



HOPE SCHOLARSHIP

SCHOOL HANDBOOK





*Click on any line within the Table of Contents to be taken directly to that section.

Contents

Provider Relations Contact Information	3
Step Up For Students Overview	3
As a new school, how can we partner with Step Up For Students?.....	4
Indicate Which Scholarships Your School Will Accept.....	4
Sign Up for School Webinars Through Step Up For Students	4
How do families qualify and apply for the scholarship?.....	5
Qualifying for a Scholarship	5
Scholarship Continuity	6
Scholarship Application.....	6
When should the school accept scholarship students?	7
Scholarship Awards and What Is Covered	7
Hope Scholarship Award Amounts.....	7
What is covered?.....	8
Private School Tuition and Fees.....	8
Statutory Requirements	9
Financial Reporting Requirements - Agreed Upon Procedures (AUP) Report	9
What's Involved.....	10
Why are AUPs important?.....	10
Important AUP Details	10
Norm-Referenced Testing	10
Private School Responsibilities	11
How to Enroll Students	12
Enter Tuition and Fees.....	12
Discounted Fees	13
Revisions to Tuition and Fees	13
Obtain Student(s) Current Year Award Letter.....	14
Register a Student to Your School	14
Complete and Submit a School Commitment Form (SCF) for Each Student.....	14



How to Complete a School Commitment Form (SCF).....	15
School Commitment Form (SCF) Tips.....	17
How to Withdraw a Student.....	17
Withdrawing a Student That Never Attended Your School.....	18
Withdrawing a Student Who Did Attend Your School.....	18
Exit Confirmation Form (ECF).....	18
Scholarship Funds When an ECF is Submitted.....	19
Student Transfers.....	19
How are scholarship payments made?.....	20
Confirm Enrollment.....	21
What to Check When Reconciling Roster	21
Verification Report (VR)	21
How to Complete the Verification Report.....	22
Parent Approval of Payments	23
Scholarship Recipient Obligations.....	23
Student Attendance.....	23
Discipline	23
Parent's Financial Obligation.....	23
Resources:.....	24
Customer Experience Team:.....	24
Marketing tools.....	24
Useful Email Addresses	25

WARNING: Please be advised that some of the Hope Scholarship content may be sensitive in nature and include references to, and descriptions of, topics such as bullying, harassment, hazing, and sexual assault. Step Up For Students acknowledges that this content may be difficult. We encourage you to care for your safety and well-being as you review the content.



Provider Relations Contact Information

There are 2 ways to reach us:

💬 Chat with a live agent at www.sufs.org

☎️ Call us at 877-735-7837

For Service Center hours, please visit our [“Contact Us”](#) page on our website.

Step Up For Students Overview

Step Up For Students is a state-approved nonprofit scholarship funding organization that empowers families to pursue and engage in the most appropriate learning options for their children.

One of the primary focuses of Step Up For Students is the administration of four scholarships for students in Florida: the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program (FTC) for lower to middle income families; the Family Empowerment Scholarship (FES), which has two components, one for students with Unique Abilities (FES-UA) and a second for lower to middle income families and for students who meet other categorical requirements (FES-EO); the Hope Scholarship for students who are bullied or are victims of violence, and the New Worlds Reading Scholarship Accounts Program (formerly Reading Scholarship Accounts Program) for public school students in kindergarten through fifth grades who struggle with reading.

In 2018 the Florida Legislature established the Hope Scholarship Program. The purpose of the program is to provide parents of public-school students in grades K-12 who are subjected to incidents of bullying or violence with options for a new learning environment. These options are:

- Transfer the student to another public school with available capacity within the student's current school district.
- The opportunity to request a scholarship to transport the student to a public school in another school district
- Request a scholarship for the student to attend an eligible participating, private school.

Step Up For Students administers the private school and transportation options for the Hope Scholarship.

Funding for the Hope Scholarship Program is provided through tax credits offered to the purchasers of motor vehicles and is distributed on a first-come, first-served basis, subject to available funding. Beginning on October 1, 2018, the purchaser of a motor vehicle is given a dollar-for-dollar sales tax credit, up to \$105, against any tax imposed by the state and collected



by a dealer, private tag agent or county tax collector as a contribution to Step Up For Students. More information for automobile dealers, car purchasers, and county tax collectors is available by clicking [here](#).

As a new school, how can we partner with Step Up For Students?

Step Up For Students welcomes private schools to participate in the scholarship program at any time of year. In order for a private school to accept scholarship students, it must be in good standing with the Florida Department of Education and fully compliant with the scholarship statute corresponding to private schools.

Requirements for private schools are focused on two categories: a school's facility and its personnel. The state is focused on providing a great learning environment for all of Florida's students and asks private schools to hold themselves to the standards found in s. 1002.421, F.S. A school will work with local agencies, such as fire and health departments, to successfully complete inspections annually. Additionally, school faculty and staff are fingerprinted to ensure they are good candidates to work with students.

Indicate Which Scholarships Your School Will Accept

Once a school has received their four-digit DOE code, they will need to follow the process below to be able to accept scholarship students:

- Navigate to www.floridaschoolchoice.org.
- Click on "K-12 PRIVATE SCHOOLS"
- Click on "Secure Login"
- Click on, "Private school Login" under Secure Login.
- Use your 4-digit Department of Education code and password to Login under "Existing Private Schools Login." If you don't have a DOE code, please click [here](#) and follow instructions to obtain a code and password.
- After logging in, please indicate which scholarship programs you'd like to participate in.

