



———— 2021-22 ————

**END OF YEAR REPORT**

**Income-Based Scholarships**

## **Introduction**

This school report looks at characteristics of private schools and enrolled students who received a Florida Tax Credit Scholarship (FTC) or a Family Empowerment Scholarship for Educational Options (FES-EO) through Step Up For Students during the 2021-2022 school year. This report examines the distribution of private schools by various characteristics and calculates graduation rates for 12<sup>th</sup> grade scholarship students enrolled in these schools. There is also an analysis of student demographics both in overall program enrollment and graduation rates.

The graduation portion of the report is modeled after the National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) biennial report, "Characteristics of Private Schools in the United States: Results from the 2019-2020 Private School Universe Survey (PSS)." The NCES's mandate is to collect, analyze, and report on education throughout the U.S. and abroad. The PSS serves as the primary source of private school data in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. This report is only focused on Florida private schools that serve students who receive a FTC or FES-EO scholarship through Step Up For Students.

## **Data**

Data from the Florida Department of Education was utilized to examine these private schools along with data collected by Step Up For Students through school surveys. Religious affiliation data was collected at the school level. Information about students' gender, race/ethnicity, grade, single parent household status, poverty level, and graduation status were collected at the student level.

Private schools that had Step Up For Students participants enrolled in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade during the 2021-2022 school year were surveyed online to determine the exit status of these students at the end of the academic year. Schools that did not respond to the online survey received follow-up phone calls and emails. This resulted in a 92.4% response rate.<sup>1</sup>

Similar to the NCES report, we calculate the graduation rate for FTC and FES-EO students enrolled at these schools by focusing on students who were enrolled in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade at the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year and compared that number to how many of these students graduated at the end of the school year. A graduate is defined as a 12<sup>th</sup> grade student who received a standard diploma, special education diploma, or other certificate or diploma by the end of the academic year. Those students who dropped out or otherwise failed to complete the 12<sup>th</sup> grade were calculated as not graduating.<sup>2</sup> This resulted in 5,090 12<sup>th</sup> grade students included in this analysis.

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<sup>1</sup> Four hundred forty-eight students with no response concerning exit status were not included in the analysis.

<sup>2</sup> Two hundred and four students who transferred out of a private school to a public school and twenty-seven students who received a GED were also excluded from the private school analysis.

## Selected Findings

- At the end of the Fall 2021-2022 school year, there were 2,045 private schools serving 162,518 FTC and FES-EO students.
- A total of \$1,715,159,524.00 was awarded to FTC and FES-EO students with the average scholarship amount being \$7,136.21 for FTC students and \$7272.35 for FES-EO students.<sup>3</sup>
- There were slightly more female students (51%) than male students.
- There were more Hispanic students than any other ethnicity/race (38%). A sizable percentage of students were also Black (27%) and White (29%)
- 1,246 of the private schools were religious, and about 80% of scholarship students attended a religious school.
- There were 645 private schools with 5,769 FTC and FES-EO students enrolled in the 12th grade.
- Among these students who were enrolled in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade during the 2021-2022 school year, 4,581 students or 90.0% of all students included in the analysis graduated from a private school.<sup>4</sup>
- The graduation rate in religious schools was higher than in non-religious schools.
- Asian, White, and Multi-Racial students had the highest graduation rates.
- The graduation rates for students coming from two-parent households was slightly higher than those residing in a single parent household.
- The most impoverished students had slightly lower graduation rates than those residing in higher-income households.

