



Reporting on private schools that take public money

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Orlando Sentinel

Campus visits: A key part of our reporting



We showed up unannounced at dozens of private schools that take vouchers. Some turned us away. A surprising number invited us in.

Get all the state reports you can

SCHOOL NAME	CITY	NUMBER OF GAIN SCORES OBSERVED		AVERAGE GAIN SCORE IN 2020-21			AVERAGE GAIN SCORE FROM 2017-18 TO 2020-21		
		2020-21 SCHOOL YEAR	BETWEEN 2017-18 AND 2020-21	READING+ MATH COMBINED	READING	MATH	READING+ MATH COMBINED	READING	MATH
WESTWOOD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL	LIVE OAK	35	54	1.02	3.19	-1.14	-.23	2.32	-2.78
WILLIAM A. KIRLEW JR. ACADEMY	MIAMI GARDENS	32	46	-.30	-1.07	.47	-1.10	-1.59	-.61
WINTER HAVEN CHRISTIAN SCHOOL	WINTER HAVEN	112	159	-4.12	-2.25	-6.05	-4.13	-2.35	-5.95
WORSHIPERS' HOUSE OF PRAYER ACADEMY	MIAMI	42	58	-12.02	-8.06	-16.08	-8.05	-5.27	-10.71
YOUNG KIDS IN MOTION ACADEMY INC	JACKSONVILLE	41	51	-4.16	-3.94	-4.38	-4.08	-2.60	-5.55

Complaint and Inquiry Summary

Section 1002.421(2)(a)3, F.S., requires the Department to establish a process by which individuals may notify the Department of any violation of state laws relating to program participation by a parent, private school or school district. To comply with this section, a complaint specialist position was established. Duties of the position include being responsible for receiving the initial complaints via email or telephone through the toll-free information hotline and assisting the complainant in completing and submitting the formal complaint form.

When a signed formal complaint form is received, it is reviewed by the Department for legal sufficiency. A complaint is legally sufficient if it contains ultimate facts that show that a violation of applicable law or rule may have occurred. Formal complaints found legally sufficient either have an inquiry opened or the complaint is referred to the appropriate organization for investigation.

The Department's complaint and inquiry process is codified in State Board Rule 6A-6.03315, F.A.C., and tracked through an administrative function on the IEPC website. Below is the complaint and inquiry summary for the 2022-2023 school year.

Action	Total
Legally Sufficient – Inquiry	101
Not Legally Sufficient	96
Total Signed Complaint Forms Received	197

A total of 197 written formal complaints were submitted to the Department from 2022-2023. Ninety-six of the total written formal complaints were found to be not legally sufficient. Ninety-nine of the 101 legally sufficient inquiries have been resolved either by the Department or by the school district in compliance with program requirements or by the Department requiring the school to take corrective action. At the time this report was filed, two inquiries

Get complaints



can you explain to me why is \$3,000 ESE fee, because they have special needs and need teachers more training. But Ms. Morales is 21 didn't have a Bachelors degree as they advertise on there folders, just a calling from God that was she said. I just don't want that school to charge any \$ to my kids for less than a week on a place wasn't ready. I feel bad for all the parents who didn't know whats going on there, because when you don't teach a kid for a couple weeks he can have a regression, They charge a lot \$9800 per year for nothing. I pay a lot \$225 registration fee, and \$378 uniform fee and they didn't gave me a refund or accept back the uniform and kit even if they are new.

“I am writing to seek help for my child”

From: webmaster@fldoe.org [mailto:webmaster@fldoe.org]

Sent: Wednesday, January 9, 2019 4:29 AM

To: School Choice <SchoolChoice@fldoe.org>

Subject: School Choice - Contact Us

If you would like to send an e-mail message to the Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice, please complete the form below. Be sure to include your e-mail address and/or phone number, so we are able to respond.

Name

[REDACTED]

Subject Compliance

Message: I am writing to seek help for my child at Winner Primary School. There are constant fighting amongst students in the classroom, students with special needs not getting help they run around the rooms throwing things and yelling. No one cares. the classrooms are disgusting, children of all ages are running out of the classroom screaming and hitting each other. The principal is never at the school and the staff is not qualified to work. The principal collects money and is not helping the kids there. There no materials for the kids, no playground area my kids, the school is dirty. Someone needs to visit the school and see what takes place there. My kids tell they do not have to do class work they can do whatever they want the teacher does not care.

