



Scholarship Overview

We empower Florida students with personalized
PreK3-12 education scholarships.



Our Mission



Step Up For Students empowers families to pursue and engage in the most appropriate learning options for their children.

Who is Step Up for Students?

Step Up For Students is a state-approved, nonprofit, **Scholarship Funding Organization (SFO)** that empowers families to pursue and engage in the most appropriate learning options for their children. Step Up For Students administers Florida's school choice programs.

These programs include:

- The Family Empowerment Scholarship for Educational Opportunities (FES-EO),
- The Family Empowerment Scholarship for Students with Unique Abilities (FES-UA)
- The Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program (FTC)
- The Hope Scholarship for students who are bullied or are victims of violence in a public school
- The New Worlds Scholarship Program for public school students in kindergarten through fifth grades who struggle with math and/or reading.

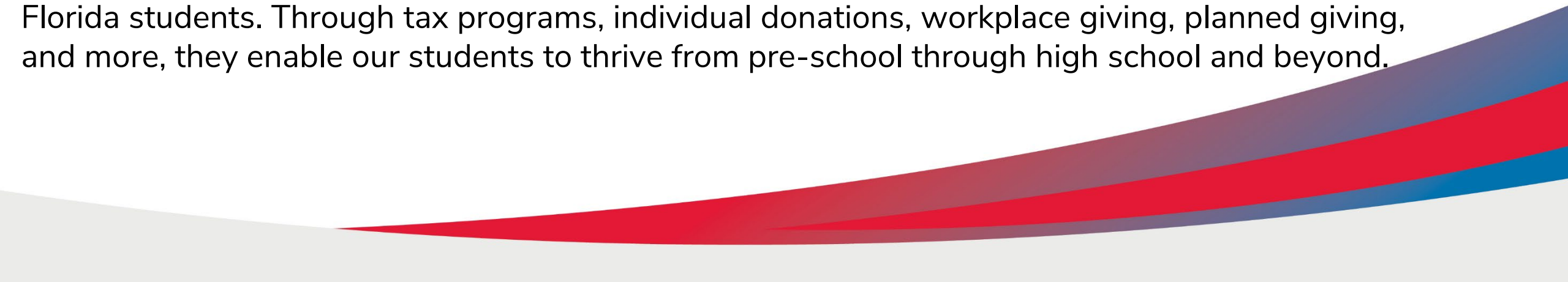
The Family Empowerment Scholarship for Students with Unique Abilities (FES-UA) provides access to an education savings account (ESA) that functions like a bank account from which you direct funds to pay for tuition and fees for a private school, homeschooling options, therapies, tutoring, and more. The Family Empowerment Scholarship has continued to expand, with the integration of the McKay Scholarship program into the Family Empowerment Scholarship in 2022. On July 1, 2023, the state of Florida expanded educational choice programs to all K-12 Florida students with the conversion of the Family Empowerment Scholarship for Educational Options and the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship into educational savings accounts (ESAs).

Customized Choice

We call it *personalized education*. This is our driving mission. We unite the community to provide scholarships that open doors to a stronger future. With this support, Florida students can choose the right learning environment and connect with the resources they need to reach their full potential.

With Step Up For Students Scholarships, children *gain access* to private or public schools that would otherwise be out of their reach. Students who were bullied get a fresh start. Struggling readers excel with extra support. And those with unique abilities access a wider range of academic programs and materials to meet their needs.

These *opportunities are made possible* by people in our community who continually step up for Florida students. Through tax programs, individual donations, workplace giving, planned giving, and more, they enable our students to thrive from pre-school through high school and beyond.





Objectives

1 What are the scholarship options?

- Family Empowerment Scholarship-Unique Abilities
- Private School and Transportation Scholarships
- Personalized Education Plan
- Hope Scholarship
- New Worlds Scholarship Accounts

2 Who is eligible for each scholarship option?

- Eligibility Requirements
- What does the scholarship program cover?

3 Application Requirements

- Application Requirements



**Florida Tax Credit Scholarship (FTC)
Family Empowerment Scholarship Educational
Options (FES-EO)
K-12**

What is the Florida Tax Credit & Family Empowerment Scholarship for Educational Options program?



