

Family Empowerment Scholarship for Students with Unique Abilities (FES-UA)
Purchasing Guide 2023-24

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Family Empowerment Scholarship for Unique Abilities Purchasing Guide

INTRODUCTION

Florida state law now requires Scholarship Funding Organizations (SFOs) to prepare a purchasing guide for scholarship students' parents/guardians and update this guide at least annually.

These guidelines are intended to be general in nature and to assist student's families to remain in compliance when requesting scholarship disbursements. They are not intended to provide detailed instructions or to prescribe any particular educational programs. Because each SFO is an independent non-profit organization they each have their own policies and procedures, so it is important that you refer to your SFO's Parent Handbook and materials for detailed information about their scholarship administration processes.

PURCHASING POLICIES

As per Florida statute s. 1002.394, Family Empowerment Scholarship for Unique Abilities (FES-UA) scholarship funds must be used to meet the educational needs of an eligible student. Using a student's scholarship funds for other purposes is a crime. For example, purchasing a product with scholarship funds, returning that product, and then spending the returned funds on items that do not meet the educational needs of the scholarship student is illegal. Please contact your Scholarship Funding Organization (SFO) if you have questions about the legality of a financial transaction using scholarship funds prior to engaging in this transaction.

SFOs may require parents/guardians to use an online platform for purchases provided their choice of curriculum or academic programs is not limited. SFOs may also reimburse parents/guardians for their purchase of eligible products or services that meet their student's educational needs. Parents/guardians should verify with their SFO that a purchase is eligible for reimbursement before making the purchase. If a parent/guardian purchases a product identical to one offered by an SFO's online platform for a lower price, the SFO is required by law to reimburse the parent/guardian for the cost of the purchase.

Per Florida Statute s. 1000.21(5), "Parent" means either or both parents of a student, any guardian of a student, any person in a parental relationship to a student, or any person exercising supervisory authority over a student in place of the parent. For the purposes of the Purchasing Guide, the term "Guardian" will be used to include all eligible parents and guardians above who manage an ESA account for an eligible FES-UA student.

GENERAL PURCHASING PROVISIONS

Product Safety: For safety reasons, SFOs should review manufacturers' recommended minimum age use when determining if an education product is appropriate for a student.

Monetary Benefit: A family may not receive a payment, refund, or rebate of scholarship funds from a vendor.

Duplicate Billing: Products or services paid for by another agency (e.g., health insurance, Healthcare Savings Accounts (HSAs), or a School Readiness program) may not be submitted for reimbursement.

Medical Services: With the exception of those Specialized Services outlined in FES-UA law (including licensed ABA, Speech, Occupational, or Physical therapies), medical services (including doctors' visits, examinations, and medical devices) are not eligible expenses.

Out-of-State Service Providers: With the exception of credentialed providers whose services may be

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delivered virtually (e.g., tutors, licensed therapists), services must be delivered in Florida.

Out-of-State Activities: Out-of-state activities that meet general expense criteria may be eligible with Pre-Authorization.

Purchase Location: Purchases made online through the direct buying platform using scholarship funds must be shipped to the Florida residential address associated with the student's scholarship account.

Prorating Payments for Multi-User Items: Other family members often use products purchased with scholarship funds. Consequently, funding for these multi-user items is prorated to only cover the scholarship student's cost.

Public and Private Schools Equivalency: Whether a product or service is available in public or private schools helps SFOs determine whether an item may be purchased with scholarship funds. SFOs also consider the availability of services and products in other Florida learning options supported by choice program funds (e.g., full time tutoring).

Pre-Authorizations:

- The pre-authorization process may be used to determine the eligibility of a purchase prior to spending funds.
- In some categories, pre-authorization is required.

Cash Purchases: Cash payments to private sellers are not eligible for reimbursement.

ELIGIBLE EXPENSE CATEGORIES

FES-UA scholarship funds may be used to purchase educational products and services in legislatively defined categories outlined in Florida statute s. 1002.394(4)(b). Spending limits and frequency of purchase policies are listed below by item and category.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Eligible instructional materials include:

Digital Devices

- Desktop computer
- Laptop computer
- Web-centric laptop computers (such as Chromebook or Surface)
- Tablet
- e-Reader
- Game consoles (must be purchased with educational software)

Prohibited Items:

- Gaming systems/Consoles purchased without accompanying educational software.
- Cellular phones
- Smart watches

Frequency of Purchase: Two years

Digital Periphery Devices

- Keyboard
- Computer monitor
- Mouse/touchpad/trackball
- Printer (including 3D printers)
- Speakers

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- Headsets
- External drive (including hard drive and flash drive)
- Scanner
- Digital pencil
- TTY/TDD conversion modems
- Virtual and augmented reality headsets/goggles
- Wands and Sticks
- Wi-Fi routers, modems, and extenders

Multiples of items over \$50 require a pre-authorization.