Sign Up for School Webinars Through Step Up For Students

Step Up For Students offers school onboarding, training and informational webinars throughout the school year.

- Double check your contact email addresses are up to date in the DOE system and the Step Up For Students School Login Portal
- Emails inviting schools to sign up for onboarding training sessions and webinars will be sent to each contact listed in our systems throughout the school year.



- The onboarding training is designed to:
 - Instruct new school administrators on how to use our systems and expectations
 - Go over changes for the upcoming school year
 - Give clarity on any new processes that will affect schools.

For additional information regarding upcoming training sessions and webinars, please contact us.

How do families qualify and apply for the scholarship?

Qualifying for a Scholarship

A student enrolled in a Florida public school in grades K-12 is eligible for a scholarship if the student reported one of the following incidents:

- Battery
- Harassment
- Hazing
- Bullying
- Kidnapping
- Physical attack
- Robbery
- Sexual offenses, harassment, assault, or battery
- Threat or intimidation
- Fighting at school

School means any educational program or activity conducted by a public K-12 educational institution, any school-related or school-sponsored program or activity, and riding on a school bus, as defined in s. 1006.25(1), F.S., including waiting at a school bus stop.

Upon receipt of a report of a listed incident, the school principal, or his/her designee, will provide a copy of the report to the parent and investigate the incident. Upon conclusion of the investigation or within 15 days after the incident was reported, whichever occurs first, the school district must notify the parent about the Hope Scholarship Program and offer the parent an opportunity to enroll the student in another public school, within the student's current district, that has capacity or to request and receive a scholarship to attend an eligible private school, subject to available funding. A parent who chooses to send their student to another public school



located outside the district in which the student resides may be eligible for a transportation scholarship.

The school district must provide the parent with a completed Hope Scholarship Notification Form (Form IEPC-HS1). The Hope Scholarship Notification Form (IEPC-HS1) is required for Step Up For Students to determine scholarship eligibility. Please note, this is the **ONLY** form that will be accepted by Step Up For Students for eligibility determination.

The Hope Scholarship Program is not based on financial need. Families may choose between transferring to another public school within the student's current school district, financial assistance toward private school tuition and fees, or transportation costs to attend a public school in another district.

Both the private school scholarship and the transportation scholarship have the same eligibility requirements

Scholarship Continuity

Once a student qualifies for a scholarship based on an incident, and is a resident of the state of Florida, the student remains eligible for the Hope Scholarship until he or she returns to public school, graduates from High School or turns 21, whichever occurs first. The student may keep the scholarship – contingent upon available funding and timely notification of renewal.

A student who enrolls in a public school or a public- school program is considered to have returned to public school for purposes of determining the end of the scholarship's term. The student does not have to apply for a scholarship within any established period of time after the occurrence of the incident. If there is a completed Hope Notification Form (IEPC HS-1) submitted with the application, the student may be found eligible.

Scholarship Application

To receive a Hope Scholarship, a parent of an eligible K-12 public school student must apply online by clicking [here](#).

The submitted application must include all the required student information to be considered complete. Incomplete applications cannot be processed. The parent will also be required to upload a copy of the completed Hope Notification Form (IEPC-HS1) that was provided by the public-school principal, or his or her designee, along with the application.

If a school principal, or his/her designee does not provide the Hope Notification Form after an incident has occurred, please contact the Florida Department of Education for further assistance.

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian, not the school, to complete the application and provide any documents required by Step Up For Students.



Applications, including all supporting documents, are processed in the order they are received. Once a student has been determined eligible by Step Up For Students, the parent will be notified of conditional eligibility and **may be funded based on program funds available on a first come, first served basis.**

Priority in subsequent school years will be given to renewal students from the previous year.

When should the school accept scholarship students?

When a family applies for a Hope Scholarship, it does not mean the student(s) will be awarded.

If a student is found eligible, the parent/guardian will receive their award letter via email.

A copy of the student(s) current year award letter should be provided by the parent/guardian to the eligible, participating private school of their choice.

If your school accepts a student without a current year award letter, your school assumes financial responsibility for that student.

Scholarship Awards and What Is Covered

Hope Scholarship Award Amounts

A parent of a student who applies and is determined eligible will be notified of eligibility and **may be funded based on program funds available on a first come, first served basis.**

Hope Scholarship award amounts for the upcoming school year are established when the Governor signs the state budget into law, typically by July 1st each year.

Scholarship awards are based on the student's grade and the county in which the student resides at the time of the application.

To view the scholarship award amounts for the 2022-23 school year, please [click here](#).

The student may keep the scholarship – contingent upon available funding and timely notification of renewal – until the student returns to public school or graduates from high school, whichever occurs first. A student who enrolls in a public school or public-school program is considered to have returned to public school for purposes of determining the end of the scholarship's term.

Please note: **If a student is found eligible before the school year's award amounts have been established, their award letter will not display any award amounts. Letters will be updated once the award amounts have been published by the Florida Department of Education.**



What is covered?

The Hope Scholarship offers two options for eligible students. One option is for attendance at an eligible, participating K-12 private school. The other is for transportation to an out of district public school, which is a public school typically outside of the student's county of residence.

Private School Tuition and Fees

Schools participating in the scholarship program may not charge a different rate for scholarship students. The same published tuition schedule must apply to all students, whether they are on scholarship or paying privately. Likewise, Step Up For Students may not pay for fees that are not included on the published fee schedule provided to all prospective parents.

