



FTC ANNUAL SCHOOL REPORT

2019-2020



Introduction

This school report looks at characteristics of private schools and enrolled students who received a Florida Tax Credit (FTC) scholarship through Step Up For Students (SUFS) during the 2019-2020 school year. This report examines the distribution of private schools by various characteristics and calculates graduation rates for 12th grade scholarship students enrolled in these schools. There is also an analysis of student demographics in terms of 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 2017-2018 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 their primary source of private school data in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. This report is focused on Florida private schools that serve students receiving a FTC scholarship through SUFS.

Data

Data from the Florida Department of Education was utilized along with data collected by SUFS through surveys of schools and students' primary guardians. Data was collected at the school level on accreditation status and religious affiliation. At the student level, information was obtained on the students' gender, race/ethnicity, grade, single parent household status, poverty level, and graduation status.

Private schools that had SUFS participants enrolled in the 12th grade during the 2019-2020 school year were surveyed online to determine these students' exit status at the end of the academic year. Schools that did not respond to the online survey received follow-up phone calls and emails. For the remaining schools that did not respond to requests for exit status information, we contacted the parents of scholarship students enrolled in the 12th grade during the 2019-2020 school year to obtain these students' exit status. This resulted in a 95.4% response rate.¹

Similar to the NCES report, we calculate the graduation rate for FTC students by focusing on students who were enrolled in the 12th grade at the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year and compared that number to how many of these students graduated. A graduate is defined as 12th grade students 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 12th grade were calculated as not graduating.² This resulted in a total of 3,460 12th grade students included in this analysis.

¹ One hundred and sixty-four students with no response concerning exit status were not included in the analysis.

² Sixteen students who transferred out of a private school to a public school were also excluded from the private school analysis.

Selected Findings

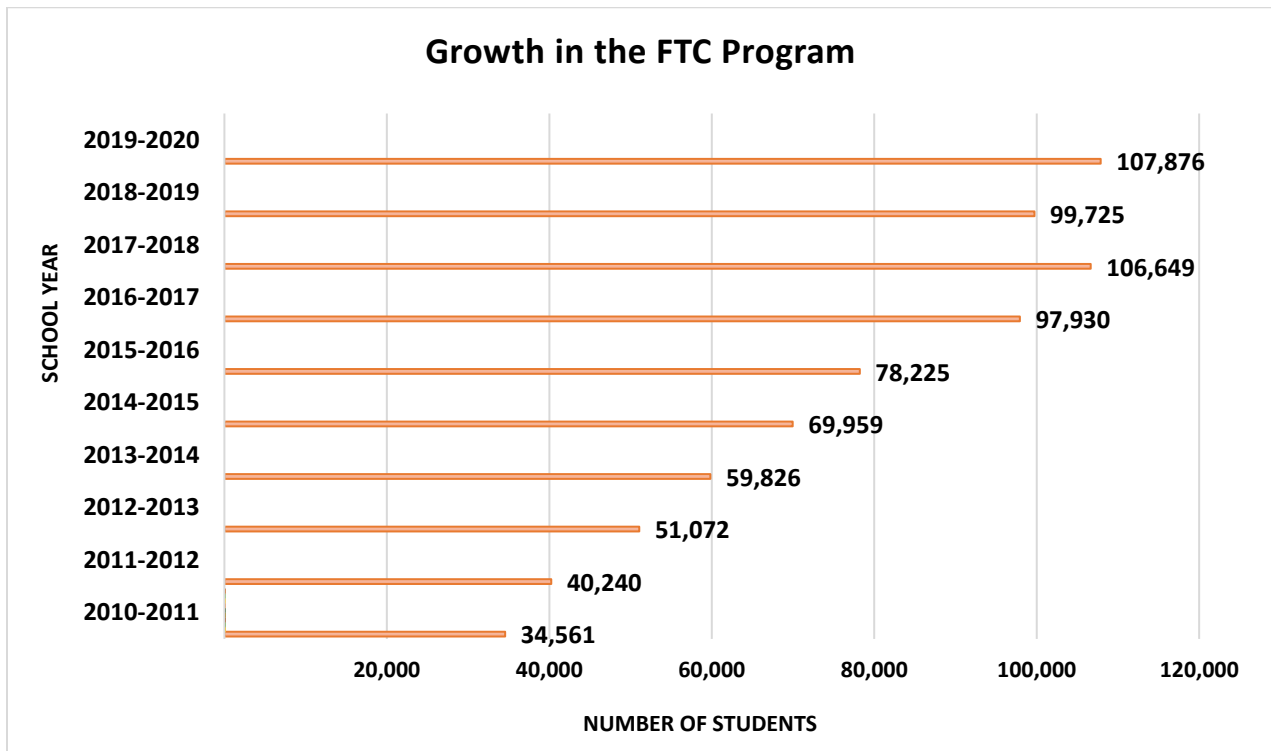
- At the end of the 2019-2020 school year, 1,850 private schools were serving 107,873 FTC students.
- A total of \$653,484,517.62 in FTC funds were awarded to students with the average scholarship amount being \$6,866.97.³
- There were slightly more female scholarship students (51%) than male scholarship students.
- More scholarship students were Hispanic (38%) than any other ethnicity/race.
- 1,178 of these private schools were religious schools, and 80% of scholarship students attended one of these schools.
- 1,213 of these private schools were not accredited, and approximately 56% of FTC students were enrolled in one of these schools.
- There were 557 private schools with 3,642 FTC students enrolled in the 12th grade.
- 3,282 12th grade students graduated during the 2019-2020 school year, or 94.9% of all students included in the analysis.⁴
- More students graduated from religious schools and accredited schools than from non-religious and non-accredited schools.
- Blacks and Hispanics had slightly lower graduation rates than other racial/ethnic groups.
- There was no significant advantage in graduation rates for students coming from two-parent households as compared to those in a single parent household.
- Those students who were among the most impoverished did not have significantly lower graduation rates than those from higher-income households.

