

The Florida Senate  
**COMMITTEE MEETING EXPANDED AGENDA**

**EDUCATION**  
**Senator Gruters, Chair**  
**Senator Jones, Vice Chair**

**MEETING DATE:** Tuesday, January 12, 2021

**TIME:** 9:00—11:30 a.m.

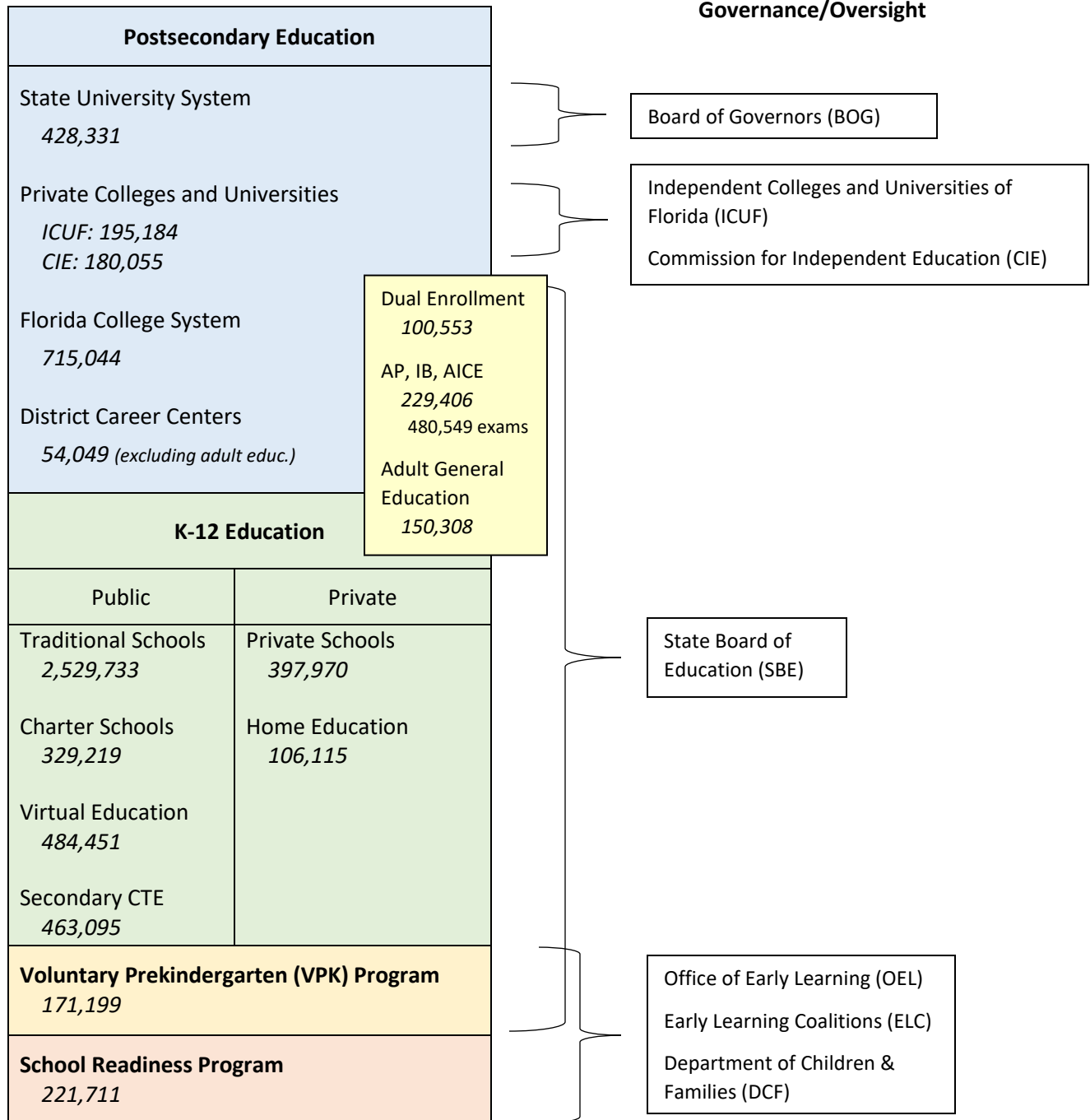
**PLACE:** *Pat Thomas Committee Room, 412 Knott Building*

**MEMBERS:** Senator Gruters, Chair; Senator Jones, Vice Chair; Senators Berman, Bradley, Broxson, Diaz, Hutson, Passidomo, Polsky, and Thurston

TAB	BILL NO. and INTRODUCER	BILL DESCRIPTION and SENATE COMMITTEE ACTIONS	COMMITTEE ACTION
PUBLIC TESTIMONY WILL BE RECEIVED FROM ROOM A3 AT THE DONALD L. TUCKER CIVIC CENTER, 505 W PENSACOLA STREET, TALLAHASSEE, FL 32306			
Introduction of Committee Members and Staff			
Overview of State K-12 Scholarship Programs			
Overview of State Financial Aid Programs			
Other Related Meeting Documents			

# Florida's PreK-20 Education System

(Including 2019-2020 Student Headcount)



**Florida Senate Committee on Education**  
**Committee Staff**

<b>Senate Committee on Education (ED) – (850) 487-5213</b>	
Matthew Bouck	Staff Director
Holly Sagues	Deputy Staff Director
Alex Brick	Senior Attorney
Rebecca Westmark	Legislative Analyst
Kendra Jahnke	Chief Legislative Analyst
Angela Herndon	Administrative Assistant

## Significant Recent Education Legislation

### School Choice

The Legislature has improved school choice options for families through the establishment of new scholarship programs, the expansion of existing programs, and the removal of barriers to participation. Recent changes to Florida's school choice programs include:

#### Charter Schools

- Establishing "Schools of Hope" and designating "hope operators" to provide charter school options in areas with persistently low-performing schools (2017, CS/HB 7069) and areas designated as Florida Opportunity Zones (2019, CS/SB 7070).
- Requiring school districts to share local millage revenue with charter schools under specified circumstances (2017, CS/HB 7069). This requirement has been nullified through the annual Implementing Bill for the past two fiscal years.

#### State K-12 Scholarship Programs

- Establishing the Hope Scholarship Program (HSP) for students who are victims of bullying or other offenses (2018, CS/HB 7055).
- Establishing Reading Scholarship Accounts for 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade students who are struggling with reading (2018, CS/HB 7055).
- Establishing the Family Empowerment Scholarship Program (FES), funded through the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP), for low-income public school students (2019, CS/SB 7070, modified in 2020 by CS/HB 7067).
- Standardizing the award amounts for the FES, HSP, and Florida Tax Credit Scholarship (FTC) program at 95 percent of the funds per unweighted FTE in the FEFP, which is in line with funding for charter schools (2019, CS/SB 7070).
- Establishing additional accountability provisions for private schools that participate in state school choice scholarship programs (2018, CS/HB 7055).
- Modifying the Gardiner Scholarship program to expand eligibility and the authorized use of funds (2017, CS/HB 7069).

#### Virtual Instruction

- Eliminating the prior public school enrollment requirement to participate in virtual options throughout the state (2017, CS/HB 7069).

### School and Student Safety

The Legislature has strengthened school security requirements and enhanced student safety through a number of measures aimed at keeping Florida's students healthy and safe, such as:

- Establishing school safety provisions, which include (2018, CS/SB 7026):
  - Creation of the MSDHS Public Safety Commission;
  - Creation of the Coach Aaron Feis Guardian Program;
  - Establishment of school district requirements including safe school officers, district school safety specialists, threat assessment teams, and active shooter drills;
  - Establishment of the mental health assistance allocation categorical within the FEFP; and
  - Creation of the "FortifyFL" tool for reporting threats made against schools and students.

- Modifying school safety provisions, which include (2019, CS/CS/SB 7030):
  - Authorization of a school security guard as a safe school officer;
  - Requirements for active assailant response plans; and
  - Requirements for a standardized behavioral threat assessment instrument.
- Revising standards of ethical conduct for instructional personnel and administrators that are in direct contact with students (2018, CS/HB 495).
- Requiring an automated external defibrillator (AED) and onsite cooling procedures and equipment to be available at all athletic activities (2020, CS/HB 7011).

### **Required Instruction and Activities**

The Legislature has added school district instructional requirements and provided additional student educational opportunities. These changes include:

- Requiring 20 minutes of recess per day in kindergarten through grade five (charter schools exempt) (2017, CS/HB 7069).
- Promoting opportunities for public middle and high school students to learn computer science taught by qualified teachers (2018, CS/HB 495).
- Promoting recognition of the history of the 1920 Ocoee Election Day Riots and specifying Holocaust instructional requirements for public schools (2020, CS/CS/HB 1213).

### **Teacher Provisions (Compensation, Evaluations, Certification)**

The Legislature has passed recent legislation focused on improving teacher salaries and removing certification barriers. These changes include:

- Establishing the Teacher Salary Increase Allocation within the FEFP (2020, HB 641).
- Repealing the Florida Best and Brightest Teacher and Principal Programs (2020, HB 641).
- Requiring that the General Knowledge (GK) examination is only required for personnel who will serve as a classroom teacher, and removing the requirement for passing the GK within one year for a teacher on a temporary certificate (2019, CS/SB 7070).
- Authorizing district school boards to issue an adjunct teaching certificate for a full-time teaching position for up to three years (2019, CS/HB 7071).
- Modifying personnel evaluations to make optional the use of the Value Added Model (VAM) (2017, CS/HB 7069).

### **School Improvement**

The Legislature has passed several initiatives to assist low-performing schools and the students they serve.

These changes include:

- Establishing the Turnaround School Supplemental Services Allocation within the FEFP to provide funding to traditional public schools in, or exiting, turnaround status to provide wraparound services (2019, CS/SB 7070).
- Creating the Community School Grant Program to fund and support the planning and implementation of community school programs (2019, CS/SB 7070).
- Modifying the early warning system, educational emergencies, limits to turnaround options for “D” and “F” schools, and requirements for selection of a turnaround option (2017, CS/HB 7069).

## **School District FTE Bonus Incentives**

In the 2020 legislative session, two bonus funding incentives were established through the FEFP to provide additional funding to school districts for students completing specified coursework or credentials, including:

- Establishing school district bonus funding for students who receive an Advanced Placement Capstone Diploma (2020, HB 641).
- Establishing dual enrollment FTE incentive for completion of general education core courses and associate degrees (2020, CS/HB 7067).

## **School District Operations**

The Legislature has increased school district fiscal accountability requirements while also providing additional flexibility for constructing educational facilities, including:

- Requiring additional fiscal accountability and transparency provisions for district school boards (2018, CS/CS/CS/HB 1279).
- Providing school districts with additional flexibility for capital outlay expenditures using specified non-state funds (2018, CS/HB 7055 and 2019, CS/SB7070).

## **Early Learning**

The Legislature has modified school readiness funding provisions and established professional development standards and career pathways for early childhood teachers and school readiness program providers. These changes include:

- Providing for school readiness program assessments and differential payments, and penalties based on assessment results (2018, CS/CS/HB 1091).
- Integrating early learning professional development pathways into existing preservice and inservice training requirements (2019, HB 1027).
- Developing professional development training and course standards for school readiness program providers (2019, HB 1027).
- Identifying both formal and informal early learning career pathways with stackable credentials and certifications to provide early childhood teachers access to specialized professional development (2019, HB 1027).

## **Career Education**

The Legislature has emphasized the importance of career and technical education by:

- Creating the “Strengthening Alignment between Industry and Learning (SAIL) to 60” initiative to increase high-value postsecondary credentials held by Floridians (2019, CS/HB 7071).
- Establishing the Career and Technical Education (CTE) graduation pathway to a standard diploma (2019, CS/HB 7071).
- Creating the “Florida Pathways to Career Opportunities Grant Program” to increase access to apprenticeship and preapprenticeship programs (2019, CS/HB 7071).

## **Postsecondary Education**

The Legislature has increased fiscal and research accountability and modified financial and programmatic supports to improve student access, retention, and on-time graduation. Changes include:

### *Funding and Operations*

- Modifying university performance funding incentives to emphasize timely graduation for first-time-in-college and transfer students, and students who receive a Pell Grant (2019, CS/SB 4 and 2020, CS/SB 72).

- Authorizing a student athlete to earn compensation for the use of her or his name, image, or likeness (NIL) and prohibiting a postsecondary institution from preventing an athlete from earning NIL compensation (2020, CS/CS/SB 646).
- Requiring that university employees engaged in research disclose such research to ensure integrity of the state university (2020, CS/SB 72).
- Modifying the excess credit hours surcharge to increase the threshold from 110 percent to 120 percent of the degree program (2019, CS/SB 190).
- Establishing the “Last Mile Scholarship Program” for Florida resident students who are within 12 or fewer credit hours of completing their first associate or baccalaureate degree (2019, CS/HB 7071).
- Authorizing Florida to participate in a reciprocity agreement with other states for the delivery of postsecondary distance education (2017, CS/CS/HB 859).
- Reconstituting the Higher Education Coordinating Council as the Florida Talent Development Council for the purpose of developing a coordinated, data-driven, statewide approach to meeting Florida’s workforce needs (2019, CS/HB 7071).
- Establishing a process for the reunification of the University of South Florida (USF) branch campuses under one umbrella and termination of separate accreditation for the St. Petersburg and Sarasota/Manatee branch campuses (2018, CS/SB 4).
- Modifying requirements for the carryforward of operational funds to include procedures for institutions above or below established minimum levels, including authorization for state universities to expend excess carryforward fund for capital outlay projects (2019, CS/SB 190) and authorization for emergency spending of carryforward funds (2020, CS/SB 72).