Assistive Technology Devices (Devices that allow students to access instruction or instructional content)

Examples include the following:

- Augmentative communication device
- Braille displays
- Braille embossers
- FM system
- Interactive metronome
- Light signaler alerts
- Proloquo2Go
- Reading tools
- Screen magnifiers/enlargers
- Screen readers
- Sip-and-puff systems
- Smart board
- Speech or voice recognition programs
- Student response systems
- Talking and large print word processors
- Text-to-speech (TTS) or speech synthesizers
- TTY/TTD conversion modems
- Vibroacoustic therapy

Additional Assistive Devices may be eligible with pre-authorization

Training On the Use of Eligible Devices

Scholarship funds may be used to train parents/guardians or students on how to use digital devices, digital peripheral devices, or assistive technology devices.

Maintenance Agreements for Eligible Devices

Maintenance agreements for eligible devices purchased with FES-UA funds may be eligible FES-UA expenses. Maintenance agreements are service agreements with a device manufacturer or vendor to support regular service on that device. Maintenance agreements do not include warranties, extended warranties, or service contracts.

Digital Materials

Scholarship funds may be used to purchase digital material such as CDs, DVDs, and digital documents, including eBooks, and audiobooks. Subscription or membership access to eBooks or Audiobooks for the student may be eligible.

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Stand-Alone Online Class

Parents/guardians may purchase online courses that are appropriate for their scholarship student. Scholarship funds may not be used to pay for full-time online instruction. Courses offered by a registered private school or approved VIP or Online Course Provider are not eligible under this category

Internet Resources

Parents/guardians may use scholarship funds to pay for in-home internet services at the Florida residential address associated with their student's scholarship application. Modem or router rental from the internet service provider and billed with a monthly internet service is also eligible.

Sensory Material

Sensory materials that encourage learning through sensory stimulation are eligible.

Eligible items include:

- OT augmentation
- PT augmentation
- Sensory swing
- Specialized furniture/comfort chair
- Air Walker
- Therapy chair
- Balance ball
- Sensory table
- Manipulatives & hands-on materials
- Fidget/boink
- Sensory lighting (including lava lamp, bubble tube)
- Sensory bundles

Physical Education

Authorized P.E. expenses include sports lessons, fees, or equipment (subject to manufacturer's age recommendations), including:

- Home playset/swing set (including rubber mulch or safety materials)
- Exercise equipment (including stationary bike, treadmill/walking pad, weight bench)
- Ping-pong table/table sports (ping-pong, basketball shooting games, foosball table, air hockey)
- Sports lessons (including individual training or group trainings)
- Sports equipment (balls, basketball goals, racquets, etc.)
- Team fees (including registration, equipment rental, and competition fees)
- Stand-alone athletic event fees (including foot or bike race registrations, endurance events, Special Olympics registration)
- Gym/fitness memberships or "Class Passes" (for the student only), including on-demand fitness classes
- Individual trampoline
- Swim goggles, snorkel, mask, fins
- Skateboard
- Kayak, canoe, surfboard, boogie board, skim board, stand-up paddleboard

Frequency of Purchase: 2 years (for equipment only)

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Please note: Adaptive exercise equipment is eligible with pre-authorization.

A pre-authorization is required for P.E. activities occurring outside of the State of Florida.

Prohibited Items May Include but Are Not Limited To:

- Motorized equipment (treadmills or walking pads are eligible)
- Trampolines (individual exercise trampolines are eligible)
- Vehicles, including but not limited to two-, three-, and four-wheeled vehicles
- Motorized boats
- Motorized scooters or ride-ons (including golf carts)
- In-ground or above-ground swimming pools
- Single-admission leisure events (including equipment rental)
- Activities occurring outside of the State of Florida that are not pre-authorized
- Pool tables

Books

Textbooks, workbooks, and other books may be eligible FES-UA expenses. Books are neither capped in annual spending nor subject to frequency of purchase. Two copies of a book are permitted in the event that the second copy is used as a parent or companion reader. However, requests for more than two copies of the same book will be denied.

Books with content that may pose a threat to the student or others or promote violence or criminal behavior are ineligible for purchase.

Musical Instruments & Equipment

Musical instruments, and certain equipment may be eligible FES-UA expenses. Tuning, insurance or service agreements and repair of instruments may be eligible.

Electives

Lessons, equipment, or consumables generally associated with elective or enrichment (non-core academic subjects), may be purchased, including:

- Music lessons
- Art lessons
- Art Supplies (including subscription kits)
- Club fees (such as Boy/Girl Scouts, and 4H/FFA Clubs)
- Cooking lessons
- Cooking supplies (including subscription kits)
- Drama lessons
- Foreign language lessons
- Sewing lessons
- Sewing supplies
- Animal husbandry lessons or training programs
- Animal husbandry supplies
- Woodworking/building lessons or training programs
- Woodworking/building supplies (tools must satisfy manufacturer age recommendations)

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Eligible providers for enrichment or elective subjects should have one of the following:

- A valid or expired Florida educator's certificate.
- At least 3 years of experience in the relevant subject area as demonstrated by employment records (for example a resume or LinkedIn account).
- Currently enrolled in a postsecondary educational institution as a student of the relevant subject area.
- A degree from a postsecondary educational institution in the relevant subject area.
- A certification or national accreditation in the relevant subject area.

These reimbursements requests must be accompanied by educational benefit documentation.

