 3424 organization and revising the plan at least annually before
 3425 program renewal.

3426 (d)~~d~~- Requiring his or her student to take a nationally
 3427 norm-referenced test identified by the Department of Education,
 3428 or a statewide assessment under s. 1008.22, and provide
 3429 assessment results to the organization before the student's
 3430 program renewal.

3431 ~~e~~- e- Complying with the scholarship application and renewal
 3432 processes and requirements established by the organization. A
 3433 student whose participation in the program is not renewed may
 3434 continue to spend scholarship funds that are in his or her
 3435 account from prior years unless the account must be closed
 3436 pursuant to s. 1002.394(5)(a)2.

3437 (e)~~f~~- Procuring the services necessary to educate the
 3438 student. When the student receives a scholarship, the district
 3439 school board is not obligated to provide the student with a free
 3440 appropriate public education.

3441

3442 For purposes of this subsection paragraph, full-time enrollment
 3443 does not include enrollment at a private school that addresses
 3444 regular and direct contact with teachers through the student
 3445 learning plan in accordance with s. 1002.421(1)(i).

3446 ~~(e)~~ A parent may not apply for multiple scholarships under
 3447 this section and s. 1002.394 for an individual student at the
 3448 same time.

3449

3450 An eligible nonprofit scholarship funding organization may not
 3451 further regulate, exercise control over, or require

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3452 ~~documentation beyond the requirements of this subsection unless~~
 3453 ~~the regulation, control, or documentation is necessary for~~
 3454 ~~participation in the program.~~

3455 (8) PRIVATE SCHOOL ELIGIBILITY AND OBLIGATIONS. An eligible
 3456 private school may be sectarian or nonsectarian and must:

3457 ~~(a)~~ (a) Comply with all requirements for private schools
 3458 participating in state school choice scholarship programs
 3459 pursuant to s. 1002.421.

3460 ~~(b)~~ (b) Provide to the organization all documentation required
 3461 for a student's participation, including confirmation of the
 3462 student's admission to the private school, the private school's
 3463 and student's fee schedules, and any other information required
 3464 by the organization to process scholarship payment pursuant to
 3465 paragraph (11)(c). Such information must be provided by the
 3466 deadlines established by the organization and in accordance with
 3467 the requirements of this section. A student is not eligible to
 3468 receive a quarterly scholarship payment if the private school
 3469 fails to meet the deadline.

3470 ~~(c)1.~~ (c)1. Annually administer or make provision for students
 3471 participating in the scholarship program in grades 3 through 10
 3472 to take one of the nationally norm-referenced tests identified
 3473 by the department or the statewide assessments pursuant to s.
 3474 1008.22. Students with disabilities for whom standardized
 3475 testing is not appropriate are exempt from this requirement. A
 3476 participating private school must report a student's scores to
 3477 the parent. A participating private school must annually report
 3478 by August 15 the scores of all participating students to a state
 3479 university described in paragraph (9)(f).

3480 ~~2.~~ 2. Administer the statewide assessments pursuant to s.

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3481 ~~1008.22 if a participating private school chooses to offer the~~
 3482 ~~statewide assessments. A participating private school may choose~~
 3483 ~~to offer and administer the statewide assessments to all~~
 3484 ~~students who attend the participating private school in grades 3~~
 3485 ~~through 10 and must submit a request in writing to the~~
 3486 ~~Department of Education by March 1 of each year in order to~~
 3487 ~~administer the statewide assessments in the subsequent school~~
 3488 ~~year.~~

3490 ~~If a participating private school fails to meet the requirements~~
 3491 ~~of this subsection or s. 1002.421, the commissioner may~~
 3492 ~~determine that the participating private school is ineligible to~~
 3493 ~~participate in the scholarship program.~~

3494 ~~(9)~~ DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION OBLIGATIONS.—The Department of
 3495 Education shall:

3496 (a) Annually submit to the department and division, by
 3497 March 15, a list of eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding
 3498 organizations that meet the requirements of paragraph (2) (f)
 3499 ~~(2) (g)~~.

3500 (b) Annually verify the eligibility of nonprofit
 3501 scholarship-funding organizations that meet the requirements of
 3502 paragraph (2) (f) ~~(2) (g)~~.

3503 (c) Annually verify the eligibility of expenditures as
 3504 provided in paragraph (6) (d) using the audit required by
 3505 paragraph (6) (k) ~~(6) (e)~~.

3506 (d) ~~Notify eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding~~
 3507 ~~organizations of the deadlines for submitting the verified list~~
 3508 ~~of eligible scholarship students; cross-check the verified list~~
 3509 ~~with the public school enrollment lists to avoid duplication;~~

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3510 and, when the Florida Education Finance Program is recalculated,
 3511 adjust the amount of state funds allocated to school districts
 3512 through the Florida Education Finance Program based upon the
 3513 ~~results of the cross-check.~~

3514 ~~(e) Maintain and annually publish a list of nationally~~
 3515 ~~norm-referenced tests identified for purposes of satisfying the~~
 3516 ~~testing requirement in subparagraph (8) (c)1. The tests must meet~~
 3517 ~~industry standards of quality in accordance with State Board of~~
 3518 ~~Education rule.~~

3519 ~~(f) Issue a project grant award to a state university, to~~
 3520 ~~which participating private schools and eligible nonprofit~~
 3521 ~~scholarship-funding organizations must report the scores of~~
 3522 ~~participating students on the nationally norm-referenced tests~~
 3523 ~~or the statewide assessments administered in grades 3 through~~
 3524 ~~10. The project term is 2 years, and the amount of the project~~
 3525 ~~is up to \$250,000 per year. The project grant award must be~~
 3526 ~~reissued in 2-year intervals in accordance with this paragraph.~~

