

Gardiner Scholarship

2016-2017 End of Year Report



Report Summary

- In 2016-17, there were 8,053 students participating in the Gardiner Scholarship program. Of these students, 7,589 students received their scholarship through Step Up For Students.
- Sixty-one percent of students were diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder.
- More Gardiner students lived in Miami-Dade County than in any other county (12.8%); followed by Orange county (8%).
- Most students were enrolled in elementary grades Kindergarten through 5th grade (44%).
- There were more home-school students participating in the program in 2016-17 than any other year (32%).
- The average Gardiner scholarship award was \$10,144 in 2016-17.
- Instructional materials category experienced more growth than any other category, increasing from 10.8% in 2015-16 to 15.4% of funds in 2016-17.
- Only 7.6% of students did not use any of their scholarship during the year, compared to 8.4% in 2015-16.
- Sixty-four percent of students used a portion of their funds for enrollment tuition and fees.
- A smaller proportion of money was spent on private school tuition and fees this year than in previous years.
- More families used their scholarship for a variety of different educational expenses than last year.

Introduction

The Gardiner Scholarship program is a Florida Educational Choice program designed to help parents individualize educational options for their children with specific special needs. The program has served students for 3 complete school years and is currently administered by two state-approved, non-profit scholarship funding organizations (SFO), Step Up For Students and AAA Scholarship Foundation. This report provides summary information for students participating in the Gardiner Scholarship program through Step Up For Students (SUFS) during 2016-2017.

Program Eligibility Requirements

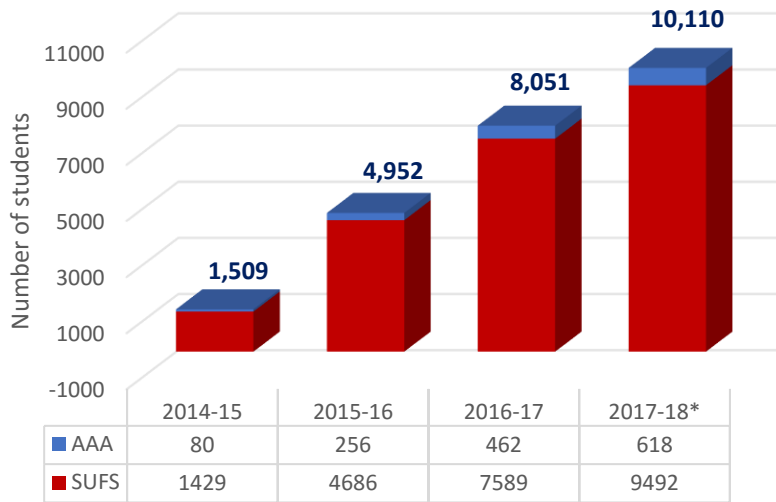
Gardiner Scholarship eligibility is based on residency, age, and disability. To be eligible to receive the scholarship for the 2016-17 year, a student must have been:

- A Florida resident
- Eligible to enroll from 3 yrs. old through 12th grade or 22 yrs. old, whichever comes first.
- The subject of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) written in accordance with rules of the State Board of Education or has received a disability diagnosis as defined from a physician who is licensed under Florida Statutes chapter 458 or chapter 459, or a psychologist who is licensed in Florida
- Diagnosed with one of the following disabilities: autism spectrum disorder, muscular dystrophy, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, Prader-Willi syndrome, Spina bifida, Williams syndrome, Phelan-McDermid syndrome, or intellectual disability (severe cognitive impairment). Also, students 3-5 yrs. old deemed “high risk” due to developmental delays and not older than 5 on Sept. 1 may be eligible for the year they apply.
- The date that eligibility is confirmed influences the scholarship amount awarded. A full (100%) scholarship will be given to those who qualify by September 1st, while 75% will be given if eligibility is confirmed by November 1st. For those who qualify later in the school year, 50% of the scholarship will be given to those whose eligibility is confirmed by February 1st, and 25% will be given for those who qualify by April 1st.

Student Enrollment

In 2016-2017, there were 7,589 students who participated in the Gardiner Scholarship program through Step Up For Students, compared to 4,686 students in the 2015-2016 school year. Students ranged from 3 years old to 12th grade and comprised several different races, grade levels, prior school types, and disabilities.