- Mechanical lessons or training programs
- Mechanical supplies (tools must satisfy manufacturer age recommendations)
- Gardening or horticultural lessons or training programs
- Garden supplies (tools must satisfy manufacturer age recommendations)
- Safety items (including protective gloves and goggles)
- Programming/digital production lessons
- Enrichment classes/courses

Frequency of Purchase: Two years for equipment.

Prohibited Items:

- Commercial-grade tools/equipment
- Live animals
- Housing/food for live animals

These reimbursements requests must be accompanied by educational benefit documentation (standardized form will be provided)

Field Trips

The following items are eligible for student admission only. Family admissions reimbursements will be prorated to cover only the student's cost. A student's ticket price must be age appropriate. Tickets or admission must be purchased directly from the venue/vendor or an authorized third-party seller. Secondary market or resale tickets are not reimbursable.

- Museum admission
- Aquarium/zoo admission
- Programs or events at museums/zoos/aquariums
- Museum or library memberships
- Aquarium/zoo memberships
- Ticketed events (including plays, musicals, or orchestral performances)
- Admission to cultural programming events or facilities
- Admission to a Florida theme park*
- School field trip fees paid to an eligible private school or eligible home education program

Frequency of Purchase: None

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These reimbursements requests must be accompanied by educational benefit documentation (standardized form is provided). A pre-authorization is required for non-school affiliated field trip activities occurring outside of the State of Florida, but within the United States.

Note on Florida theme park admission: Each scholarship student may submit one reimbursement request for admission to one Florida theme park during the school year for a value up to \$299 before tax. The parent/guardian may choose either a single or multi-day park admission ticket or an annual pass, which will be reimbursable at the actual paid rate for the student's age group up to \$299 plus tax. Because each scholarship student will be allowed one reimbursement submission, and the parent/guardian may only be reimbursed for the actual amount paid at the time of reimbursement submission, parents utilizing a payment plan must wait until the ticket or pass has been paid in full (or up to \$299) before submitting their reimbursement request. Reimbursement requests for theme parks may not be bundled with other reimbursement requests or receipts.

The reimbursement request should contain, in addition to the proof of payment and invoice with the corresponding student's name visible, a statement of educational benefit form for the student (this standardized form is available for download from Step Up For Students).

Please note: Only the actual cost of the basic admission for the scholarship student will be covered. Additional services (such as parking, food and beverage packages, photographs or souvenirs, or premium access) will not be covered. Special event ticketing is also prohibited.

For a full checklist of reimbursement procedures, please refer to Appendix B.

At Home Classroom Furnishings

Furnishing used to create an at-home classroom are eligible expenses, including:

- Desk (age/size appropriate)
- Chair (age/size appropriate)
- Storage (including bookshelves and storage or organization containers)
- Architect/drafting table (age/size appropriate)
- Picnic table
- Television (up to 55")
- Indoor projector
- Standing or drop-down Screen
- Whiteboard
- Rug or foam tile
- Map/globe/atlas
- Bulletin board
- Timer/clock
- Educational poster/visual support

Frequency of Purchase: Two years for furniture, or televisions/projectors

Prohibited Items:

- Multiples of an item type

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Frequency of Purchase: Televisions may be purchased once every two years.

School Supplies

School supplies generally found or required in classrooms may be purchased, including:

- Writing utensils
- Crayons/colored pencils/markers
- Math tools (abacus/compass/protractor/Ruler)
- Tape/paperclips/stapler
- Calculator
- Paper
- Notebooks/folders/binders
- Planners/Organizers
- Bookbags (backpack, tote bag, messenger bag)
- Lunchboxes

Frequency of Purchase: None

Lab Fees and Materials

Science, math and computer lab fees and equipment and lab safety equipment may be eligible FES-UA expenses. Lab equipment that may pose a threat to the student or others or promote violence or criminal behavior are ineligible for purchase.

Learning Manipulatives/Creative Play Items

Eligible items utilized for tactile learning, academic practice, or creative play including:

- Legos
- Dolls (and accessories)
- Stuffed animals
- Blocks
- Dominoes/marbles
- Puzzles
- Board/card games
- Chess/checker sets
- Dress-up clothing
- Play kitchens
- Water tables

Frequency of Purchase: None

Games or puzzles with content that may pose a threat to the student or others or that promote violence or criminal behavior are ineligible for purchase.

Educational Subscription Kits

Educational Subscription Kits curated and mailed to the home by a kit company are eligible for reimbursement. Subscriptions must be age and size appropriate.

Frequency of Purchase: None

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Educational Software/Subscriptions

The following items are eligible for single use/student pricing only. Reimbursements for multi-user access subscriptions will be prorated to only cover the student's cost.

Eligible expenses include:

- Software subscriptions (Word processing, Microsoft Office, Adobe, video or music-editing software, LexisNexis, QuickBooks)
- Magazine subscription
- Newspaper subscription

Prohibited Expenses may include but are not limited to:

- Video/TV/online streaming service
- Musical streaming service
- In-game purchase or credit
- Live television
- Social media (except LinkedIn Learning for Students)

CURRICULUM

State policy defines curriculum as a complete course of study for a particular content area or grade level, including any required supplemental materials, teachers' manuals, and associated online instruction.

For the purposes of this section, a complete course of study may include postsecondary programs aimed at career readiness or trade certification.

Parents/guardians may choose to submit a pre-authorization to determine expense eligibility prior to purchasing a curriculum.