3527 1. The state university must annually report to the
 3528 Department of Education on the student performance of
 3529 participating students and, beginning with the 2027-2028 school
 3530 year, on the performance of personalized education students:

3531 a. On a statewide basis. The report shall also include, to
 3532 the extent possible, a comparison of scholarship students'
 3533 performance to the statewide student performance of public
 3534 school students with socioeconomic backgrounds similar to those
 3535 of students participating in the scholarship program. To
 3536 minimize costs and reduce time required for the state
 3537 university's analysis and evaluation, the Department of
 3538 Education shall coordinate with the state university to provide

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3539 data to the state university in order to conduct analyses of
 3540 matched students from public school assessment data and
 3541 calculate control group student performance using an agreed-upon
 3542 methodology with the state university; and

3543 b. On an individual school basis for students enrolled full
 3544 time in a private school. The annual report must include student
 3545 performance for each participating private school in which
 3546 enrolled students in the private school participated in a
 3547 scholarship program under this section ~~or s. 1002.394(12)(a)~~ in
 3548 the prior school year. The report shall be according to each
 3549 participating private school, and for participating students, in
 3550 which there are at least 30 participating students who have
 3551 scores for tests administered. If the state university
 3552 determines that the 30-participating-student cell size may be
 3553 reduced without disclosing personally identifiable information,
 3554 as described in 34 C.F.R. s. 99.12, of a participating student,
 3555 the state university may reduce the participating-student cell
 3556 size, but the cell size must not be reduced to less than 10
 3557 participating students. The department shall provide each
 3558 participating private school's prior school year's student
 3559 enrollment information to the state university no later than
 3560 June 15 of each year, or as requested by the state university.

3561 2. The sharing and reporting of student performance data
 3562 under this paragraph must be in accordance with requirements of
 3563 ss. 1002.22 and 1002.221 and 20 U.S.C. s. 1232g, the Family
 3564 Educational Rights and Privacy Act, and the applicable rules and
 3565 regulations issued pursuant thereto, and shall be for the sole
 3566 purpose of creating the annual report required by subparagraph
 3567 1. All parties must preserve the confidentiality of such

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3568 information as required by law. The annual report must not
 3569 disaggregate data to a level that will identify individual
 3570 participating schools, except as required under sub-subparagraph
 3571 1.b., or disclose the academic level of individual students.

3572 3. The annual report required by subparagraph 1. shall be
 3573 published by the Department of Education on its website.

3574 ~~(g) Notify an eligible nonprofit scholarship funding~~
 3575 ~~organization of any of the organization's identified students~~
 3576 ~~who are receiving educational scholarships pursuant to this~~
 3577 ~~chapter.~~

3578 ~~(h) Notify an eligible nonprofit scholarship funding~~
 3579 ~~organization of any of the organization's identified students~~
 3580 ~~who are receiving tax credit scholarships from other eligible~~
 3581 ~~nonprofit scholarship funding organizations.~~

3582 ~~(i) Require quarterly reports by an eligible nonprofit~~
 3583 ~~scholarship funding organization regarding the number of~~
 3584 ~~students participating in the program; the private schools at~~
 3585 ~~which the students are enrolled; the number of scholarship~~
 3586 ~~applications received; the number of applications processed~~
 3587 ~~within 30 days after receipt; and the number of incomplete~~
 3588 ~~applications received; data related to reimbursement~~
 3589 ~~submissions, including the average number of days for a~~
 3590 ~~reimbursement to be reviewed and the average number of days for~~
 3591 ~~a reimbursement to be approved; any parent input and feedback~~
 3592 ~~collected regarding the program; and any other information~~
 3593 ~~deemed necessary by the Department of Education.~~

3594 (e)-(j) Provide a process to match the direct certification
 3595 list with the scholarship application data submitted by any
 3596 nonprofit scholarship-funding organization eligible to receive

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3597 the 3-percent administrative allowance under paragraph (6) (i)
 3598 ~~(6) (1)~~.

3599 ~~(f) (k)~~ Notify each school district of the full-time
 3600 equivalent student consensus estimate of scholarship students
 3601 developed pursuant to s. 216.136(4) (a).

3602 ~~(10) SCHOOL DISTRICT OBLIGATIONS; PARENTAL OPTIONS.—~~

3603 ~~(a) Upon the request of any eligible nonprofit scholarship-~~
 3604 ~~funding organization, a school district shall inform all~~
 3605 ~~households within the district receiving free or reduced-priced~~
 3606 ~~meals under the National School Lunch Act of their eligibility~~
 3607 ~~to apply for a tax credit scholarship. The form of such notice~~
 3608 ~~shall be provided by the eligible nonprofit scholarship funding~~
 3609 ~~organization, and the district shall include the provided form,~~
 3610 ~~if requested by the organization, in any normal correspondence~~
 3611 ~~with eligible households. If an eligible nonprofit scholarship-~~
 3612 ~~funding organization requests a special communication to be~~
 3613 ~~issued to households within the district receiving free or~~
 3614 ~~reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch Act, the~~
 3615 ~~organization shall reimburse the district for the cost of~~
 3616 ~~postage. Such notice is limited to once a year.~~

