

6A-6.0952 Family Empowerment Scholarship Program.

(1) No change.

(2) Definitions. As used in this rule:

(a) Disability” is defined as stated in Section 1002.394(2)(~~c~~)(d), F.S.

(b) through (d) No change.

(e) “Family Empowerment Scholarship for Students with Unique Abilities” is the scholarship option for eligible students with the disabilities described in Section 1002.394(2)(~~c~~)(d), F.S., and paragraph (2)(a) and subsection (4) of this rule. The scholarship funds may be used for a variety of purposes, such as certain instructional materials, therapy services, and tuition and fees as described in Section 1002.394(4)(b), F.S.

(f) through (g) No change.

(3) Family Empowerment Scholarship for Educational Options.

(a) through (c) No change.

~~(d) Transportation Scholarship. For a student initially eligible pursuant to Section 1002.394(3)(a), F.S., in lieu of accepting the scholarship to attend a private school, a seven hundred fifty dollar (\$750) scholarship may be awarded to assist with transportation costs to a public school that is different from the school the student is assigned to attend.~~

(4) No change.

(5) Scholarship Funding Process.

(a) After determining student eligibility, the SFO shall notify the Department of the parent’s request for a scholarship. In a manner to be specified by the Department, the SFO must:

1. Confirm that the student has met the eligibility criteria and, beginning in the 2025-2026 school year, that the parent has accepted the scholarship;

2. Submit information on each student, which must include the following:

a. Student name, date of birth, social security number, ~~sex gender~~, race, grade level, and address including county of residence;

b. through e. No change.

(b) The Department shall assign scholarships on a first-come first-served basis, based upon the date and time the scholarship-funding organization confirmed eligibility pursuant to Sections 1002.394(3) and 1002.394(11)(a) and

(b), F.S.

1. Scholarship payments will be made to the SFO for renewing students eligible pursuant to Section 1002.394(3)(a), F.S., on or before August 1, November 1, February 1, and April 1 of each year. Scholarship payments will be made to the SFO for new students eligible pursuant to Section 1002.394(3)(a), F.S., on or before September 1, November 1, February 1, and April 1 of each year. ~~Following receipt of scholarship payment from the Department, the SFO shall have fourteen (14) business days to initiate a scholarship payment to a participating private school.~~

2. Scholarship payments will be made to the SFO for renewing students eligible pursuant to Section 1002.394(3)(b), F.S., on or before ~~August~~ September 1, November 1, February 1, and April 1 of each year. Scholarship payments will be made to the SFO for new students eligible pursuant to Section 1002.394(3)(b), F.S., on or before September 1, November 1, February 1, and April 1 of each year.

3. No change.

(d) No change.

(6) SFO Requirements. Eligible SFOs shall:

(a) through (b) No change.

(c) Four (4) times a year, no later than October 30, January 30, April 30, and July 30 of each year, the SFO shall submit, in a manner to be specified by the Department, electronic lists of all scholarship students, providers of services, and participating private schools. The lists shall include the following information:

1. through 2. No change.

3. Expenditures by purpose type as specified in Section 1002.394(4), F.S.; and,

4. No change.

(7) Return of Funds.

(a) SFOs are responsible for the return of all scholarship funds to the Department that were received in error or associated with a scholarship account that has been closed pursuant to Section 1002.394(5)(a)2., F.S. or Section 1002.394(5)(b)3., F.S. or identified as ineligible pursuant to Section 1002.394(8)(b)(a)2., F.S. If the Department identifies scholarship funds that must be returned or if an SFO certifies an overpayment pursuant to Section 1002.394(12)(d), F.S., the Department may adjust a subsequent quarterly payment release accordingly. Otherwise, the Department, it shall send a letter via both regular and certified mail requesting the return of the funds. The letter

shall state the reason the funds are being requested, the student or students involved, instructions on returning the funds, and the procedure to be followed if the SFO believes that return of the funds is being requested in error or wishes to provide additional information related to the requested funds. The Department's letter may also require the SFO to provide an explanation for how the funds were erroneously obtained.

(b) through (d) No change.

(8) No change.

Rulemaking Authority 1001.02, 1002.394(17)(44) FS. Law Implemented 1002.394 FS. History--New 10-27-20, Amended 9-21-21., 8-22-23.