Many eligible, participating private schools charge more than the value of the scholarship. In some cases, eligible, participating private schools may decide to provide scholarship students with supplemental financial assistance at their own discretion. Parents will be required to pay the difference between the value of the scholarship and the full tuition and fees.

The scholarship may be used towards the following school expenses, in this order:

- Tuition
- Books sold through the school (e.g., textbooks, workbooks, etc.)
- Registration
- Transportation services that occur during school hours (e.g., transportation services to/from school or for field trips)
- Uniforms sold through the school
- Testing (e.g., standardized or entrance testing)
- Other fees, not including before and/or after school care services or after school sports fees (e.g., graduation fees, yearbook fees, field trips)

***Before, after and wrap-around care or extracurricular sports are not a covered fee item. Also, fees paid to a third-party vendor (including books and uniforms) will not be covered by the Hope Scholarship.**

Students may not receive funding if the student is:

- Enrolled in public school (including the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind, the College-Preparatory Boarding Academy, or a charter school)
- Enrolled in a school operating for the purpose of providing education to youth in Department of Juvenile Justice programs



- Participating in a virtual school, correspondence school, or distance learning program that receives state funding unless limited to no more than two courses per school year
- Receiving any other educational scholarship under Chapter 1002, Florida Statutes.

Scholarship funding can be transferred to another eligible, participating private school during the school year if the student moves within the state, or simply wants to attend a different participating private school.

Statutory Requirements

In order to accept students receiving the Hope Scholarship, a school must apply with and meet the annual compliance regulations of the Florida Department of Education (DOE). For more information regarding these requirements, please login to your DOE portal.

Private school administrators are required to be familiar with and know the Hope Scholarship Statutes and Rules. The statute and rules can be found [here](#).

For questions related to Florida DOE compliance requirements or deadlines, you may contact your DOE regional manager by calling 800-447-1636. Please see a list of your regional managers by logging in to your DOE portal.

The policies and procedures specific to Step Up For Students are contained in this document. Please take the time to become familiar with them.

Financial Reporting Requirements - Agreed Upon Procedures (AUP) Report

Private schools receiving more than \$250,000 in scholarship dollars from the Family Empowerment Scholarship for Educational Options (FES-EO) and for students with Unique Abilities (FES-UA), the John M. McKay Scholarship for Students with Disabilities, the Hope Scholarship, the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship or in aggregate scholarship dollars from multiple programs in a single academic year must submit a financial report to Step Up For Students (or the scholarship funding organization from whom they receive most scholarship funds) no later than September 15th of the following year. (I.e., for the 2022-23 school year, reports will be due by September 15, 2023).

Agreed Upon Procedures are required by ss.1002.395(6)(o) and 1002.421(1)(q), F.S.

Due to varying award totals by grade level and scholarship this year, a school could have any number of students enrolled (around 25 and above) and meet this threshold.

Click [here](#) to watch a helpful video on Agreed Upon Procedures for schools.



What's Involved

Schools must hire an Independent Florida-licensed Certified Public Accountant, (CPA), to complete this financial report.

The Agreed Upon Procedures (AUPs) are defined procedures that will guide the CPA as they complete the report on behalf of the private school. Click [here](#) for a helpful video on Agreed Upon Procedures for CPAs.

To view the Agreed Upon Procedures guidelines, click [here](#). Florida statute s.1002.395 allows for the agreed upon procedures to be revised every other year. Any changes will be communicated to the schools in a timely manner. Step Up recommends you watch closely for changes each year.

Why are AUPs important?

- Financial accountability is essential for scholarship program growth.
 - This accountability may lead to increases in the scholarship fundraising cap, appropriations, and individual scholarship amounts.
- Provides proof that scholarship funds are safeguarded and spent on education-related expenditures.

Important AUP Details

- Section VI.D. requires a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) to visit those schools required to complete an AUP so they may physically review student attendance. *This section must be completed before the end of the school year.*
- Failure to meet the September 15 deadline may result in your school losing eligibility to participate in scholarship programs.
- All Agreed Upon Procedures (AUP) Reports must be **emailed** by the CPA to AUP@sufs.org. Hard copies of AUP Reports and reports submitted by the school will not be accepted.

For questions regarding the Financial Reporting requirement, please contact a Service Ambassador or email your questions to AUP@sufs.org.

Norm-Referenced Testing

To demonstrate academic accountability, participating schools are required to conduct a state-approved norm-referenced standardized test annually for scholarship students in grades 3rd through 10th.

A list of state-approved exams may be found by clicking [here](#).



Participating private schools must report a student's scores to the parent and submit scores for Hope Scholarship students to the independent research organization selected by the Department of Education by **August 15** each year.

Copies of students' score sheets with name, testing date, and national percentile ranking must be sent to:

Melissa Dyehouse
Learning Systems Institute
Florida State University
Suite 4600 University Center Bldg. C
Tallahassee, FL 32306-2540

Failure to submit results by the deadline may result in the loss of eligibility to participate in the scholarship programs.

Private School Responsibilities

Prior to accepting a student awarded a scholarship, each school will need to indicate their intent to participate in the Hope Scholarship by checking the Hope Scholarship box on the school's Department of Education private school log-in.