#### Financial Assistance

The Legislature has increased student awards and flexibility for using financial assistance. These changes include:

- Modifying the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program by:
  - Increasing the Florida Academic Scholars (FAS) and Florida Medallion Scholars (FMS) awards to 100 percent and 75 percent of tuition and fees respectively;
  - Requiring that SAT scores for the FAS and FMS eligibility be tied to specified national percentiles (2019, CS/SB 190); and
  - Increasing the FMS award for an associate degree program at a college to 100 percent of tuition and fees (2020, CS/SB 72).
- Expanding the Benacquisto Scholarship Program to attract qualified students from out-of-state (2018, CS/SB 4).
- Expanding death benefits for certain educational expenses for surviving dependents of firefighters, law enforcement and correctional officers, emergency medical personnel, and Florida National Guard members (2019, CS/SB 7098, also 2018, Art. X, s. 31).
- Modifying the Florida Student Assistance Grant (FSAG) programs to authorize a student to receive an award during the summer term, prioritize the distribution of grant funds to students who are within one semester of completing a degree or certificate program, and modify the maximum expected family contribution (2020, CS/SB 72).

#### Articulation

The Legislature has removed transition barriers to help students more easily navigate through postsecondary education. These measures include:

- Creating the “2+2” targeted pathway program to improve transfer from Florida College System (FCS) institutions to state universities (2019, CS/SB 190).

- Requiring that FCS institutions and state universities establish reverse transfer agreements (2019, CS/HB 7071).
- Requiring that career centers and FCS institutions establish regional career pathway agreements between certificate and college credit programs (2019, CS/HB 7071).

### **Civil Liberties**

The Legislature has enhanced student civil liberties by:

- Enacting the "Campus Free Expression Act," which addresses the issue of free speech on the campuses of public postsecondary institutions (2018, CS/SB 4).
- Creating the "Florida Student and School Personnel Religious Liberties Act" to specify that a school district may not discriminate against a student, parent, or school personnel on the basis of a religious viewpoint or religious expression (2017, SB 436).



# K-12 Scholarships

Eric Hall, Senior Chancellor

January 12, 2021

Senate Education Committee



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF  
**EDUCATION**  
fldoe.org

[www.FLDOE.org](http://www.FLDOE.org)



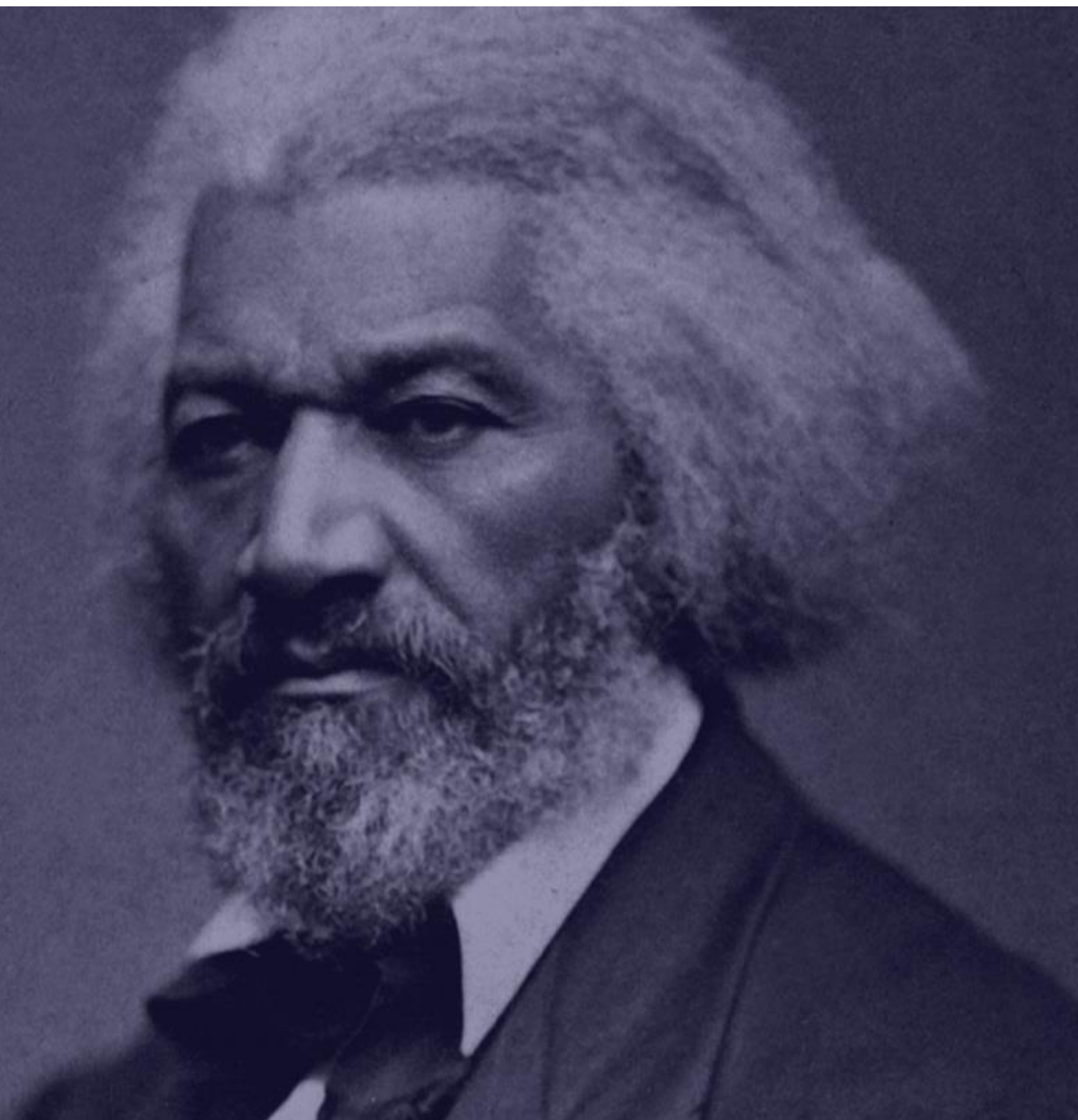
WITHOUT **EDUCATION**  
HE LIVES WITHIN THE NARROW,  
DARK, AND GRIMY WALLS OF **IGNORANCE**.  
**EDUCATION** ON THE OTHER HAND, MEANS

**EMANCIPATION;**

IT MEANS **LIGHT** AND **LIBERTY**.  
IT MEANS THE **UPLIFTING** OF THE SOUL OF MAN INTO  
THE **GLORIOUS LIGHT** OF TRUTH, THE  
LIGHT ONLY BY WHICH MEN CAN BE **FREE**.

TO **DENY** EDUCATION TO ANY PEOPLE  
IS ONE OF THE **GREATEST CRIMES** AGAINST  
HUMAN NATURE. IT IS TO DENY THEM THE MEANS  
OF **FREEDOM**, THE RIGHTFUL PURSUIT OF  
**HAPPINESS** AND TO **DEFEAT** THE VERY END  
OF THEIR **BEING**.

FREDERICK DOUGLASS  
A GREAT AMERICAN HISTORICAL LEADER



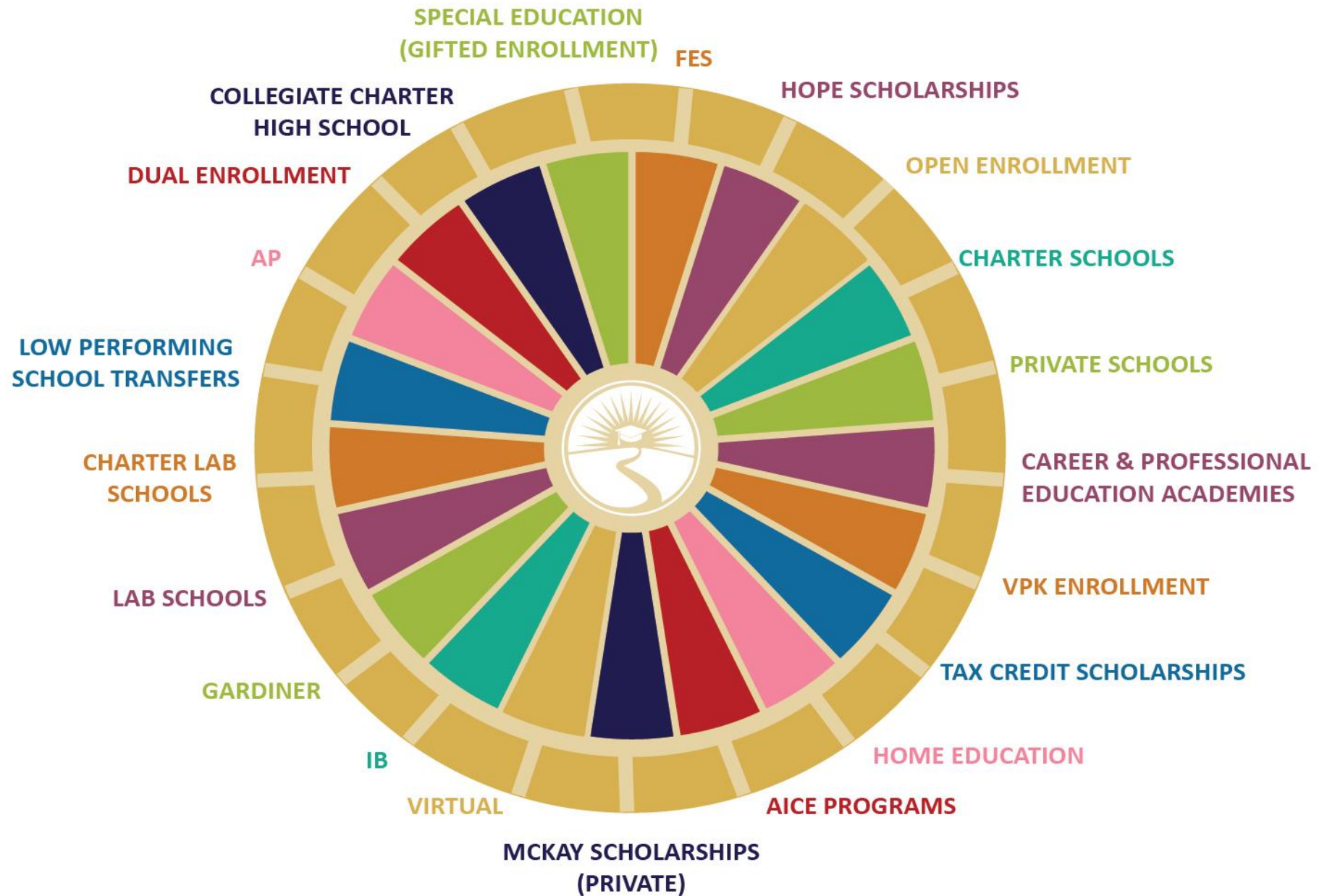
## What Does School Choice Do?

- Choice ensures every child, **no matter their demographic**, has the same access and opportunity to receive a world-class education
- Choice ensures families are not trapped in schools that do not meet their child's individual needs
- Choice has a significantly positive impact on our most vulnerable students
- Choice provides **greater opportunities** for students and their families that they otherwise would not have

# The Origins of School Choice

- School choice is not a new concept
- School choice has always existed long before the first public charter school was ever opened in Florida
- Individuals with financial means have always had school choice options
- Now, students with disabilities have school choice options via the McKay and Gardiner Scholarships
- School choice is no longer for the financially well-off – low-income students now have access to school choice via the Florida Tax Credit and Family Empowerment Scholarship programs

# FLORIDA PUBLIC & PRIVATE CHOICE OPTIONS



# Research on Private School Choice

- When reviewing studies of choice programs using appropriate research methods, the findings are spectacularly positive.

