



A Choice:

Step Up For Students Scholarships empower low-income families with children in K-12 in Florida to choose either a private school or an out-of-district public school that might better suit their children's learning needs.

Funding:

Companies receive a dollar-for-dollar tax credit off state corporate income or insurance premium taxes for their contributions. The annual limit on the program is \$118-million, or roughly 25,000 scholarships.

Private Schools:

During the 2008-2009 school year, 988 private schools that were approved by the Florida Department of Education (DOE) accepted the scholarship. Each school is required to meet a variety of health, safety and welfare regulations. Additionally,

all personnel who have direct contact with students are required to undergo background screening.

Nonprofits:

The redirected tax dollars are received and then distributed to students by nonprofit corporations called Scholarship Funding Organizations (SFOs), which are approved by the state Department of Education. Each year, the SFOs are required to submit a detailed financial audit. The two currently active SFOs are:

- **Step Up For Students**

Step Up For Students serves all of Florida with offices in Tampa, Jacksonville, Orlando and Miami.

- **The Carrie Meek Foundation**

The Carrie Meek Foundation is located in Miami-Dade and serves select areas of Miami-Dade County.

Learning Gains:

Each year, all students are required to take a nationally norm-referenced test identified by the state DOE. The scores are then reported to researchers at the University of Florida for a longitudinal study of learning gains.

Qualifying Guidelines:

- ➔ The child must be 5 by September 1, 2009.
- ➔ If the child is entering 2nd grade or higher, the child must have attended a Florida public school the prior year
- ➔ The household income must be at or below the amounts listed below:
 - 2 people: **\$26,995**
 - 3 people: **\$33,874**
 - Add **\$6,919** for each additional person