

# How McKay changes under HB 7045

**1 This fall, McKay Scholarship amounts will increase almost across the board.** Under HB 7045, 86% of current scholarship students will realize an increase depending on their matrix level. The approximate increase for students in Levels I, II, IV and V is between \$1,000 to \$4,000. Matrix Level 253 students will keep the current amount for as long as they remain on the program or until the new calculation is higher. New students with a Matrix Level 253 will earn approximately \$9,458.

**2 This fall, the McKay program will operate largely the same as this year.** For the coming year, 2021-22, the McKay Scholarship will continue under the same structure as the current law. This will allow families and their private schools to prepare for the transition and to understand the full benefits of the education savings accounts. These participating students will then be moved directly into a new scholarship in 2022, and will be exempt from any scholarship enrollment caps.

**3 Next fall, the name will change, but the scholarship will be even more focused on meeting the needs of students with unique abilities.** For the school year 2022-23, the McKay Scholarship will be folded into what is now known as the Family Empowerment Scholarship. The Family Empowerment Scholarship (FES) will provide two separate and distinct scholarship tracks: one for economically disadvantaged students and one for students with unique abilities/special needs.

**4 This fall and next fall, a student with an eligible disability would have two different ways to get a scholarship.** The bill folds the current Gardiner Scholarship into FES this fall and, with it, presents two different paths for students with an eligible disability: 1) The current McKay method, with a district-issued Individual Education Plan (IEP); and 2) With a doctor's diagnosis of any of a broad assortment of special needs outlined in the bill. By 2022-23, when McKay is also added to FES, all new students with qualifying disabilities will no longer be required to have attended a public district school the previous year.

**5 Next fall, families will soon get to spend scholarship dollars on educational needs beyond just school tuition and fees.** In 2022-23, what is now the McKay Scholarship will be operated just like the current Gardiner Scholarship, which allows families the flexibility to spend scholarship dollars on a wide assortment of educational and therapeutic needs. The scholarship funds are deposited into an account from which the family can determine how to spend.

**Please note:** Further guidance regarding changes to the scholarship programs will be

provided by Step Up For Students after a bill is passed by the Florida Legislature and signed into law by the Governor.