



## TAX CREDIT SCHOLARSHIP STUDENTS AND ACADEMIC FINDINGS

### Typical student is poor, minority and was struggling in school

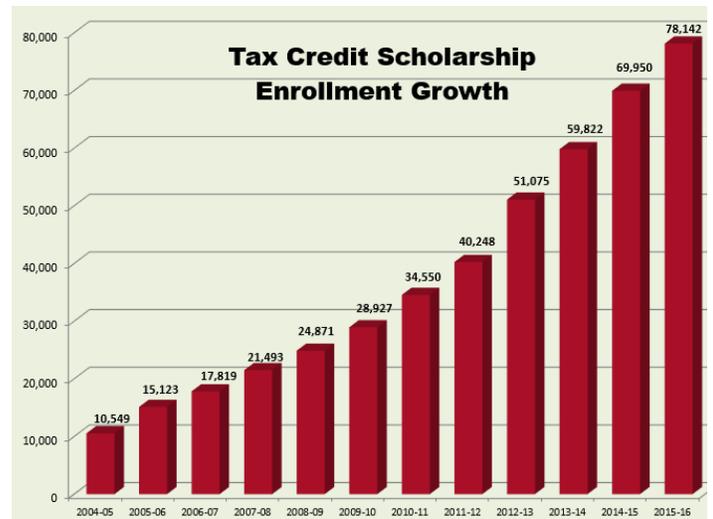
**Lives near poverty:** The average household income in 2015-16 is \$25,557. That's only 7 percent above the federal poverty level.

**Is black or Hispanic:** About 30 percent are black and 38 percent are Hispanic. Another 3 percent identify themselves as "multi-racial," and about 25 percent are white.

**Live with one parent:** More than half — 58.3 percent — lived in a single-parent home.

**Has struggled academically:** The scholarship attracts the lowest academic achievers from their previous public schools, a trend the state researcher wrote in August is "becoming stronger over time."

**Lives in an urban area:** Miami-Dade has 20,538 scholarship students, Orange has 7,633. Some 225 zip codes contain at least 100 scholarship students each, including 58 with more than 300 each. Two adjacent zip codes in west Orlando have 1,742 scholarship students.



### Scholarship students keeping pace with those of all incomes

**Testing is required:** Every scholarship student in grades 3-10 must take a nationally norm-referenced test approved by the state, and most take the Stanford Achievement Test. Though some policymakers think the students should be required to take the state assessment, no one disputes the validity of these tests to measure student improvement. They have been required since 2006, and the Learning Systems Institute at Florida State University evaluates and reports publicly on the test scores each year.

Source: Florida Statutes 1002.395(8)(c) and (9)(i-j)



**Students were behind academically:** Over the course of seven annual reports, the state's researchers have found a consistent pattern: on average, students who choose the scholarship were struggling academically in their prior public school. This year Florida State researchers wrote, "New FTC students, as in previous years, tend to come from lower-performing public schools prior to entering the program. Moreover, they are more likely to be



among the lower performing students in their prior school before attending the program, regardless of the performance level of their public school.”

Source: [http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/5606/urlt/FTC\\_FinalReport-13-14.pdf](http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/5606/urlt/FTC_FinalReport-13-14.pdf)

**Students achieving solid annual gains:** The researcher also has found a consistent trend in learning gains: Students are achieving the same gains in reading and math as student of all incomes nationally. The learning gains are measured by the difference between a student’s national percentile ranking from one year to the next, with zero meaning the student kept pace with the national sample. For 2013-14, the average gain score was 0.4 percentile points in reading and 0.0 points in math. “This means that the typical FTC students tends to maintain his or her relative position in comparison with others nationwide,” the researchers wrote. “It is important to note that these national comparisons pertain to all students nationally, and not just students from low-income families.”

Source: [http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/5606/urlt/FTC\\_FinalReport-13-14.pdf](http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/5606/urlt/FTC_FinalReport-13-14.pdf)

**Public schools also doing well with low-income students:** Two Northwestern University academic researchers reported in 2011 that the public schools most impacted by the potential and actual loss of students to the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship experienced increases in their own test scores. The researchers saw this improvement in the year between the law’s passage in 2001 and its implementation in 2002-03. They also saw improvement over the next five years, in part because some of the lowest achieving students were choosing the scholarships.

Source: <http://www.stepupforstudents.org/docs/default-source/independent-studies/2010-study-on-impact-to-public-schools.pdf?sfvrsn=2>