3617 ~~(b) Upon the request of the Department of Education, a~~
 3618 ~~school district shall coordinate with the department to provide~~
 3619 ~~to a participating private school the statewide assessments~~
 3620 ~~administered under s. 1008.22 and any related materials for~~
 3621 ~~administering the assessments. A school district is responsible~~
 3622 ~~for implementing test administrations at a participating private~~
 3623 ~~school, including the:~~

3624 ~~1. Provision of training for participating private school~~
 3625 ~~staff on test security and assessment administration procedures;~~

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3626 ~~2. Distribution of testing materials to a participating~~
 3627 ~~private school;~~

3628 ~~3. Retrieval of testing materials from a participating~~
 3629 ~~private school;~~

3630 ~~4. Provision of the required format for a participating~~
 3631 ~~private school to submit information to the district for test~~
 3632 ~~administration and enrollment purposes; and~~

3633 ~~5. Provision of any required assistance, monitoring, or~~
 3634 ~~investigation at a participating private school.~~

3635 ~~(9) (11) SCHOLARSHIP AMOUNT AND PAYMENT.—~~

3636 (a) The scholarship amount provided to any student for any
 3637 single school year by an eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding
 3638 organization from eligible contributions shall be for total
 3639 costs authorized under paragraph (6) (c) ~~(6) (d)~~, not to exceed
 3640 annual limits, which shall be determined as follows:

3641 ~~1. For a student who received a scholarship in the 2018-~~
 3642 ~~2019 school year, who remains eligible, and who is enrolled in~~
 3643 ~~an eligible private school, the amount shall be the greater~~
 3644 ~~amount calculated pursuant to subparagraph 2. or a percentage of~~
 3645 ~~the unweighted FTE funding amount for the 2018-2019 state fiscal~~
 3646 ~~year and thereafter as follows:~~

3647 ~~a. Eighty-eight percent for a student enrolled in~~
 3648 ~~kindergarten through grade 5.~~

3649 ~~b. Ninety-two percent for a student enrolled in grade 6~~
 3650 ~~through grade 8.~~

3651 ~~c. Ninety-six percent for a student enrolled in grade 9~~
 3652 ~~through grade 12.~~

3653 ~~2. For students initially eligible in the 2019-2020 school~~
 3654 ~~year or thereafter, the calculated amount for a student to~~

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3655 attend an eligible private school shall be calculated in
 3656 accordance with s. 1002.394(12)(a).

3657 ~~(b) Payment of the scholarship by the eligible nonprofit~~
 3658 ~~scholarship funding organization shall be by funds transfer,~~
 3659 ~~including, but not limited to, debit cards, electronic payment~~
 3660 ~~cards, or any other means of payment that the department deems~~
 3661 ~~to be commercially viable or cost-effective. An eligible~~
 3662 ~~nonprofit scholarship funding organization shall ensure that the~~
 3663 ~~parent has approved a funds transfer before any scholarship~~
 3664 ~~funds are deposited.~~

3665 ~~(c) If a scholarship student is attending an eligible~~
 3666 ~~private school full time, the initial payment shall be made~~
 3667 ~~after the organization's verification of admission acceptance,~~
 3668 ~~and subsequent payments shall be made upon verification of~~
 3669 ~~continued enrollment and attendance at the eligible private~~
 3670 ~~school. Payments shall be made within 7 business days after~~
 3671 ~~approval by the parent pursuant to paragraph (7)(a) and the~~
 3672 ~~private school pursuant to paragraph (8)(b).~~

3673 ~~(d) Payment of the scholarship shall be made by the~~
 3674 ~~eligible nonprofit scholarship funding organization no less~~
 3675 ~~frequently than on a quarterly basis.~~

3676 ~~(e) An eligible nonprofit scholarship funding organization~~
 3677 ~~may not transfer any funds to an account of a student determined~~
 3678 ~~eligible under this section which has a balance in excess of~~
 3679 ~~\$24,000.~~

3680 (b)(f) A scholarship awarded to an eligible student shall
 3681 remain in force until:

3682 1. The organization determines that the student is not
 3683 eligible for program renewal;

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3684 2. The Commissioner of Education suspends or revokes
 3685 program participation or use of funds;

3686 3. The student's parent has forfeited participation in the
 3687 program for failure to comply with subsection (7);

3688 4. The student who uses the scholarship for full-time
 3689 tuition and fees at an eligible private school ~~pursuant to~~
 3690 ~~paragraph (7)(a)~~ enrolls full time in a public school. However,
 3691 if a student enters a Department of Juvenile Justice detention
 3692 center for a period of no more than 21 days, the student is not
 3693 considered to have returned to a public school on a full-time
 3694 basis for that purpose; or

3695 5. The student graduates from high school or attains 21
 3696 years of age, whichever occurs first.

3697 ~~(g) Reimbursements for program expenditures may continue~~
 3698 ~~until the account balance is expended or remaining funds have~~
 3699 ~~reverted to the state.~~

3700 (c)(h) A student's scholarship account must be closed and
 3701 any remaining funds shall revert to the state after:

3702 1. Denial or revocation of program eligibility by the
 3703 commissioner for fraud or abuse, including, but not limited to,
 3704 the student or student's parent accepting any payment, refund,
 3705 or rebate, in any manner, from a provider of any services
 3706 received pursuant to paragraph (6)(d);

3707 2. One fiscal year ~~Two consecutive fiscal years~~ in which an
 3708 account has been inactive; ~~or~~

3709 3. The student remains unenrolled in an eligible private
 3710 school for 30 days while receiving a scholarship that requires
 3711 full-time enrollment;

3712 4. A student's scholarship no longer remains in force due

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3713 to any of the reasons provided in paragraph (b).