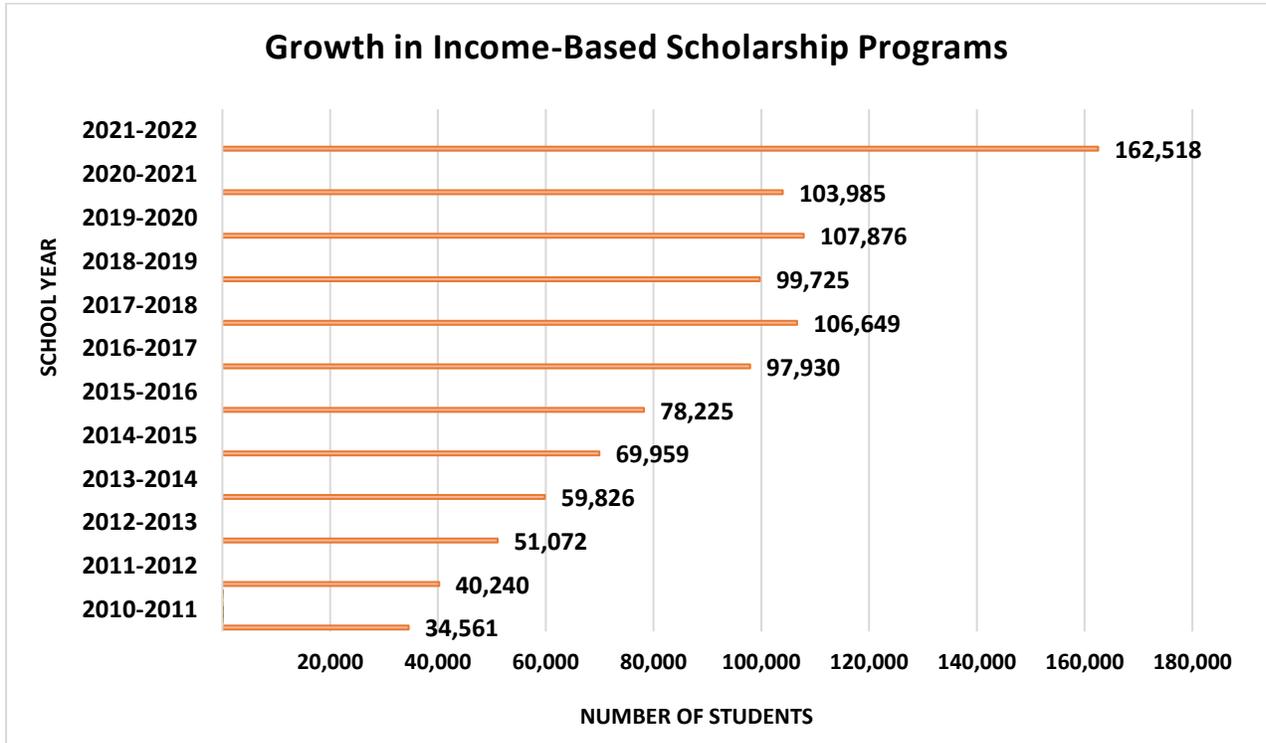
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<sup>3</sup> The average scholarship amount is for those students who received 100% of the scholarship award.

<sup>4</sup> The NCES report, which attempted to survey all private schools in the U.S., found a 96% graduation rate for 12<sup>th</sup> graders.

## STUDENT LEVEL DATA

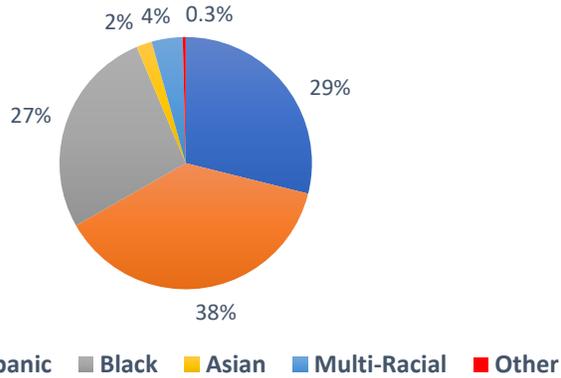
There were 162,518 students enrolled in the FTC and FES-EO programs during the 2021-2022 school year, and a total of \$ \$1,715,159,524.00 was awarded to these students. The chart below shows the growth in income-based scholarship students from 2020-2021 (103,985) to 2021-2022 (162,518).<sup>5</sup>



Of those students enrolled during the 2021-2022 school year, the majority (58.4%) were enrolled in the elementary grades of K-5, while 23.2% of students were in the middle school grades of 6-8 and 18.4% were in high school. There were slightly more female students enrolled (51%) than male students. There was also significant racial/ethnic diversity with more students identifying as Hispanic (38%) followed by White (29%) and Black (27%).

<sup>5</sup> While the state created the FES program in 2019, this is the first year that FES-EO students have been included in the annual report. As a result, the number of students in income-based programs administered by Step Up increased significantly for the 2021-2022 school year.