Scholarships for Private Schools

K-12 students regardless of household income, who are residents of Florida and eligible to enroll in a K-12 public school, can receive a scholarship worth an average of \$7,800 to attend a private school that best meets their academic needs.

The scholarship can be used for tuition along with other related expenses such as registration, books, testing, and other fees.



Scholarships for Public School Transportation

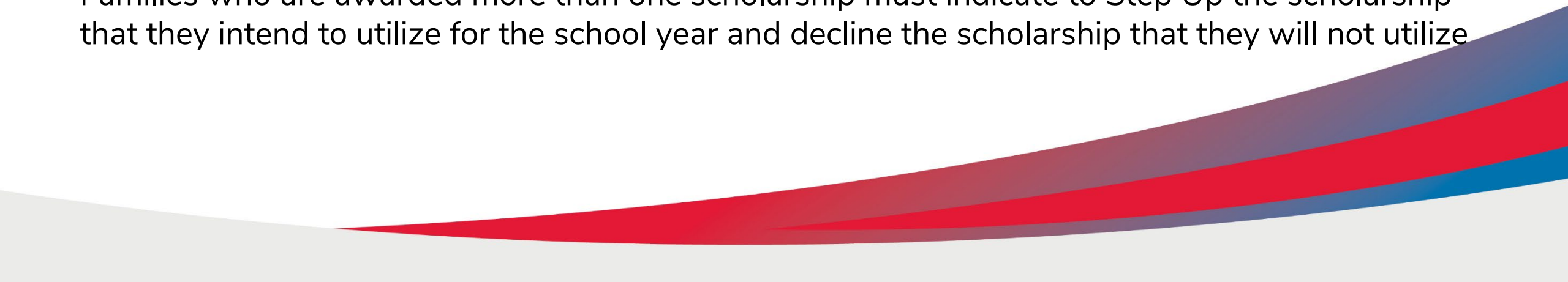
K-12 students have the option of attending a public school that is a better fit than the one they've been assigned. Students can receive at least \$750 to be used for transportation.

Contingent upon available funds and on a first-come, first-served basis, a student must meet the eligibility criteria and household income requirements to qualify for FES-EO.

Student Eligibility Criteria

- The student is a resident of the state of Florida.
- The student is eligible to enroll in grades kindergarten – 12 in a public school in the state of Florida.
- A student entering kindergarten must be 5 years old on or before September 1 of the applying school year
- A student entering first grade must be 6 years old on or before September 1 of the applying school year

Requirements for the Florida Tax Credit & Family Empowerment Scholarship for Educational Options cont...

- The student is not enrolled in full-time Florida public school (including the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind, the College-Preparatory Boarding Academy, or a charter school), a school providing education to youth in Department of Juvenile Justice programs;, or a virtual school (including FLVS), correspondence school, or distance learning program that receives state funding.
 - The student is not participating in any other scholarship, including the Family Empowerment Scholarship for Students with Unique Abilities (FES-UA), Hope, or New Worlds programs, whether administered by Step Up or by another
 - Families who are awarded more than one scholarship must indicate to Step Up the scholarship that they intend to utilize for the school year and decline the scholarship that they will not utilize
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What does the Florida Tax Credit & Family Empowerment Scholarship for Educational Options cover?

The Family Empowerment Scholarship offers three options for eligible students: the Transportation scholarship, the Private School option ESA, and the FTC-PEP option ESA.

2023-24 Transportation Option If the option to transport the student to a public school other than the student is assigned to is selected, the parent/guardian may receive the greater of \$750 or the value of the local school district's per-pupil expenditure on transportation, to assist with the cost of transportation to a school other than the one the student is assigned to.

If awarded a scholarship and the student meets the requirements above, the parent or guardian can complete the Transportation scholarship interest form linked in the student's scholarship Award Notification. Parents/Guardians will need to upload a report card or progress report from the student's school on a quarterly basis through their EMA portal to receive payment.