Curricula must be publicly available for SFOs to determine eligibility. Curricula that pose a safety threat to the student or others will not be approved.

SPECIALIZED SERVICES

Specialized services are those provided by the approved providers listed below or a Florida hospital.

Services may be delivered outside Florida if credentialed. Online delivery is eligible.

For the purposes of this section, an approved provider is licensed by the [Florida Department of Health](#) to perform the service, approved as a provider by the [Agency for Persons with Disabilities](#), or approved as a [Specialized Instructional Services \(SIS\) Provider by the Office of Early Learning](#). An approved provider must provide services in the specialized area in which they are approved. These services include:

- Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) services provided by a [Board Certified](#) Behavior Analyst (BCBA)
- Services provided by a Florida licensed Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP)
- Services provided by a Florida licensed occupational therapist
- Services provided by Florida licensed physical therapist
- Services provided by a Florida licensed listening and spoken language specialist

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- Psychotherapy or counseling by a Florida licensed Psychologist, School Psychologist, Mental Health Counselor, Marriage and Family Therapist, or Clinical Social Worker
- Vision therapy by a Florida licensed Optometrist

Here are links to help verify specialized service provider credentials:

- [Agency for Persons with Disabilities \(APD\)](#)
- [Florida Department of Health](#)
- [Specialized Instructional Services \(SIS\) / Early Learning Coalition](#)
- [Behavioral Analyst Certification Board \(BACB\)](#)

TUITION AND FEES

Tuition and Fees at an Eligible Private School

Tuition and fees at an eligible private school may be covered by a Family Empowerment Scholarship.

Not all private schools are eligible to participate. Schools must meet state eligibility criteria and elect to participate in the FES program with the FLDOE. A list of schools eligible to serve scholarship students can be found at the [Florida Private Schools Directory](#). Choose “Family Empowerment Scholarship for Students with Unique Abilities (FES-UA).”

The agreed-upon amount of tuition and fees for each student is a contractual agreement between the parent/guardian and their eligible private school. We recommend parents/guardians communicate with their preferred private school about what is required before enrolling their student.

Eligible Fees:

- Application fee (payable in the fiscal year preceding the academic year)
- Registration fee (payable in the fiscal year preceding the academic year)
- Uniform fee (basic uniform pieces purchased from a school-required vendor; shoes and accessories are not eligible).
- Book fee
- Technology fee
- Test fee
- Athletics and club Fees
- Graduation fee

Prohibited Fees:

- Fundraising fee/donation fee/volunteer waiver fee
- Annual funds
- Giving funds
- Therapies or services as fees (Credentialed Services including tutoring and therapies should be billed in their categories)
- Costs associated with scholarship management
- Optional fees

Please note: Field trip fees at an Eligible Private School are reimbursable to the parents/guardian under the Instructional Materials – Field Trip expense category.

Tuition and Fees for Home Education Programs

Scholarship funds may be used to pay tuition and fees for programs, courses, or classes offered to home education students. These services must be part of the student's sequential instruction per the definition of a home education program.

A "home education program" means the sequentially progressive instruction of a student directed by his or her parent in order to satisfy the attendance requirements of ss. [1002.41](#), [1003.01](#)(13), and [1003.21](#)(1).

"Parent" is either or both parents of a student, any parents/guardian of a student, any person in a parental relationship to a student, or any person exercising supervisory authority over a student in place of the parent (s. [1000.21](#)(5)).

To visit the FLDOE's website for additional information about home education programs, click [here](#)

The following considerations apply when determining whether a program is an eligible home education program tuition and fees expense. Eligible programs must:

- Be a program selected by the parent as a part of their home education student's parent-directed instruction. Private schools, virtual schools, and public or charter schools are not considered home education programs.
- Provide courses and/or activities for home education students that enhance or enrich the child's learning opportunities.
- Have publicly available/reviewable program descriptions of courses and/or activities.
- Have a published tuition and fees schedule.
- Be operated in a physical location (cannot be in online).
- Be a business organization (tuition and fees may not be payable to an individual, with the exception of regional program directors or designated liaisons of national home educational communities).

All other live instruction, whether in-person or via remote access online, must meet the requirements for part-time tutoring services to be reimbursed by FES-UA funds.

Parents may submit a pre-authorization request to have a proposed home education program provider reviewed for approval.

Tuition and Fees at an Eligible Postsecondary Institution

Tuition and fees required for enrollment at an eligible postsecondary institution, or a program offered by an eligible postsecondary institution, is covered by FES-UA.

Eligible postsecondary institutions include:

- A Florida College System institution
- A state university
- A school district technical center
- A school district adult general education center
- An independent college or university that is eligible to participate in the William L Boyd, IV Effective Access to Student Education Grant Program under s. 1009.89
- An accredited independent postsecondary educational institution, as defined in s. 1005.02, which is licensed to operate in the State of Florida

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Tuition and fees schedules must be published and made publicly available.

Tuition and Fees for an Approved Preapprenticeship Program

Tuition and fees for an organized course of instruction designed to prepare a person 16 years of age or older to become an apprentice in a course approved by and registered with the department and sponsored by a registered apprenticeship program under s. [446.042](#).