3714

3715 An organization must report to the Department of Education the
3716 total number of scholarship accounts that were closed pursuant
3717 to this paragraph and the amount of funds by account that
3718 reverted to the state.

3719 ~~(d)(i)~~ Moneys received pursuant to this section do not
3720 constitute taxable income to the qualified student or the parent
3721 of the qualified student.

3722 ~~(13)(15)~~ NONPROFIT SCHOLARSHIP-FUNDING ORGANIZATIONS;
3723 APPLICATION.—In order to participate in the scholarship program
3724 created under this section, a charitable organization that seeks
3725 to be a nonprofit scholarship-funding organization must submit
3726 an application for initial approval or renewal to the Office of
3727 Independent Education and Parental Choice. Charitable
3728 organizations may apply at any time to participate in the
3729 program.

3730 (e) If the State Board of Education disapproves the renewal
3731 of a nonprofit scholarship-funding organization, the
3732 organization must notify the affected eligible students and
3733 parents of the decision within 15 days after disapproval. An
3734 eligible student affected by the disapproval of an
3735 organization's participation remains eligible under this section
3736 until the end of the school year in which the organization was
3737 disapproved. The student must apply and be accepted by another
3738 eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organization for the
3739 upcoming school year. The student shall be given priority in
3740 accordance with s. 1002.421(2)(d)3. paragraph (6)(g).

3741 Section 9. Paragraph (b) of subsection (2) and paragraph

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3742 (1) of subsection (4) of section 1003.485, Florida Statutes, are
3743 amended to read:

3744 1003.485 The New Worlds Reading Initiative.—

3745 (2) NEW WORLDS READING INITIATIVE; PURPOSE.—The purpose of
3746 the New Worlds Reading Initiative established under the
3747 department is to instill a love of reading by providing high-
3748 quality, free books to students in prekindergarten through grade
3749 5 who are reading below grade level and to improve the literacy
3750 skills of students in prekindergarten through grade 12. The New
3751 Worlds Reading Initiative shall consist of:

3752 ~~(b) The New Worlds Scholarship Program under s. 1002.411.~~

3753 (4) ADMINISTRATOR RESPONSIBILITIES.—The administrator
3754 shall:

3755 (1) Expend eligible contributions received only for the
3756 purchase and delivery of books and to implement the requirements
3757 of this section, as well as for administrative expenses not to
3758 exceed 2 percent of total eligible contributions.

3759 Notwithstanding s. 1002.395(6)(i)3. s. 1002.395(6)(i)3., the
3760 administrator may carry forward up to 25 percent of eligible
3761 contributions made before January 1 of each state fiscal year
3762 and 100 percent of eligible contributions made on or after
3763 January 1 of each state fiscal year to the following state
3764 fiscal year for purposes authorized by this subsection. Any
3765 eligible contributions in excess of the allowable carry forward
3766 not used to provide additional books throughout the year to
3767 eligible students shall revert to the state treasury.

3768 Section 10. Paragraph (d) of subsection (5) of section
3769 1008.25, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

3770 1008.25 Public school student progression; student support;

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3771 coordinated screening and progress monitoring; reporting
3772 requirements.—

3773 (5) READING DEFICIENCY AND PARENTAL NOTIFICATION.—

3774 (d) The parent of any student who exhibits a substantial
3775 deficiency in reading, as described in paragraph (a), must be
3776 immediately notified in writing of the following:

3777 1. That his or her child has been identified as having a
3778 substantial deficiency in reading, including a description and
3779 explanation, in terms understandable to the parent, of the exact
3780 nature of the student's difficulty in learning and lack of
3781 achievement in reading.

3782 2. A description of the current services that are provided
3783 to the child.

3784 3. A description of the proposed intensive interventions
3785 and supports that will be provided to the child that are
3786 designed to remediate the identified area of reading deficiency.

3787 4. The student progression requirements under paragraph
3788 (2) (h) and that if the child's reading deficiency is not
3789 remediated by the end of grade 3, the child must be retained
3790 unless he or she is exempt from mandatory retention for good
3791 cause.

3792 5. Strategies, including multisensory strategies and
3793 programming, through a read-at-home plan the parent can use in
3794 helping his or her child succeed in reading. The read-at-home
3795 plan must provide access to the resources identified in
3796 paragraph (e).

3797 6. That the statewide, standardized English Language Arts
3798 assessment is not the sole determiner of promotion and that
3799 additional evaluations, portfolio reviews, and assessments are

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3800 available to the child to assist parents and the school district
3801 in knowing when a child is reading at or above grade level and
3802 ready for grade promotion.

3803 7. The district's specific criteria and policies for a
3804 portfolio as provided in subparagraph (7) (b) 4. and the evidence
3805 required for a student to demonstrate mastery of Florida's
3806 academic standards for English Language Arts. A school must
3807 immediately begin collecting evidence for a portfolio when a
3808 student in grade 3 is identified as being at risk of retention
3809 or upon the request of the parent, whichever occurs first.

3810 8. The district's specific criteria and policies for
3811 midyear promotion. Midyear promotion means promotion of a
3812 retained student at any time during the year of retention once
3813 the student has demonstrated ability to read at grade level.

3814 9. Information about the student's eligibility for the New
3815 Worlds Reading Initiative under s. 1003.485 ~~and the New Worlds~~
3816 ~~Scholarship Accounts under s. 1002.411~~ and information on parent
3817 training modules and other reading engagement resources
3818 available through the initiative.