Participating private schools must comply with all of the requirements for private schools participating in state school choice programs pursuant to s. 1002.421, F.S. This includes annually administering a nationally norm-referenced test or the statewide assessments for students in grades 3 through 10 and reporting the student's scores to his or her parent.

Participating private schools may also choose to administer the statewide assessment to all private school students in grades 3 through 10 and must submit a request to the Department of Education by March 1 of each year in order to administer the statewide assessments in the subsequent school year.

If a private school fails to meet the requirements of the Hope Scholarship Program or s. 1002.421, F.S., the Commissioner may determine that the private school is ineligible to participate in the program.

Participating private schools must abide by the policies of Step Up For Students associated with, but not limited to the timely submission of School Commitment Forms, tuition and fee schedules, Exit Confirmation Forms, and completion of pre-funding student verification.

Participating private schools that receive a minimum of \$250,000 from any one or a combination of any of the scholarship programs (Hope, FES-UA, FES-EO, Florida Tax Credit, or McKay), from



either or a combination of Scholarship Funding Organizations (Step Up For Students or AAA Scholarship Foundation) are subject to the Agreed Upon Procedures process.

A copy of the requirements can be found [here](#).

How to Enroll Students

Enter Tuition and Fees

Before you can enroll students, you must enter your school's tuition and fees in the School Login and submit a PDF copy of your **published** tuition and fee schedule to Step Up For Students. This is done annually.

1. Log in to your Step Up For Students account by [clicking here](#).
2. Once you are logged in, click on the *School Info* tab and then on *Tuition and Fees* and fill in the following information:
 - a. Annual fees by grade level
 - b. Start and end dates for the 2022-23 school year
 - c. Testing information
3. Review all information to make sure it is correct and then click *Submit Tuition and Fees Data for Verification*.
4. Email your published Tuition and Fees and a PDF copy to tuitionandfees@sufs.org or fax them to 813-862-2325.
5. Note: You must submit the Tuition and Fees that you provide to your families when their students enrolled at your school. ***Do not send a screenshot of the financial contract/handbook, photocopy of the website page, or the Tuition and Fees chart within your Step Up For Students Portal.***

A Step Up For Students Service Ambassador will notify you if your Tuition and Fees have been approved or if we have any questions.

Once verified, any changes to your school's Tuition and Fees, including a change to the school's start date or tuition and fees amounts, **MUST BE COMPLETED BEFORE** the first Verification Report becomes available for the 2022-23 school year.

Please contact a Service Ambassador to make changes to already verified Tuition and Fees. Please **do not** attempt to update information before speaking with a Service Ambassador.



School Fee Schedule

Tuition and Fees Schedule:

School Year: Tuition and Fees Schedule Status: Not Submitted Schedule Submission Date: None

Grade	Tuition	Fees for Books	Fees for Registration	Fees for Transportation	Fees for Uniforms	Fees for Testing	Other Fees	Total
K	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
1	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
2	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
3	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
4	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
5	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
6	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
7	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
8	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
9	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
10	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
11	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
12	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

School Start Date: School End Date:

Standardized Test Given:

Standardized Test Start Date: Standardized Test End Date:

Multi-Sibling Discounts Available? Affiliation Discounts Available?

The information entered in the chart should be the same tuition and fees published for ALL prospective families.

Discounted Fees

Enter the highest possible amount for that grade and fee. Do not enter discounted tuition/fee amounts. For example, if your school offers discounted tuition/fees (i.e. parishioner rate for religious schools), you should enter the higher amount on the chart (i.e. non-parishioner rate).

Please note: Scholarship students must be charged the same amounts as non-scholarship students.

Revisions to Tuition and Fees

To avoid payment discrepancies, tuition and fees should be entered correctly on the first attempt. If any updates are needed to your tuition and fees, including your school's start date, once they have been verified by Step Up, please contact a Service Ambassador.

- Depending on what needs to be updated, the Service Ambassador may instruct you to take the following steps:
- Provide a letter from your school's Board of Directors detailing what has changed and why since the previously submission of tuition and fees.



- Provide a revised tuition and fees document to Step Up (which has been published to parents).
- If applicable, withdraw all students currently enrolled back to the first day of school listed on the previously submitted Tuition and Fee Schedule. (**Note: In this case, the first date and last date of attendance should equal the first day of school.**)
- Contact a Service Ambassador so we may un-verify your school's tuition and fees.
- Update your school's tuition and fees in the Step Up School Login and notify Step Up.

Once we have re-verified your tuition and fees, you may re-enroll scholarship students with the corrected amounts.

REMINDERS:

- Please do NOT attempt to correct or adjust your tuition and fees without speaking to a Service Ambassador first.
- No changes will be allowed to your school's tuition and fee schedule, including your start date, after the first Verification Report has opened.
- If your school offers discounted fees, these will be provided on a student basis via the School Commitment Form.

Obtain Student(s) Current Year Award Letter

Obtain a copy of the student's award letter for the *current* year from the parent/guardian.

Register a Student to Your School

Complete and Submit a School Commitment Form (SCF) for Each Student

To register a Hope Scholarship student attending your school, you must complete and submit a **School Commitment Form (SCF)**. This form can be requested by emailing the Provider Relations team at hopeenrollment@sufs.org.