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

⁴ The NCES report, which attempted to survey all private schools in the U.S., found a 97% graduation rate for 12th graders.

STUDENT LEVEL DATA

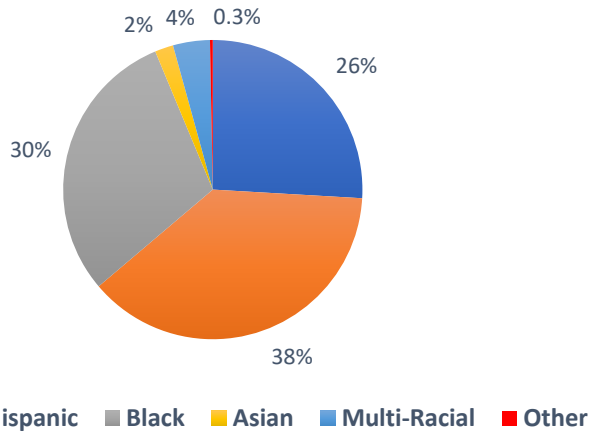
There were 107,873 students enrolled in the FTC program during the 2019-2020 school year, and a total of \$653,484,517.62 was awarded to these students with the average scholarship amount being \$6,866.97.⁵ The number of students in the program has increased slightly from 2018-2019 when 99,735 students participated in the program and has increased substantially since the 2010-2011 school year. The chart below demonstrates the growth in FTC students over this ten-year period.



Of those students enrolled during the 2019-2020 school year, the majority (58.4%) were in the elementary grades of K-5, while 24.4% of students were in the middle school grades of 6-8, and 17.2% were in high school. There were slightly more female FTC students (51%) than male students in the program. In addition, the racial/ethnic diversity found among FTC students was significant with 38% of students identifying as Hispanic followed by Black (30%) and White (26%).

⁵ There was a total of 198,045 applications started to receive a FTC scholarship, but only 107,873 students were awarded a scholarship and subsequently enrolled in a private school.

