

SCHOOL CHOICE PLAN REVISIONS
School Board Meeting – February 10, 2022

Page 3

A. Background

The Santa Rosa County School District serves approximately ~~29,000~~ 30,000 pre-kindergarten through grade twelve students in ~~34~~ 36 school centers. These centers include ~~1~~ 2 Pre-K centers, 17 elementary level schools, 7 middle schools, 6 high schools, 1 K-12 combination school, 1 technical ~~center~~ college, 1 K-8 school, 1 Virtual School and 1 adult school. The district strives to ensure both equal educational opportunities and facilities at all school centers. All school centers in accordance with the comprehensive technology plan have access to the Internet through the district wide area network. Local area networks in all schools, support classroom computers and/or computer labs. All schools have instructional television accessible to all classrooms. The Office of Professional Learning provides in-service to teachers on state-of-the-art technology in two locations (one in the north end of the district and one in the south end of the district).

The Santa Rosa County School District is accredited by ~~the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools~~ Cognia Inc. District scores with regard to state testing are excellent. Santa Rosa County Schools rank within the top 3-5 of all districts in the state on a consistent basis with regard to state-wide testing scores in the areas of reading, math, and science.

Page 4

2. ~~John M. McKay Scholarships for Students with Disabilities Program~~ Family Empowerment Scholarship for Students with Unique Abilities (FES-UA)

~~(FL Statute Rule 6A-6.0970, F.A.C., June 14, 2015)~~

~~The John M. McKay Scholarships for Students with Disabilities Program is established to provide the option to attend a public school other than the one to which assigned, or to provide a scholarship to a private school of choice, for students with disabilities for whom:~~

- ~~(a) An Individual Educational Plan (IEP) has been written in accordance with rules of the State Board of Education; or~~
- ~~(b) A 504 accommodation plan has been issued under s. 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.~~

~~NOTE: Students with disabilities include K-12 students who are documented as having an intellectual disability; a speech impairment; a language impairment; a hearing impairment, including deafness; a visual impairment, including blindness; a dual sensory impairment; an orthopedic impairment; another health impairment; an emotional or behavioral disability; a specific learning disability, including, but not limited to, dyslexia, dyscalculia, or~~

developmental aphasia; a traumatic brain injury; a developmental delay; or autism spectrum disorder.

On May 11, 2021, Governor DeSantis signed House Bill 7045 into law, resulting in several changes to the state funded scholarship programs, including extensive expansion of the Family Empowerment Scholarship Program.

Beginning with the 2022-2023 school year, the FES-US will include the John M. McKay Scholarship

This branch of the Family Empowerment Scholarship Program is designed to offer families of students with disabilities, as young as 3 years of age, access to additional education options. Families may choose to enroll their student in another public school, or they may take the opportunity to receive a personal education savings account (ESA) for their student. With an ESA, parents receive a deposit of public funds into government-authorized savings accounts with restricted, but multiple, uses. An ESA can be used to fund not only items such as private school tuition and fees, but also online learning programs, private tutoring, community college costs, higher education expenses and other approved customized learning services and materials. Families apply **and annually renew** for participation in FES UA through one of the approved SFOs, which are responsible for determining eligibility, awarding and distributing funding to eligible student accounts, and approving eligible expenditures.

Page 5

1. Scholarship Application Procedure:

~~To receive a McKay Scholarship, the parent of a public school student must first request by filing a notice of intent with the Department of Education by fully completing an online application for a McKay Scholarship using the Department's website: www.floridaschoolchoice.org.~~

~~A school district, a private school, or the Department may assist a parent in filing the notice of intent. A notice of intent must be filed before a student withdraws from public school and must include the student's: name, date of birth, current public school district, last attended public school, parent's name, telephone number, mailing address, and email address (if applicable).~~

~~Upon filing a notice of intent the parent shall receive immediate online filing confirmation including: a confirmation number, a notice of potential eligibility or ineligibility, and, if ineligible, reasons for the ineligibility and instructions on contacting the public school district to correct any~~

errors in information that may have caused the ineligibility. Intent may be filed throughout the school year.

NOTE: Intents filed after February 1 will be for the following school year.

In the Spring of 2022 the FLDOE will share further information about the application procedures for the Family Empowerment Scholarship for Students with Unique Abilities. If you have questions you may contact Rachelle Wood, ESE Administrative Intern.
Email: woodrl@santarosa.k12.fl.us

Page 5

2. Determination of Eligibility:

After receipt of a notice of intent, the Department shall, in cooperation with the school district, determine the student's eligibility for a scholarship by verifying that the student:

- Meets the prior school year in attendance definition in Section 1002.39(2)(a), F.S.
- Filed a valid notice of intent; and
- Meets one (1) of the following requirements:

a. Is a current public school student with a disability and has an individual education plan or a 504 accommodation plan, unless the accommodation plan has a duration of six (6) months or less;

OR

b. Is not a current public school student but filed a notice of intent while a public school student, and was a student with a disability and Individual Education Plan (IEP) or a 504 accommodation plan, unless the accommodation plan has a duration of six (6) months or less, at the time he or she left the public school.