2020-21 HOPE SCHOLARSHIP SCHOOL COMMITMENT FORM (SCF)	
FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY <small>This form must be completed by a private school eligible to accept Hope Scholarship students as determined by the FLDOE. The form should be returned to Step Up For Students within 15 days of the student's enrollment in the private school, or risk potential loss of scholarship or reduced funding. This form may only be used AFTER the parent's receipt of a funding confirmation email from Step Up noting the student's Hope Scholarship has been funded.</small>	
STUDENT: Name: _____ FLEID #: _____ Grade level: _____ Student's First Day of Attendance 2020-21: _____	
PARENT/GUARDIAN: Name: _____ Email Address: _____ Address: _____ County: _____ City: _____ State: FL Zip: _____ Parent/Guardian's Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____	
SCHOOL: Name: _____ DOE School Number: _____ Scholarship Program Contact: _____ Title: _____ County: _____ School's First Day of the 2020-21 Academic Year: _____ School Phone: _____ E-mail: _____	
TUITION: After completion of the required Verification Report, Step Up will distribute payment directly to the school for tuition & other fees up to the annual award as established by the State of Florida or the school's published rates (whichever is less) based on actual attendance following award. Scholarship payments MUST be approved by the parent prior to being deposited into a school account. This could be via a digital approval for ACH or by check endorsement depending on the method of payment. All other tuition and/or fees over the maximum scholarship award are the responsibility of the parent/guardian.	
School Conditions of Eligibility: (All questions must be checked in the "YES" column for the student to qualify for funding.)	
YES NO () () I certify the student's 2020-21 grade level is correctly stated above. () () I certify the student is NOT receiving funding from McKay, Gardiner or the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship. () () I certify this student is physically attending school full-time and is not in any type of home-school program. () () I certify a standardized test will be administered if the student is in grades 3-10. () () I understand an Exit Confirmation Form must be submitted to Step Up within 5 business days of notification of a student's withdrawal to receive a final payment and not adversely affect the student's eligibility. () () I certify this school has completed the annual DOE compliance requirements for participating scholarship schools and is compliant for the 2020-21 school year. () () I certify this school agrees to abide by all Step Up policies and procedures.	
ANNUAL Published TIF: Tuition: \$ _____ Books: \$ _____ Registration \$ _____ Transportation: \$ _____ Uniforms: \$ _____ Testing: \$ _____ Other: \$ _____ Description of "Other": _____	
ANNUAL Discounts (if applicable): Tuition: \$ _____ Books: \$ _____ Registration: \$ _____	
I acknowledge that payments by Step Up are strictly contingent upon 1) the school and family meeting and maintaining the conditions of eligibility; 2) the family remaining current on all fees and additional tuition payments; 3) the student meeting attendance requirements. I agree to notify Step Up if the school or parent loses their scholarship eligibility and provide to Step Up any documentation requested for audit purposes.	
THESE SIGNATURES CERTIFY THE INFORMATION PROVIDED IS CORRECT AND INDICATES AGREEMENT TO THE TERMS OUTLINED.	
Signature of Principal or Authorized School Representative _____ Date _____	
PARENT CONDITIONS OF ELIGIBILITY: I certify I have notified my student's public school district of my intent to use the Hope Scholarship. I agree to abide by all Step Up Scholarship policies and procedures as stated in the Hope Scholarship Parent Handbook and understand that failure to do so will result in loss of scholarship funding.	
Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian Addressee on Award Letter _____ Date _____	
Return Completed Form to Step Up For Students at: HopeEnrollment@sufs.org	
<small>V3 Updated 06-28-2020</small>	

Please make sure you fill out all the information in the form and include the student's FLEID.

By completing the SCF, the school and parent/guardian are confirming the student's enrollment and authorizing Step Up to distribute the student's scholarship funds to the school.

Please note: **SCFs must be submitted immediately. Failure to submit a student's SCF in a timely manner may result in delayed payment for your school, proration of the student's award amount, or possible award expiration for that student.**

How to Complete a School Commitment Form (SCF)

1. Request a form from the provider relations team by emailing hopeenrollment@sufs.org.
2. Fill out the information requested on the form, including the student's name, FLEID number, grade level and the student's start date. (This is the student's first day at your school.)



- a. Note: The student's start date must be equal to or later than the school's start date as listed on the tuition and fees chart.
3. Enter the annual tuition and fees for the student. If the student receives a discount (i.e., parishioner rate or sibling discount), enter the actual amount the student is charged.
 - a. Note: The student's tuition and fees must be less than or equal to the school's overall published Tuition and Fees for that grade level.
4. Check all certification boxes. On each SCF you will certify the following:
 - a. I certify that the student's grade level is correctly stated.
 - b. I certify that this student is physically attending school full-time and is not in any type of home school program.
 - c. I certify that a standardized test will be administered and the student's scores (3rd through 10th grade only) will be provided to the Department of Education as required by law.
 - d. I understand that I must submit an Exit Confirmation Form (ECF) to Step Up For Students within five (5) business days of the student's withdrawal in order to receive a final payment for the child and to not compromise his/her eligibility in future years. In cases where an overpayment occurred, the private school should expect to receive an invoice from our Finance department for any funds paid after the student's exit date.
 - e. I certify that this school has completed the annual Department of Education private school compliance requirements and is compliant for [current] school year.
 - f. I certify that this school agrees to abide by all Step Up For Students scholarship administration policies and procedures.
 - g. I acknowledge that payments by Step Up For Students are strictly contingent upon 1) the school and family meeting and maintaining the conditions of eligibility; 2) the family remaining current on all fees and additional tuition payments; 3) the child maintaining compliance with this school's attendance policy.
 - h. I agree to report of the default of school or parent eligibility to Step Up For Students and provide access to supporting documentation for audit purposes.
5. Review entire SCF, carefully checking:
 - a. FLEID
 - b. grade level,
 - c. student's first day of attendance
 - d. start date and
 - e. tuition and fee amounts.
6. Sign and date the SCF
7. Ask the parent to sign and date the SCF.
8. Scan a clear copy of the SCF form
9. Email it back to hopeenrollment@sufs.org.
10. You will receive an email confirming receipt of the SCF and funding amount for the student in approximately 3-5 business days.