Race/Ethnicity of 2019-2020 FTC Students

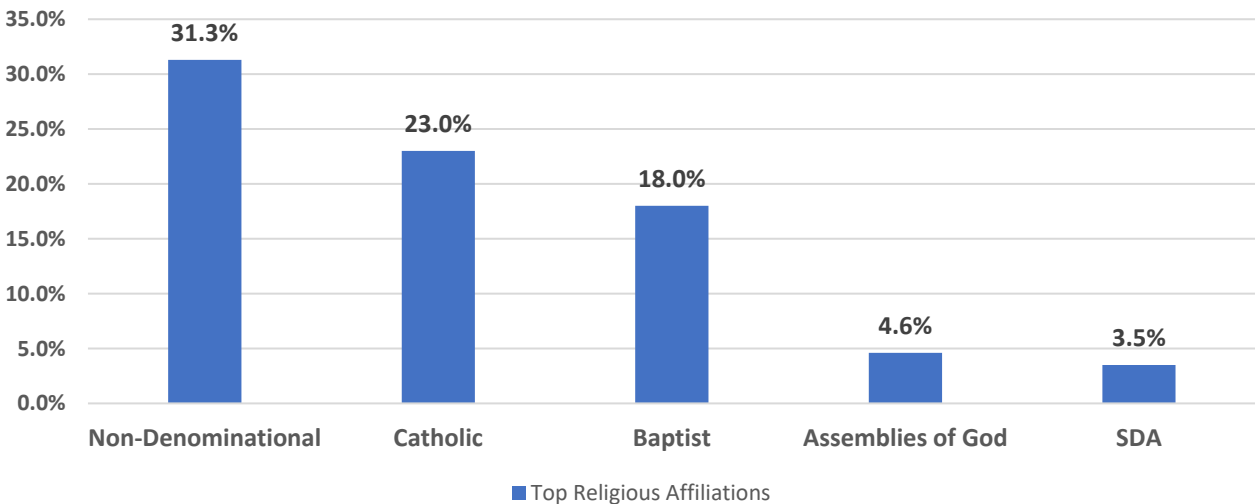


As for household demographics, 53% of FTC students lived in single parent households and about 51% came from households at or below the 185% federal poverty threshold.

SCHOOL LEVEL DATA

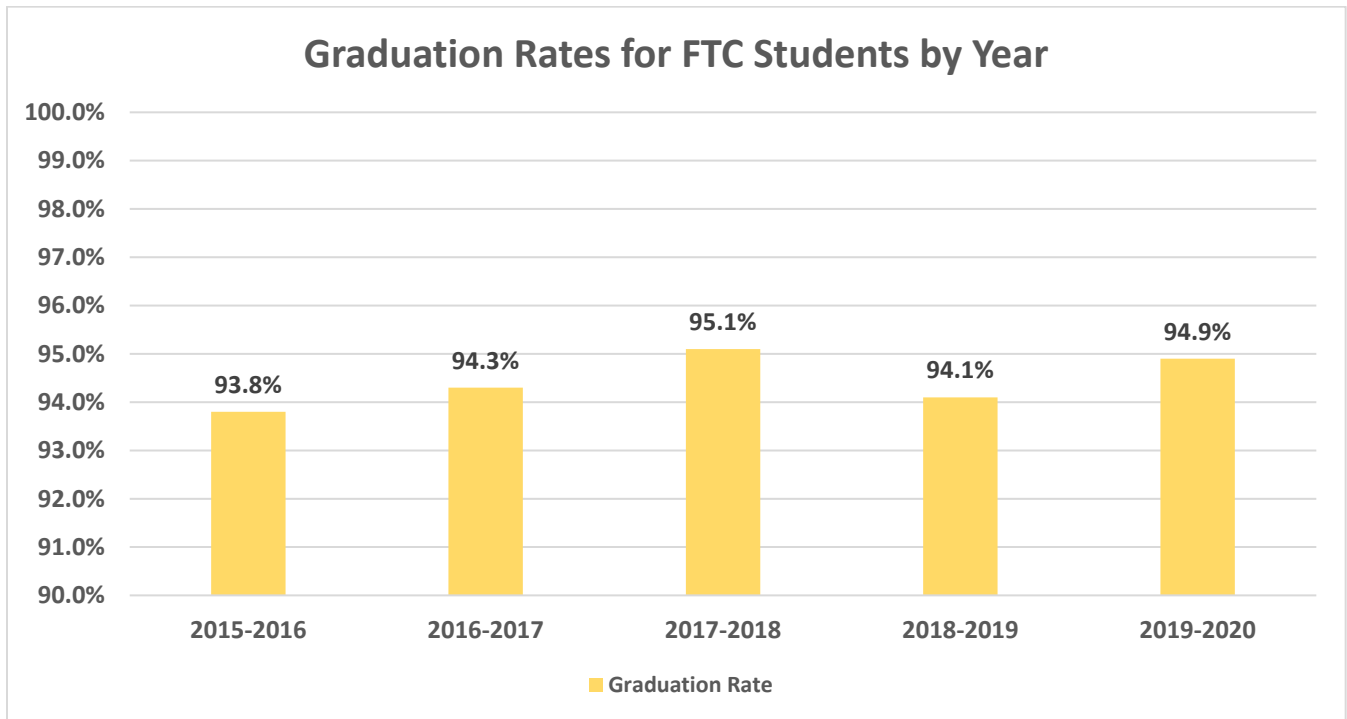
There were 1,850 schools with FTC students enrolled during the 2019-2020 school year. The majority of these schools (65.6%) were not accredited, and 56% of FTC students attended one of these schools. However, most schools (63.7%) had a religious affiliation with 80% of FTC students enrolled in one of these religious schools. Of students attending these schools, around 31% attended a Non-Denominational school, 23% attended Catholic schools, and 18% attended Baptist schools.

