



Vision:
100% Student Success

Mission:
"Educate and prepare each student for college, career and life."

February 17, 2020

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Thank you for allowing Pinellas County Schools the opportunity to serve your child. A major goal of the Pinellas County School District is to provide quality services that support effective learning opportunities for students with disabilities. Our highly trained staff members strive to provide unparalleled services for all exceptional education students from age 3-22. Please allow me to share with you some highlights of the district's outstanding Exceptional Student Education (ESE) department.

- Our ESE team presently serves over 14,000 students with disabilities, or approximately 14 percent of the student population, developing individual education plans to meet the specific needs of our students.
- Our Extended Transition programs provide a full array of services for students 18-22, most of which are provided directly in the community.
- Our district strives to serve students with disabilities in inclusive environments.
- Over 5,400 general education students, or approximately 5 percent of the student population, are served under Section 504 with an accommodation plan developed in order to meet individual needs to ensure equitable educational access.

If your child meets the requirements outlined below, he or she may be eligible to transfer to a different public school within Pinellas County, request a public school in an adjacent school district, or receive a scholarship to attend a private school participating in the John M. McKay Scholarship for Students with Disabilities Program. This letter does not guarantee your child's eligibility. In order for your child to be eligible for the McKay Scholarship Program, you must apply for the program prior to withdrawing your child from public school. The student also must meet certain requirements:

Your child must have an active IEP (Individualized Education Plan) or 504 Accommodation Plan issued under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (with duration of more than six months) from the public school and:


- Have been enrolled in a Florida public school (Grades K-12) and reported for funding for the school year prior to applying for a scholarship; or
- Have been a pre-kindergarten student who was enrolled and reported for funding in a Florida public school during the school year prior to applying for a scholarship; or
- Have received specialized instructional services under the Voluntary Pre-kindergarten Education Program from an approved provider pursuant to section 1002.66, Florida Statutes, during the previous school year; or
- Have attended the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind during the preceding school year's student membership surveys (Grades K-12).

Further information about the McKay Scholarship program can be found by visiting the Florida Department of Education, Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice website at www.floridaschoolchoice.org. Select the McKay Scholarship option. Intent to participate must be filed on this website. To learn more, call the Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice hotline at 1-800-447-1636.

Please note: Students who participate in the McKay Scholarship Program and choose the private school option are no longer entitled to most of the Procedural Safeguards provided by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

The Pinellas County McKay representative can be contacted at (727) 588-5090 concerning these services.

Regardless of whether you choose to participate in the McKay Scholarship Program, the district's committed staff members look forward to working with you to ensure the success of your child. If you need additional help on this topic or on any other topic related to your child's education, please call our Exceptional Student Education office at (727) 588-6032.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Grego, Ed.D., Superintendent

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