Research Topic	Positive Finding	Neutral Finding	Negative Finding
Academic Outcomes of Scholarship Recipients	14	2	2
<b>Academic Outcomes of Remaining Public School Students</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
Effect of Choice Program on Integration of Schools	8	1	0
Effect on Civic Values of Scholarship Students (civic knowledge, respect for rights of others)	8	3	0
Fiscal Impact on Taxpayers and Districts	25	3	0



# K-12 Scholarship Programs

[www.FLDOE.org](http://www.FLDOE.org)

## K-12 Scholarship Programs

- McKay Scholarship Program **serves students with special needs**
- Gardiner Scholarship Program **serves students with special needs**
- Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program **serves low-income students**
- Family Empowerment Scholarship Program **serves low-income students**
- Hope Scholarship Program **serves students subjected to physical and/or mental abuse at their schools**
- Reading Scholarship Program **serves struggling readers**

## All K-12 Public Schools (2019-2020)

### Total Students

**2,858,952**

- |                          |       |                                     |       |
|--------------------------|-------|-------------------------------------|-------|
| • White                  | 36.9% | • Economically Disadvantaged        | 53.9% |
| • Hispanic               | 34.5% | • English Language Learners (ELLs)  | 10.1% |
| • Black/African-American | 21.6% | • Students with Special Needs (SWD) | 14.5% |

## Major Choice Programs (2019-2020)

### McKay Scholarship (Private)

**30,185**

- |                                     |        |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| • White                             | • 46%  |
| • Hispanic                          | • 30%  |
| • Black/African-American            | • 19%  |
| • Economically Disadvantaged (FRPL) | • 42%  |
| • Students with Special Needs (SWD) | • 100% |

### Gardiner Scholarship

**14,318**

- |                                     |        |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| • Students with Special Needs (SWD) | • 100% |
|-------------------------------------|--------|

### Florida Tax Credit Scholarship

**111,219**

- |                              |        |
|------------------------------|--------|
| • White                      | • 27%  |
| • Hispanic                   | • 38%  |
| • Black/African-American     | • 30%  |
| • Economically Disadvantaged | • 100% |

### Hope Scholarship

**388**

- |                          |        |
|--------------------------|--------|
| • White                  | • 49%  |
| • Hispanic               | • 24%  |
| • Black/African-American | • 19%  |
| • Bullied                | • 100% |

### Family Empowerment Scholarship

**17,823**

- |                                     |       |
|-------------------------------------|-------|
| • White                             | • 27% |
| • Hispanic                          | • 36% |
| • Black/African-American            | • 35% |
| • Economically Disadvantaged (FRPL) | • 99% |

### Reading Scholarship Accounts

**6,763**

- |                                    |        |
|------------------------------------|--------|
| • White                            | • 29%  |
| • Hispanic                         | • 36%  |
| • Black/African-American           | • 18%  |
| • English Language Learners (ELLs) | • %    |
| • Struggling Readers               | • 100% |

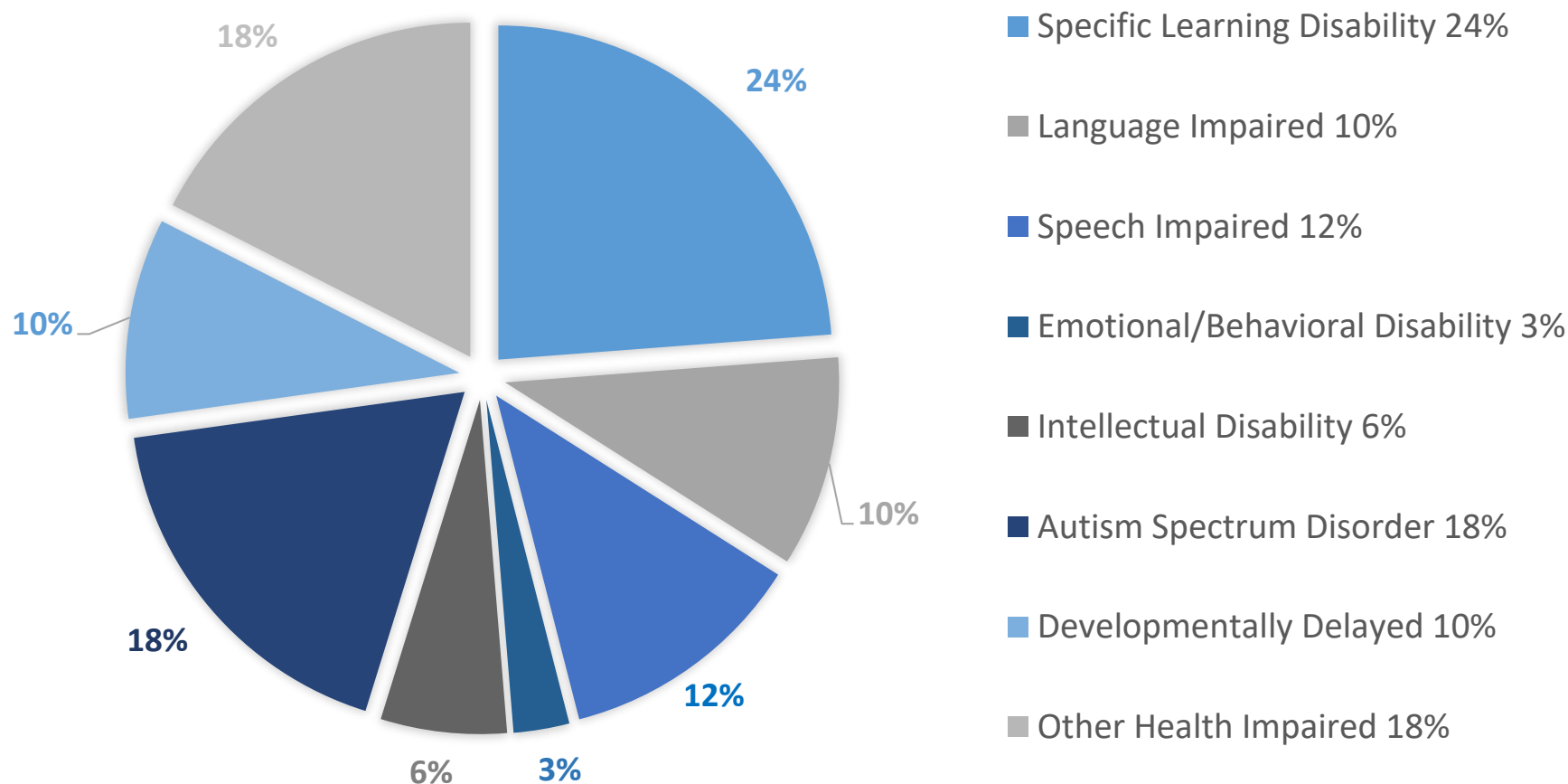
## Continued Growth in Florida's K-12 Scholarship Choice Options

Program	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	YTD 2020-21
<b>McKay (Private)</b>	30, 378	31,173	31,499	31,044	30,695	30,185	27,226
<b>McKay (Public)</b>	3,467	3,922	4,322	5,134	5,636	6,509	5,386
<b>Gardiner</b>	1,559	4,815	8,000	10,236	12,179	14,318	17,508
<b>Florida Tax Credit</b>	69,950	78,664	98,936	108,098	104,091	111,219	100,008
<b>Hope (Private)</b>	-	-	-	-	123	388	390
<b>Hope (Public)</b>	-	-	-	-	-	404	476
<b>Family Empowerment</b>	-	-	-	-	-	17,823	36,384
<b>Reading Scholarship Accounts</b>	-	-	-	-	5,632	6,763	902

# McKay Scholarships

- **Serves students with special needs** and allows students to attend an eligible public or private school
- A student is eligible if:
  - The student has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan, **and**
  - The student has spent the prior school year in attendance at a Florida public school; **or** the student is a foster child or is a dependent child of a member of the U.S. Armed Forces who transfers from out of state due to a parent's change of station orders.
- Funded by the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP)
  - The average amount for enrollment in a private school for a student with an IEP is \$8,473. The average amount for a student with a 504 plan is \$4,676.

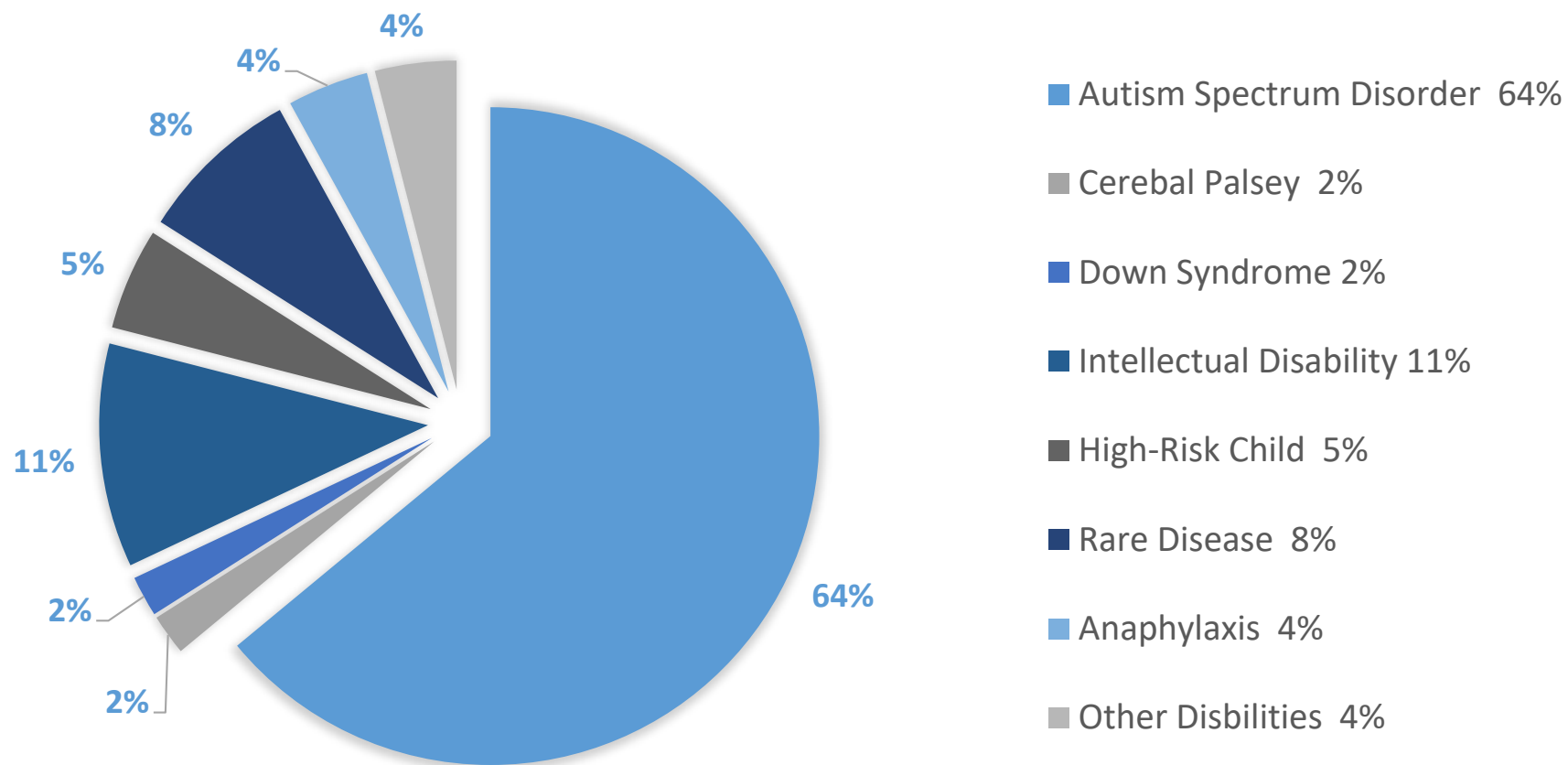
## McKay Student Enrollment by Disability Type



# Gardiner Scholarships

- **Serves students with special needs** and allows students with disabilities to receive therapies/services or tuition to an eligible private school.
- A student is eligible if:
  - The student is in a K-12 public school or will be three or four years old before September 1, **and**
  - The student has a specified disability as defined in s. 1002.385, F.S.
- Funded by legislative appropriation
  - The average amount is \$10,000 for specialized services such as speech or occupational therapy, instructional materials, tuition at an eligible private school, contributions to a college prepaid account.

# Gardiner Students by Disability Type



*\*data as of October 2020*

[www.FLDOE.org](http://www.FLDOE.org)

## Empowering Parents to Meet Child's Individual Needs

In June 2020, researchers at the University of Arkansas and Boston University administered a survey to Florida parents to evaluate the McKay and Gardiner Scholarship programs.

Survey Question	McKay Parents	Gardiner Parents	Non-Participating Parents
I am satisfied with my interactions with school staff	91%	93%	83%
I am satisfied with my child's teachers	94%	95%	87%
I am satisfied with my school's ability to meet my child's special needs	87%	91%	82%
I am satisfied with my school's commitment to help my children learn	90%	94%	86%

# Florida Tax Credit (FTC) Scholarship

- **Serves low-income students** attending or assigned to attend failing public schools the option to choose a higher performing public school.
- A student is eligible if:
  - The student's household income is < 260% federal poverty line; the student is on the direct certification list, or
  - The student is currently or during the previous state fiscal year was in foster care or out-of-home care.
- Funded by private, voluntary contributions to nonprofit Scholarship Funding Organizations (SFOs) such as Step Up for Students and AAA
  - The average amount for enrollment in an eligible private school is \$6,815 or \$750 for transportation to a public school located outside the district the student resides.

# Participating in FTC Increases the Likelihood Students Will Earn a Bachelor's Degree

**FTC students are more likely to enroll in both two-year and four-year colleges** than their nonparticipating counterparts (Center on Education Data and Policy at the Urban Institute study).

- FTC Students who entered in middle school are 6% points more likely to enroll in college
- FTC Students who entered in high school are 10% points more likely to enroll in college

## Family Empowerment Scholarship (FES)

- **Serves low-income students** and provides the option to attend a private school.
- A student is eligible if:
  - The student's household income is < 300% FPL; the student is on the direct certification list, or
  - The student is currently or during the previous state fiscal year was in foster care or out-of-home care, and
  - The student is eligible to enroll in kindergarten or has spent the prior school year in attendance at a Florida public school.
- Funded by the FEFP
  - The average amount for enrollment in an eligible private school is \$6,972.

# Hope Scholarship Program

- **Serves students subjected to physical and/or mental bullying at their schools** and provides the option to attend an eligible public or private school.
- A student is eligible if:
  - The student has been subjected to a specified incident of bullying while enrolled in a Florida public school.
- Funded by eligible sales tax contributions from the purchase of a motor vehicle to nonprofit Scholarship Funding Organizations (SFOs) such as Step Up for Students and AAA.
  - The average amount for enrollment in an eligible private school is \$6,815 or \$750 for enrollment in a public school located outside the district the student resides.

# Reading Scholarship Program

- **Serves struggling readers in grades 3-5** and provides funds to assist with reading skills.
- A student is eligible if:
  - The student is in grades 3-5 who were Level 1 or 2 on their most recent FSA/ELA or students identified with a substantial deficiency in reading based on most available screening or progress monitoring and are classified as English Language Learner;
  - The student is in grades 3-5 enrolled in one of Florida's 300 Lowest Performing Elementary Schools in 2018-19; or
  - The student is in in grades 3-5 enrolled in one of Florida's elementary schools that earned a D or F school grade in 2018-19.
- Funded by legislative appropriation
  - The average amount is \$500 for instructional materials, curriculum; tuition and fees for part-time tutoring services, etc.



