



# Gardiner Scholarship

2018-2019 End of Year Report



## Report Summary

- In 2018-2019, there were 12,245 students participating in the Gardiner Scholarship program. Of these students, 11,393 students received their scholarship through Step Up For Students.
- More of these students were enrolled in the elementary grades of Kindergarten through 5th grade (44%) than in middle or high school.
- The majority of Gardiner students, 63%, were diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder.
- There has been a slight increase in the percentage of Gardiner students who are home school students with 29.5% being home schooled in 14-15 and 34.0% of students being educated at home in 18-19.
- More Gardiner students lived in Miami-Dade county than in any other county (13%) followed by Orange county (8%).
- The average Gardiner scholarship award was \$10,265, compared to \$10,276 in 2017-18.
- Fewer families are spending scholarship funds on tuition and fees.
- Families spent their money in more diverse categories than was found in previous years.
- Around 58% of families spent funds on tuition and fees in 18-19, while 42% spent funds on instructional materials.
- The largest expenditure category, tuition and fees, made up just 57.9% of all expenditure in 18-19 compared to 77.4% of all expenditures during the 14-15 school year.
- Instructional materials is the category with the largest increase in spending from the previous school year with an increase from 15.8% of all funds spent in 17-18 to 22.2% of all funds spent in 18-19.
- Instructional materials is also the category with the largest increase in funds spent since the Gardiner program began with only 10.5% of all spending in 14-15 falling under the instructional materials category compared to the 22.2% spent in 18-19.
- Around 85% of all scholarship funds awarded in 2018-19 were expended by June 30, 2019.
- The percentage of non-spenders has sharply declined. Only about 3% of families did not spend any of their scholarship funds in 18-19 compared to 7.2% of families in 17-18 and 23.8% of families in 14-15.

## Introduction

The Gardiner Scholarship program is a Florida School Choice program designed to help parents individualize educational options for their children with specific special needs. The program has served students for 4 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 2018-2019 school year.

## Program Eligibility Requirements

Gardiner Scholarship eligibility is based on residency, age, and disability. To be eligible to receive the scholarship for the 2018-2019 year, a student must have been:

- A Florida resident
- Eligible to enroll from 3 yrs. old through 12<sup>th</sup> 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, Phelan McDermid syndrome, Prader-Willi syndrome, Spina bifida, Williams syndrome, Intellectual disability (severe cognitive impairment), rare diseases as defined by the National Organization for Rare Disorders, anaphylaxis, deaf, visually impaired, dual sensory impaired, traumatic brain injured, hospital or homebound as defined by the rules of the State Board of Education and evidenced by reports from local school districts, or 3-5 year-olds who are 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 1<sup>st</sup>, while 75% will be given if eligibility is confirmed by November 1<sup>st</sup>. For those who qualify later in the school year, 50% of the scholarship will be given to those whose eligibility is confirmed by February 1<sup>st</sup>, and 25% will be given for those who qualify by April 1<sup>st</sup>.