## Race/Ethnicity of 21-22 Income-Based Scholarship Students

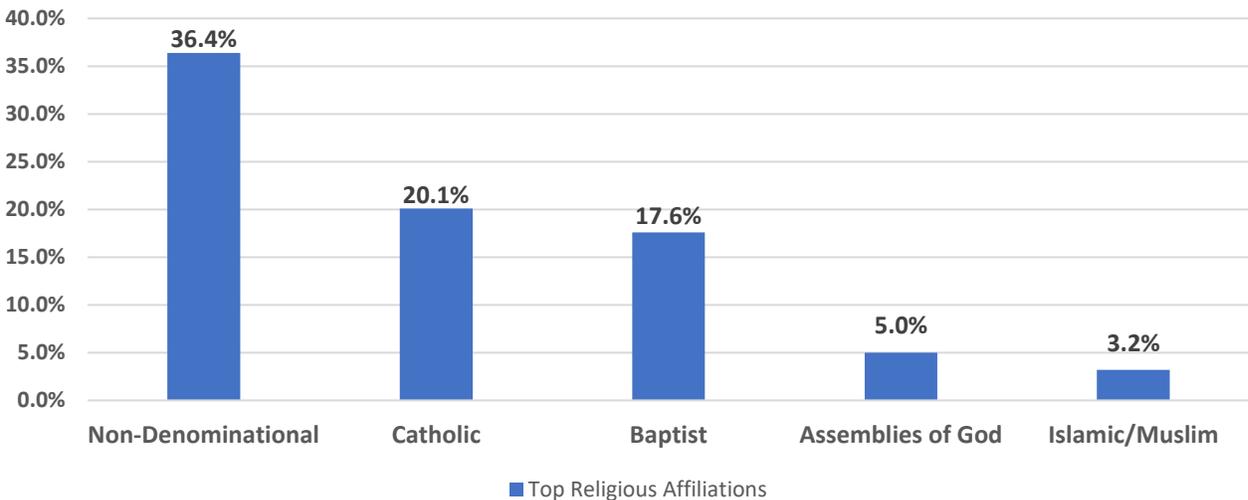


As for the household makeup of these students, around 46% of FTC and FES-EO students lived in single parent households, while about 68% came from households at or below the 185% federal poverty threshold.

### SCHOOL LEVEL DATA

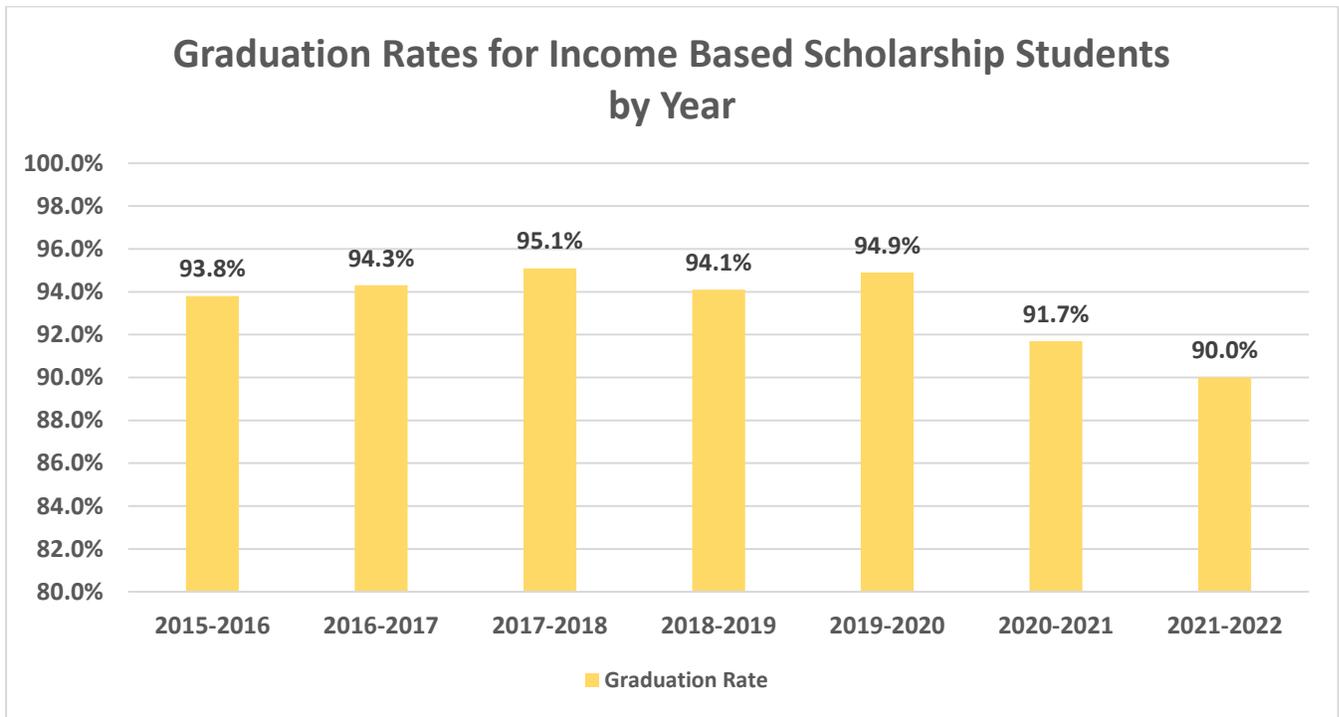
There were 2,045 schools with FTC and FES-EO students enrolled during the 2021-2022 school year. Most schools (61%) have a religious affiliation with 78.7% of FTC and FES-EO students enrolled in one of these religious schools. Among those attending these schools, around 36% attended a Non-Denominational school, 20% attended Catholic schools, and around 18% attended Baptist schools.