Top Religious Affiliations of Schools with 2019-2020 FTC Students Enrolled



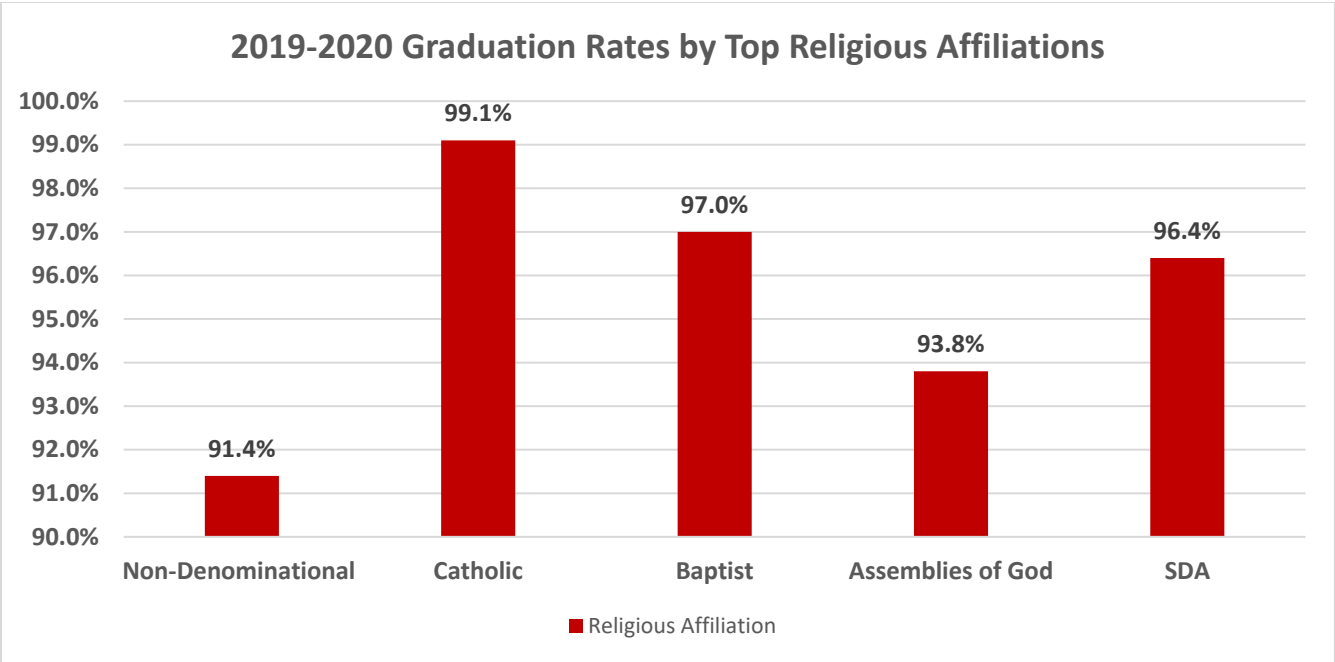
GRADUATION SURVEY

There were 557 schools with 3,642 FTC students enrolled in the 12th grade. Of students enrolled at the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year, 94.9%, or 3,282 students, graduated by the end of the 2019-2020 school year.⁶ This is a slight increase from the previous year and follows a trend of high graduation rates reported since the survey began during the 2015-2016 school year.