# Scholarship Participant Accountability

## Scholarship Program Participation Requirements

- **Accountability is key!** The processes laid out within statute illustrates the intent for full transparency in compliance of private schools, ultimately providing equity for the students of Florida through the provision of the social justice programs offered through scholarship participation.
- Annually, FDOE verifies the eligibility of private schools that meet the requirements of s. 1002.421, F.S., specific requirements identified within respective scholarship program laws, and other provisions of state law that apply to private schools.
- Schools must submit a signed and notarized Scholarship Compliance Form certifying that all school employees and contracted personnel with direct student contact have undergone the **required background screening**.
- Schools must meet **state and local health, safety, and welfare laws, codes, and rules**.
  - FDOE coordinates with the entities conducting the health inspection for a private school to obtain copies of the inspection reports.

## Scholarship Program Participation Requirements – Cont.

- Beginning 2019-20, a private school is not eligible to receive scholarship payments until a **satisfactory site visit has been conducted** and the school is in compliance with all other requirements of s. 1002.421, F.S.
  - During site visits, the FDOE's team reviews **all compliance documents** including **student information, attendance data, school administration/employee files, and school facility information**.
- Additional requirements (s. 1002.421, F.S.)
  - Maintain a physical location in Florida where students **regularly attend classes**.
  - Notify FDOE of their intent to participate.
  - Demonstrate **fiscal soundness** by:
    - Being in operation for at least three school years, or
    - Filing with the FDOE a surety bond or letter of credit for the amount equal to the scholarship funds for any quarter.
  - Comply with the **anti-discrimination provisions of 42 U.S.C. s. 2000d**.
  - Employ or contract only **with teachers who hold a baccalaureate or higher degree, or have at least three years of teaching experience in public or private schools, or have special skills, knowledge, or expertise** that qualifies them to provide instruction in subjects taught.

# Scholarship Compliance Procedures

- FDOE has an **established process** by which individuals may notify us of any violation by a parent, private school, or school district of state laws relating to program participation.
  - If FDOE has reasonable cause to believe that a violation of this section or any rule adopted by the State Board of Education has occurred, it shall **conduct an inquiry** or make a referral to the appropriate agency for an investigation.
- FDOE may also conduct site visits to any private school participating in a scholarship program that has received a complaint about a violation of state law or state board rule or has received a notice of noncompliance or a notice of proposed action within the previous 2 years.
- Students participating in state scholarship programs are required to complete the **nationally norm-referenced tests** identified by FDOE or the statewide assessments to demonstrate academic accountability.



[www.FLDOE.org](http://www.FLDOE.org)

Eric Hall, Senior Chancellor



[www.FLDOE.org](http://www.FLDOE.org)

# STEP UP FOR STUDENTS

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*Helping public education fulfill the promise of equal opportunity*

Senate Education Committee  
January 12, 2021

**Doug Tuthill**  
President



# Changing Landscape of K-12 Education

## 1.7 MILLION STUDENTS CHOOSE

Approximately 48 percent of PreK-12 students in Florida now participate in education choice programs.

309,730

in 658 Charter Schools privately operated under contract with districts



273,377

in Open Enrollment in 51 school districts



248,199

in Choice and Magnet programs at district schools



237,290

in 2,689 Private Schools



145,373

in Career and Professional Academies at 426 high schools



133,870

in private PreKindergarten Scholarships for 4-year-olds



104,091

in Tax Credit Scholarships for low-income students at 1,825 private schools



91,596

in Home Education while reporting results to districts



55,119

in Advanced International Certificate programs for 11th and 12th graders



36,331

in McKay Scholarships for special-needs students (30,895 in private schools and 5,636 in district schools)



13,575

in International Baccalaureate at district schools



13,884

in Gardiner Scholarships for special-needs students



11,175

in full-time Virtual Instruction



7,319

in Lab Schools run by five universities



3,949

in School Transfers related to state or federal performance thresholds



**= 1,684,878 STUDENTS AT SCHOOLS OF THEIR CHOICE**

Source | 2018-19 Florida Department of Education data. \*The 2018-19 changing landscape cannot be compared with past years due to changes in Survey data.

# Scholarship Funding Organizations

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- The Department of Education approves eligible nonprofits as Scholarship Funding Organizations to help administer five scholarship programs.
  - Tax Credit Scholarship (2002)
  - Gardiner Scholarship (2014)
  - Hope Scholarship (2018)
  - Reading Scholarship Accounts (2018)
  - Family Empowerment Scholarship (2019)\*

\*Step Up For Students determines students' income eligibility for the Family Empowerment Scholarship.
- Currently, two SFOs administer the Tax Credit Scholarship, the Family Empowerment Scholarship and Gardiner Scholarship.
- Step Up For Students administers the Hope Scholarship and Reading Scholarship Accounts.



# Accountability for SFOs

- Must conduct level 2 background checks on owners and operators of the SFO.
- Must apply annually to be approved by the State Board of Education. Approval requires an IRS Form 990, financial plans, geographic regions served, description of the application process, an annual report, and a copy of the audits.
- Are subject to 2 audits each year:
  1. Operational and compliance audit by the Auditor General.
  2. Financial audit of accounts and records by an independent CPA, which must be provided to the Auditor General and the Department of Education.
- Must allow students to attend any eligible private school.
- May not restrict or reserve scholarships for use at a particular private school.
- Must prepare and submit quarterly reports on scholarships to the DOE.



# General Responsibilities

- Review over 220,000 students on applications for five scholarship programs and determine eligibility. (average 13K applications reviewed per month)
  - FTC and FES: process documentation of household income
  - Gardiner: process documentation of qualifying disability
- Answer calls, emails and chats from current and prospective parents and providers.
  - Average over 20K incoming calls per month
  - Take calls in any language
  - Emails and chat services average over 20K contacts per month
- Communication during the eligibility and funding process.
- Create and maintain Parent and Provider Handbooks for each program.
- Produce quarterly scholarship payments and a weekly ACH payment file for providers and parents for the Gardiner program.
- Produce quarterly reports for the Department of Education.
- Review approximately 1,185 Agreed Upon Procedure reports (19-20) –from CPAs for participating schools
- Perform quality assurance on reimbursement and application processing.
- Recruitment of contributions and marketing.
- Respond to data requests from external organizations.
- Assist in fraud prevention.
- Make quarterly tuition payments to schools for over 100k FTC students
- Raise \$750 million in tax credited contributions between FTC and Hope.
- Privately raised more than \$4.75 million in philanthropic donations in the last 5 years.



# General Responsibilities

- Additional Gardiner Scholarship administration (Education Savings Accounts):
  - Establish and maintain student accounts.
  - Verify providers and confirm a valid license at the time of each expense.
  - Process over 149K reimbursements each year by reviewing invoices and verifying expenditures.
  - Develop and manage hardware and secure software infrastructure.
  - Establish a scalable ESA platform for purchases.
  - Conduct weekly meetings to review reimbursement requests.
  - Review appeals for denied reimbursements.
  - Conduct Parent and School Advisory Council meetings to receive feedback.
  - Work on innovations using Artificial Intelligence to increase accuracy and efficiencies in operations.
  - Raised \$900,000 privately to begin the Gardiner Program because administrative funding was not allocated in the first year.



# Tax Credit Scholarships for Financial Need

- Created in 2001 for economically disadvantaged students.
- Provides tuition scholarships for private schools or transportation scholarships for students attending a different public school.
- Step Up For Students serves 99,113 students in 1,896 schools this year.



# Income-based Scholarship Demand

- Received 185,104 FTC & FES student applications as of 12/31/2020.
- Served an additional 22,000 students on the income-based scholarships this year versus last year.
- Enrollment steady with approximately 400 new enrollments per week as the school year moves into the second half.
- Enrollments for the current school year will close on Jan 31, 2021.
- New application period opens in February for renewing families and March for new families.



# The Typical Tax Credit Scholarship Student

- **Lives near poverty:** Average household income for a family of four this year is \$32,835, or 12 percent above poverty.
- **Is Hispanic or Black:** 38 percent Hispanic, 29 percent Black, and 26 percent White.
- **Lives with one parent:** 55 percent live in single-parent households.
- **Has struggled academically:** Research shows students “tend to be among the lowest-performing students in their prior school, regardless of the performance level of their public school.”



# Tax Credit Scholarship Program Mechanics

- **Eligibility:** Household income must not exceed 260% of the federal poverty level (\$68,120 for a household of four).
- **Priority:** Renewal students and students with household incomes that do not exceed 185% of poverty, or who are in foster care or out-of-home care have priority.
- About 82% of FTC students have household incomes  $\leq$  185% of poverty.
- **Scholarship:** About 95 percent of the unweighted FTE amount as determined by county of residence and grade level. Average amount is between \$6,673 and \$7,169.
- **Tax-credited contributions:** Companies receive a dollar-for-dollar tax credit on five different state taxes for contributions to SFOs.



# What the Research Tells Us

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- **Academics:** Annual reports by independent researchers show: 1) Students are the lowest-performing from the public schools they left; 2) They achieve the same test score gains in reading and math as students of all income levels nationally.
- **Long term effects:** In a 2019 study, the Urban Institute found that FTC students were up to 43% more likely to attend 4-year colleges than their public-school peers, and up to 20% more likely to earn bachelor's degrees. Those on the scholarship at least 4 years were 99% more likely to attend college, and 45% more likely to earn a degree.
- **Financial impact:** Eight studies have concluded the FTC Scholarship saves taxpayer money. The Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability said in 2010 that the state saved \$1.44 for every \$1 lost in tax credits.
- **Public school impact:** A 2020 study by the National Bureau of Economic Research found as the FTC Scholarship expanded, public schools most impacted by the competition had higher test scores, fewer suspensions, and reduced absenteeism.



# Gardiner Scholarship Program

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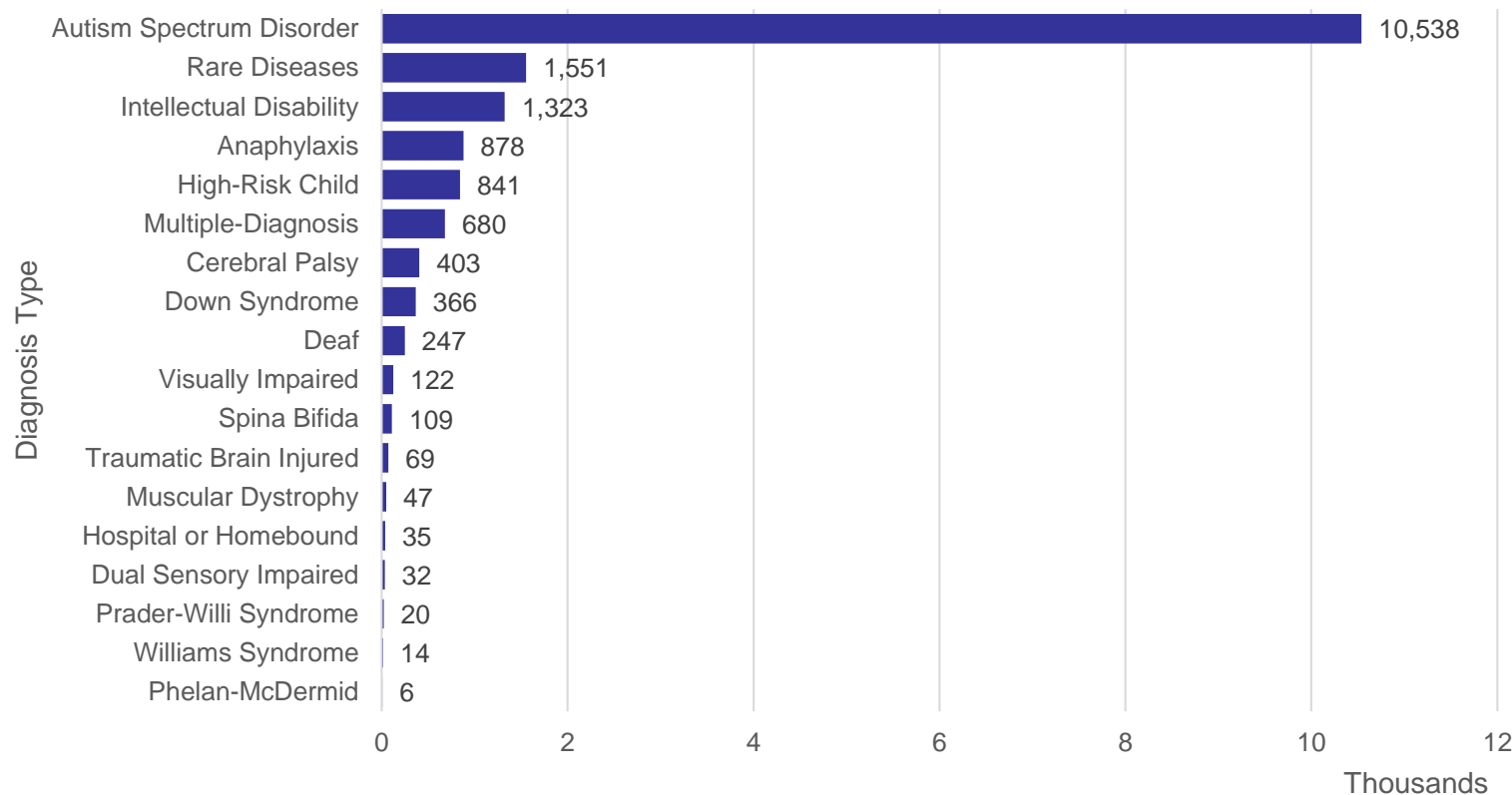
- Created in 2014, the Gardiner Scholarship program allows parents to personalize the education of their special-needs children by directing money toward a combination of programs and approved providers.
- Florida was the second state in the country to use this model, known nationally as an education savings account, or ESA.
- Parents are able to customize their child's learning by incorporating the best of all delivery methods (home education, private school, public school, online learning, tutoring, etc.)