Tuition and fees schedules must be published and made publicly available.

Tuition and Fees for a Private Tutoring Program

Tuition and fees required for enrollment in an eligible Private Tutoring Program, authorized under s. [1002.43](#) are covered.

Requirements for approved Private Full-Time Tutors include:

- The tutor must hold a current, valid Florida teaching certificate for the subject or grade level in which they will tutor
- For grades K-3, full-time tutoring is considered 720 hours per school year
- For grades 4-12, full-time tutoring is considered 900 hours (equivalent to 180 teaching days)
- A tutor seeking to provide services must certify compliance with relevant statutes, including attendance requirements, and file annually a W9 form with the appropriate Scholarship Funding Organization prior to the receipt of education savings account funds (ESA), and then annually thereafter. The FLDOE may institute a standardized compliance form.

A full-time private tutor receiving ESA funds may not serve more than 5 students at one time. However, a full-time private tutor may provide tutoring for up to 25 students if the following facility requirements are satisfied:

- Private tutoring may be provided for up to 25 students in any commercial building with a valid certificate of occupancy, library, community service, museum, performing arts, theatre, cinema, or church facility; in any facility or on any land owned by a Florida College System institution or university; in any similar public institution facility; and in any facility recently used to house a school or child care facility licensed under s. 402.305 within the preexisting zoning and land use designations of the facility without obtaining a special exception, rezoning, or a land use change so long as the provision of such tutoring meets all applicable state and local health, safety, and welfare laws, codes, and rules, including those pertaining to fire safety and building safety.

Tuition and fees schedules must be published and made publicly available.

Tuition and Fees for Part-Time Tutoring Services or Fees for Choice Navigator Services

Tuition and Fees for part-time tutoring, or fees for Choice Navigator services are covered by FES-UA.

Part-time tutoring includes tuition and fees for services provided by a person who:

- Holds a valid Florida educator's certificate pursuant to s. 1012.56, Florida Statutes.
- Holds an adjunct teaching certificate pursuant to s. 1012.57, Florida Statutes.
- Has a bachelor's degree or a graduate degree in the subject area in which instruction is given;
- Is certified by a nationally or internationally recognized research-based training program as

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approved by the department.

- Has demonstrated a mastery of subject area knowledge pursuant to s. 1012.56(5), Florida Statutes, by one of the following ways:
 - For a subject requiring only a baccalaureate degree for which a Florida subject area examination has been developed, achievement of a passing score on the Florida-developed subject area examination specified in state board rule.
 - For a subject for which a Florida subject area examination has not been developed, achievement of a passing score on a standardized examination specified in state board rule, including, but not limited to, passing scores on both the oral proficiency and written proficiency examinations administered by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.
 - For a subject for which a Florida subject area examination has not been developed or a standardized examination has not been specified in state board rule, completion of the subject area specialization requirements specified in state board rule and verification of the attainment of the essential subject matter competencies by the district school superintendent of the employing school district or chief administrative officer of the employing state-supported or private school.
 - For a subject requiring a master's or higher degree, completion of the subject area specialization requirements specified in state board rule and achievement of a passing score on the Florida-developed subject area examination or a standardized examination that is directly related to the subject specified in state board rule.
 - Documentation of successful completion of a United States Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center program.
 - Documentation of a passing score on the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT).
 - For a subject requiring only a baccalaureate degree for which a Florida subject area examination has been developed, documentation of receipt of a master's or higher degree from an accredited postsecondary educational institution that the Department of Education has identified as having a quality program resulting in a baccalaureate degree or higher in the certificate subject area as identified by state board rule.

Tuition and fees schedules must be published and made publicly available.

A “Choice Navigator” is an individual who meets the credentialing requirements of a Part-Time Tutor (above) and who provides consultations, at a mutually agreed upon location, on the selection of, application for, and enrollment in educational options addressing the academic needs of a student; curriculum selection; and advice on career and postsecondary education opportunities. A Choice Navigator may not oversee or exercise control over the curricula or academic programs of a student.

Fee schedules must be published and made publicly available.

Tuition and Fees at an Approved Online or Virtual Provider

Tuition and fees required for enrollment at an eligible or approved online or virtual provider are covered by FES-UA.

Approved online or virtual providers include:

- An approved private online provider under s. 1002.45(2)(a), Florida Statutes.

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- A program offered by the Florida Virtual School in which the eligible student is enrolled as a private paying student. (**Note:** If a student is enrolled in FLVS as a public-school student the student will be considered a public-school student and will be ineligible for a Family Empowerment Scholarship)
- An approved online course offered pursuant to ss. 1003.499 or 1004.0961, Florida Statutes.
- A private virtual school that meets the requirements of s. 1002.421, Florida Statutes.

The Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) has approval authority for these funding categories. The FLDOE may publish or maintain a list of approved online or virtual providers pursuant to the above statutory authority.