Program Growth



*Funded through September 2017

2016 Enrollment Summary

New 51%
Renewal 49%

Grade Level

3-4 Years Old 15%
Elem. Grades (K-5) 44%
Middle Grades (6-8) 22%
High Grades (9-12) 18%

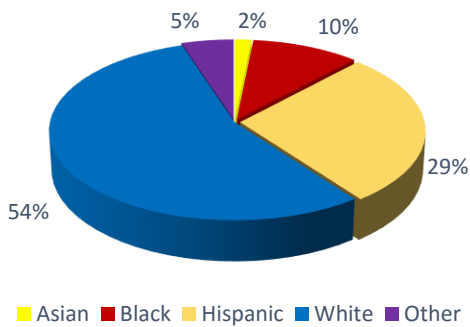
Current School Type

Private School 68%
Home School 32%

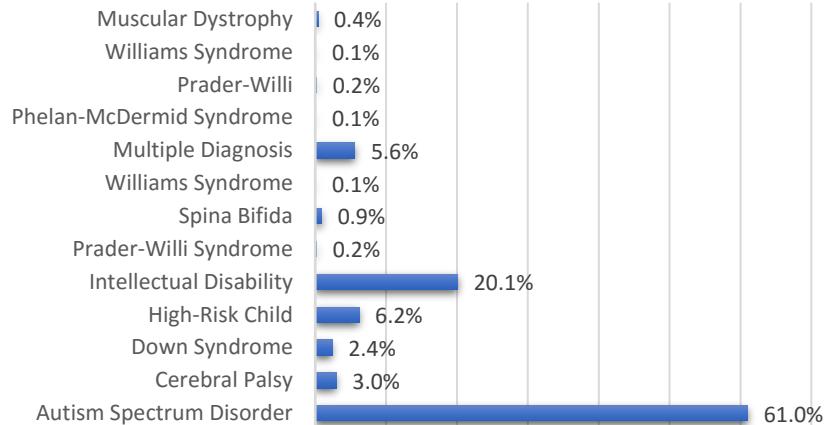
Prior School Type (New Students)

Home School 14%
Public School 46%
Private School 39%

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity



Enrollment by Diagnosis



School Enrollment

There were 1,365 approved private schools participating in the Gardiner Scholarship program in 2016-17. Of these schools, 65% received payments for tuition or other educational services for 4,522 students. A list of participating schools and total number of students submitting payments to each school is included in the Appendix.

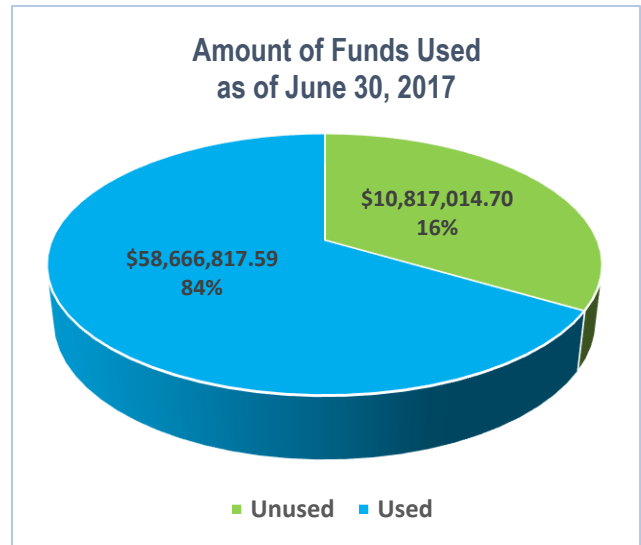
Scholarship Awards

The average scholarship awarded for 2016-2017 was \$10,144.00. However, the actual amount of a child's award is based on his/her grade, county of residence, and the date eligibility is confirmed. For Step Up for Students, a total of \$69,483,832.25 was awarded to 7,589 students. As of June 30, 2017, SUFS families spent \$58,666,817.59 on qualifying educational expenses. On average, SUFS families submitted nearly 16 reimbursements per child and spent \$8,067.49 of each child's scholarship award. Unspent funds in student accounts roll over from year to year and are

refunded to the state if the student has not enrolled in any eligible post-secondary institution for three consecutive years following high school graduation.

