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MEMORANDUM

TO: School District Superintendents

FROM: Jacob Oliva, Chancellor
Division of Public Schools

Dr. Dakeyan Graham, Executive Director
Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice

DATE: August 28, 2020

SUBJECT: **Changes to the Hope Scholarship Program Notification Form**

The Florida Department of Education continues to work toward improving the quality of educational options for Florida students. Public school districts share in the important task of communicating to parents the school choice options that are available.

Section 1002.40, Florida Statutes (F.S.), was established during the 2018 legislative session and provides the parent of a public school student who was subjected to an incident of bullying or violence (a complete list of incidents is found in section 1002.40(3), F.S.), an opportunity to transfer to another public school, or request a scholarship for the student to enroll in and attend a participating private school. The law states in part, “Upon receipt of a report 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 as required by s. 1006.09(6). Within 24 hours after receipt of the report, the principal or his or her 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 was reported, whichever occurs first, the school district shall notify the parent of the program and offer the parent an opportunity to enroll his or her student in another public school that has capacity or to request and receive a scholarship to attend an eligible private school, subject to available funding.”

On July 15, 2020, State Board of Education members adopted an amendment to State Board of Education Rule 6A-6.0951, Florida Administrative Code, related to the Hope Scholarship. This amendment makes adjustments to the Hope Scholarship Notification Form and requires districts to report the number of Hope Scholarship Notification Forms provided to parents for each substantiated and unsubstantiated incident reported. Please share the attached, updated rule and form with your teachers and administrators.

Contact Information:

Kate Goff
850-245-0502
Kate.Goff@fldoe.org
DPS: 2020-106

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Parents who wish to request their child attend another public school should work directly with their school district.

Parents who choose the private school option may apply for the Hope Scholarship by using the updated Hope Notification Form and going to the Step Up For Students website at <https://www.stepupforstudents.org/for-parents/hope/how-the-scholarship-works/>. Parents who have additional questions may reference the letter included at the end of this document, email hope@sufs.org or call 877-735-7837.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have questions related to this requirement, please contact Kate Goff. She can be reached by email at Kate.Goff@fldoe.org or by telephone at 850-245-0502.

JO/DG

Attachments

6A-6.0951 The Hope Scholarship Program.

(1) Eligibility of nonprofit scholarship-funding organizations. A nonprofit scholarship-funding organization (SFO) that is approved pursuant to Section 1002.395, F.S., may establish Hope Scholarships for eligible students.

(2) Eligibility of private schools. A private school is eligible to participate in the Hope Scholarship Program if it complies with all requirements for private schools participating in state school choice scholarship programs pursuant to Sections 1002.40, and 1002.421, F.S., and State Board of Education Rule 6A-6.03315, F.A.C.

(3) Parent notification requirements. Pursuant to the requirements of Section 1002.40(6), F.S., a school district must timely notify a parent of the Hope Scholarship program and provide the parent a completed Hope Scholarship Notification Form (Form IEPC-HS1), available on the Department's website, www.floridaschoolchoice.org. Form IEPC-HS1 (<http://www.flrules.org/Gateway/reference.asp?No=Ref-12106>) is hereby incorporated by reference, effective August 2020.

(4) Hope Scholarship application procedure. To receive a Hope Scholarship a parent must apply to an eligible and participating SFO according to the SFO's application procedures and deadlines. The application submitted by a parent must include, at a minimum, the following information:

(a) Student's name, student's Florida Education Identifier (FLEID), date of birth, gender, race, current public school district, current public school attended, grade level, parent's name, telephone number, mailing address and email address.

(b) A completed Form IEPC-HS1 must be included with the application and submitted to the scholarship funding organization to which the application is made.

(5) The nonprofit scholarship-funding organization shall confirm eligibility for each student and award all scholarships consistent with the requirements of Section 1002.40, F.S. The process used to confirm the eligibility of students and award scholarships is subject to the annual financial and compliance audit required by law.

(6) Public school Hope Scholarship option. Pursuant to Section 1002.40(6), F.S., a student meeting the Hope Scholarship eligibility requirements may choose to attend another public school in the student's school district or in another school district. Public school options are subject to the receiving school's capacity.