## Top Religious Affiliations of Schools with 2021-2022 Income-Based Scholarship Students Enrolled



## GRADUATION SURVEY

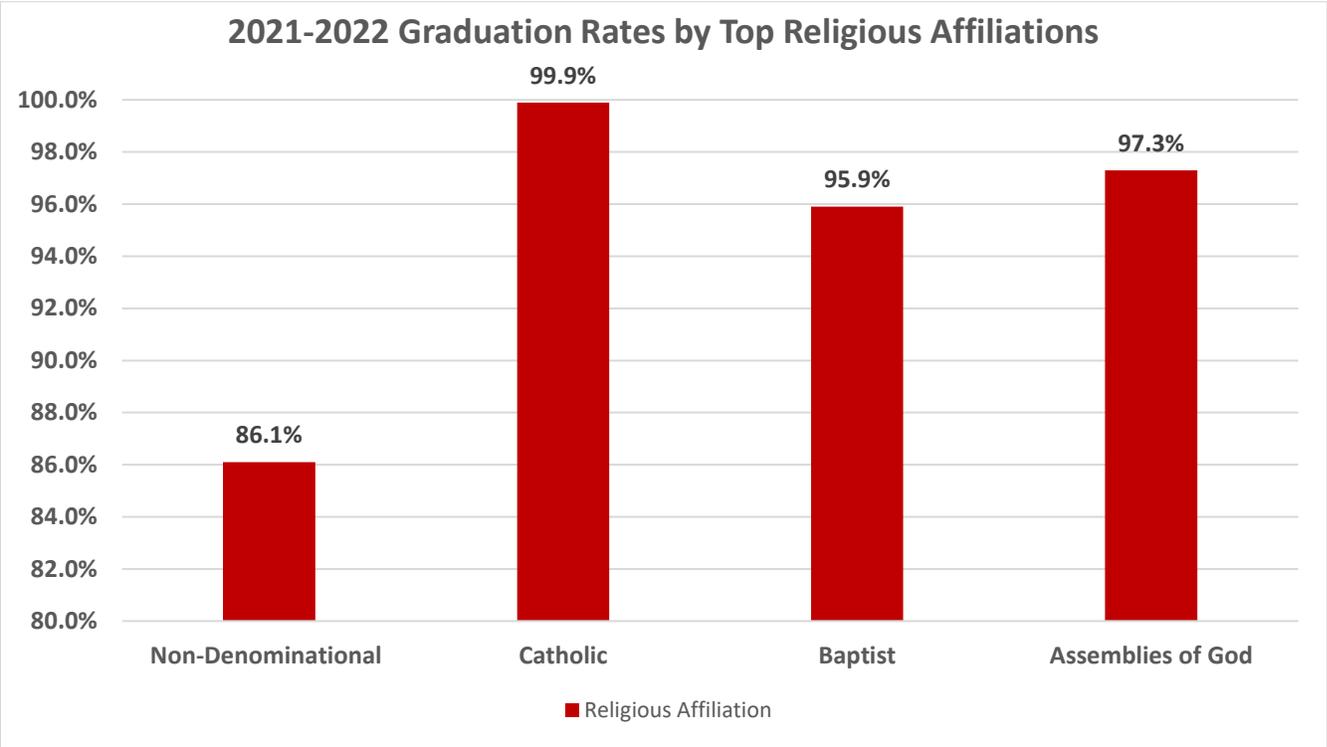
There were 645 schools with 5,769 FTC and FES-EO students enrolled in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Of these students who were enrolled at the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year, 90.0%, or 4,581 students in the analysis, graduated by the end of the 2021-2022 school year.<sup>6</sup>