## Student Enrollment

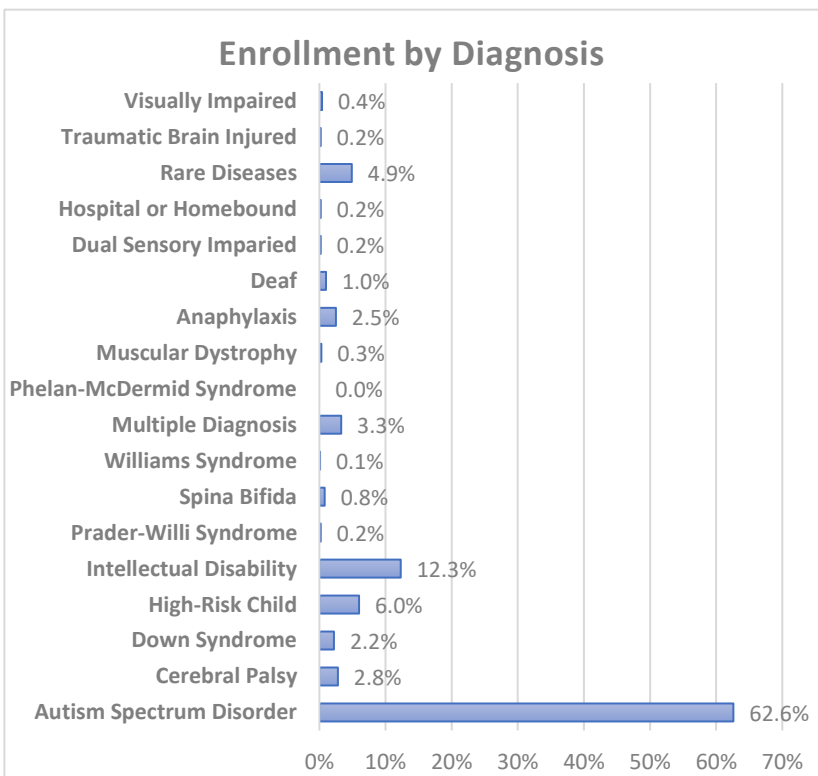
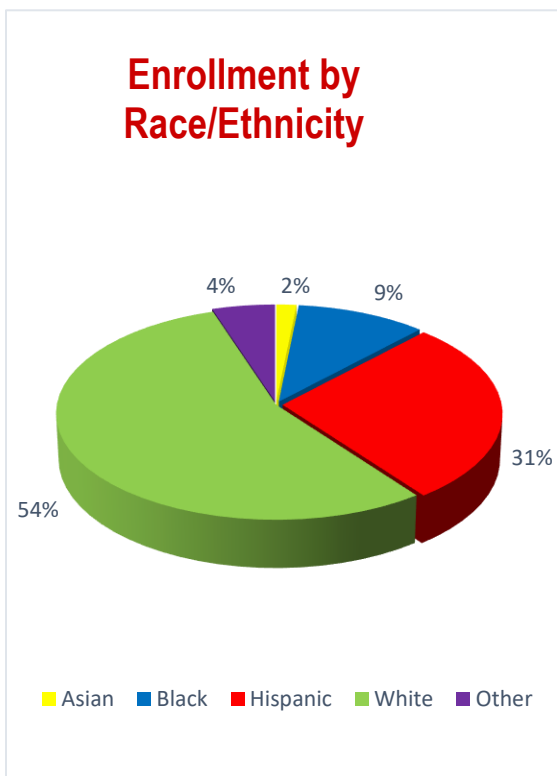
In 2018-2019, there were 11,393 students who participated in the Gardiner Scholarship program through Step Up For Students, compared to 9,627 students in the 2017-2018 school year. Students ranged from 3 years old to 12th grade and comprised several different races, grade levels, prior school types, and

disabilities. Students were likewise found to be primarily enrolled in private school, while 34% of Gardiner students were home schooled. <sup>1</sup>



### 2018-2019 Enrollment Summary

New	29%
Renewal	71%
<b>Grade Level</b>	
3-4 Years Old	12%
Elem. Grades (K-5)	44%
Middle Grades (6-8)	22%
High Grades (9-12)	22%
<b>Current School Type</b>	
Private School	66.0%
Home School	34.0%
<b>Prior School Type (New Students)</b>	
Home School	20%
Public School	31%
Private School	45%



<sup>1</sup>Private and home school rates are based on students who were at least 6 years old by February 1, 2019, which is the mandatory age for school attendance. These rates are approximate and based on information obtained from Gardiner families and from private school payments.

## School Enrollment

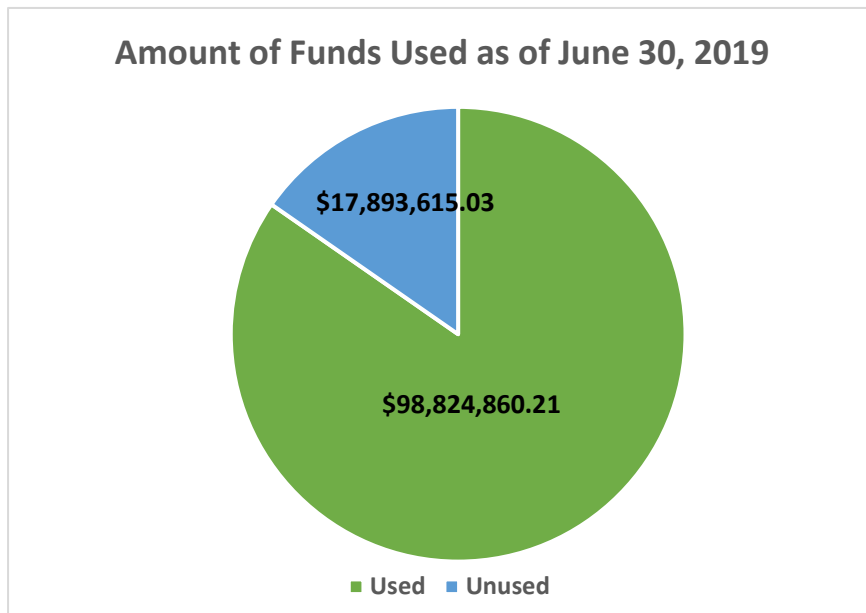
There were 1,588 approved private schools participating in the Gardiner Scholarship program in 2018-19. Of these schools 1,130, or 71%, received payments for tuition or other educational services for 6,648 students.