(7) Quarterly and annual reports. Participating eligible SFOs shall provide quarterly reports no later than August 10, October 10, January 10, and March 10, and an annual report no later than July 15 of each fiscal year the SFO received any contributions, as defined in Section 1002.40(2), F.S. The quarterly and annual reports must be submitted in a format to be specified by the Department and must include an electronic list of all participating scholarship students. The list shall include the following information:

(a) Demographic information for each student, including name, date of birth, Florida Education Identifier, grade level, gender, race, parent's name, mailing address, email address, and telephone number;

(b) The name and Master School ID of the public school and district in which the student was enrolled when the incident was reported;

(c) Information on the student's school of attendance, including tuition, fees, and transportation amounts;

(d) The amount and type of each student's scholarship;

(e) The incident type as reported on Form IEPC-HS1; and,

(f) Year-to-date information on the amount paid for each scholarship student during the school year and the school attended, including the first date of attendance and withdraw date. If a student attended more than one school, the summary shall detail the amount of the scholarship payments that the student generated by each school.

(8) School District Reporting Requirements. Each school district must report during the survey periods and using the elements set forth in Rule 6A-1.0014, F.A.C., Comprehensive Management Information System, the following information: For each substantiated and unsubstantiated incident listed in Section 1002.40(3), F.S., the number of Hope Scholarship Notification Forms provided to parents.

(9) Nothing in this rule shall limit the Department's authority to request any other information related to the scholarship program.

Rulemaking Authority 1001.02(2)(n), 1002.40(16) FS. Law Implemented 1002.40, 1008.385 F.S. History--New 8-21-18, Amended 8-18-20.

Hope Scholarship Notification Form

Pursuant to section 1002.40, Florida Statutes, the Hope Scholarship Program provides a public school student who was subjected to a qualifying incident with the opportunity to transfer to another public school with capacity (within the school district or another school district) or request a scholarship to attend an eligible private school. Upon receipt of a report of an incident, the school principal (or designee), is required to notify the parents of the reported incident and to investigate the incident to determine if it must be reported in SESIR, as required by s. 1006.09(6), F.S. After the investigation is completed, or within 15 days after the incident was reported to the principal, whichever comes first, the school district must notify the parent of opportunity to transfer to another school under the Hope Scholarship Program.

By completing and signing this form, the principal is confirming that the parent was provided the form within the required timeframe and was notified of the educational opportunities under the Hope Scholarship Program. The school should retain a copy and provide original document to the parent.

Student Information

Student Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____
FLEID: _____ Grade Level: _____
School of Enrollment and MSID: _____ School District: _____

Incident Information

Date and Time of Incident: _____ Date Incident Reported: _____ Incident Location: <input type="checkbox"/> School Grounds/On Campus <input type="checkbox"/> School-Sponsored Activity/Off Campus <input type="checkbox"/> School-Sponsored Transportation (Including Bus Stops) <input type="checkbox"/> Other School Location (please specify): _____	Incident Type as defined in Rule 6A-1.0017 SESIR*: <input type="checkbox"/> Aggravated Battery <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Assault <input type="checkbox"/> Harassment <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Battery <input type="checkbox"/> Hazing <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Harassment <input type="checkbox"/> Bullying <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Offenses-Other <input type="checkbox"/> Kidnapping <input type="checkbox"/> Threat or Intimidation <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Attack <input type="checkbox"/> Fighting <input type="checkbox"/> Robbery *Includes substantiated and unsubstantiated incidents
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Confirmation of Hope Scholarship Notification and Reporting

Principal or Designee Signature: _____ Date: _____
Email Address: _____ Phone Number: _____

Schools: Please report the number of Hope Scholarship Notification Forms provided to parents for substantiated and unsubstantiated incidents in your Student Information System.
Parents: To transfer your student to another public school please contact your school district office. For more information on how to apply for the private school option, please visit <http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org>. The maximum amount awarded to a student enrolled in a public school located outside of the district the student resides shall be \$750. Parents are required to inform the school district when the parent withdraws a student to attend a private school under this program.

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Created by the Florida Legislature in 2018, the Hope Scholarship serves as an educational option for public schoolchildren who have reported that they experienced bullying. This program allows families the opportunity to transfer to another public school or request a scholarship to attend an eligible private school.

Now that you have received the **Hope Scholarship Notification Form** from your child's school, Step Up For Students will walk you through the next steps, should you desire.

If you want to request another public school, please work directly with your district.

If you choose the private school option, with this form, you may apply for the Hope Scholarship by going to the Step Up For Students website at <https://www.stepupforstudents.org/for-parents/hope/how-the-scholarship-works/>.

The Step Up For Students application system will walk you through the process; however, should you have a question that is not answered on the website, you may email hope@sufs.org or call Step Up for Students at 877-735-7837.

Sincerely,

Step Up For Students