# Eligibility

Students age 3 years through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, or age 22, who qualify under one or more of the diagnosis categories listed below.

**Gardiner Enrollment by Diagnosis**



2020-21 Funded Students as of January 2021



# The Scholarship

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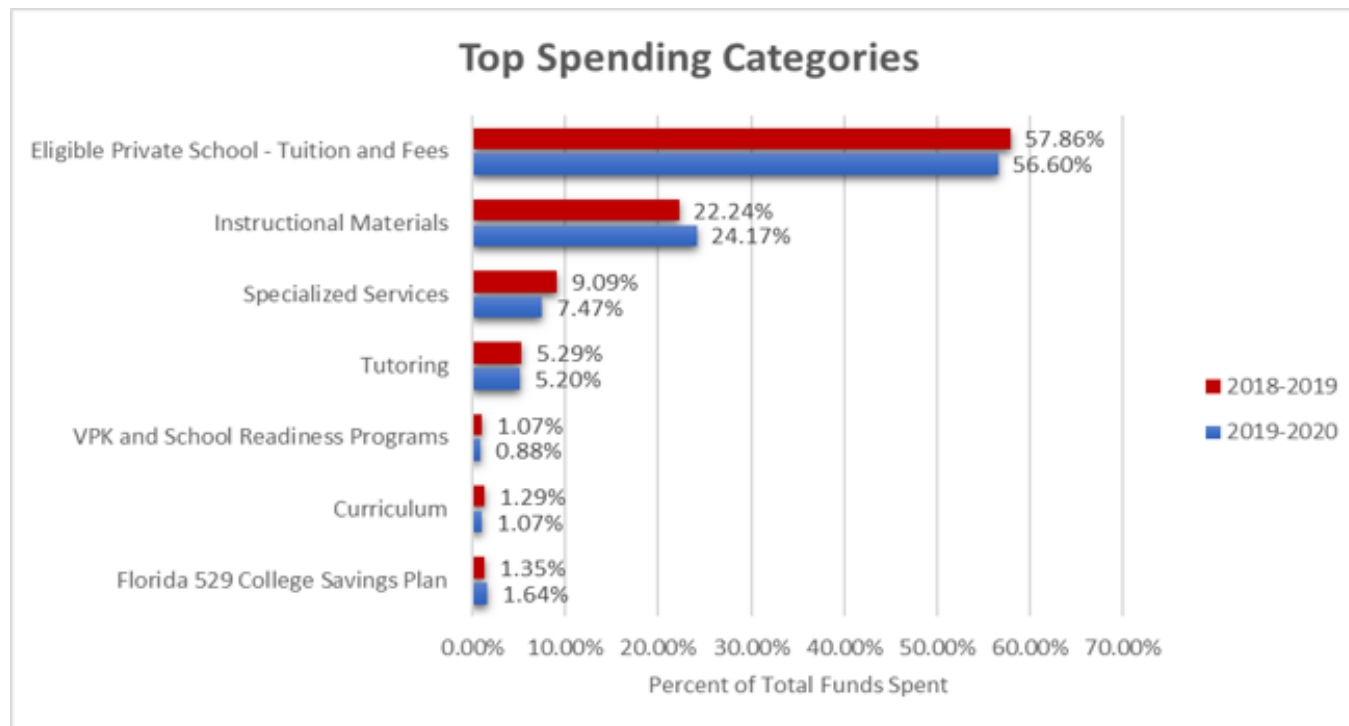
The average scholarship is (*scholarships vary per grade and county of residence*). Funds may be rolled over from year to year. Parents may pick and choose from a variety of approved items and services, including:

- ☐ Curriculum
- ☐ Instructional materials, including digital devices
- ☐ Specialized services, such as therapy with a Florida licensed professional
- ☐ Tuition and fees for an eligible private school, post-secondary or virtual program, or Florida Virtual School
- ☐ Fees for nationally standardized, norm-referenced achievement tests, placement tests, or industry certification examinations
- ☐ Florida Prepaid or 529 college savings plan
- ☐ Tuition and fees for full-time or part-time tutoring
- ☐ Contracted services from a public school



# Gardiner Facts

- 2020-21 allocation for scholarship awards: \$189.9 million
- 17,282 students funded in 20-21 through Step Up
- 9,152 students enrolled in private schools; 5,382 enrolled in home education
- Waitlist of about 400 students
- More than 8,400 participating providers through Step Up



# Hope Scholarship Program

- Began in 2018 for students who are subjected to an incident, including battery; harassment; hazing; bullying; kidnapping; physical attack; robbery; sexual offenses, harassment, assault, or battery; threat or intimidation; or fighting at school.
- Provides a scholarship that may be used toward tuition and fees at an eligible private school or a transportation scholarship of up to \$750 for students attending a public school in another district.
- Purchaser of a motor vehicle receives a sales tax credit, up to \$105, against tax imposed by the state and collected by the dealer or private tag agent.
- \$66.8 million total contributions in 2019-20
- 388 total students funded in 2019-20
- 638 total students awarded so far in 2020-21
- Remaining funds transferred the following year to the FTC Scholarship



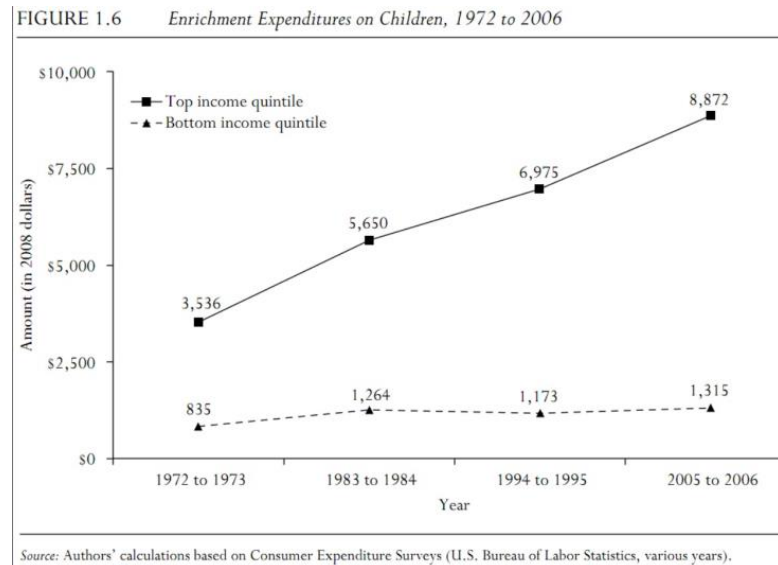
# Reading Scholarship Accounts

- Created in 2018 for students who are struggling in reading.
- First ESA program in the nation for students who are in public school
- \$500 scholarships
- \$7.6 million allocation for 2020-21
- 1,971 students determined eligible so far (awards began in late fall)
- Uses of funds: part-time tutoring, digital devices, instructional materials or curriculum related to reading or literacy; or afterschool and summer education programs designed to improve reading or literacy



# Improvement Opportunities

- To keep their children safe and well educated, all families need more spending flexibility—Education Savings Accounts provide this flexibility.
  - Customize learning by incorporating different delivery methods (home education, private school, public school, online learning, tutoring, etc)
  - Help with disparities in out-of-school learning opportunities



\*<https://www.russellsage.org/research/chartbook/enrichment-expenditures-children-1972-to-2006>

- Remaining access barriers should be removed to allow flexibility.
- Increasing the scholarship amounts would allow families to access more of the services they need.



# About Step Up

- **Top-ranked charity:** Step Up has a 4-Star rating by national watchdog Charity Navigator 14 different years and is recognized as a Platinum GuideStar member. These accolades are achieved through the organization's commitment to fiscal responsibility in accounting and transparency.
- **National charity rankings:** Step Up was ranked 21<sup>st</sup> by *Forbes* (1<sup>st</sup> among education charities), and the Chronicle of Philanthropy ranked Step Up 18th in its 2019 list of America's Favorite Charities.





[www.aaascholarships.org](http://www.aaascholarships.org)

# AAA Scholarship Foundation



**Charitable and Educational Mission:** To promote relief of the poor, the distressed or the underprivileged and to promote the advancement of education.

**How:** We currently administer six innovative scholarship programs in four states that help families pay for educational expenses exclusively for disabled, displaced and economically-disadvantaged children (up to grade 12).



# Florida Programs

## ❑ **Florida Tax Credit Scholarships:**

- ❑ Funded by charitable contributions from Florida taxpaying companies
- ❑ \$24,327,000 in contributions through 12/31/2020 for the cap year that opened 1/1/2020 (down from \$29,500,500 over same period last year)
- ❑ 2,681 students approved (down from 2,718 last year at this time)

## ❑ **Family Empowerment Scholarships:**

- ❑ Funded by the state of Florida
- ❑ Administered by the Florida DOE
- ❑ 104 students approved (up from 28)

## ❑ **Gardiner Scholarship Program:**

- ❑ Funded by the state of Florida
- ❑ 1,061 students approved (up from 917 last year at this time)

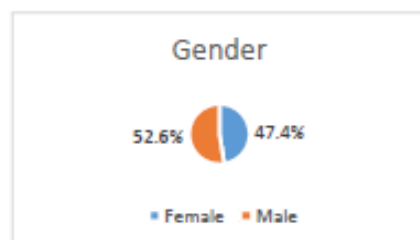


# Florida Tax Credit Scholarship

## Student-Specific

### Gender

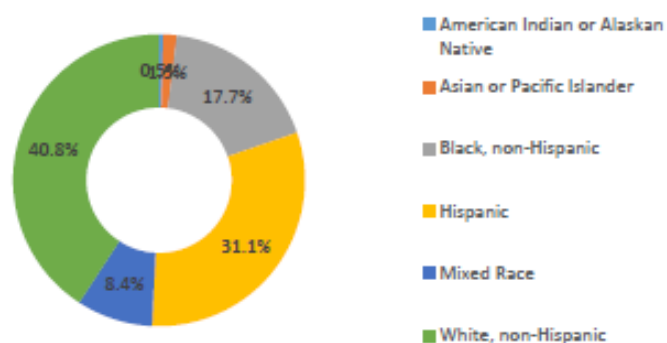
Female	47.4%
Male	52.6%



### Race/Ethnicity

American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.5%
Asian or Pacific Islander	1.5%
Black, non-Hispanic	17.7%
Hispanic	31.1%
Mixed Race	8.4%
White, non-Hispanic	40.8%

### Race/Ethnicity



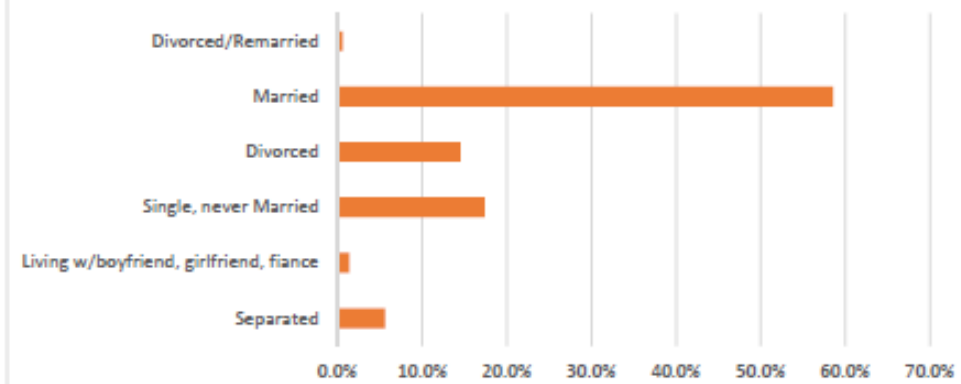
## Household

Average Household Size*	4
Average Household Income*	\$ 44,908
Average Percentage of Poverty*	163.2%
Single-Parent Home*	37.6%
Average Scholarship Awarded	\$ 6,731
Average Scholarship Funded	\$ 6,608

### Marital Status

Separated	5.6%
Living w/boyfriend, girlfriend, fiancé	1.3%
Single, never Married	17.4%
Divorced	14.5%
Married	58.5%
Divorced/Remarried	0.6%
Other	0.4%
Widowed	1.6%