## Scholarship Awards

The average scholarship awarded for 2018-2019 was \$10,265.95. 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 \$116,718,475.24 was awarded to 11,393 students. As of June 30, 2019, SUFS families spent \$98,824,860.21 on qualifying educational expenses. On average, SUFS families submitted 29 reimbursements per child and spent \$8,674.17 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.

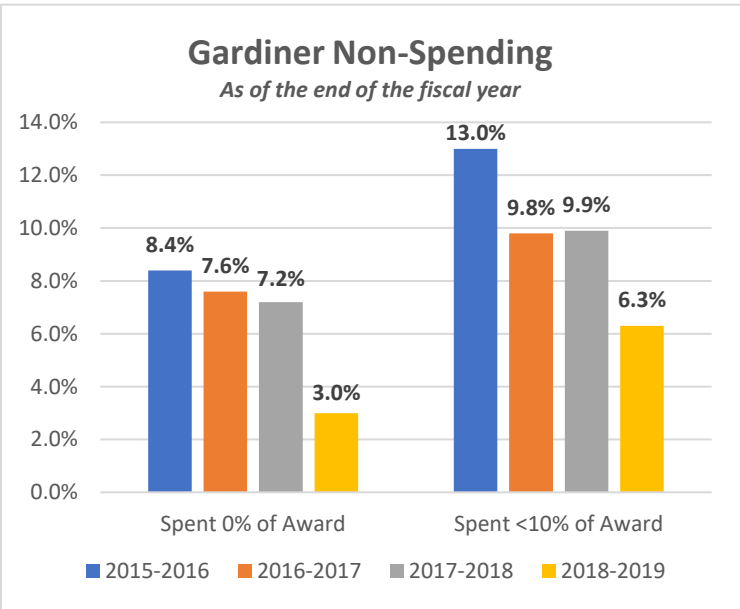
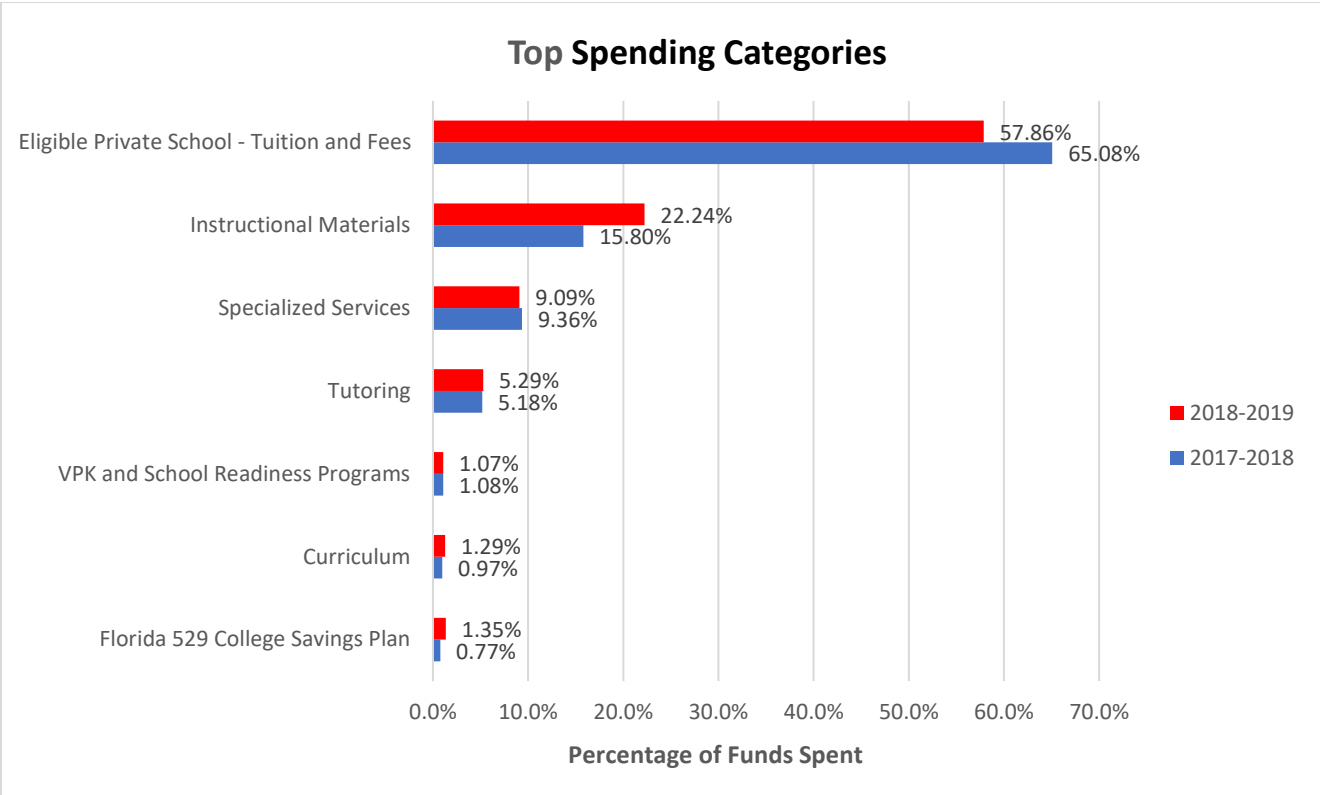
## Findings Regarding Scholarship Expenditures