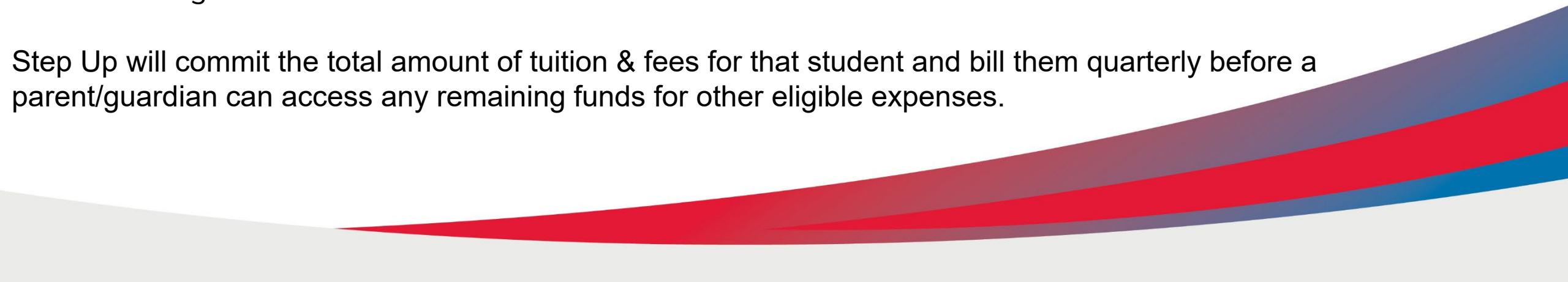
What does the Florida Tax Credit & Family Empowerment Scholarship for Educational Options cover? cont...

Scholarship recipients not registered in the PEP or Transportation program will be required to enroll in an Eligible Private School. Students utilizing the eligible private school option must be full-time private school students and must be educated full-time, onsite at the school's physical location. The school will initiate student enrollment, and the parent/guardian will confirm enrollment.

Once a student has been approved for the scholarship, the next step is to select an eligible, participating private school. Once a private school has been selected, the parent/guardian should provide the student's Award ID to the selected private school.

At the time of enrollment, the school and parent/guardian must both certify the agreed-upon tuition and fee rate for that student. The agreed-upon tuition and fee rate for the student may include discounts or other considerations and may be less than the school's published tuition & fee rate for the student's grade level.

Step Up will commit the total amount of tuition & fees for that student and bill them quarterly before a parent/guardian can access any remaining funds for other eligible expenses.





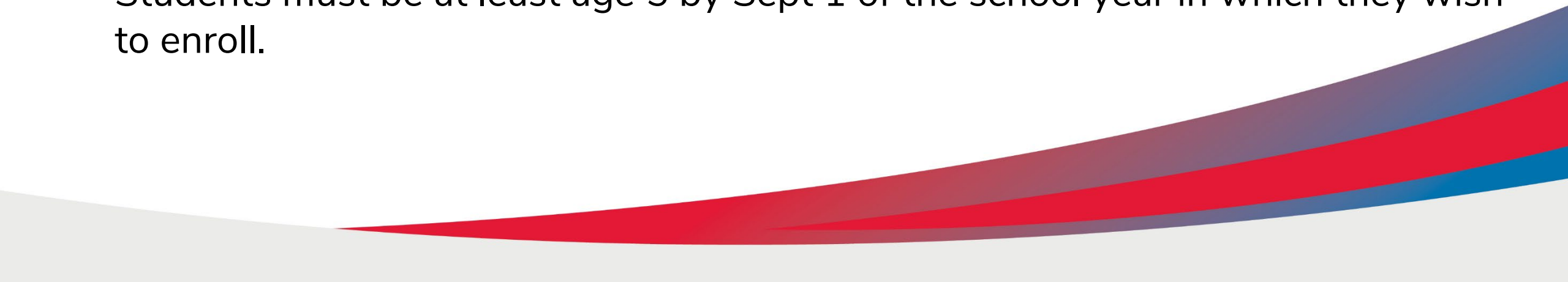
Personalized Education Program (PEP) Education Savings Account K-12

What is the Personalized Education Plan (PEP) program?