FLDOE Approved Virtual Instruction Program (VIP) providers (approved as a course and VIP provider)

- [Accel Schools East](#) (grades K-12 through 2023-24)
- [Connections Education of Florida, LLC](#) (grades K-12 through 2024-25)
- [Graduation Alliance](#) (grades 9-12 for 2023-24)
- Imagination Learning (grade K-12 through 2024-25)
- [K12 Florida](#) (grades K-12 for 2018-19 to 2024-25)
- [Mater Virtual Academy](#) (grades K-12 through 2023-24)
- [OptimaED, LLC](#) (grades K-9 through 2023-24)
- [Somerset Virtual Academy](#) (grade K-12 through 2023-24)

Approved online course providers

- Accelerate Education (grades K-5 through 2025-26) /approved courses listed [here](#)
- EdisonLearning (grades 6-12 for through 2024-25) / approved courses listed [here](#)
- Edmentum/Apex Learning (grades 9-12 through 2025-26)/approved courses listed [here](#)
- eDynamic Learning ULC (grades 6-12 through 2024-25) / approved courses listed [here](#)
- Founders Education LLC (grades 9-12 through 2025-26) / approved courses listed [here](#)
- Grade Results, Inc. (grades K-12 for through 2023-24) / approved courses listed [here](#)
- My Virtual Academy (grades 9-12 through 2025-26) / approved courses listed [here](#)
- National Highway Safety Administration (grades 9-12 through 2024-25) / approved courses listed [here](#)

Tuition and Fees as a Private-Pay Student for Florida Virtual School

Tuition and fees required for enrollment as a private-pay student at a Florida Virtual School (FLVS) are covered by FES-UA.

Students utilizing FLVS must be enrolled as a private-pay student. FLVS will submit reimbursement requests to Step Up For Students, which must be approved by the parent/guardian prior to payment being released. If a student is enrolled in FLVS and funded as a public-school student, the student may lose eligibility and funding for FES-UA.

Tuition and fees schedules must be published and made publicly available.

STANDARDIZED TESTING FEES

Fees associated with standardized testing or examinations may be covered by FES funds.

Approved standardized testing or assessments include:

- Nationally standardized, norm-referenced assessments

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- Advanced Placement (AP) examinations
- Industry certification examinations
- Assessments related to postsecondary education
- Other assessments as outlined in the Family Empowerment Scholarship Purchasing Guide

CONTRIBUTIONS TO APPROVED COLLEGE SAVINGS PROGRAMS

Contributions to the Stanley G. Tate Florida Prepaid College Program pursuant to s. 1009.98, Florida Statutes, or the Florida College Savings Program pursuant to s. 1009.981, Florida Statutes, for the benefit of the eligible student, may be covered by the FES.

Stanley G. Tate Florida Prepaid College Program

The following plans are eligible for contributions:

- 1-Year University Plan
- 4-Year University Plan
- 2-Year College Plan
- 4-Year College Plan
- 2+2 Florida Plan
- Dormitory Plan

The following restrictions on scholarship fund contributions apply:

- Contributions may be made only on behalf of the eligible scholarship student.
- The account owner cannot change the beneficiary of an account that contains scholarship funds.
- Any privately contributed funds in the account will be used to pay plan benefits before the scholarship funds.
- If a Prepaid College account is closed the money will go back to the open scholarship account along with any interest accumulated, or to the State of Florida if the scholarship account has been or is being closed.
- If a student's scholarship account closes for any reason money in the student's Florida Prepaid account contributed through the scholarship will be returned to the State of Florida

Contributions to a Stanley G. Tate Florida Prepaid College Program account must be paid out of pocket and reimbursed to the parent. There is no direct payment option for Florida Prepaid Accounts.

Florida College Savings Program

The following restrictions on scholarship fund contributions apply.

- The account type must be an UTMA or UGMA.
- The account owner cannot change the beneficiary of an account that contains scholarship funds.
- The privately contributed funds in the account (if any) will be used to pay plan benefits before the scholarship funds.
- If a Florida 529 College Savings account is closed, the money will go back to the open scholarship account along with any interest accumulated, or to the State of Florida if the scholarship account has been or is being closed.
- If a student's scholarship account closes for any reason, any money in the student's 529 College Savings account contributed through the scholarship will be returned to the State of Florida.
- If a student has an existing Florida 529 College Savings plan, scholarship funds will be managed in a separate account from private funds that are invested.

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Please note: Although 529 funds may be used to pay for private school expenses, FES-UA funds may not be used at a private school that is not an FES-UA eligible private school.

Contributions to a 529 account must be made by direct contributions from scholarship funds. Contributions may not be made out of pocket and reimbursed to the parent.

CONTRACTED SERVICES PROVIDED BY A PUBLIC SCHOOL OR SCHOOL DISTRICT

Contracted services provided by a public district or charter school, or school district may be covered by FES.

A scholarship recipient may take courses, participate in programming (including after school, extracurricular, supplemental, or summer school programs) or receive services from a public school (including charter schools and the Florida Virtual School), if the student contracts for classes/services on a private pay basis.

The parent/guardian can pay for services and request reimbursement, or the school district can choose to be paid directly as a provider.

There is no requirement for public district or charter schools, or school districts, to contract for services with a scholarship participant or to set up an account for payment as a provider. Participation is optional for the public schools and/or districts.

A student who receives contracted services under this paragraph is not considered enrolled in a public school for scholarship eligibility purposes. However, if the district reports the student for any FTE funding or other state funding, the student will be ineligible for the Family Empowerment Scholarship.