- Around 85% of scholarship funds awarded in 2018-19 were expended by June 30, 2019.
- Around 58% of funds were spent on enrollment tuition and fees.
- While there was a small increase in the proportion of funds spent on tutoring, curriculum, Florida 529 College Savings Plan, and instructional materials, families spent slightly less on programs with VPK and school readiness and specialized services along with tuition and fees compared to the previous year.
- Forty-two percent of students who used their Gardiner scholarship spent a portion of their award on instructional materials.
- Families who spent money on tutoring spent an average of \$9,658.03 on tutoring services.



<b><i>Top Spending Categories (2018-2019)<sup>2</sup></i></b>	<b>Total Amount Spent</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Eligible Private School - Tuition and Fees	\$57,179,895.18	57.86%
Instructional Materials	\$21,982,434.43	22.24%
Specialized Services	\$8,988,062.39	9.09%
Part -Time Tutoring	\$4,669,534.24	4.73%
Florida 529 College Savings Plan	\$1,335,982.33	1.35%
Curriculum	\$1,274,923.17	1.29%
Programs with VPK and School Readiness	\$1,061,666.20	1.07%

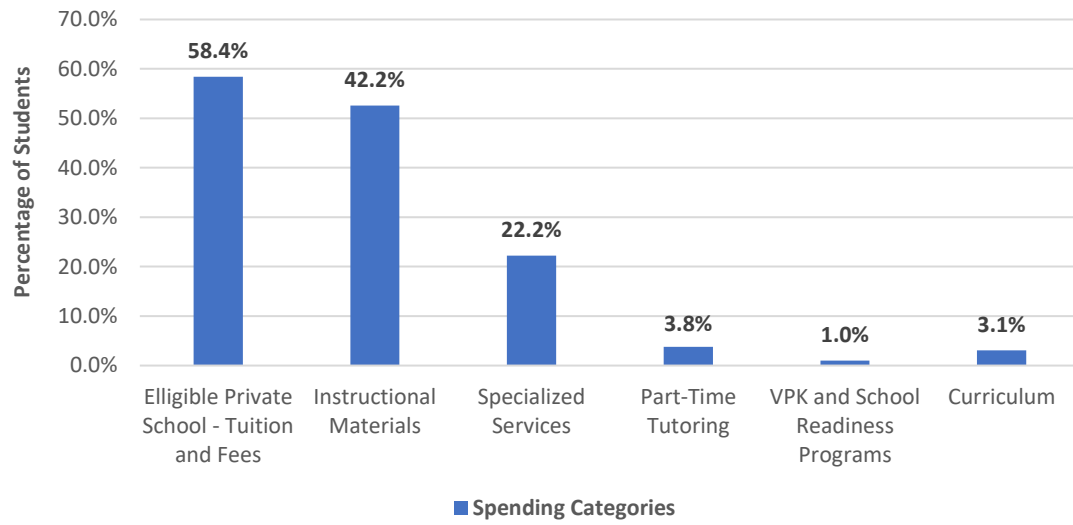
<sup>2</sup> Categories that include 1% or more of total funds spent are included in the chart. For all spending categories and total scholarship expenditures, see the appendix.



