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Florida businesses make school choice a reality

CLEARWATER –Thanks to the support and contributions of more than 100 Florida corporations, Step Up For Students, a nonprofit that helps manage the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program, raised \$447 million expected to provide nearly 78,000 low-income student scholarships during the 2015-16 school year.

“We are grateful for our corporate partners who recognize the value of educational choice and who support our mission to ensure that all Florida students have access to the learning environment that suit their individual needs,” said Step Up For Students President Doug Tuthill.

The program allows recipients to choose between two scholarships – a tuition scholarship valued up to \$5,667 per student for the 2015-16 school year to help with private school tuition and fees, or a \$500 transportation scholarship to offset the cost of transportation to an out-of-district public school. More than 1,600 private schools participate in the scholarship program statewide.

The typical Florida Tax Credit Scholarship student comes from a household with an average income of \$25,557 for a household of four – just 7 percent above the poverty level. Nearly 68 percent of the scholarship recipients are black or Hispanic and over half of the scholarship students – 58 percent – come from single parent households.

Scholarships are funded by corporations that receive a dollar-for-dollar tax credit for their contributions. Florida’s Tax Credit Scholarship program is limited to students who qualify for the federal free- or reduced-price lunch program (185 percent above poverty) and children who are in foster care or children who are homeless.

For more information about the scholarship program, visit www.stepupforstudents.org.

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