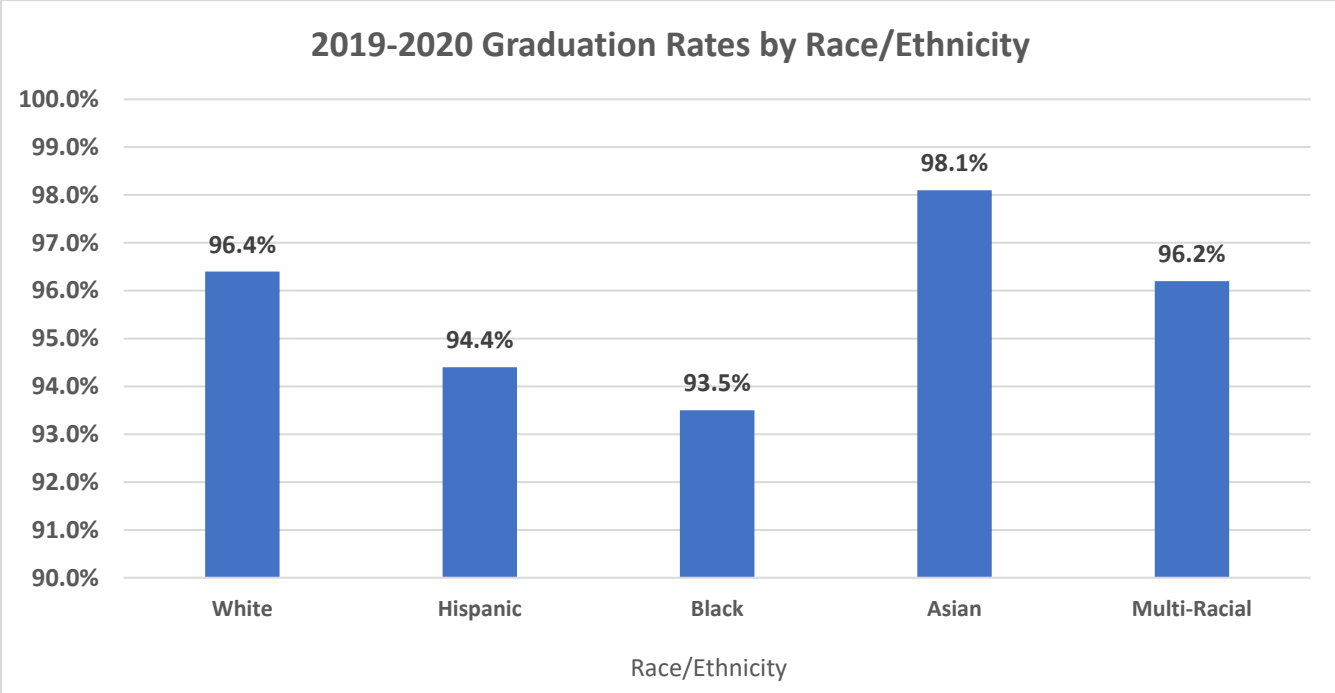


A higher percentage of students enrolled in accredited schools graduated (97.8%) than those enrolled in non-accredited schools (88.0%). Similarly, more students enrolled in religious schools graduated during the 2019-2020 school year (96.0%) than students enrolled in non-religious schools (85.5%). Of the religious affiliated schools, Catholic schools had the highest graduation rate (99.1%) and Non-Denominational schools, which have the largest percentage of enrolled students, had the lowest graduation rate (91.4%).

⁶ There were 3,460 students included in the graduation analysis. The remaining 182 students who were in the 12th grade at the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year were excluded from the analysis because there was either a lack of a response concerning graduation, or the student transferred to a public school.



In terms of student demographics, there was a slightly lower graduation rate for male students (93.9%) than female students (95.8%). Blacks (93.5%) and Hispanics (94.4%) also had slightly lower graduation rates than other races and ethnicities.



However, there was little difference in graduation rates for those coming from either single parent households or from the most impoverished households. Students from single parent households had a similar graduation rate (94.4%) to those from two-parent households (95.5%). Likewise, there was only a small gap in graduation rates between those at or below the 185% federal poverty threshold (94.3%) and those from households with higher incomes (95.4%).