3819
3820 After initial notification, the school shall apprise the parent
3821 at least monthly of the student's progress in response to the
3822 intensive interventions and supports. Such communications must
3823 be in writing and must explain any additional interventions or
3824 supports that will be implemented to accelerate the student's
3825 progress if the interventions and supports already being
3826 implemented have not resulted in improvement. Upon the request
3827 of the parent, the teacher or school administrator shall meet to
3828 discuss the student's progress. The parent may request more

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3829 frequent notification of the student's progress, more frequent
 3830 interventions or supports, and earlier implementation of the
 3831 additional interventions or supports described in the initial
 3832 notification.

3833 Section 11. Section 1010.305, Florida Statutes, is amended
 3834 to read:

3835 1010.305 Audit of student enrollment.—

3836 (1) The Auditor General shall periodically examine the
 3837 records of school districts, eligible nonprofit scholarship-
 3838 funding organizations as defined in s. 1002.421, and other
 3839 agencies as appropriate, to determine compliance with law and
 3840 State Board of Education rules relating to the classification,
 3841 assignment, and verification of full-time equivalent student
 3842 enrollment and student transportation reported under the Florida
 3843 Education Finance Program.

3844 (2) If it is determined that the approved criteria and
 3845 procedures for the placement of students and the conduct of
 3846 programs have not been followed by the district or eligible
 3847 nonprofit scholarship-funding organization, appropriate
 3848 adjustments in the full-time equivalent student count for that
 3849 district or eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organization
 3850 must be made, and any excess funds must be deducted from
 3851 subsequent allocations of state funds to that district or
 3852 eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organization. As provided
 3853 for by rule, if errors in a specific program of a district or
 3854 eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organization recur in
 3855 consecutive years due to lack of corrective action by the
 3856 district or eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organization,
 3857 adjustments may be made based upon statistical estimates of

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3858 error projected to the overall district or scholarship program.

3859 Section 12. Subsection (5) of section 1011.61, Florida
 3860 Statutes, is amended to read:

3861 1011.61 Definitions.—Notwithstanding the provisions of s.
 3862 1000.21, the following terms are defined as follows for the
 3863 purposes of the Florida Education Finance Program:

3864 (5) The "Florida Education Finance Program" includes all
 3865 programs and costs as provided in ss. 1003.03, 1011.62, 1011.68,
 3866 ~~and 1011.685, and 1011.687.~~

3867 Section 13. Paragraph (a) of subsection (15) and
 3868 subsections (16) and (18) of section 1011.62, Florida Statutes,
 3869 are amended to read:

3870 1011.62 Funds for operation of schools.—If the annual
 3871 allocation from the Florida Education Finance Program to each
 3872 district for operation of schools is not determined in the
 3873 annual appropriations act or the substantive bill implementing
 3874 the annual appropriations act, it shall be determined as
 3875 follows:

3876 (15) TOTAL ALLOCATION OF STATE FUNDS TO EACH DISTRICT FOR
 3877 CURRENT OPERATION.—The total annual state allocation to each
 3878 district for current operation for the Florida Education Finance
 3879 Program shall be distributed periodically in the manner
 3880 prescribed in the General Appropriations Act.

3881 (a) If the funds appropriated for current operation of the
 3882 Florida Education Finance Program, ~~including funds appropriated~~
 3883 ~~pursuant to subsection (18),~~ are not sufficient to pay the state
 3884 requirement in full, the department shall prorate the available
 3885 state funds to each district in the following manner:

3886 1. Determine the percentage of proration by dividing the

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3887 sum of the total amount for current operation, as provided in
 3888 this paragraph for all districts collectively, and the total
 3889 district required local effort into the sum of the state funds
 3890 available for current operation and the total district required
 3891 local effort.

3892 2. Multiply the percentage so determined by the sum of the
 3893 total amount for current operation as provided in this paragraph
 3894 and the required local effort for each individual district.

3895 3. From the product of such multiplication, subtract the
 3896 required local effort of each district; and the remainder shall
 3897 be the amount of state funds allocated to the district for
 3898 current operation. However, no calculation subsequent to the
 3899 appropriation shall result in negative state funds for any
 3900 district.

3901 ~~(16) STATE FUNDED DISCRETIONARY SUPPLEMENT.~~

3902 ~~(a) The state-funded discretionary supplement is created to~~
 3903 ~~fund the nonvoted discretionary millage for operations pursuant~~
 3904 ~~to s. 1011.71(1) and (3) for students awarded a Family~~
 3905 ~~Empowerment Scholarship in accordance with s. 1002.394. To~~
 3906 ~~calculate the state-funded discretionary supplement for~~
 3907 ~~inclusion in the amount of the scholarship funding.~~

3908 ~~1. For fiscal year 2023-2024, multiply the maximum~~
 3909 ~~allowable nonvoted discretionary millage for operations pursuant~~
 3910 ~~to s. 1011.71(1) and (3) by the value of 96 percent of the~~
 3911 ~~current year's taxable value for school purposes for the school~~
 3912 ~~district where the student is reported for purposes of the~~
 3913 ~~Florida Education Finance Program as appropriated in the General~~
 3914 ~~Appropriations Act; divide the result by the school district's~~
 3915 ~~total unweighted full-time equivalent membership as appropriated~~

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3916 ~~in the General Appropriations Act; and multiply the result by~~
 3917 ~~the total unweighted full-time equivalent membership associated~~
 3918 ~~with the number of Family Empowerment Scholarship students~~
 3919 ~~included in the school district's total unweighted full-time~~
 3920 ~~equivalent membership. A base amount as specified in the General~~
 3921 ~~Appropriations Act shall be added to this amount for purposes of~~
 3922 ~~calculating the total amount of the supplement.~~

