

# Family Empowerment Scholarship



SEPTEMBER 2019

OFFICE OF POLICY AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

## THE FAMILY EMPOWERMENT SCHOLARSHIP

The Family Empowerment Scholarship (FES) is Florida's first voucher program for low- and middle-income students. Like the McKay Scholarship for students with special needs, FES is funded from the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP), an operational formula that funds K-12 student choices in district schools, charter schools and private schools. The scholarships will average between \$6,775 and \$7,250 depending on the grade level and county of the student. The program is projected to cost about \$130 million in its first year; less than the cost to educate the students at a traditional public school.

### 2019-20 FAST FACTS

Program is capped at 18,000 students. 9,095 currently enrolled.

There is no financial cap, but the program is estimated to cost about \$130 million.

Scholarships are worth 95 percent of the FEFP per-pupil funding by grade and county (however, the FES calculation excludes the \$1.1 billion "ESE Guaranteed Allocation" which makes the scholarship about 90 percent of the FEFP).

FES will become the second K-12 voucher program currently funded from the FEFP and will join McKay, Gardiner, Bright Futures, EASE grants and VPK as state-funded private school scholarship programs.

Scholarships will vary by grade and county and will average between \$6,775 and \$7,250.

### ELIGIBILITY

- Students must be in grades K-12 and age 5 by September 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Students must have attended a Florida public school for the prior school year unless entering kindergarten, a sibling of another eligible student, a foster child, or a child of a member of the United States Armed Forces who transfers to Florida with permanent change of station orders.
- Students must be living in a household earning at, or below, 300 percent of the Federal poverty level, or in foster care or out-of-home care. That equals \$77,250 for a student living in a household of four.
- Priority is given to students whose household income is no more than 185 percent of the poverty level – the level that qualifies public school students for free- or reduced-price lunch, or are in foster or out-of-home care. That equals \$47,637 for a household of four.

### HOW TO APPLY

- Parents or guardians may start an application by visiting the Step Up For Students website here: <https://www.stepupforstudents.org/logins/income-based-scholarship-login/>
- Parents or guardians can learn more about the scholarship by visiting the fact page here: <https://www.stepupforstudents.org/for-parents/income-based/how-the-scholarship-works/>
- Parents or guardians can call 1-877-735-7837 or email [info@stepupforstudents.org](mailto:info@stepupforstudents.org) for more details.

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