### Expenditure Categories by School Type

	Private School	Home School
Eligible Private School	82.1%	0.0%
Instructional Materials	8.8%	51.8%
Specialized Services	4.0%	29.2%
Full-Time Tutoring	0.4%	1.3%
Part-Time Tutoring	1.9%	12.8%
Curriculum	0.4%	3.5%
Florida Virtual School	0.3%	1.2%
Florida 529 College Savings Plan	1.3%	1.6%

### Percentage of students who spent part of their reward in the top spending categories



## APPENDIX

### Spending by Category

	# of Students Spending in Category	Average Spent Per Student	Total Amount of Reimbursements	% of Total Reimbursements
Annual Educational Evaluation Fees	313	\$46.53	\$14,562.75	0.01%
Certified Horse Therapy Centers	17	\$6,935.43	\$117,902.25	0.12%
Certified Music and Art Therapy	204	\$1,209.56	\$246,749.74	0.25%
Contracted Public School Services	3	\$2,108.08	\$6,324.25	0.01%
Curriculum	358	\$3,561.24	\$1,274,923.17	1.29%
DOE Approved Virtual Courses	6	\$616.02	\$3,696.14	0.00%
Eligible Postsecondary Institutions or Programs	85	\$1,167.60	\$99,246.09	0.10%
Eligible Private School - Tuition and Fees	6,647	\$8,601.07	\$57,179,895.18	57.86%
Florida 529 College Savings Plan	158	\$8,455.58	\$1,335,982.33	1.35%
Florida Virtual School (FLVS)	431	\$1,111.39	\$479,007	0.48%
Full-Time Tutoring	103	\$5,392.81	\$555,459.06	0.56%
Home Education Tuition/Fees	236	\$782.18	\$184,595.48	0.19%
Instructional Materials	5,988	\$3,671.08	\$21,982,434.43	22.24%
Part-Time Tutoring	438	\$10,661.04	\$4,669,534.24	4.73%
Programs Offered by VPK Program Providers	110	\$9,651.51	\$1,061,666.20	1.07%
Specialized After -Education Programs	53	\$331.94	\$17,592.79	0.02%
Specialized Services	2,465	\$3,646.27	\$8,988,062.39	9.09%
Specialized Summer Education Programs	266	\$862.40	\$229,397.89	0.23%
Standardized Testing Fees	149	\$182.32	\$27,165.75	0.03%
Stanley G. Tate Florida Prepaid College Fees	148	\$2,247.47	\$332,624.90	0.34%
Transition Services	2	\$2,027.50	\$4,055	0.00%
Tuition or Fees for Nationally or Internationally Recognized Training Programs for Children with Neurological Disorders or Brain Damage	6	\$2,330.53	\$13,983.18	0.01%



***Enrollment by County (Top 25)***

	Number	Percent
Dade	1,501	13.2%
Orange	881	7.7%
Broward	697	6.1%
Palm Beach	583	5.1%
Hillsborough	573	5.0%
Brevard	558	4.9%
Polk	505	4.4%
Pinellas	497	4.4%
Duval	494	4.3%
Seminole	437	3.8%
Volusia	394	3.5%
Pasco	392	3.4%
Lake	361	3.2%
Osceola	327	2.9%
Leon	267	2.3%
Hernando	259	2.3%
Lee	206	1.8%
Manatee	199	1.8%
St. Lucie	190	1.7%
Alachua	179	1.6%
Marion	169	1.5%
Sarasota	144	1.3%
Okaloosa	141	1.2%
St. Johns	141	1.2%
Escambia	128	1.1%

***Enrollment by Grade***

	Number	Percent
3-year-old	529	4.6%
4-year-old	869	7.6%
Kindergarten	1,084	9.5%
First	821	7.2%
Second	770	6.8%
Third	757	6.6%
Fourth	744	6.5%
Fifth	803	7.0%
Sixth	810	7.1%
Seventh	856	7.5%
Eighth	830	7.3%
Ninth	755	6.6%
Tenth	698	6.1%
Eleventh	542	4.8%
Twelfth	525	4.6%