3923 ~~2. Beginning in fiscal year 2024-2025 and thereafter,~~
 3924 ~~multiply the maximum allowable nonvoted discretionary millage~~
 3925 ~~for operations pursuant to s. 1011.71(1) and (3) by the value of~~
 3926 ~~96 percent of the current year's taxable value for school~~
 3927 ~~purposes for the school district where the student is reported~~
 3928 ~~for purposes of the Florida Education Finance Program as~~
 3929 ~~appropriated in the General Appropriations Act; divide the~~
 3930 ~~result by the school district's total unweighted full-time~~
 3931 ~~equivalent membership as appropriated in the General~~
 3932 ~~Appropriations Act; and multiply the result by the total~~
 3933 ~~unweighted full-time equivalent membership associated with the~~
 3934 ~~number of Family Empowerment Scholarship students. The prior~~
 3935 ~~year's base amount shall be adjusted based on changes in the~~
 3936 ~~eligible number of unweighted full-time equivalent membership~~
 3937 ~~associated with the number of Family Empowerment Scholarship~~
 3938 ~~students.~~

3939 ~~(b) The state-funded discretionary supplement shall be~~
 3940 ~~recalculated during the fiscal year pursuant to paragraph~~
 3941 ~~(1)(a). If the recalculated amount is greater than the amount~~
 3942 ~~provided in the General Appropriations Act, the allocation shall~~
 3943 ~~be prorated to the level provided to support the appropriation,~~
 3944 ~~based on each school district's proportionate share of the total~~

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3945 allocation.

3946 ~~(18) EDUCATIONAL ENROLLMENT STABILIZATION PROGRAM.--~~

3947 ~~(a) The educational enrollment stabilization program is~~
 3948 ~~created to provide supplemental state funds as needed to~~
 3949 ~~maintain the stability of the operations of public schools in~~
 3950 ~~each school district and to protect districts, including charter~~
 3951 ~~schools, from financial instability as a result of changes in~~
 3952 ~~full-time equivalent student enrollment throughout the school~~
 3953 ~~year.--~~

3954 ~~(b) The Legislature shall annually appropriate funds in the~~
 3955 ~~General Appropriations Act to the Department of Education for~~
 3956 ~~this program in an amount necessary to maintain a projected~~
 3957 ~~minimum balance of \$250 million at the beginning of the upcoming~~
 3958 ~~fiscal year. The Department of Education shall use funds as~~
 3959 ~~appropriated to ensure that based on each recalculation of the~~
 3960 ~~Florida Education Finance Program pursuant to paragraph (1)(a),~~
 3961 ~~a school district's funds per unweighted full-time equivalent~~
 3962 ~~student are not less than the greater of either the school~~
 3963 ~~district's funds per unweighted full-time equivalent student as~~
 3964 ~~appropriated in the General Appropriations Act or the school~~
 3965 ~~district's funds per unweighted full-time equivalent student as~~
 3966 ~~recalculated based upon the receipt of the certified taxable~~
 3967 ~~value for school purposes pursuant to s. 1011.62(4).--~~

3968 ~~(c) Notwithstanding s. 216.301 and pursuant to s. 216.351,~~
 3969 ~~the unexpended balance of funds appropriated pursuant to this~~
 3970 ~~subsection which is not disbursed by June 30 of the fiscal year~~
 3971 ~~in which the funds are appropriated may be carried forward for~~
 3972 ~~up to 10 years after the effective date of the original~~
 3973 ~~appropriation.--~~

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3974 Section 14. Paragraph (1) of subsection (2) of section
 3975 11.45, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

3976 11.45 Definitions; duties; authorities; reports; rules.--

3977 (2) DUTIES.--The Auditor General shall:

3978 (1) At least once every 3 years, conduct operational audits
 3979 of the accounts and records of eligible nonprofit scholarship-
 3980 funding organizations receiving eligible contributions under s.
 3981 1002.395, including any contracts for services with related
 3982 entities, to determine compliance with the provisions of that
 3983 section. Such audits shall include, but not be limited to, a
 3984 determination of the eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding
 3985 organization's compliance with s. 1002.395(6)(i) ~~s.~~
 3986 ~~1002.395(6)(1)~~. The Auditor General shall provide its report on
 3987 the results of the audits to the Governor, the President of the
 3988 Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Chief
 3989 Financial Officer, and the Legislative Auditing Committee,
 3990 within 30 days of completion of the audit.

3991 The Auditor General shall perform his or her duties
 3992 independently but under the general policies established by the
 3993 Legislative Auditing Committee. This subsection does not limit
 3994 the Auditor General's discretionary authority to conduct other
 3995 audits or engagements of governmental entities as authorized in
 3996 subsection (3).

3998 Section 15. Paragraph (c) of subsection (7) of section
 3999 212.099, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

4000 212.099 Credit for contributions to eligible nonprofit
 4001 scholarship-funding organizations.--

4002 (7)

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4003 (c) The organization may, subject to the limitations of s.
4004 1002.395(6)(i)1. ~~s. 1002.395(6)(i)1.~~, use eligible contributions
4005 received during the state fiscal year in which such
4006 contributions are collected for administrative expenses.

