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Florida Department of Education
Your Child • Your Choice
IMPROVE K-12 EDUCATIONAL CHOICE OPTIONS

MEMORANDUM

TO: School District Superintendents

FROM: Mike Kooi, Executive Director
Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice
Pam Stewart, Chancellor of Public Schools
Division of Public Schools

DATE: April 15, 2013

SUBJECT: Opportunity Scholarship Program-Parental Notifications

Contact Information

Rachel Somers

850-245-0502

Rachel.Somers@fldoe.org

DPS: 2013-42

During the 2012 legislative session, the Florida legislature passed and Governor Scott signed House Bill 7127, an act relating to school improvement and accountability. Within that bill, the definition of school eligibility as related to the Opportunity Scholarship Program (OSP) was amended to include those schools earning a grade of "F" or three consecutive "Ds" as based on the statewide assessments conducted pursuant to Section 1008.22, Florida Statutes (F.S.). Current statutes require districts to offer the parents of affected students the option to enroll their student(s) in a higher performing public school (receiving a performance grade of "C" or better) in their district **with** transportation or in any other district in the state **without** transportation.

Subsequent to the December 2012 release of the 2011-12 high school grades, the Florida Department of Education has determined that one or more public schools in your school district has been designated as having received a performance grade category "F" or three consecutive "Ds."

Further, the OSP statute and corresponding Rule 6A-6.0950, Florida Administrative Code, requires the school district to timely notify parents of their OSP options as soon as the eligibility designation is made. As provided by statute as well as the new rule referenced herein, parents of students currently assigned to the school(s) must be notified of the transfer options within **15 days of notification** by the Florida Department of Education.

MICHAEL D. KOOL, ESQ.

Executive Director

Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice

To comply, your district must provide the parents of students who currently attend the school(s) or are assigned to attend such school(s) in the 2013-2014 school year the option to enroll their child(ren) in a higher performing public school in your district (with transportation) or in any other district in the state (without transportation). Additionally, if your school is considered an ESE Center School, please be advised that Dr. Monica Verra-Tirado has reached out to personnel at the school and district level as it relates to both your school improvement plan(s) and the OSP requirements.

We have attached a sample parent notification letter that **may** be used as a template, if you choose. The notifications should be made to families no later than April 30, 2013. Your district will then be required to complete a *Notification Verification Form* after the notifications have been sent and parents have been given an opportunity to respond; therefore, **it is important to document and monitor the total number of transfer requests and placements**. The rule states that failure of the district to meet the deadline requirements in this rule will result in a withholding of Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) funds as follows:

- (a) The department will withhold FEFP funds based on the total Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) of the eligible school from the next available FEFP distribution to the district.
- (b) Subsequent distributions of the FEFP will continue to be withheld, until the district has fulfilled the requirements of subsections (3) and (4) of this rule.

In order to ensure compliance with this requirement, please submit the completed *Notification Verification Form* no later than May 30, 2013, to Rachel Somers in the Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice. She may be reached via email at Rachel.Somers@fldoe.org or by phone at 850-245-0866.

Thank you for assisting us with the important task of communicating to parents about the educational options for Florida's students.

cc: Monica Verra-Tirado
Mari Presley
Charlie Hood
Mark Eggers

Attachments