



The Florida House of Representatives

Democratic Leader's Office Representative Fentrice Driskell

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September 13, 2024

Commissioner Manny Diaz
Florida Department of Education
Turlington Building, Suite 1514
325 West Gaines Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Via Email

Dear Commissioner Diaz:

We, the undersigned Representatives, call on the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) and its scholarship funding organizations (SFOs), Step Up For Students and AAA Scholarship Foundation, to provide more information on students who have applied and been approved for Florida's Tax Credit (FTC) Scholarships, Family Empowerment Scholarships – Educational Options (FES-EO), and Family Empowerment Scholarships for students with Unique Abilities (FES-UA).

Looking at all revenue sources, there is \$3.9 billion available for the coming school year, including \$2.8 billion coming from the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP), an additional \$50 million in the Education Enrollment Stabilization Program (EESP) for cost overruns for 2024-25 as well as carryforward from the current year's EESP. There is also funding from the FTC Scholarship Program, which is approved for \$1.1 billion for school year 2024. Additionally, there is funding from the sales tax and motor vehicle tax.

However, little is known about the characteristics of the students applying, the future budgetary consequences of these scholarships, and the likely downstream impact on public schools. The Senate [staff analysis](#) reports that a total of 374,960 students are receiving scholarships this school year including 129,288 students receiving the FTC Scholarship, 133,969 students receiving the FES-EO, 93,682 students receiving the FES-UA, and 18,081 homeschooled students receiving the Personalized Education Program (PEP) scholarships. This is an increase of 46.8% over the 2022-23 school year.

With this letter, we request an official release of this data on a quarterly basis, with the information provided within thirty days of the request. Specifically, we request that the following information be made public:

- Number of new private schools that have applied to accept scholarships
- Demographic information, including race/ethnicity, and income information of students awarded scholarships by type of scholarship by school district
- Number of students who have never been in public school before because they were already in private school or are kindergarteners by school district
 - Total funding expended for FTC scholarships
 - Total funding carried forward and expended by the SFOs.

We also request that FLDOE provide information on the budgetary impact and effects of universal FES and FTC scholarships on public schools. What happens if the scholarship costs exceed:

- The allocated per-district amounts as laid out in the FEFP summary?
- The available funds from the FTC Scholarship Program?
- The non-recurring funds in the EESP this year and in years to come?

In the interest of transparency and the responsible use of taxpayer dollars, we ask that you disclose this data publicly on a quarterly schedule.

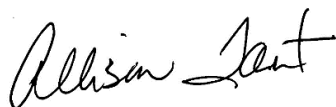
Sincerely,



Representative Fentrice Driskell
Florida House District 67
Florida House Democratic Leader



Representative Kelly Skidmore
Florida House District 92
Florida House Democratic Policy Chair



Representative Allison Tant
Florida House District 9

Cc: Gretchen Schoenhaar, Chief Executive Officer, Step Up for Students

Kim Dyson, President and CEO, AAA Scholarship Foundation