Read responses from schools

Dear Private School Administrator:

Our records indicate that your school participates in the McKay Scholarship Program, the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program, the Hope Scholarship Program, the Family Empowerment Scholarship for Educational Options, and the Family Empowerment Scholarship for Students with Unique Abilities, providing services to eligible students pursuant to sections 1002.39, 1002.395, 1002.40, 1002.394, and 1002.421, Florida Statutes.

It has been brought to our attention that your school may be in violation of laws governing the state school choice scholarship programs. Pursuant to section 1002.421(2), Florida Statutes, if the department has reasonable cause to believe that a violation has occurred, it shall conduct an inquiry or make a referral to the appropriate agency for an investigation. As evidence of compliance with program requirements, please provide the following documents:

- A list of **all** owners, operators, and employees (teachers and other personnel) and their position titles in accordance with section 1002.421, Florida Statutes;

POSITIONS /TITLE	EMPLOYEMENT HISTORY CHECK	YEARS OF EXPERIENCE	EDUCATION / SPECIAL SKILLS / KNOWLEDGE	CONTINUE EDUCATION
Technology	Downey Christian School	16	Bilingual	
First Grade Teacher	Kid's Prep School	15	Bachelor of Arts: Elementary Education; Bilingual	
Records, Office & Substitute	Rainbow Store	3 Tutor / 3 Office	IT Technical of Central Florida: Medical Assistant and Billing & Coding; Bilingual	
High School English Teacher	Baldwin Park Elementary	7	Associates in Science: Entertainment Design Tech; Associates in Arts; Bilingual	Not enrolled due to finance. Will continue to major in Education.
Support Services	Eastland Baptist School	7	Bilingual	
Technology & Office	self employed	10	Bilingual	
High School Math Teacher	Publix	1	Bachelors (incomplete): Mathematics and Education; Associates in Arts; Bilingual	UCF - Pursuing Bachelor in Mathematics and a minor in Education

Check court records, too

STATEMENT OF CLAIM

1. Plaintiff, LaTonya Thomas, brings this action for monetary damages against Agape Christian Academy for nonpayment of wages earned for the months of April 2016, and May 2016. Mrs. Thomas was employed in a salaried position by Agape Christian Academy as the VPK Teacher / Preschool Director. Her monthly salary was \$2,450.00 / month.

Divine Orders International Ministries, Inc.,
a Florida corporation, Dena Elmore and
Chonda L. Hawkins,
Defendant(s).

WRIT OF POSSESSION

THE STATE OF FLORIDA:
To the Sheriff of Orange County, Florida

YOU ARE COMMANDED to remove all persons from the following described property in Orange County, Florida:

913 South Ivey Lane, Orlando, FL 32811

and put J.P.F.D Investment Corporation, a Florida corporation, the Plaintiff herein, in possession of it, after 24 hours prior notice conspicuously posted on the premises.

DATED this the 11 day of January, 2017.

Look at handbooks and school policies

Group Three Violations include serious infractions, on or off campus, evidencing significant unacceptable (for a Christian school setting) heart issues.

Typical Group Three Violations	Possible Consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Repeated or egregious Group Two Violations• Possession or use of pornography, alcohol, firearms, weapons, illegal drugs, unreported prescription or non-prescription medications.• Falsely activating a fire alarm• Sexual harassment or immorality• Homosexual behavior• Parent or Student engaging in any willful or blatant violation of our Statement of Faith.• Blatant insubordination• Serious threats to the safety or welfare of another individual(s)• Theft from the school or another student.• A Parent or student posting any item about WHCS and/or a WHCS student online without permission• Parent or student not following the traffic guidelines in the parking lot, including cutting over the center grass median.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Involvement of law enforcement, as necessary• Out of school suspension• Referral to Board of Directors• Student placed on probation• Dismissal• Removal from an Honor Society or position of school leadership.• Other consequence deemed appropriate by administration

Definition of "identifying statement"

A statement that a student is a homosexual, bisexual, or otherwise immoral, or words to that effect or language or behavior that a reasonable person would believe is intended to convey the statement that a student engages in or has a propensity or intent to engage in immoral and/or homosexual acts.

Examples: "I am gay," "I am a homosexual," "I have a homosexual orientation."

Homosexual conduct, defined as acts or identifying statements, is incompatible with enrollment at Evangelical Christian School and is a basis for dismissal. All students must be treated with dignity and respect, free of threats or harassment.

