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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: September 25, 2020

SUBJECT: Reading Scholarship Accounts

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 1002.411, Florida Statutes (F.S.), was established during the 2018 legislative session and provides public school students in grades 3 through 5 an opportunity to access services to assist them in improving their reading skills. The law states in part, “Each student in grades 3 through 5 who is enrolled in a Florida public school is eligible for a Reading Scholarship Account if the student scored below a Level 3 on the grade 3 or grade 4 statewide, standardized English Language Arts (ELA) assessment in the prior school year. An eligible student who is classified as an English Language Learner and is enrolled in a program or receiving services that are specifically designed to meet the instructional needs of English Language Learner students shall receive priority.”

On March 23, 2020, Commissioner of Education Richard Corcoran issued Emergency Order No. 2020-EO-01 cancelling all statewide assessments for the 2019-20 school year. Given this new directive, the department developed new eligibility criteria for the Reading Scholarship Account. Therefore, for the 2020-21 school year, students will be

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DPS: 2020-117

eligible for a \$500 stipend to cover an array of reading remediation supports (including district-run programs) if they fall into one or all of the following priority-ordered categories:

- Students in grades 3 through 5 who are enrolled in a Florida public school and scored a Level 1 or 2 on their most recent Florida Standards Assessment (FSA)-ELA, or in 2019-20 were identified with a substantial deficiency in reading based on their most recent available screening and progress monitoring assessment, and are classified as an English Language Learner (ELL) enrolled in a program or receiving services that are specifically designed to meet the instructional needs of ELL students;
- Students in grades 3 through 5 who are enrolled in a Florida public school and scored a Level 1 or 2 on their most recent FSA-ELA or in 2019-20 were identified with a substantial deficiency in reading based on their most recent available screening and progress monitoring assessment;
- Students in grades 3-5 who are enrolled in one of Florida's 300 Lowest-Performing Elementary Schools in 2018-19; or
- Students in grades 3-5 who are enrolled in one of Florida's elementary schools that earned a D or F school grade in 2018-19.

Parents of students who meet any of the above requirements may apply using the attached form by going to the [Step Up For Students website](#). Parents who have additional questions may email reading@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

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF INDEPENDENT EDUCATION AND PARENTAL CHOICE

READING SCHOLARSHIP ACCOUNTS PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY NOTIFICATION FORM



Your student has been found eligible for the Reading Scholarship Accounts Program for the 2020-21 school year. The 2020-21 scholarship amount is \$500 per eligible student and shall be used toward the following expenditures:

- **Instructional materials;**
- **Curriculum;**
- **Tuition and fees for part-time tutoring services. The services shall be provided by a person who holds a valid teaching certificate in the subject area pursuant to s. 1012.56, F.S.; a person who holds a baccalaureate or graduate degree in the subject area; a person who holds an adjunct teaching certificate pursuant to s. 1012.57, F.S.; or a person who has demonstrated a mastery of subject area knowledge pursuant to s. 1012.56(5), F.S.;**
- **Fees for specialized summer education programs designed to improve reading or literacy skills; and**
- **Fees for after-school education programs designed to improve reading or literacy skills.**

To receive funding you must apply online through Step Up For Students using this eligibility notification form at <https://www.stepupforstudents.org/for-parents/reading-scholarship/how-the-scholarship-works/>.

Student Information:

Student Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____ FLEID: _____

2020-21 Grade Level: _____ ELL Status: _____

School Name and
School Code: _____

Parent/Guardian Information:

Name: _____

Street: _____ Phone: _____

City, Zip: _____ Email: _____

Principal or
Designee
Signature: _____

For questions regarding the Reading Scholarship Program, please contact the Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice at schoolchoice@fldoe.org or the number below or visit www.floridaschoolchoice.org.