4007 Section 16. Paragraph (b) of subsection (6) of section
4008 1002.45, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

4009 1002.45 Virtual instruction programs.—

4010 (6) VIRTUAL INSTRUCTION PROGRAM AND VIRTUAL CHARTER SCHOOL
4011 FUNDING.—

4012 (b) Students enrolled in a virtual instruction program
4013 shall be funded in the Florida Education Finance Program as
4014 provided in the General Appropriations Act. The calculation to
4015 determine the amount of funds for each student through the
4016 Florida Education Finance Program shall include the sum of the
4017 basic amount for current operations established in s.
4018 1011.62(1)(s) and all categorical programs except for the
4019 categorical programs established in ss. 1011.62(7) ~~and~~ (12),
4020 ~~and (16)~~, 1011.68, and 1011.685. Students residing outside of
4021 the school district reporting the full-time equivalent virtual
4022 student shall be funded from state funds only.

4023 Section 17. This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.

Gray, Heather

From: Gray, Heather
Sent: Monday, March 24, 2025 12:05 PM
To: Gray, Heather
Subject: Step Up for Students 24-25 Application Numbers

Benjamin Palazesi

The Florida Senate Committees on
Education Pre-K – 12 and Education Postsecondary
415 Knott Building
404 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100
Phone: (850) 487-5403
E-mail: Palazesi.Ben@flsenate.gov

From: Alexis Laroe <alaroe@sufs.org>
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 1:27 PM
To: Palazesi, Ben <PALAZESI.BEN@flsenate.gov>
Subject: RE: Step Up for Students 24-25 Application Numbers

I have a ticket submitted for the Hope information. Funded information is below.

24-25 Funded

FTC	FES-EO	PEP	UA	Total Students Funded
54,356	265,522	58,943	115,417	494,238

Gray, Heather

From: Elwell, Tim
Sent: Monday, February 10, 2025 1:28 PM
To: Bouck, Matthew; Palazes, Ben; Fountain, Amanda; Grace, Jessica; Gray, Heather; Underhill, Brian; Washington, Karl
Subject: FW: New Worlds

From: Alexis Laroe <alaroe@sufs.org>
Sent: Monday, February 10, 2025 12:52 PM
To: Elwell, Tim <Tim.Elwell@LASPBS.STATE.FL.US>
Subject: New Worlds

Please see below.

NEW WORLDS SCHOLARSHIP ACCOUNTS

- 24-25 Total Funded Dollar Value: \$29,287,200
- 24-25 Spending Categories: **Awaiting Data**
- 23-24 Spending Categories:
 - 9,347 students: Instructional Materials- Curriculum/Course (learning software programs like Tune into Reading and Readability that students can complete at their own pace. There are math ones available too)
 - 3,485 students: Part-time Tutoring
 - 355 students: After school/summer programs
- 23-24 Funded Students Count: 31,764
 - 2,045 students spent all funds
 - 9,451 students spent partial funds
 - 20,268 students didn't spend in 23-24

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: The communication, including attachments, is confidential, may contain legally privileged information, and is intended for the sole benefit of the addressee. If the reader is not the intended recipient of this communication, any use, duplication, dissemination, distribution, or copying of this communication is prohibited. If you received this communication in error, please reply to the sender notifying the sender of this error and delete or destroy this communication immediately.

3/26/25

Meeting Date

The Florida Senate APPEARANCE RECORD

Deliver both copies of this form to
Senate professional staff conducting the meeting

7030

Bill Number or Topic

Committee

Amendment Barcode (if applicable)

Name

Steve Hicks

Phone

813-695-1949

Address

29359 Grass Bunker Dr.

Email

Street

SAN ANTONIO FL

33576

City

State

Zip

Speaking:

For

Against

Information

OR

Waive Speaking:

In Support

Against

PLEASE CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:



I am appearing without
compensation or sponsorship.



I am a registered lobbyist,
representing:



I am not a lobbyist, but received
something of value for my appearance
(travel, meals, lodging, etc.),
sponsored by:

While it is a tradition to encourage public testimony, time may not permit all persons wishing to speak to be heard at this hearing. Those who do speak may be asked to limit their remarks so that as many persons as possible can be heard. If you have questions about registering to lobby please see Fla. Stat. §11.045 and Joint Rule 1. [2020-2022 Joint Rules.pdf flsenate.gov](#)

This form is part of the public record for this meeting.

S-001 (08/10/2021)

3/26/25

Meeting Date

Appropriations Committee on PreK-12 Education

Committee

Name **David Sikes**

Phone

Address **208 S. Monroe St**

Email

Street

Tallahassee

FL

32301

City

State

Zip

The Florida Senate

APPEARANCE RECORD

Deliver both copies of this form to
Senate professional staff conducting the meeting

SPB 7030

Bill Number or Topic

Amendment Barcode (if applicable)

Speaking: For Against Information **OR** Waive Speaking: In Support Against

PLEASE CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

I am appearing without compensation or sponsorship.

I am a registered lobbyist, representing:

Florida Association of District School Superintendents

I am not a lobbyist, but received something of value for my appearance (travel, meals, lodging, etc.), sponsored by:

While it is a tradition to encourage public testimony, time may not permit all persons wishing to speak to be heard at this hearing. Those who do speak may be asked to limit their remarks so that as many persons as possible can be heard. If you have questions about registering to lobby please see Fla. Stat. §11.045 and Joint Rule 1. [2020-2022JointRules.pdf](#) ([flsenate.gov](#))

This form is part of the public record for this meeting.

