



HISTORY

2001 — The Florida Legislature creates the Corporate Tax Credit Scholarship (CTC) program to give new opportunities to low-income students in Kindergarten through 12th grade. The scholarship amount is set at \$3,500 per student, and the program is capped at \$50-million. House sponsor, Joe Negron, said upon passage, "This puts the parents in charge."

2002 — The CTC program begins operation. The Collins Center for Public Policy projects that the increases in statewide net revenues could accumulate to more than \$600-million over the next 10 years as low-income students take advantage of this innovative choice program.

2003 — Four CTC groups form the Florida Association of Scholarship Funding Organizations to impose strict financial and educational accountability controls. Florida TaxWatch projects the CTC program could save \$478-million over the next eight years.

2005 — The Legislature raises the cap to \$88-million to meet growing demand.

2006 — The Legislature, with the support of the Scholarship Funding Organizations, enacts a law establishing a list of accountability measures, including the requirement that each student take a nationally recognized norm-referenced test. The scholarship amount is increased to \$3,750.

2008 — The Legislature raises the program cap to \$118-million, increases the scholarship amount to \$3,950 and aims to reach 25,000 students. The law also authorizes 3 percent of the money to be used for administrative purposes. The 3 percent translates to approximately \$122 per student, which compares to \$349 per student that is allocated in charter schools. The state Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability reported that the program saved taxpayers \$39-million in 2007-08.

2009 — The Legislature strengthens the program with a strong show of bipartisan support, including most Republicans, nearly half the Democrats, a majority of the Black Caucus and all the Hispanic Caucus. The legislation extends tax credit status to insurance premium taxes. A state-commissioned report looks at standardized test scores to conclude that scholarship students in 2007-08 kept pace academically with a public school comparison group and with students of all income levels nationally. Step Up enters into partnership with Hillsborough district schools and the Hillsborough teachers union to provide professional training for teachers in private schools.