PEP, funded through the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship, was created to serve Florida's families who would prefer not to enroll their child in public or private school and would like access to an education savings account to fund their student's learning directed by the parent.

Requirements for the Personalized Education Program (PEP)

- Must be registered with a Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) approved scholarship-funding organization (SFO) such as Step Up For Students, as a PEP student and not as a Home Education Student.
 - Must not be enrolled full-time in a private, public school, charter school, school for the deaf and blind, college preparatory academy, developmental research school, or juvenile justice school.
 - Students must be at least age 5 by Sept 1 of the school year in which they wish to enroll.
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Requirements for the Personalized Education Program (PEP)

- Parents and guardians must annually develop a “Student Learning Plan” to guide instruction and address the students’ learning needs and submit the plan to the SFO.
 - Must take a FLDOE approved national norm-referenced test and submit results to the SFO.
 - Must complete a sworn compliance statement through the SFO.
- 


The Student Learning Plan

- A **Student Learning Plan (SLP)** is a customized learning plan developed by parents at least annually to guide instruction for their students and to address the services needed to fulfill the academic needs of their student.
- SLPs are only required for students on the Personalized Education Program.



Student Learning Plan
FAQs

What does the Personalized Education Plan (PEP) cover?

- Instructional material (including digital materials and internet resources)
 - Curriculum
 - Tuition for full-time or part-time enrollment in a home education instructional program
 - Education at an eligible postsecondary educational institution or approved apprenticeship program
 - Fees for nationally standardized norm-referenced tests and other assessments
 - Contracted services provided by a public school or school district
 - Tuition and fees for part-time tutoring services
 - An approved virtual course
 - Tuition as a private pay student at Florida Virtual School
 - Fees for a “Choice Navigator.”
- 



**Family Empowerment Scholarship for
Unique Abilities
K-12**

What is the Family Empowerment Scholarship for Unique Abilities program?



A Unique Education for a Unique Child

Children with unique abilities may have different needs when it comes to their education. And we believe they deserve an opportunity to thrive and learn in an environment that will best support their success. The Family Empowerment Scholarship for Students with Unique Abilities (FES-UA) enables families to personalize the education of their students by directing funds to where they're needed most. The funds can be used for a combination of programs and approved expenses including therapists, specialists, curriculum, private school, a college savings account and more.

Eligibility Criteria for FES-UA

Florida students 3 years through 12th grade with one of the following diagnoses:

Anaphylaxis	Autism spectrum disorder	Cerebral Palsy	Deaf or Hearing Impaired	Down syndrome	Dual sensory impaired	Emotional or behavioral impairment
“High-risk” 3-, 4-, and 5- year-olds	Hospital or Homebound	Language impairment	Muscular dystrophy	Orthopedic impairment	Other health impairment	Phelan-McDermid syndrome
Prader-Willi syndrome	Rare disease or condition	Speech impairment	Spina bifida	Traumatic brain injured	Visually impaired including blindness	Williams syndrome

Specific learning disability, not limited to dyslexia, dyscalculia or developmental aphasia

Intellectual disability - severe cognitive impairment

Other Eligibility Criteria for FES-UA

Student document requirements either/or:



Formal diagnosis
from a licensed
physician or
psychologist

OR

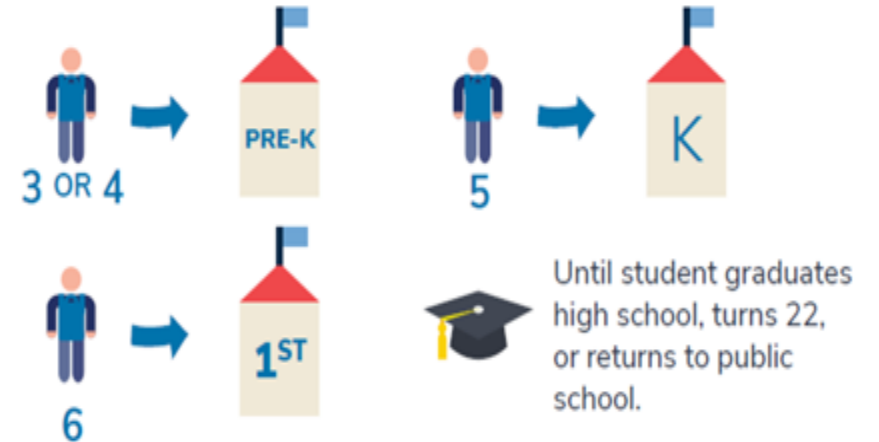


Current
Individual
Education Plan
from a school
district

*Autonomous Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRN)
can also provide a formal diagnosis