IMPORTANT: Please make sure all the information is legible and accurate before submission.



School Commitment Form (SCF) Tips

IMPORTANT: To avoid payment issues, please confirm your school's tuition and fees AND SCF's are entered correctly. These forms directly affect Step Up's accounting system, and it is your school's responsibility to ensure all information is accurate.

Scholarships are paid to the school on a quarterly basis. If a student attended a school for a minimum of 10 days, the school would receive the full quarter's tuition.

When an SCF is submitted, our team will calculate the payment based on the student's funding start date determined by the latest of the following four factors:

- the date of the student's scholarship award
- the student's first day of attendance at the school
- the date the school became compliant with the Florida DOE.

Note: Changes to SCFs and ECFs (discussed next) cannot be made when a Verification Report is taking place.

How to Withdraw a Student

When a student withdraws from an eligible participating private school during the academic year, an Exit Confirmation Form (ECF) must be completed and submitted within FIVE (5) business days of the student's withdrawal.

The ECF asks questions related to outstanding balances owed to the school by the parent and student's behavior.

If there is an outstanding balance at the time of the withdrawal, please indicate this information on the ECF. Only the balance related to tuition and/or fees for that academic year for that individual student should be indicated on the ECF. A family balance should be divided by the number of children attending the school and the individual amount due entered on each student's ECF.

If a student is being withdrawn due to expulsion, please indicate this information on the ECF. Balances may not be listed on the ECF for the following reasons: prior years' balances owed, future scholarship checks or before/after school care fees.

Step Up For Students will **not** hold a request to transfer the student's scholarship to another eligible, participating private school due to an outstanding balance. **Step Up For Students will not mediate issues related to outstanding balances for either the school or the parent. Any issues related to outstanding balances are strictly between the parent and the school.**

An **Exit Confirmation Form (ECF)** must be completed for students who:



- Never attend or show up once the school year starts
- Leave your school; OR
- Stop attending without notice.

Withdrawing a Student That Never Attended Your School

If withdrawing a student who never attended your school, the student's start date and end date must be the same as the school's start date for the academic year.

Withdrawing a Student Who Did Attend Your School

If withdrawing a student who did attend your school, please enter the date the student physically last attended, not the date the parent notified you.

The student's payment will be adjusted in our system based on the ECF and, if applicable, Step Up will invoice your school for any over payment.

Exit Confirmation Form (ECF)

To request an Exit Confirmation Form, you must email hopeenrollment@sufs.org.

2020-2021 STEP UP FOR STUDENTS HOPE SCHOLARSHIP EXIT CONFIRMATION	
<p><small>Please complete this form upon withdrawal of a scholarship student. Funding is based on actual attendance through withdrawal date only. THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED AND SUBMITTED TO SUFS WITHIN 5 WORKING DAYS OF STUDENT WITHDRAWAL.</small></p>	
<p>1. Student Name: _____</p>	
<p>2. Parent/Guardian Names(s) _____</p>	
<p>3. Name of School: _____ School DOE Code: _____</p>	
<p>Address: _____ City: _____ State: EL Zip: _____</p>	
<p>Ph # _____ E-mail: _____</p>	
<p>4. Student's first day of class ____/____/____</p>	
<p>5. Student's last day of class ____/____/____</p>	
<p>6. Reason for leaving school (check all that apply)</p>	
<p>Moved out of area _____ Graduated from highest grade offered _____ Academic difficulties _____</p>	
<p>Disciplinary problems _____ Could not continue tuition payments _____ Parental Choice _____</p>	
<p>Other _____</p>	
<p>7. Is this student leaving as the result of suspension? ____Yes ____No</p>	
<p>If yes, why? _____</p>	
<p>8. Has this student been expelled? ____Yes ____No</p>	
<p>If yes, why? _____</p>	
<p>9. This student is now transferring to: _____ Public School _____ Unknown</p>	
<p>_____ Private School Name of Private School _____</p>	
<p>10. Does this family have an outstanding account balance beyond the scholarship commitment that would prevent them from transferring their scholarship to another school?</p>	
<p>____Yes ____No If yes, what is the amount owed? _____</p>	
<p><small>Upon receipt of the Exit Confirmation Form by the SUFS, determination will be made if any scholarship funds are due to the school or if the school has received an overage. This determination will be based on the child's actual attendance at the private school beginning with the student's first day of attendance, eligibility date (whichever is latest) and the student's last day of attendance. If additional funds are due to the school the funds will be paid in the next scheduled funding verification cycle. If it is determined that funds are owed to Step Up for payment in excess of actual attendance; the school will be notified and must remit reimbursement prior to the next scholarship distribution.</small></p>	
<p>Print Name of Principle, Assistant or equivalent _____</p> <p>Title: _____</p>	<p>Signature of Principal, Assistant or equivalent _____</p> <p>Date ____/____/____</p>
<p><i>For SFO use only</i></p>	
<p>Date of award letter _____ OR</p> <p>Owed to School _____ OR</p>	<p>First day of attendance _____</p> <p>Owed to SFO _____</p>
<p><small>V3.Updated 06-28-2020</small></p>	



Important:

- Please make sure that all the information is filled out correctly to avoid issues with payment.
- An ECF is not necessary if the school year has concluded.
- If you need to revise a student's School Commitment Form (SCF), please do not complete an ECF. Contact a Service Ambassador or email hopeenrollment@sufs.org for assistance.
- The "Outstanding Balance" field on the ECF is for informational purposes only and will not prevent the student from enrolling in another school.