FEES FOR SPECIALIZED SUMMER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Fees for specialized summer education programs (or other programs during standard school breaks) meeting eligibility criteria are covered by FES.

The term “specialized” means a program developed specifically for students with special or unique needs or a program that can meet the student’s needs.

Overnight educational camps may be permitted with pre-authorization and documentation of the educational benefit from a physician or licensed therapist.

Published fees must be provided to the SFO prior to receipt of any FES-UA funding. Proof of attendance is required.

FEES FOR SPECIALIZED AFTER-SCHOOL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Fees for after-school education programs meeting eligibility criteria are covered by the Family Empowerment Scholarship.

Please see the definition of “specialized” above.

Published fees must be provided to any SFO prior to receipt of FES-UA funding. Proof of attendance is required.

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For students aged 16 and up, full or half day education programs are permitted with pre-authorization.

TRANSITION SERVICES PROVIDED BY JOB COACHES

Students ages 14 through 22 may submit reimbursements for transition services by job coaches. Job coaches must meet one of the following criteria:

- Hired by the private school as a job coach.
- Hired by the school district as a job coach.
- The criteria/training of the Florida Agency for Persons with Disabilities for job coaches.
- The criteria/training of the Florida Association of Rehabilitation Facilities.
- Have an Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ARCE) certification.
- Have an Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE) certification.
- Have an Institution for Community Inclusion certification.
- Employment Specialist Vendor for Vocational Rehabilitation.

Types of Transition Services that may be provided by the job coach:

- Conducting career and interest assessments
- Self-determination/self-advocacy training
- Employability/soft skills education
- Job development
- Job training
- Interview skill development and support, assistance with preparation and post interview, resume development
- Onsite job coaching
- Follow-along support to maintain employment
- Monitoring and re-training for changes on the job site
- Benefits planning and financial literacy services (ex. working with the student to understand the impact of work on SSI benefits and income)
- Advocacy services (ex. working on benefit issues, Social Security, facilitating transportation services)
- Career Exploration
- Career Counseling
- Inclusive programs with multiple services where job training or coaching is a defined, regular component of the program

Scholarship participants should explore all available State resources including Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and financial aid. VR helps high school youth with disabilities establish a foundation for a seamless transition to individualized training, education, and employment. For more information on VR's Transition Program visit the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

ANNUAL EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION FEES

Fees for annual evaluations of the educational progress of a home education student as required under s. 1002.41(1)(f), Florida Statutes, is covered by the Family Empowerment Scholarship.

Eligible evaluation methods include:

- Evaluation of a student's educational progress upon review of the portfolio and discussion with the student by a teacher holding a valid regular Florida certificate to teach academic subjects at the elementary or secondary level.
- Administration of any nationally normed student achievement test administered by a certified

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teacher.

- Administration of a state student assessment test by a certified teacher at a location and under testing conditions approved by the school district.

TUITION AND FEES FOR AN APPROVED VPK PROGRAM PROVIDER OR AN APPROVED SCHOOL READINESS PROVIDER

Tuition and fees associated with programs offered by Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Program providers approved pursuant to s. [1002.55, F.S.](#) and school readiness providers approved pursuant to s. [1002.88, F.S.](#) are covered by the Family Empowerment Scholarship.

Families are encouraged to contact their local Early Learning Coalition for information about eligible VPK or School Readiness Providers.

This category includes tuition and fees for the educational needs of the student and may cover a full-day program.

Eligible Fees:

- Application fee (payable in the fiscal year preceding the academic year)
- Registration fee (payable in the fiscal year preceding the academic year)
- Uniform fee (basic uniform pieces purchased from a school-required vendor; shoes and accessories are not eligible).
- Book fee
- Technology fee
- Graduation fee

Prohibited Fees:

- Fundraising fee/donation fee/volunteer waiver fee
- Giving funds
- Therapies or services as fees (credentialed services including tutoring and therapies should be billed in their categories)
- Costs associated with scholarship management
- Optional fees
- Nursery or daycare fees

Approved VPK and School Readiness services may not be billed under an Eligible Private School.

Tuition and fees schedules must be published and made publicly available.

HORSE THERAPY

Horse therapy fees may be covered by FES.

This category includes fees for services provided at a center that is a member of the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International. To find a PATH certified center in Florida, [click here.](#)

The PATH certification must be issued to the center and not to individuals working at the center.

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MUSIC AND ART THERAPY

Music and art therapy fees may be covered by FES.

This category includes fees for services provided by a therapist who is certified by the Certification Board for Music Therapists or credentialed by the Art Therapy Credentials Board, Inc.

To find a therapist in Florida certified by the Board for Music Therapists, [click here](#).

To find a therapist in Florida credentialed by the Art Therapy Credentials Board, Inc., [click here](#).

REVIEW

Step Up For Students has placed a [feedback form](#) on our website where parents/guardians may submit suggestions for improving this Purchasing Guide. Step Up will periodically review these suggestions and implement improvements when appropriate.