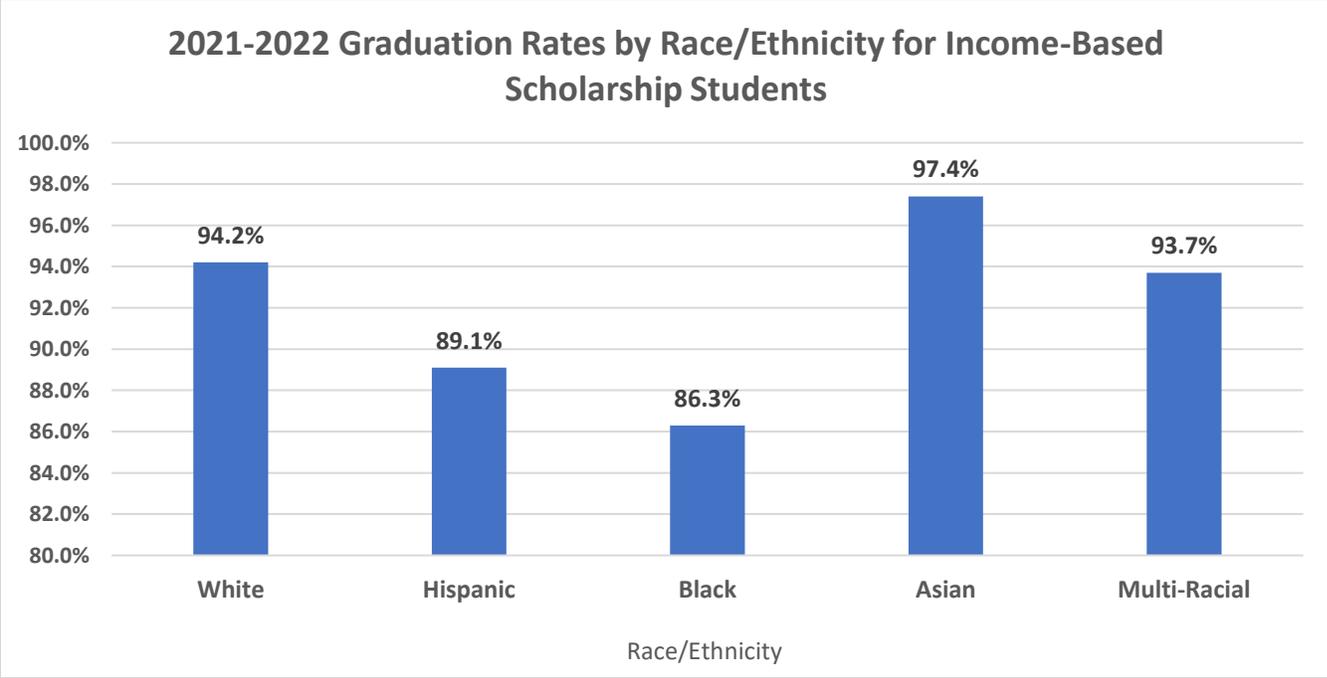
Students enrolled in religious schools had higher graduation rates in the 2021-2022 school year (92.3%) than students enrolled in non-religious schools (72.8%). Catholic schools had the highest graduation rate of FTC and FES-EO students (99.9%) and Non-Denominational schools, which had the largest percentage of students who are enrolled in religious schools, had the lowest graduation rate (86.1%).

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<sup>6</sup> There were 5,090 students included in the graduation analysis. The remaining 679 students who were in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade at the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year were excluded from the analysis because there was either a lack of a response concerning graduation, the student transferred to a public school, or the student received a GED.



The graduation rate for female students (92.1%) was higher than male students (88.2%). Asian students had the highest graduation rate (97.4%) followed by White students (94.2%), Multi-racial students (93.7%), Hispanic students (89.1%) and Black students (86.3%).



Students from single parent households had a lower graduation rate (86.5%) than those from two-parent households (94.4%). Students from homes at or below the 185% federal poverty threshold had a lower graduation rate (88.3%) than those who come from higher-income households (93.2%).