Student age requirements:

**AGE
ELIGIBILITY**
on or before
Sept. 1



How the Unique Abilities Option Works



When a student receives an FES-UA scholarship, the family affirms that they will enroll the student in a private or parochial school or register the student with their district as a home education student.

FES-UA scholarship recipients may not be enrolled in a Florida public school, including the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind; or the College-Preparatory Boarding Academy, a developmental research school authorized under s. 1002.32; a charter school authorized under s. 1002.33, s. 1002.331, or s. 1002.332; or a virtual education program authorized under s. 1002.45.

Neither may students be utilizing a state-funded VPK program, or any other school choice scholarship such as the Family Empowerment Scholarship Florida Tax Credit Scholarship, Hope Scholarship, or New Worlds Scholarship. Families who are awarded more than one scholarship must indicate to Step Up the scholarship that they intend to utilize for the school year and decline the scholarship that they will not utilize. A student may utilize only one scholarship.

What does the Family Empowerment Scholarship for Unique Abilities cover?

Program funds must be used for eligible expenses that meet the individual educational needs of the eligible student. A parent/guardian, student, or provider of any services may not bill an insurance company, Medicaid, or any other agency for the same services that are paid for using Family Empowerment Scholarship for Students with Unique Abilities (FES-UA) funds. The following categories of items and services are approved uses for the scholarship funds. Eligible Expenses are detailed in the FES-UA Purchasing Guide:

- Instructional Materials
- Curriculum
- Specialized Services
- Tuition and Fees for a:
 - o Eligible Private School
 - o Home Education Program
 - o Eligible Postsecondary Institution
 - o Approved Pre-apprenticeship Program
 - o Full-Time Private Tutoring Program
 - o Part-Time Tutoring or Services from a Choice Navigator
 - o Approved Online or Virtual Provider
 - o Florida Virtual School(FLVS) as a private pay student
 - o Contracted Services Provider by a Public School or School District
- Standardized Testing Fees
- Contributions to a Stanley G. Tate Florida Prepaid College Program
- Contributions to a Florida 529 College Savings Program
- Contracted Services Provided by a Public School or School District
- Fees for Part-Time Tutoring or Choice Navigator Services
- Fees Associated with Specialized Summer Education Programs
- Fees Associated with Specialized After-School Education Programs Transition Services Provided by Job Coaches
- Annual Educational Evaluation Fees • Tuition and Fees Offered by Approved Voluntary Prekindergarten Education (VPK) Program Providers Tuition and Fees Offered by Approved School Readiness Program Providers
- Horse Therapy
- Music & Art Therapy



Hope Scholarship K-12

What is the Hope Scholarship program?



In 2018 the Florida Legislature established the Hope Scholarship Program. The purpose of the program is to provide parents of public-school students in grades K-12 who are subjected to incidents of bullying or violence with options for a new learning environment.

Funding for the Hope Scholarship Program is provided through tax credits offered to the purchasers of motor vehicles within Florida. Beginning on October 1, 2018, the purchaser of a motor vehicle is given a dollar-for-dollar sales tax credit, up to \$105, against any tax imposed by the state and collected by a dealer, private tag agent or county tax collector as a contribution to Step Up For Students.

Requirements for the Hope Scholarship Program

Contingent upon available funds, and on a first come, first-served basis, a student enrolled in a Florida public school in grades K-12 is eligible for a scholarship if the student reported one of the following incidents:

- Battery
- Harassment
- Hazing
- Bullying
- Kidnapping
- Physical attack
- Robbery
- Sexual offenses, harassment, assault, or battery
- Threat or intimidation
- Fighting at school



“School” is defined as any educational program or activity conducted by a public K-12 educational institution, any school-related or school-sponsored program or activity, including riding on a school bus, as defined in s. 1006.25(1), F.S., and waiting at a school bus stop.