### Marital Status



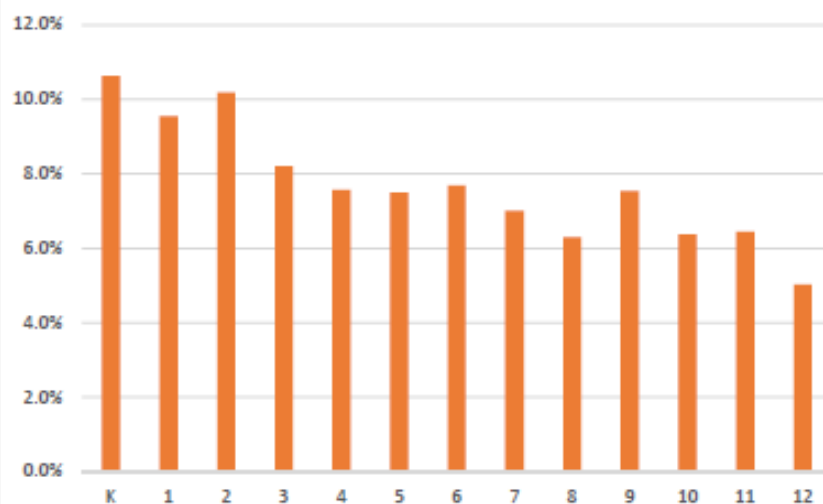
# Florida Tax Credit Scholarship

## Student-Specific

### Grade Level

K	10.6%
1	9.5%
2	10.2%
3	8.2%
4	7.6%
5	7.5%
6	7.7%
7	7.0%
8	6.3%
9	7.5%
10	6.4%
11	6.5%
12	5.0%

### Grade Level

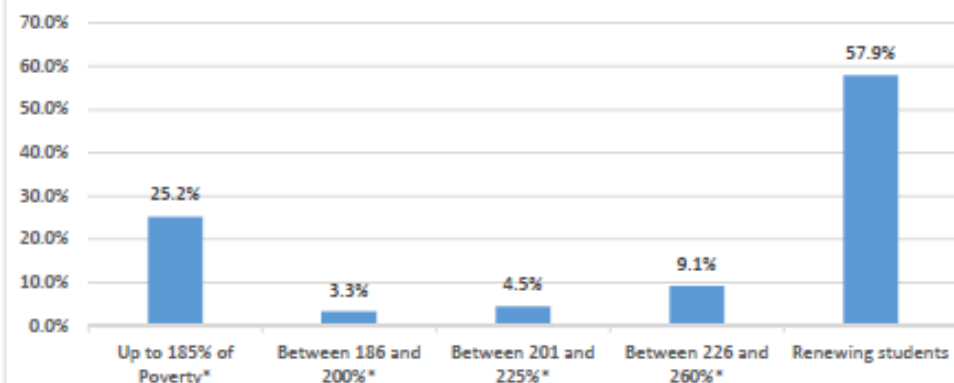


## Household

### Scholarships Awarded by HH Income Levels

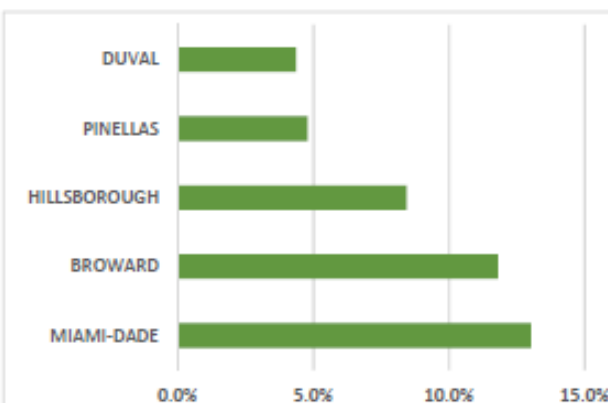
Up to 185% of Poverty*	25.2%
Between 186 and 200%*	3.3%
Between 201 and 225%*	4.5%
Between 226 and 260%*	9.1%
Renewing students	57.9%

### Scholarships Awarded by HH Income Levels



### Top 5 Household Counties

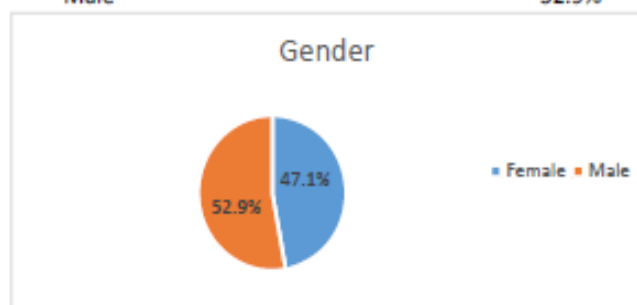
MIAMI-DADE	13.0%
BROWARD	11.8%
HILLSBOROUGH	8.4%
PINELLAS	4.8%
DUVAL	4.4%



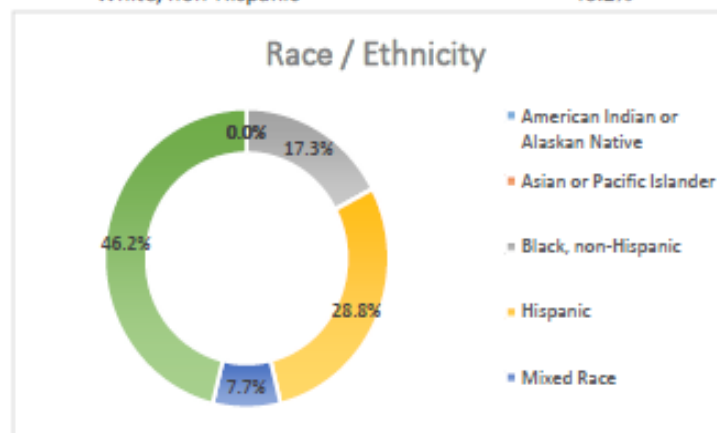
# Family Empowerment Scholarship

## Student-Specific

Gender	
Female	47.1%
Male	52.9%



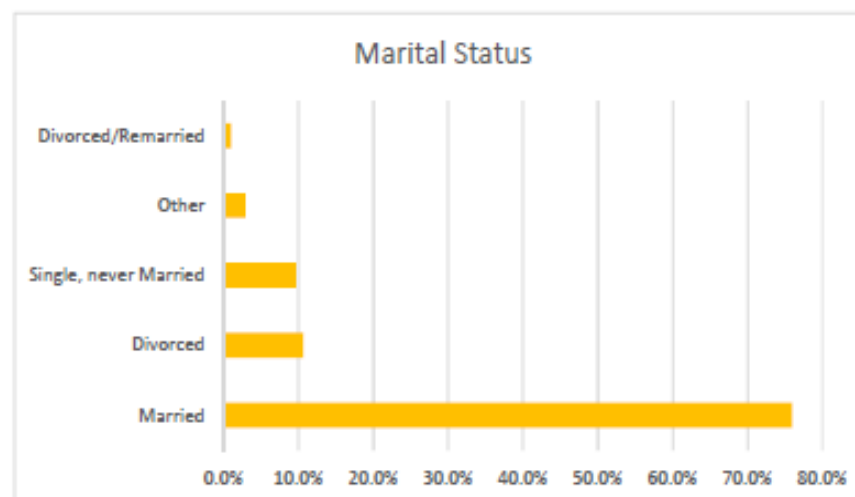
Race/Ethnicity	
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.0%
Asian or Pacific Islander	0.0%
Black, non-Hispanic	17.3%
Hispanic	28.8%
Mixed Race	7.7%
White, non-Hispanic	46.2%



## Household

Average Household Size*	5
Average Household Income*	\$ 79,252
Average Percentage of Poverty*	278.5%
Single-Parent Home*	22.1%
Average Scholarship Awarded	FL DOE
Average Scholarship Funded	FL DOE

Marital Status	
Married	76.0%
Divorced	10.6%
Single, never Married	9.6%
Other	2.9%
Divorced/Remarried	1.0%
Separated	0.0%
Living w/boyfriend, girlfriend, fiancé	0.0%
Widowed	0.0%



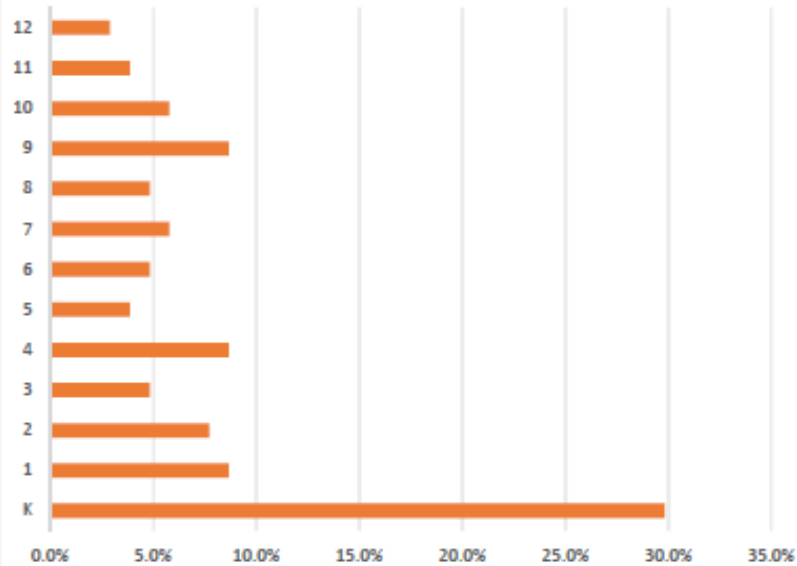
# Family Empowerment Scholarship

## Student-Specific

### Grade Level

K	29.8%
1	8.7%
2	7.7%
3	4.8%
4	8.7%
5	3.8%
6	4.8%
7	5.8%
8	4.8%
9	8.7%
10	5.8%
11	3.8%
12	2.9%

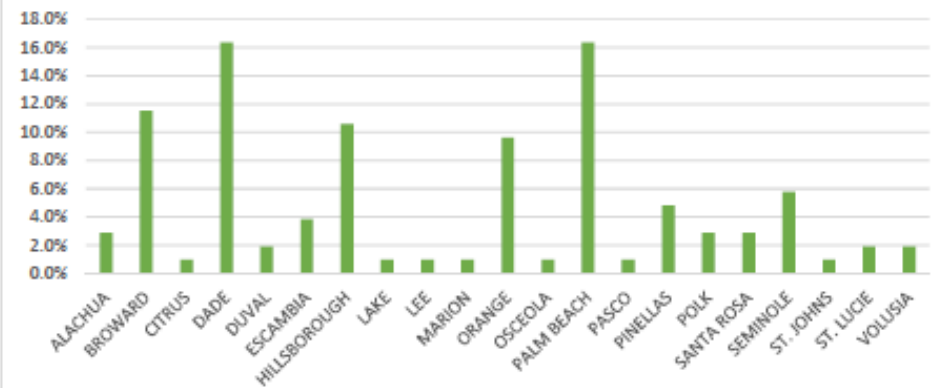
### Grade Levels



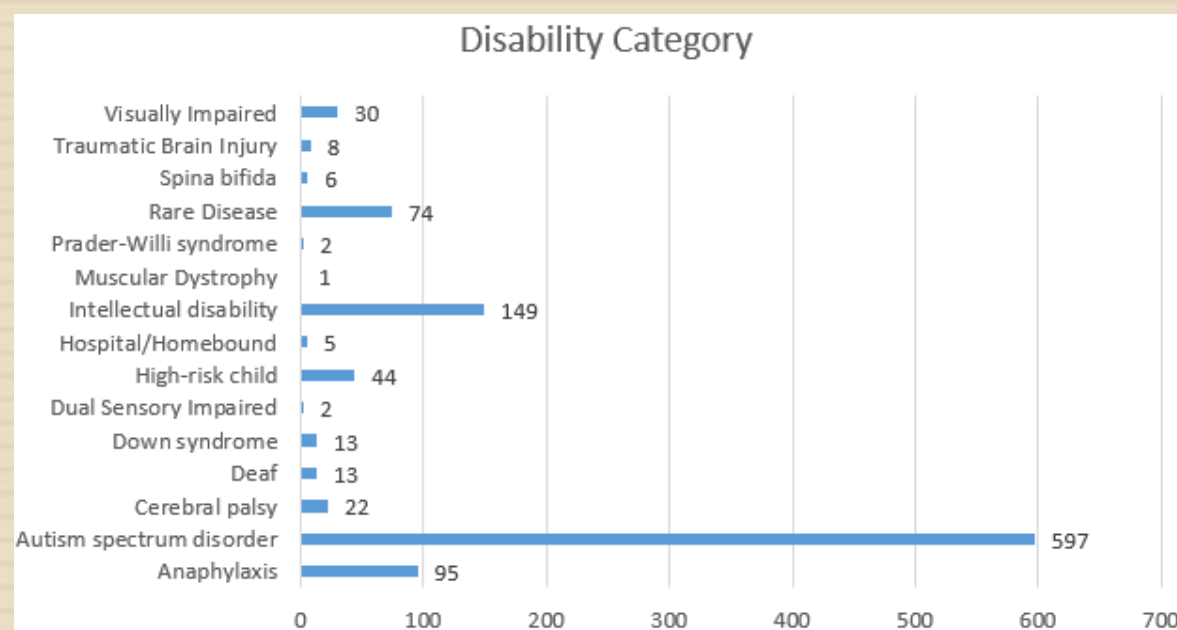
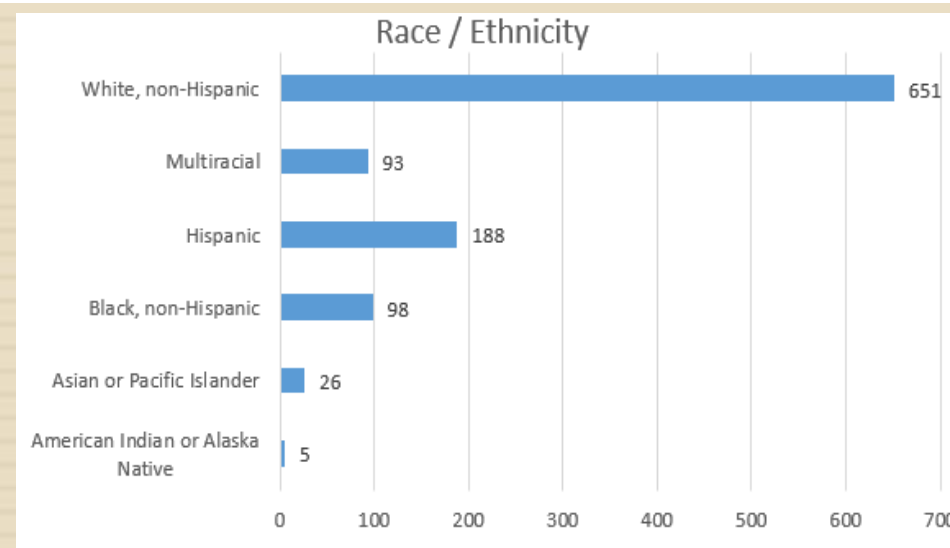
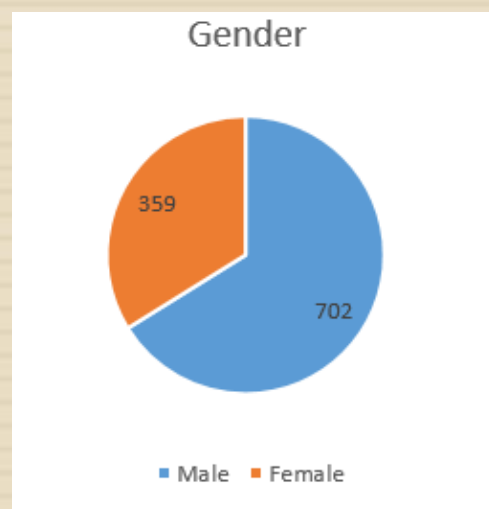
## Household