Statement on Marriage and Sexuality

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. (Gen 1:26-27) **Rejection of one's biological gender is a rejection of the image of God within that person.**

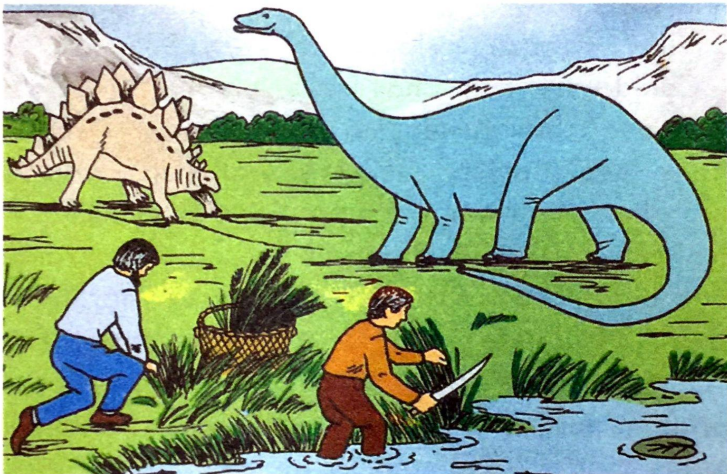
Ask for school enrollment and voucher data

SCHOOLNAME	# of McKay Students	\$ Scholarship Amount Paid
ELITE PREPARATORY ACADEMY	20	123,775.75
SAINTS ACADEMY INC.	50	264,561.75
ACADEMY FOR AUTISM	51	674,241.00
MONTESSORI WAY SCHOOL	#	#
RJB CHRISTIAN SCHOOL	#	#
MONTESSORI SCHOOL OF EAST ORLANDO	18	121,748.00
THE PARAGON SCHOOL	56	656,410.50
POTTER'S HOUSE ACADEMY	56	311,014.75



Check out curricula – buy textbooks if you can

fossils, the term “dinosaur” was coined from two Greek words meaning “terrible” and “lizard.” Although we usually think of the larger dinosaurs, most were probably about the size of a horse or smaller.



Dinosaurs with men

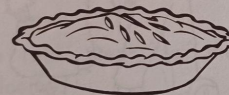
Bible passages, rock art, and ancient evidence seem to describe man’s accounts of living dinosaurs. Some Bible scholars believe that two references in the Biblical Book of Job refer to dinosaurs. One reference mentions

Circle and color what you saw in your mind when you read “The Big Cover-Up.”

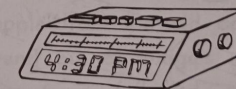
(8) The apples that Ace and Pudge picked from the old apple tree probably looked like . . .



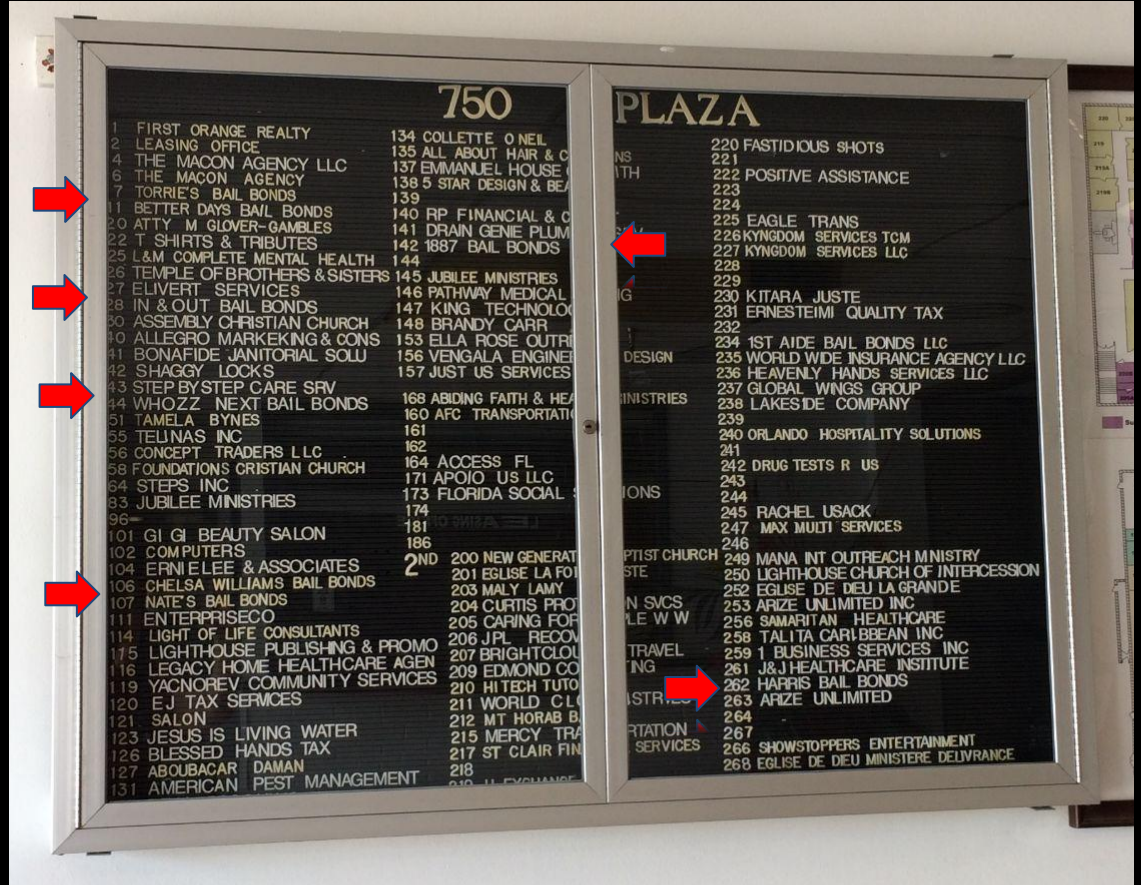
(9) The pie Grandma baked probably looked more like . . .