1. Public school McKay Scholarship option:

Pursuant to Section 1002.39(5), F.S., a student meeting the McKay eligibility requirements may choose to attend another public school in the student's school district or in an adjacent school district. In this case, the district McKay Scholarship Representative (name and contact information found on the School Choice website) must be contacted to discuss available public school options. Public school availability is determined by the school district and is based upon the following:

- Program availability (determined by the student's IEP) at the requested school center.
- Ability of parent to provide transportation for their child to and from the school of choice if the scholarship is awarded. **(Transportation is the responsibility of the parent.)**
- Parent should also complete a District Request for Student Transfer form to state the use of McKay Scholarship within the Santa Rosa County School system.
 - Document on the form the approval of the McKay Intent as well as alternate school choice.
 - Verification of ESE program will be done by ESE Admin as well as affiliated program facilitator to determine appropriate services and/or supports in requested school.
 - Verification submitted to designated Level Director for final approval of public school.

NOTE: Parents may file a Notice of Intent at any time during the school year. For those intents filed after February 1, for the following school year, determination will be made and parent contacted by June 15th.

In the Spring of 2022 the FLDOE will share further information about the Determination of Eligibility for the Family Empowerment Scholarship for Students with Unique Abilities.

If you have questions you may contact Rachelle Wood, ESE Administrative Intern. Email: woodrl@santarosa.k12.fl.us

Page 7

3. Parent Request for Student Transfer (In-County and Controlled Open Enrollment)

Students may be reassigned to a school outside of their residence zone with the approval of the Santa Rosa County District School Board. The **Request for Student Transfer** form must be completed by a custodial parent or a court-awarded guardian. A separate form must be completed for each child requesting a transfer.

(a) Each school will have the **Request for Student Transfer** form available. This form is also available on the district's web page, <https://www.santarosa.k12.fl.us/choice/>

(b) The Request for Student Transfer (In-County and Controlled Open Enrollment) period is from

April 9th — May 24th **April 8th — May 23rd**. In-County, Court Orders, and Military Preference requests submitted after the transfer period may be held until enrollment numbers can be evaluated for the upcoming school year. In this case, the district grade

level director will make decisions based on available capacity. The parent/guardian is responsible for submitting the form to the district grade level director at the Douglas A. Dillon Administrative Center located at 6032 Highway 90, Milton, Florida. The request will be evaluated based on established criteria and recommended to the Santa Rosa County School Board for action. The parent/guardian will be notified of the School Board's decision.

Page 10

(2) McKay Scholarships Program

Every parent of a special needs child with an IEP that is being served in the SRCSD receives a letter each year from the SRCSB informing them of the McKay Scholarship Program. Parents also receive notification of the McKay Scholarship Program at every IEP meeting they attend. The parent initiates the application process by going on-line to the Florida Department of Education web site and files a "Notice of Intent" to participate in the program at which point, the parent is contacted within 30 days of filing the intent by the district contact person to review qualifications and assist in the application process.

[Family Empowerment Scholarship for Students with Unique Abilities \(FES-UA\)](#)
[In the Spring of 2022 the FLDOE will share further information about the Determination of Eligibility for the Family Empowerment Scholarship for Students with Unique Abilities.](#)
[If you have questions you may contact Rachelle Wood, ESE Administrative Intern.](#)
[Email: woodrl@santarosa.k12.fl.us](mailto:woodrl@santarosa.k12.fl.us)

Page 11

F. Application Timelines

Parents may choose at any time during the year to apply for the School Choice Programs available with the exception of Controlled Open Enrollment. Parents may submit an application for a school transfer request **beginning April 9th – May 24th** **April 8th – May 23rd** for the beginning of the subsequent school year. Applications submitted after May 25th **May 23rd** may be held until enrollment numbers can be evaluated for the upcoming school year unless the parent/student has established residence in Santa Rosa County. Transfer determinations may not be made prior to the May School Board Meeting each year. Once initial transfer determinations have been made, it is not likely any transfer requests will be considered until after the FTE period in October.

Target Timeline for School Choice Determinations

Draft School Choice Plan to School Board
Post Capacity Chart and Plan on website
Application Window

Controlled Open Enrollment Application Closed
In-County, Court Orders, Military Preference to Board

February School Board Meeting
~~April 9, 2021~~ **April 8, 2022**
~~April 9 – May 24, 2021~~ **April 8 – May 23, 2022**
~~May 24, 2021~~ **May 23, 2022**
May School Board Meeting

Parent/Guardian Notifications Begin

First Day After May School Board Meeting

~~Consider Controlled Open Enrollment Request/Lotteries May 14 May 28, 2021~~

Controlled Open Enrollment Transfers to Board

First June School Board Meeting

Parent/Guardian Notifications Begin

First Day After First June School Board Meeting