Selected Findings Regarding Scholarship Expenditures

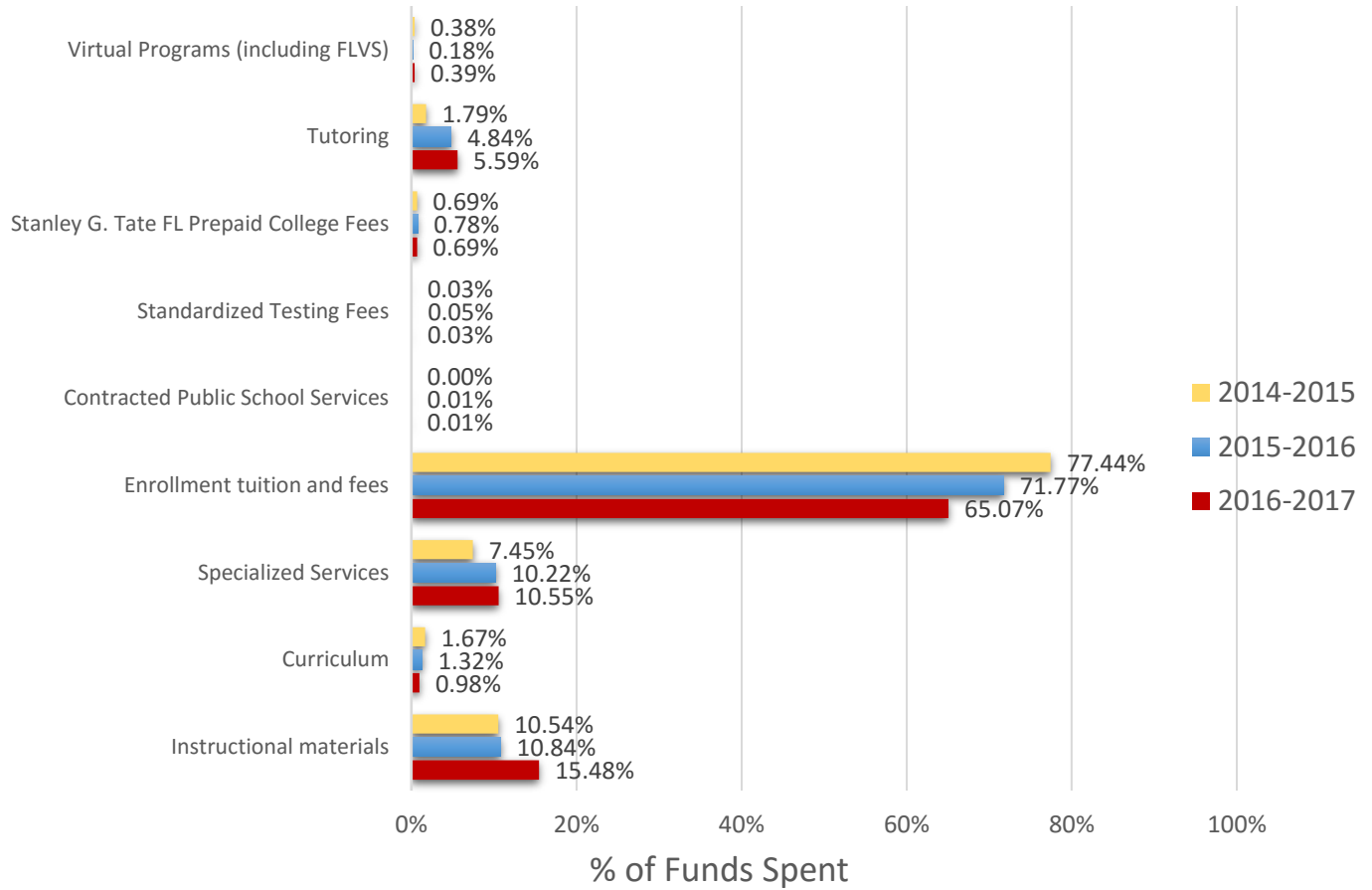
- Over 80% of scholarship funds awarded in 2016-17 were expended by June 30, 2017.
- Sixty-five percent of funds were spent on enrollment tuition and fees.
- While there was an increase in the proportion of funds spent on tutoring and instructional materials, families spent slightly less on tuition and fees compared to previous years.
- Forty percent of students who used their Gardiner scholarship spent a portion of their award on instructional materials.
- One out of every four Gardiner students used their scholarship funds for specialized therapies.
- Families who spent money on tutoring spent an average of \$3,643 on tutoring services.