### Household Counties

ALACHUA	2.9%
BROWARD	11.5%
CITRUS	1.0%
DADE	16.3%
DUVAL	1.9%
ESCAMBIA	3.8%
HILLSBOROUGH	10.6%
LAKE	1.0%
LEE	1.0%
MARION	1.0%
ORANGE	9.6%
OSCEOLA	1.0%
PALM BEACH	16.3%
PASCO	1.0%
PINELLAS	4.8%
POLK	2.9%
SANTA ROSA	2.9%
SEMINOLE	5.8%
ST. JOHNS	1.0%
ST. LUCIE	1.9%
VOLUSIA	1.9%

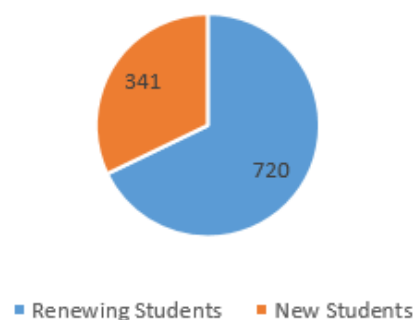


# Gardiner Scholarship

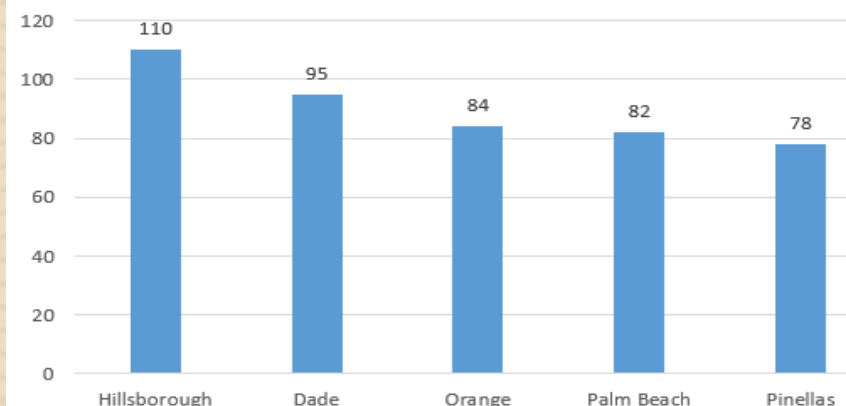


# Gardiner Scholarship

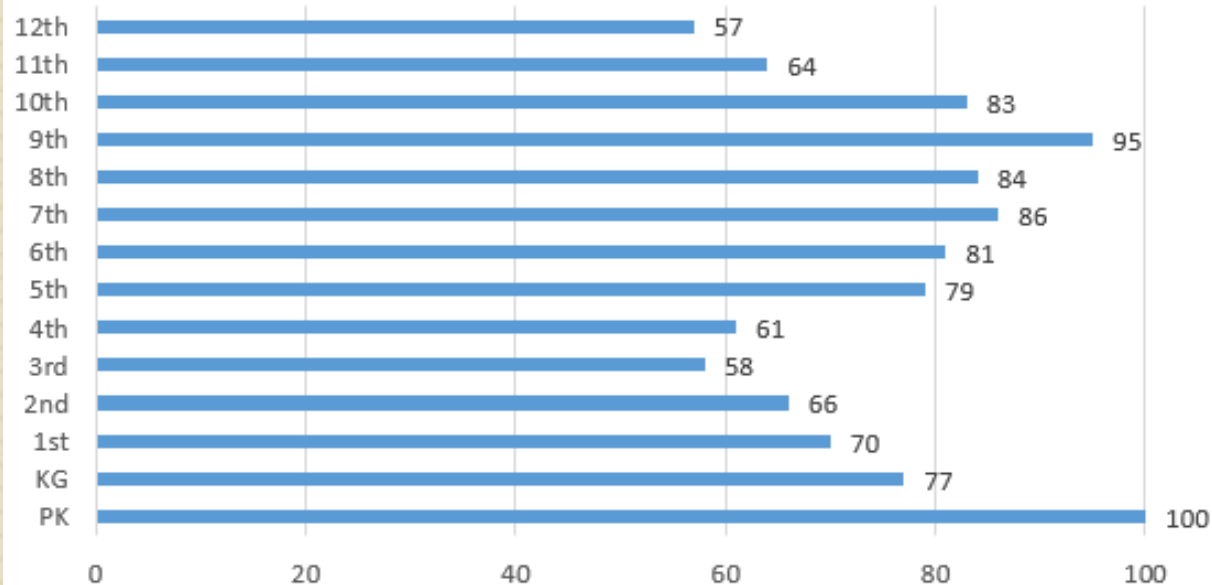
Gardiner Student Type



Top 5 Districts

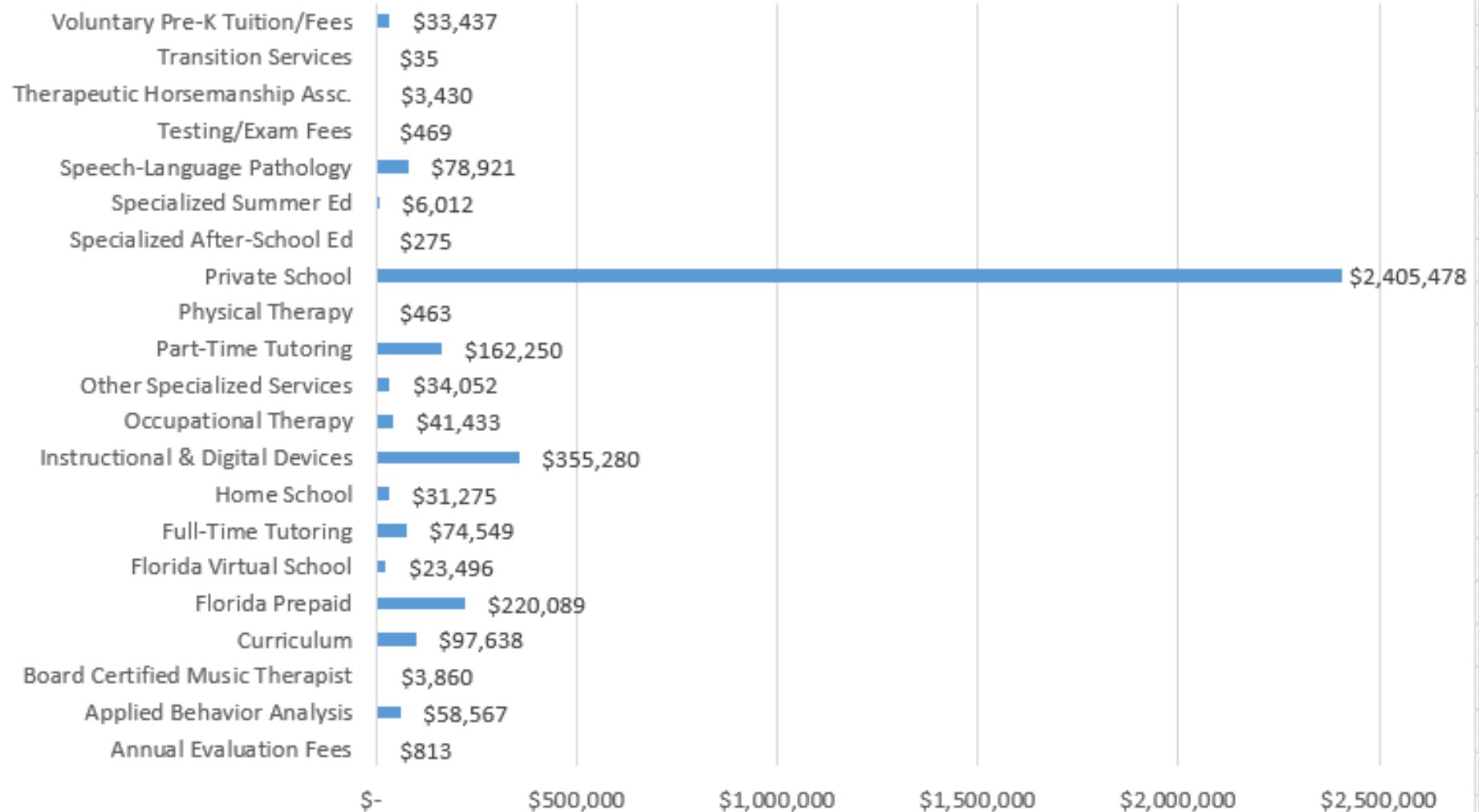


Grade



# Gardiner Scholarship

## Authorized Uses



# Dekendrick Wilson



- Dekendrick attended public school through elementary and middle school, but over the years his grades began to decline and his grade point average (GPA) dropped to a 1.9 by his 10<sup>th</sup> grade year
- Dekendrick has five other biological siblings and lives with his single mom; private school appeared to be out of reach financially
- Dekendrick was able to enroll in JAM Preparatory Academy of Excellence during his 11<sup>th</sup> grade year with an AAA scholarship
- By the time he reached his senior year, he had brought his GPA up from a 1.9 to above a 3.0
- Dekendrick proudly received his high school diploma in the Spring of 2020 and earned a full scholarship to attend Miles College in Birmingham, AL



# Sergio Gaston

- Sergio Gaston's mother, Alba, was angry and frustrated when she was told that any therapies would be a waste of time for him and it was obvious that her young son lacked the ability to learn



- She applied for an AAA Gardiner scholarship as soon as she heard about the program and he was awarded one that year
- With the help of a team of therapists, Sergio has been thriving in school and is now in dual enrollment at SEU in Lakeland
- Alba happily proclaims, "This scholarship and AAA have been a game-changer for Sergio!"

# Spread the word: AAA has FTC scholarship funding available for the 2020-21 school year!



Thank You!



**Contact: Kim Dyson, CPA, President and CEO**  
**Offices: Arizona • Florida • Georgia • Nevada**  
**Office: 888-707-2465 • Email: kim @ aaascholarships.org**  
**Website: www.aaascholarships.org**



# Florida Student Financial Assistance State Scholarship and Grant Programs

Senate Education Committee

January 12, 2021

Suzanne Pridgeon

Deputy Commissioner, Finance and Operations

[www.FLDOE.org](http://www.FLDOE.org)

# Florida State Scholarship and Grant Programs

- **Florida offers several state-funded student financial assistance programs to:**
  - Increase student access to postsecondary education;
  - Reward Florida high school graduates for high academic achievement;
  - Provide funds to students who may not otherwise be able to afford postsecondary education; and
  - Offer students opportunities to pursue careers in both technical and academic fields.

# State Student Financial Assistance Programs

Merit-Based	Need-Based	Tuition Assistance
Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Programs	Florida Student Assistance Grants (FSAG) Program	Effective Access to Student Education (EASE) Grant Program
Benacquist Scholarship Program	Florida Work Experience Program (FWEP)	Access to Better Learning and Education (ABLE) Grant Program

# State Student Financial Assistance Programs

## Other Programs

José Martí Scholarship Challenge Grant

Rosewood Family Scholarship

Mary McLeod Bethune Scholarship (MMB)

First Generation Matching Grant (FGMG)