Ineligible Items/Services

- Any item for which the scholarship student does not meet manufacturer's minimum age recommendation
- Live animals
- Food or housing for live animals
- Gas or electric powered gardening tools
- Ornamental plants (shrubs, landscaping, houseplants). **Please note:** this does not include seeds, seedlings, or fruit/vegetable/herb plants which are eligible expenses
- Household items, other than cooking supplies or items on the classroom furnishings list
- Commercial grade tools/equipment
- Blades or knives or items with blades or knives (except for scissors, math tools, or some cooking equipment)
- Water parks admission or annual pass
- In-ground or above-ground swimming pools
- Jacuzzis
- Bouncy houses
- Inflatable slides
- Trampolines larger than those for an individual
- Motorized exercise equipment (other than treadmills or walking pads)
- Motorized boats
- Motorized scooters or ride-ons (including golf carts)
- Single-admission leisure events (with the exception of bowling, trampoline park, or ice skating sessions)
- Pool toys/floats (except kickboards)
- Family memberships to gyms, YMCAs, libraries, museums or other facilities
- Family or Multi-User Subscriptions (when a single-user subscription is available)
- Group admissions or rentals (with the exception of a canoe or two-person kayak rental)
- Pool tables
- Arcade games
- Arcade visits
- Footwear of any kind

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- Sports uniforms
- Performance costumes
- Outdoor televisions/Inflatable outdoor theatres
- Video streaming services
- Television services
- In-Game/In-App Purchases or video game credits
- Social media Subscriptions or purchases (except LinkedIn Learning for Students)
- Activities occurring outside of the State of Florida that are not pre-authorized
- Costs of transportation (including gas, mileage, or public transportation)
- Costs of accommodations
- Cell phones
- Smartwatches
- Gaming consoles without educational software
- Hyperbaric chambers
- Wheelchairs
- Walkers and walking devices
- Braces (back, leg, neck, etc.)
- Medical testing kits and testing equipment
- Medically required equipment and accessories (feeding tubes, hygiene, sleeping, etc.)
- Hearing aids
- Contact lenses, non-prescription eyeglasses, prescription sunglasses (**Please note:** One pair of prescription eyeglasses may be submitted for reimbursement each year)

One reimbursement request for a Florida theme park ticket or annual pass during the school year (July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024) may be submitted per scholarship student, which may be reimbursed up to \$299 (before tax). Only the actual cost of the basic admission for the student will be covered. Additional services (such as parking, food and beverage packages, photographs or souvenirs, or premium access) will not be covered.

- The following Florida Theme Parks are eligible:
 - Animal Kingdom
 - Busch Gardens Tampa Bay
 - Epcot
 - Hollywood Studios
 - Islands of Adventure
 - Legoland Florida
 - Magic Kingdom
 - Peppa Pig Theme Park
 - SeaWorld Orlando
 - Universal Studios Florida

*An annual pass or multi-day ticket may include admission to more than one of the theme parks above in the same resort family.

- Admission to amusement parks, water parks, and out-of-state theme parks is not an eligible expense.
- Special event ticketing (for example, seasonal or after-hours events) at a Florida theme park is not an eligible expense.

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Reimbursement Requirements:

- The reimbursement request must be submitted under Instructional Materials > Field Trips > Florida theme park admission and may not include any additional items for reimbursement.
- An educational Benefit Form must be completed and submitted with the reimbursement request.
- The reimbursement request must be submitted after the ticket or pass has been paid in full, or the parent has incurred \$299 before tax.
- *For purchases made with a payment plan: the parent/guardian may only be reimbursed for the actual amount paid at the time of reimbursement submission, parents utilizing a payment plan must wait until the ticket or pass has been paid in full (or up to \$299) before submitting their reimbursement request.*
- Requests will be reviewed and reimbursed at the amount expended at the time of the reimbursement request.
- The purchase date is the date the ticket/pass is paid in full (or the purchaser has paid \$299, whichever is earlier). For example: an Annual Pass is purchased in August 2023, but paid on a payment plan; a total of \$299 has been paid as of November 15, 2023, and a reimbursement is submitted. The reimbursement request should be submitted with Invoice Date would be November 15, 2023.
- Proof of Purchase requirements:
 - Must include student name on the receipt or invoice.

Appendix B



Educational Benefit Form

Student Name: _____

Student ID: _____

Reimbursement Type (example: PE equipment, field trip, etc.): _____

Item for which Reimbursement is Requested (the item you purchased or plan to purchase):

Learning subject area(s) (for example: math, reading, physical education, social development):

Supporting curriculum or course description (curriculum or course with which the item requested will be used; curriculum may either be purchased or parent-designed. **Note:** This section required for Cooking, Gardening, Mechanical, and Woodworking Equipment and Supplies):

How will this item help my student learn? (Describe **in as much detail as you can** how this purchase will benefit your student's education):

Cost of purchase: _____

Place of purchase: _____

Date of purchase: _____

Link to website where item was purchased (if applicable; please provide the url to the purchased item): _____

I affirm that scholarship program funds are used only for authorized purposes as described in Florida Statutes 1002.394(4) or 1002.395(6), as applicable, and serve the listed student's educational needs.

Parent Name: _____

Parent Signature: _____

PLEASE NOTE: Any violation of the FES/FTC scholarship statutes, rules, policies, or procedures may result in the loss of the scholarship, ineligibility for future scholarships, or financial or criminal penalties. Please see the Parent Handbooks for [FES-UA](#) or [FES- EO/FTC](#).