Spending by Category (2016-2017)

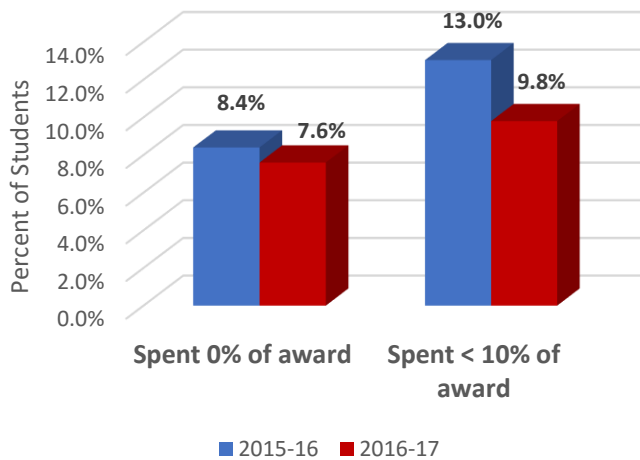
	Total Amount Spent	% of Total
Instructional Materials	\$8,923,885.00	15.54%
Curriculum	\$566,021.81	0.98%
Specialized Services	\$6,084,456.80	10.55%
Enrollment Tuition and Fees	\$37,510,245.00	65.07%
Contracted Public School Services	\$6,480.00	0.01%
Standardized Testing Fees	\$19,569.93	0.03%
Stanley G. Tate FL Prepaid College Fees	\$400,032.02	0.69%
Tutoring	\$3,222,657.90	5.59%
Virtual Programs (including FLVS)	\$226,425.24	0.39%
Programs with VPK and School Readiness	\$484,352.49	0.84%
Specialized Programs/Transitional Services/Education Evaluation Fees	\$174,154.81	0.30%
Eligible Postsecondary Institution or Program	\$29,489.54	0.05%