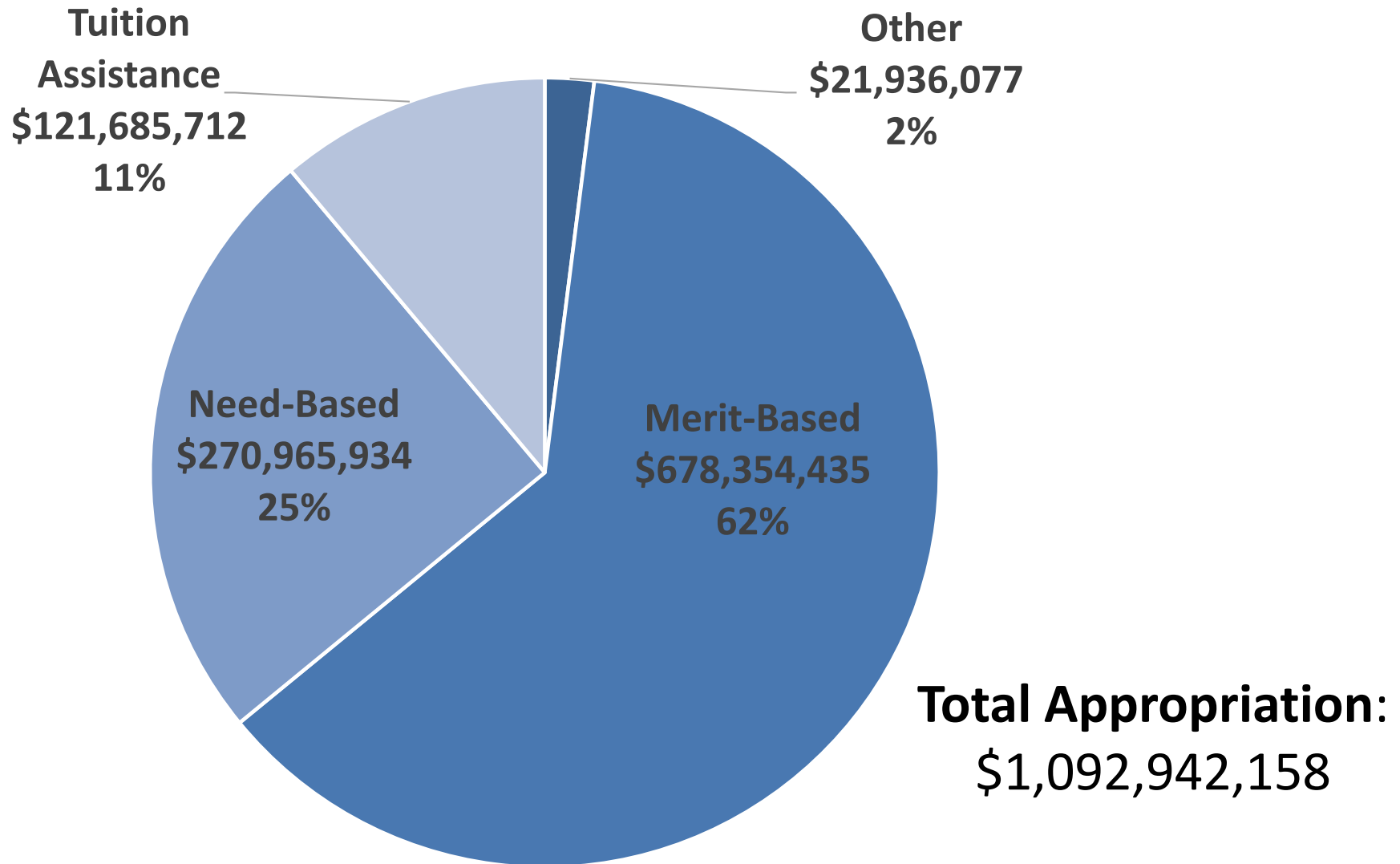
Scholarships for Children & Spouses of Deceased or Disabled Veterans (CSDDV)

Minority Teacher Education Scholars (MTES)

Florida Farmworker Student Scholarship

Honorably Discharged Graduate Assistance Program

## 2020-21 Appropriations by Category



## Four-Year Appropriations Comparison

Program	2017-18 Appropriation	2018-19 Appropriation	2019-20 Appropriation	2020-21 Appropriation
Bright Futures	\$397.28	\$519.70	\$595.14	<b>\$651.78</b>
Benacquisto	\$14.28	\$17.04	\$21.37	<b>\$26.58</b>
FSAG	\$269.40	\$269.40	\$269.40	<b>\$269.40</b>
FWEP	\$1.57	\$1.57	\$1.57	<b>\$1.57</b>
EASE	\$125.45	\$136.82	\$113.91	<b>\$116.66</b>
ABLE	\$6.83	\$6.34	\$4.95	<b>\$5.03</b>

NOTE: Appropriation amounts are in millions.

# Merit-Based Programs

- **Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program**

- Created in 1997 and funded by the Florida Lottery.
- Students may receive funding for **ONE** of the Bright Futures Scholarship awards:
  - Florida Academic Scholars (FAS);
  - Florida Medallion Scholars (FMS);
  - Florida Gold Seal CAPE Scholars (GSC); or
  - Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholars (GSV).
- Students receive the specified award amounts established by the Florida Legislature in the General Appropriations Act.

- **Benacquisto Scholarship Program**

- Created in 2014 for high school graduates who achieved the National Merit® Scholar designation.
- Eligible scholars will receive an award equal to the institutional cost of attendance for an in-state student minus the sum of Bright Futures and the National Merit® award.
- Starting in 2018-19, out-of-state students were funded and out-of-state fees were waived.

# 2020-21 Bright Futures Award Amounts

- **Florida Academic Scholars (FAS)**

- Amount to cover 100% tuition and applicable fees  
*(at a public institution or comparable amount at a nonpublic institution)*
- \$300 each fall and spring semester for textbooks and college-related expenses
- Summer - 100% tuition and applicable fees
- Academic Top Scholars – additional stipend of \$44 per credit hour (fall and spring)

- **Florida Medallion Scholars (FMS)**

- Amount to cover 75% tuition and applicable fees  
*(at a public institution or comparable amount at a nonpublic institution)*
- Summer - 75% tuition and applicable fees
- Beginning in the fall 2021 semester, a Florida Medallion Scholar who is enrolled in an associate degree program at a Florida College System institution is eligible for an award equal to the amount necessary to pay 100 percent of tuition and fees (s. 1009.535(8) F.S.)

[www.FLDOE.org](http://www.FLDOE.org)

# 2020-21 Bright Futures Award Amounts

## Gold Seal CAPE (GSC) and Gold Seal Vocational (GSV)

Program Type	Semester Per Credit Hour Award
Post Secondary Adult Vocational (PSAV) Certificate	\$39
Applied Technology Diploma (ATD)	\$39
Associate of Science (AS) Associate of Applied Science (AAS) College Credit Certificate (CCC)	\$48

After a GSC recipient earns an AS or AAS degree, he/she may receive up to 60 additional hours toward a BS or BAS that articulated from the AS or AAS.

Program Type	Semester Per Credit Hour Award
Bachelor of Science (BS)	\$48
Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS)	\$48

# Bright Futures Scholarship Program

## Students and Disbursements History

Year	Student Recipients	Total Disbursements
2008-09	169,366	\$429.00
2009-10	177,612	\$423.50
2010-11	179,076	\$423.30
2011-12	174,047	\$333.80
2012-13	162,980	\$312.20
2013-14	153,800	\$303.40
2014-15	128,545	\$257.20
2015-16	110,802	\$226.30
2016-17	96,806	\$204.10
2017-18	94,137	\$382.80
2018-19	101,579	\$544.40
2019-20	111,973	\$618.61
2020-21	119,925	\$657.90

NOTE: Disbursement amounts are in millions, 2020-21 data is estimated.

# FAS/FMS Award Requirements

Type	16 High School Course Credits <sup>1</sup>	High School Weighted Bright Futures GPA	College Entrance Exams by High School Graduation Year (ACT <sup>®</sup> /SAT <sup>®</sup> )	Service Hours
FAS	4 - English <i>(three must include substantial writing)</i> 4 - Mathematics <i>(at or above the Algebra I level)</i> 3 - Natural Science <i>(two must have substantial laboratory)</i>	3.50	2020-21 Graduates: 29/1330 2021-22 Graduates: 29/1330	100 hours
FMS	3 - Social Science 2 - World Language <i>(sequential, in same language)</i>	3.00	2020-21 Graduates: 25/1210 2021-22 Graduates: 25/1210	75 hours

<sup>1</sup> The required coursework aligns with the State University System admission requirements found in Florida Board of Governor's Regulation 6.002. Additional information regarding high school coursework can be found within the [Florida Counseling for Future Education Handbook](#).

**Note:** The 2019-20 graduates required an ACT/SAT of 29/1290 for FAS or 26/1170 for FMS.

# Need-Based Programs

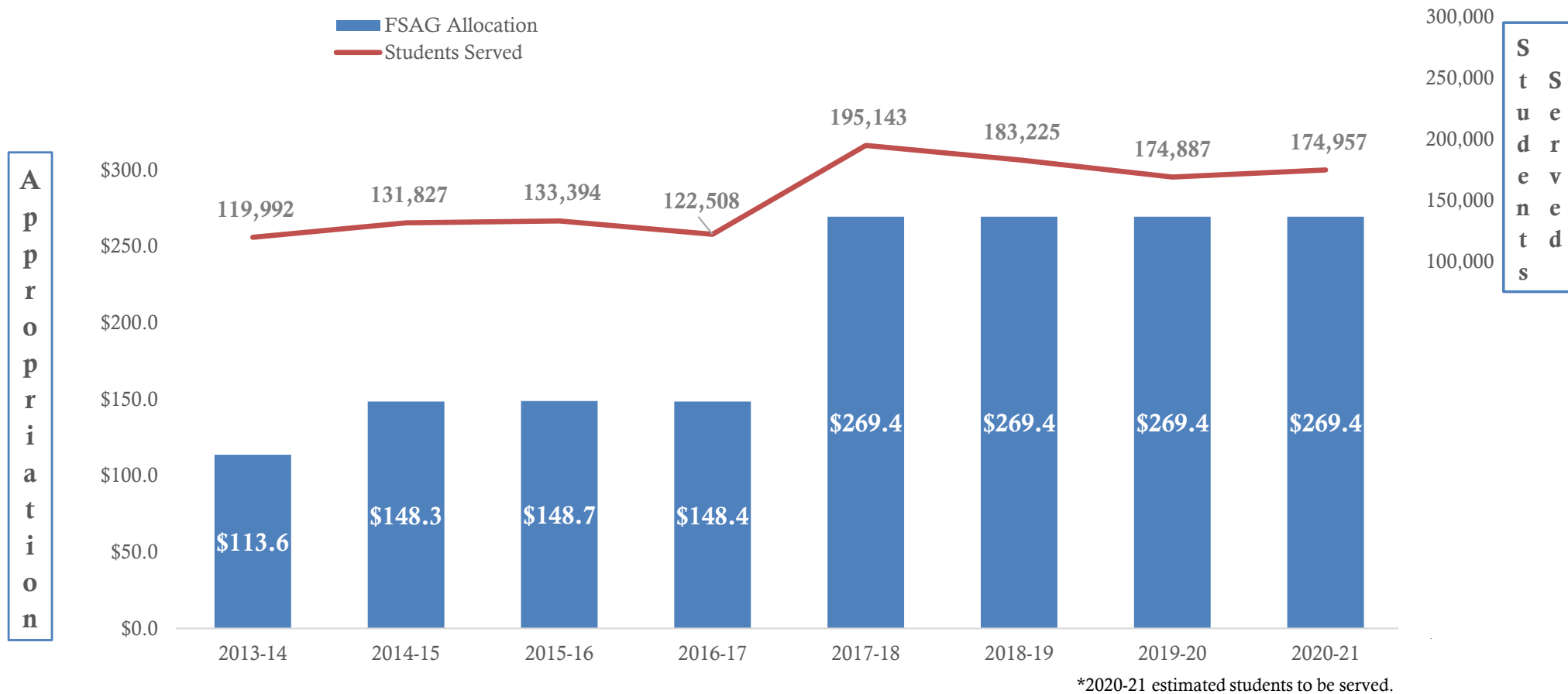
- **Florida Student Assistance Grant Program (FSAG)**

- Florida's largest need-based grant program.
- Four sectors:
  - Public;
  - Private;
  - Postsecondary; and
  - Public Postsecondary Career Education.
- Awards range from \$200 minimum – \$2,610 maximum, as determined by the institutions.
- 169,293 students served in 2019-20.
- \$1,593 average award in 2019-20.
- Maximum award increased to \$3,260 for 2020-21.

- **Florida Work Experience Program (FWEP)**

- Self-help, need-based student financial assistance program intended to facilitate student employment in occupations complementary to students' educational endeavors and career goals.
- Institutions may use up to 100 percent of their program allocation for student on-campus employment.
- Public school employers are funded 100 percent of a student's wages; private employers are funded up to 70 percent of a student's wages.
- Annual Appropriation - \$1.57M, unchanged since 2013-14.
- Program award amount – determined by financial need.
- 728 students served in 2019-20.
- \$1,879 average award in 2019-20.

# Florida Student Assistance Grant (FSAG) Total Annual Appropriations



# Tuition Assistance Programs

- **Access to Better Learning and Education Grant (ABLE)**

- Created in 2004 to provide tuition assistance to Florida residents who are enrolled in undergraduate degree programs at eligible independent Florida postsecondary institutions.
- ABLE is not related to a student's financial need or other criteria upon which financial aid programs are usually based.
- The maximum annual award amount is established in the General Appropriations Act (2020-21 maximum award: \$2,841; Estimated students served: 1,620).

- **William L. Boyd, IV, Effective Access to Student Education (EASE)**

- Created in 1979 to provide tuition assistance to Florida residents who are enrolled in undergraduate degree programs at eligible independent, nonprofit colleges or universities in Florida.
- EASE is not related to a student's financial need or other criteria upon which financial aid programs are usually based.
- The maximum annual award amount is established in the General Appropriations Act (2020-21 maximum award: \$2,841; Estimated students served: 39,543).

# Pell Grant

- Federal grant program
  - Administered by the U.S. Department of Education
  - Requires completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
- Need-based grants
- Maximum Award for 2020-21: \$6,345
- Award Calculation:
  - Maximum award minus
  - Expected Family Contribution; and
  - Cost of Attendance; and
  - Full-time or Part-time; and
  - Other
- Funds are sent to the institution:
  - Applies funds to tuition and fee balances;
  - Provide vouchers for bookstore; and
  - Sends a check to the student.
- No direct contact with the Florida Department of Education
  - Some Florida scholarships and grants require application for the Pell Grant
    - Florida Work Experience Program (FWEP)
    - Florida Student Assistance Grant (FSAG)



# Additional Information

## **WEBSITE**

[www.FloridaStudentFinancialAidsg.org](http://www.FloridaStudentFinancialAidsg.org)

## **REPORTS**

[Annual Report to the Commissioner](#)

[End-of-Year Reports](#)

[Bright Futures Statistical Reports](#)

[www.FLDOE.org](http://www.FLDOE.org)



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