S-001 (08/10/2021)

District Office
1380 Sarno Road
Suite C
Melbourne, FL 32935
(321) 409-2025

District Aide
Nancy Bernier
Bernier.Nancy@flsenate.gov

Legislative Aide
Tommy Unger
Unger.Thomas@flsenate.gov



Tallahassee Office:
302 SOB
404 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300
(850) 487-5019
Fine.Randy@flsenate.gov

Legislative Aide
Anna Budko
Budko.Anna@flsenate.gov

Randy Fine
Florida Senate
Senator, District 19

March 25, 2025

The Honorable Danny Burgess
Chairman of Appropriations Committee on Pre-K - 12 Education,
201 The Capitol
404 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100

Dear Chairman Burgess,

I respectfully request an excused absence from the Appropriations Committee on Pre-K - 12 Education meeting on March 26th, 2025.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request.

cc:
Staff Director Tim Elwell
Committee Administrative Assistant Amanda Fountain

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Randy A. Fine".

Randy Fine
State Senator, District 19

Governmental Oversight and Accountability, Chair
Community Affairs, Vice Chair
Joint Select Committee on Collective Bargaining, Alternating Chair
Appropriations -- Regulated Industries
Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment, and General Government
Appropriations Committee on Pre-K - 12 Education -- Education Postsecondary
Brevard County Delegation

CourtSmart Tag Report

Room: SB 37

Case No.:

Type:

Caption: Senate Appropriations Committee on Pre-K - 12 Education

Judge:

Started: 3/26/2025 1:01:38 PM

Ends: 3/26/2025 2:37:26 PM

Length: 01:35:49

1:01:42 PM	Sen. Burgess (Chair)
1:02:38 PM	TAB 1 - Review and Discussion of Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget Issues Relating to Dept. of Education
1:06:49 PM	TAB 3 - CS/SB 1402
1:07:13 PM	Sen. Yarborough
1:07:29 PM	Sen. Burgess
1:07:33 PM	Sen. Yarborough
1:07:41 PM	Sen. Burgess
1:07:54 PM	Sen. Yarborough
1:07:59 PM	Sen. Burgess
1:09:01 PM	TAB 4 - SPB 7030
1:09:14 PM	Sen. Gaetz
1:31:02 PM	Sen. Burgess
1:31:57 PM	Sen. Yarborough
1:32:56 PM	Sen. Gaetz
1:33:41 PM	Sen. Yarborough
1:34:08 PM	Sen. Gaetz
1:34:15 PM	Sen. Yarborough
1:34:19 PM	Sen. Pizzo
1:34:56 PM	Sen. Gaetz
1:35:33 PM	Sen. Jones
1:36:30 PM	Sen. Gaetz
1:37:23 PM	Sen. Jones
1:37:42 PM	Sen. Gaetz
1:38:49 PM	Sen. Jones
1:39:09 PM	Sen. Gaetz
1:39:52 PM	Sen. Simon
1:40:10 PM	Sen. Gaetz
1:40:11 PM	Sen. Simon
1:40:26 PM	Sen. Gaetz
1:41:18 PM	Sen. Burgess
1:42:09 PM	Sen. Simon
1:42:25 PM	Sen. Gaetz
1:43:10 PM	Sen. Osgood
1:43:32 PM	Sen. Gaetz
1:44:02 PM	Sen. Osgood
1:44:35 PM	Sen. Gaetz
1:45:13 PM	Sen. Osgood
1:46:10 PM	Sen. Gaetz
1:47:02 PM	Sen. Osgood
1:47:45 PM	Sen. Gaetz
1:49:06 PM	Sen. Osgood
1:49:37 PM	Sen. Gaetz
1:50:09 PM	Sen. Osgood
1:50:13 PM	Sen. Gaetz
1:50:18 PM	Sen. Burgess
1:50:30 PM	Sen. Gaetz
1:50:34 PM	Sen. Jones
1:51:29 PM	Sen. Gaetz
1:52:05 PM	Sen. Jones
1:52:36 PM	Sen. Gaetz
1:53:37 PM	Sen. Burgess
1:53:57 PM	Sen. Gaetz

1:53:59 PM	Sen. Burgess
1:54:02 PM	Sen. Bradley
1:55:05 PM	Sen. Gaetz
1:55:25 PM	Sen. Bradley
1:55:29 PM	Sen. Burgess
1:55:47 PM	Sen. Osgood
1:56:07 PM	Sen. Burgess
1:56:16 PM	Sen. Gaetz
1:56:20 PM	Sen. Burgess
1:56:52 PM	Steve Hicks
2:01:32 PM	Sen. Burgess
2:02:02 PM	S. Hicks
2:02:14 PM	Sen. Burgess
2:02:30 PM	Sen. Jones
2:03:39 PM	Sen. Simon
2:05:31 PM	Sen. Burgess
2:05:33 PM	Sen. Yarborough
2:08:46 PM	Sen. Pizzo
2:11:08 PM	Sen. Burgess
2:11:10 PM	Sen. Osgood
2:16:16 PM	Sen. Burgess
2:20:39 PM	Sen. Gaetz
2:27:06 PM	Sen. Burgess
2:28:07 PM	Sen. Pizzo (Chair)
2:28:11 PM	TAB 2 - SB 508
2:28:23 PM	Sen. Jones
2:29:24 PM	Sen. Pizzo
2:29:47 PM	Sen. Jones
2:30:23 PM	Sen. Pizzo
2:30:30 PM	Sen. Jones
2:30:32 PM	Sen. Pizzo
2:31:22 PM	Crystal Etienne
2:32:07 PM	Sen. Pizzo
2:32:11 PM	S. Hicks
2:34:44 PM	Sen. Pizzo
2:34:52 PM	Sen. Jones
2:36:32 PM	Sen. Pizzo
2:37:05 PM	Sen. Jones
2:37:09 PM	Sen. Pizzo