Note: Changes to SCFs and ECFs cannot be made when a Verification Report is taking place.

Scholarship Funds When an ECF is Submitted

When Step Up for Students receives an ECF, calculations will be made to determine if additional scholarship funds are due to the eligible, participating private school or if funds are owed to Step Up For Students.

If scholarship funds are due to the school, those funds will be included in the next scheduled payment distribution. If money is due to Step Up For Students, an invoice will be sent to the school and payment is due upon receipt.

In the event the repayment of invoiced amount presents a financial challenge for the eligible, participating school, a payment plan may be negotiated.

Failure to submit payment for invoices by the deadline and/or the agreed-upon payment plan schedule may result in the suspension of funding from Step Up For Students.

Student Transfers

The Hope Scholarship may be transferred to another eligible, participating private school throughout the academic year.

To transfer the scholarship, the current eligible participating private school must withdraw the student (see [Exit Confirmation Form](#) for more information). After the ECF has been received by Step Up For Students, the new school will be required to submit an SCF for the student (see [School Commitment Form](#) for more information).

If a student is enrolled and attending a school for 10 or more days in a particular quarter, the school will receive the full quarter's tuition. If a student transfers to a different participating school in the same quarter, the parent and the schools will negotiate the amount due to the new school.



How are scholarship payments made?

Scholarship payments are made directly to the school's business bank account via Automated Clearing House (ACH) at least four times per year. Scholarship parents or guardians must approve scholarship payments through a unique link sent to their email on file for the payments to be released.

To make sure the school receives on-time payments the following instructions must be followed:

- Log into your Step Up For Students account. Click on the "*School Info*" tab and then on "*Tax & Bank Information*".
 - **Please note: Bank account information must be for your school's business account** – this will be validated before payments are made.
- If the bank account information **has not changed**, then you do not need to do anything.
- If you **need to update** the bank account details, please click the *pencil* icon within the "*Financial Institution Information*" section, enter the new information and then click the *save* icon.
 - Upload a new copy of your school's voided check that matches the new bank account details. To upload the voided check, follow the instructions below
 - click the *pencil* icon within the "*Tax Information*" section,
 - click *Choose File* followed by
 - click *Upload Documents* once you have selected the document and finally
 - click the *save* icon. Once you have done this, you do not need to do anything else.
- If you **have not previously submitted** your banking information, please upload your W-9 and add your banking information by following these steps:
 - Start in the "*Tax Information*" section by selecting your *Tax ID Type* from the drop down and then entering your Tax ID number. Then click *Choose File*, select your W-9 and then click *Upload Documents* followed by clicking the *save* icon.
 - Move to the "*Financial Institution Information*" section and enter your school's banking information and then click the *save* icon.

Payments are made on Fridays during the payment period. If a parent approves payment before 11:59 p.m. ET on the Thursday before a payment, the student will be included in the ACH payment the following day. This will continue through the final ACH payment for the distribution period.



- Step Up For Students will send continuous reminders to parents/guardians who have not yet approved their student's payment.
- Scholarship funds may take two business days from the dates of initiation listed above to be reflected in your school's bank account.
- Your school will be emailed a remittance advice advising which students are included in that week's ACH payment.

Helpful Tip: You can cross-reference your distribution Verification Report against ACH remittance advices to identify which of your students are still awaiting payment approval.

Confirm Enrollment

Before the Verification Report is due, please make sure that you have submitted an SCF for each student attending your school on a Hope Scholarship to avoid missing or delaying a payment.

What to Check When Reconciling Roster

Confirm that you have received a confirmation from the Provider Relations team for each SCF you have submitted according to your school roster.

Verification Report (VR)

Prior to each scholarship payment, schools are required to verify their scholarship students by completing and submitting a Verification Report (VR).

The VR will be sent via email. This report shows all students eligible to receive a payment in the upcoming distribution for the Hope scholarship.



Step Up for Students – 2020-2021 Verification Report

Verification Report: Payment Distribution – 4, August 2020-June 2021 School Year

For Step Up for Students to process your verification report(s), please ensure all the information below is accurate and sign at the bottom. If you have any questions, please call our Provider Relations team at 1-877-735-7837 and select option 2 for Providers, then 4 for Hope or email our Provider Relations Team at hopevr@sufs.org.

School Name:

DOE Number:

Currently Enrolled Students:

Student Name (First Middle Last)	Student FLEID:	Grade Level	Funding Start Date	Annual Payment Amount	Payment Distribution Amount	Is this student still enrolled in your school?	Has this student had continuance attendance since the last VR?	Days Absent
						<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
						<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
						<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
						<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
						<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
						<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
						<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	

I certify that all the information provided in this verification report is true, correct, and complete. I understand I can be lawfully punished for fraud, disciplinary action or participation revocation by Step Up for Students and The Department of Education if I intentionally misrepresent the information.