(10) The old clock on the wall probably looked like . . .



School won't let you in? Your visit can still have value

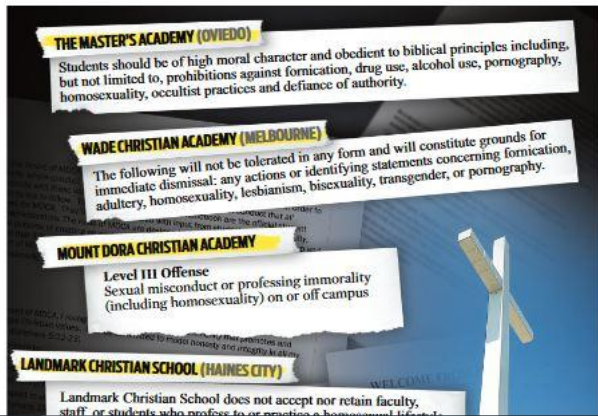


The story makes it all worth it

DISCRIMINATION IN EDUCATION

Anti-LGBTQ schools receive state vouchers

More than \$129M in Florida scholarships went to students who attended private schools where gays are condemned or unwelcome



By LESLIE POSTAL AND ANNIE MARTIN

In the shadow of a nearly 200-foot cross, Central Florida Christian Academy enrolls students who live by the Bible's commands and abstain from "sexual immorality" — meaning gay children aren't welcome on the state-supported campus in west Orange County.

Calvary Christian High School in Clearwater denies admission to students if they, or someone in their home, are practicing a "homosexual lifestyle or alternative gender identity" or "promoting such practices."

Wade Christian School in Melbourne keeps an "expulsion list," with a "homosexual act" among the offenses, alongside bringing weapons to campus, distributing drugs and striking a staff member.

In Florida last year, 156 private Christian schools with these types of anti-gay views educated



Left: Students arrive for the start of the day at Altamonte Christian School in Altamonte Springs. Top right: Students wait to be picked up at the end of the school day at the Muslim Academy of Greater Orlando. Bottom right: Students are dismissed to the car pickup line at Orlando Torah Academy. JOE BURBANK/STEPHEN DOWELL/PHILAN EBENHACK/ORLANDO SENTINEL

Religious schools get vouchers

By Leslie Postal and Annie Martin
Orlando Sentinel

Most Florida students using state vouchers to pay for private school spend their scholarships at religious schools, as their parents select campuses where lessons from the Bible, the Torah and the Quran are taught alongside tradi-

tion Secena Academy — Its mission to nurture children "in an Islamic environment" free of the "evils of modern society" — and Leaders Preparatory School combined received more than \$1.6 million in taxpayer-funded scholarships this school year to educate more than 430 students.

At a large Jewish school in South Florida, where girls and boys are

Yeshiva Torah Chaim Torah Emes educates more than 1,000 students in kindergarten through 12th grade, about 86% of them on state scholarships that provided the school more than \$3.5 million so far this year.

At Azalea Park Baptist school in east Orlando, the Bible is "the sole authority" and the school's foundation. The school, which received more than \$679,000 so far this year

Supporters of school vouchers are thrilled the Florida Legislature this year is pushing to expand the programs that now serve children from low-income families or those with disabilities into a "universal" plan open to all students. That will likely mean more money and students for religious schools, which now educate about 78% of Florida's voucher students, accord-