Spending by Category



Gardiner Non-Spending

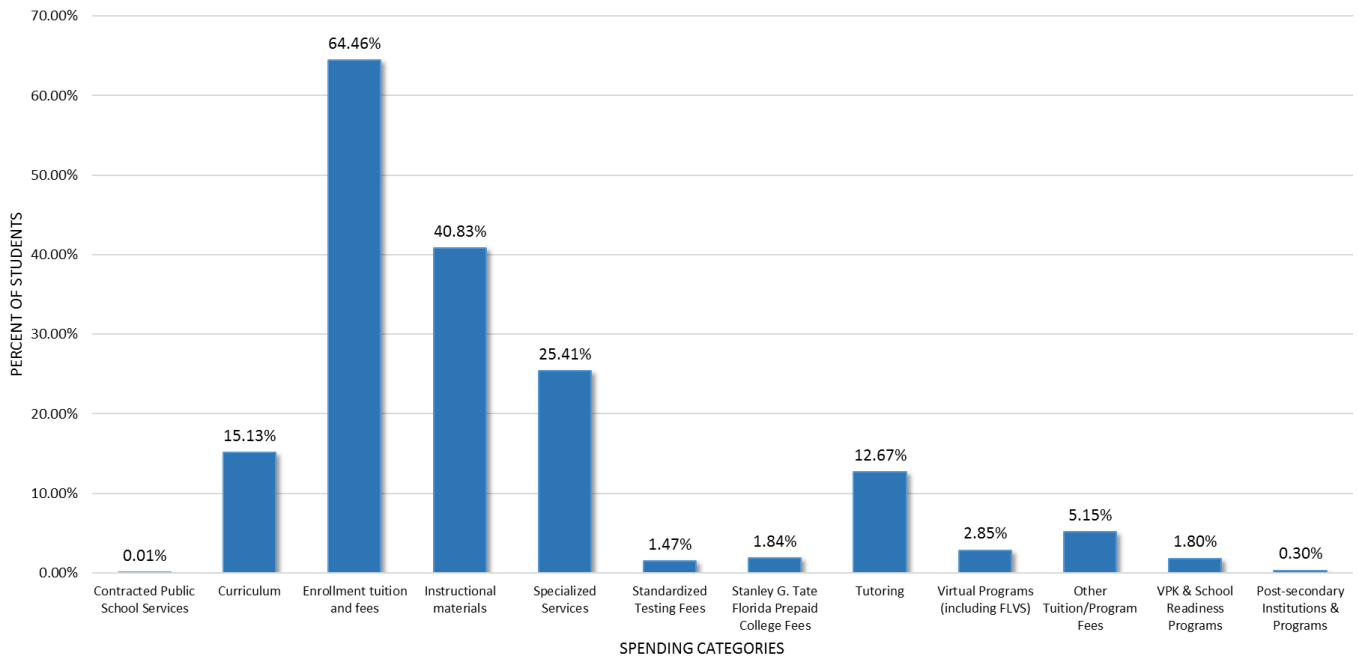
As of the end of the fiscal year



Expenditure Categories by School Type

	<i>Private School</i>	<i>Home School</i>
Eligible Private School	91.9%	0.0%
Instructional Materials	3.9%	48.0%
Specialized Services	2.0%	22.9%
Curriculum	0.2%	3.7%
Tutoring	1.4%	21.0%
Virtual Schools	0.1%	1.4%
Stanley G. Tate FL Prepaid	0.3%	1.8%
Standardized Testing Fees	0.0%	0.1%
Contracted Public School Services	0.0%	0.1%
Other Fees*	0.1%	0.8%
VPK or School Readiness Program Providers	0.0%	0.1%
Eligible Postsecondary	0.0%	0.2%

Percentage of students who spent a portion of their award in each spending category



Number of Expenditures and Average Amount Spent by Category

	Number of Students Spending by Category	Average Amount Spent Per Student
Contracted Public School Services	1	\$6,480.00
Curriculum	1,086	\$530.11
Eligible Private School	4,625	\$8,208.59
Instructional materials	2,972	\$3,068.75
Specialized Services	1,853	\$3,352.69
Standardized Testing Fees	104	\$188.56
Stanley G. Tate FL Prepaid College Fees/Florida 529 College Savings Plan	133	\$3,172.30
Specialized Programs/Transition Services/Education Evaluation Fees	375	\$499.79
Tutoring	931	\$3,643.37
Virtual Programs (including FLVS)	204	\$1,116.35
Eligible Postsecondary Institution or Program	30	\$4,375.29
Programs with VPK or School Readiness Providers	126	\$3,844.07

Additional Tables

Enrollment by County (Top 25)

	Number	Percent
Dade	970	12.80%
Orange	609	8.00%
Broward	547	7.20%
Palm Beach	388	5.10%
Pinellas	361	4.80%
Hillsborough	353	4.70%
Duval	348	4.60%
Polk	341	4.50%
Brevard	332	4.40%
Seminole	290	3.80%
Pasco	274	3.60%
Volusia	245	3.20%
Osceola	240	3.20%
Lake	221	2.90%
Hernando	187	2.50%
Leon	178	2.30%
Manatee	140	1.80%
St. Lucie	129	1.70%
Lee	125	1.60%
Alachua	118	1.60%
Marion	104	1.40%
Okaloosa	92	1.20%
Escambia	87	1.10%
St. Johns	85	1.10%
Sarasota	82	1.10%

Enrollment by Grade

	Number	Percent
3 year old	554	7.3%
4 year old	620	8.2%
Kindergarten	691	9.1%
First	553	7.3%
Second	501	6.6%
Third	541	7.1%
Fourth	539	7.1%
Fifth	534	7.0%
Sixth	619	8.2%
Seventh	561	7.4%
Eighth	521	6.9%
Ninth	466	6.1%
Tenth	372	4.9%
Eleventh	277	3.6%
Twelfth	242	3.2%