Signature Date _____



If a scholarship student at your school is not shown on this report, they are not receiving a payment for that distribution.

The Verification Report must be completed during the verification window, typically 5 days, in order for the school to receive payment. (Verification Report dates can be found on the Payment Distribution Schedule.)

Please note: If your school does not complete your Verification Report during the specified verification window, your students' payments will not be included in that payment distribution.

How to Complete the Verification Report

You will receive the VR during the pre-determined Verification Window via email.

1. Confirm that all Hope students enrolled at your school are listed on the Verification Report and ensure all students have the correct:
 - a. FLEID
 - b. grade level
 - c. funding start date
 - d. end date (if applicable) AND
 - e. payment amount
2. Answer two questions for each student that has enrolled/withdrawn at your school in the last quarter. Both questions for all students must be answered to submit your VR.
 - a. The question about student attendance should be answered relative to the school's attendance requirements. If a student has missed a few days for illness or because of a family situation but is in line with the school's attendance requirements and currently enrolled, **this should not be a 'No' answer.**
 - b. **Enter the number of days absent for each student, if applicable.**
3. Once you have completed the VR, sign the bottom of the page.
4. Scan a clear copy of the verification report.
5. Reply to the original VR email you received and attach the completed VR.
 - a. You will receive an email confirming the VR has been processed. If you do not receive an email within approximately 3-5 business days, please contact a Service Ambassador.



Parent Approval of Payments

Step Up For Students issues Hope Scholarship payments to schools electronically. This process takes place at least four times per school year and requires the parent/guardian to electronically verify their student's payment before Step Up For Students can release the student's scholarship funds to the school.

Parents or guardians will be notified via email when there is a payment to approve. Parents/guardians will need to follow the steps below to make sure payments are made to the school on time:

- Click on the link found within the email to review their student's payment.
- Review, complete and submit the electronic form for their student's payment.

Scholarship Recipient Obligations

Student Attendance

Students must abide by the attendance policy of the eligible, participating private school in which they are enrolled. Failure to do so may result in a loss of scholarship. Should extenuating circumstances exist that cause a student to be absent for an excessive number of days, during which no education is being provided to the student by the school, the school should submit an Exit Confirmation Form (ECF) for this student. Once the student has returned to the eligible, participating private school, a School Commitment Form (SCF) should be submitted to reactivate scholarship funding.

If the circumstances surrounding the student's absence are unique, please contact a Service Ambassador for additional guidance.

Discipline

Students and families must abide by the behavioral and disciplinary policies of the eligible, participating private school in which the student is enrolled. Failure to do so may result in loss of scholarship. An eligible, participating private school reserves the right to suspend or expel students if its published policies are not followed.

For more information or for specific questions, please contact a Service Ambassador.

Parent's Financial Obligation

If the cost to attend an eligible, participating private school exceeds the student's funding amount for that academic year, the parent is responsible for the difference. If a student withdraws from a school and has an outstanding balance, the school should indicate the balance on the student's



ECF. If the balance is for an individual student, the balance should be indicated on the individual student's ECF.

If there is a family balance, divide the balance by the number of children and enter the amount on each student's ECF.

Please contact a Service Ambassador with any questions regarding financial obligations.

Step Up for Students will NOT mediate outstanding balances. An outstanding balance and the collection of the debt is between the school and the parent.

Resources:

Customer Experience Team:



The Customer Experience Team exists to engage, equip, and empower educational partners to support student success. CX offers timely updates through our [Bulletin Board](#), develops connections to available high-quality resources through our [School Leadership Padlet](#), and connects schools to professional learning opportunities. We build a support base of school stakeholders, educate them about our programs, and train them to participate in advocacy so that they can be activated when needed. CX is committed to supporting and building relationships with our educational partners.

[Click here](#) to find your CX Regional Manager.

Marketing tools

The “Marketing Toolkit” tab on the Step Up For Students website provides helpful resources to market your school and the Step Up For Students Scholarship program. From Step Up’s Marketing Toolkit, you can:

- download flyers or request printed flyers
- request one free outdoor banner (or purchase additional)
- view and download Step Up TV and Radio PSAs
- request to purchase indoor retractable banners
- download a web banner for your website



- A web banner alleviates the need to update information from one year to the next. We recommend adding either of the following statements along with web banners:
 - We Accept Step Up For Students Scholarship Recipients.
 - (School Name) Accepts Step Up For Students Scholarship Recipients.
- review and copy social media posts

Adding information about Step Up For Students to your website allows families to learn of the scholarship program and financial assistance available.

You're welcome to use the Step Up For Students logo on your website and collateral. We ask that you allow us to review the materials prior to using them. Reach out to us at Marketing@sufs.org.

Useful Email Addresses

- **Hopeenrollment@sufs.org**– The Provider Relations Department has a team of Service Ambassadors that can assist you with your questions and/or concerns.
- **AUP@sufs.org** – Contact the AUP Accounting Team with questions regarding the financial reporting requirement.
- **Tuitionandfees@sufs.org** – Email your published annual Tuition and Fees after entering the information in your Step Up For Students account.
- **Marketing@sufs.org** – Please allow us to review any materials using the Step Up For Students logo prior to using them.

The terms outlined in this handbook are subject to change. You may familiarize yourself with updates by occasionally checking our website at www.stepupforstudents.org.