Requirements for the Hope Scholarship Program cont...

- Upon conclusion of the investigation or within 15 days after the incident was reported, whichever occurs first, the school district must notify the parent about the Hope Scholarship Program and offer the parent an opportunity to enroll the student in another public school, within the student's current district, that has capacity, or to inform them of the option to request and receive a scholarship to attend an eligible private school, or to a public school located outside the district in which the student resides. The school district must provide the parent with a completed Hope Scholarship Notification Form (Form IEPC-HS1).
- The Hope Scholarship Notification Form (IEPC-HS1) is required for Step Up For Students to determine scholarship eligibility. Please note, this is the ONLY form that will be accepted by Step Up For Students for eligibility determination.

What does the Hope Scholarship program cover?



The Hope Scholarship Program is not based on financial need. Both the Hope Scholarship options, private school or transportation to a public school outside the district where the student resides, have the same eligibility requirements.



Hope Scholarship
Program



New Worlds Scholarship Accounts

K-5

What is the New Worlds Scholarship Accounts program?

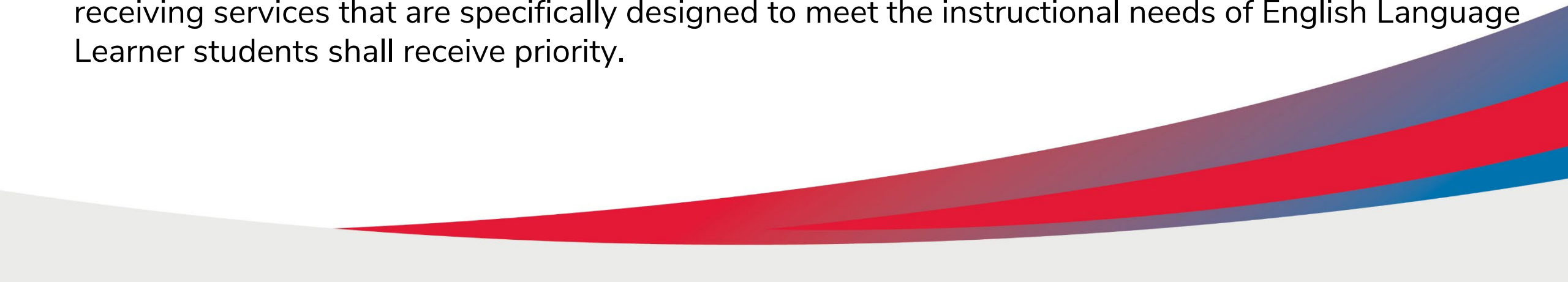
Reading and math skills provide a foundation for academic success starting at an early age. Students who struggle early in their academic career may continue to struggle to reach their full learning potential. New Worlds Scholarship Accounts enable early intervention to support students in moving ahead.

The program benefits students in grades K-5 by providing families with access to an education savings account (ESA) of \$500 to pay for programs and materials designed to boost reading and math skills.




Requirements for the New Worlds Scholarship Accounts Program

New Worlds Scholarship Accounts are available to students who are enrolled in a Florida Public School in grades K-5 who:

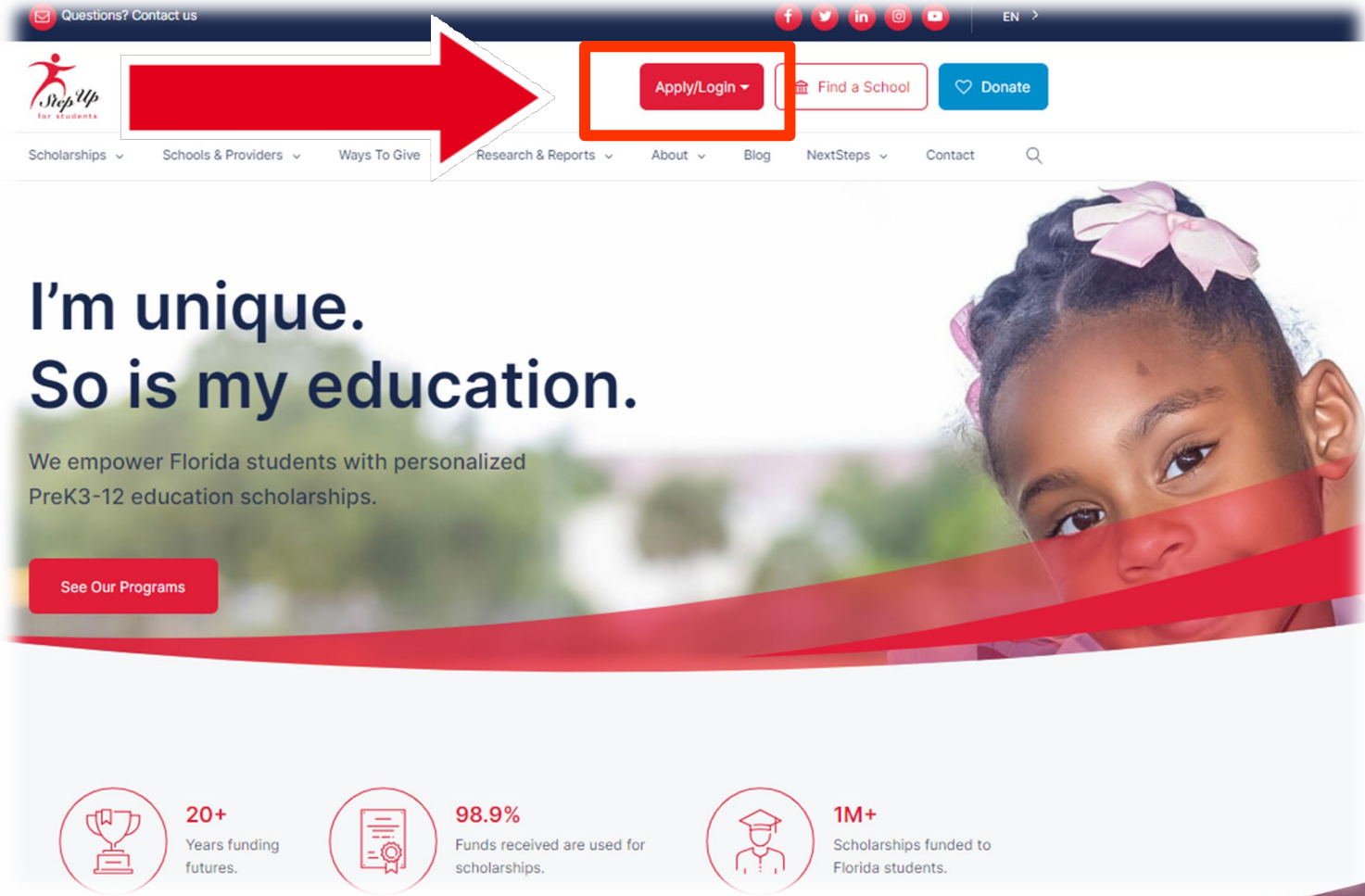
- Have a substantial reading deficiency or exhibit characteristics of dyslexia as identified under s. [1008.25](#)(5)
 - Or scored below a Level 3 on the statewide, standardized English Language Arts (ELA) assessment in the prior school year.
 - Or have a substantial deficiency in mathematics or the characteristics of dyscalculia as identified under s. [1008.25](#)(6)
 - Or scored below a Level 3 on the statewide, standardized Mathematics assessment in the prior school year.
 - An eligible student who is classified as an English Language Learner and is enrolled in a program or receiving services that are specifically designed to meet the instructional needs of English Language Learner students shall receive priority.
- 

What does the New Worlds Scholarship Accounts program cover?

Once funds have been deposited into the student's account, parents may use the scholarship funds for a variety of services:

- Part-Time Tutoring Services
 - Fees Associated with Summer Education Programs
 - Fees Associated with After-School Education
 - Instructional Materials
 - Curriculum
- 

How to apply for our scholarship programs?



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I'm unique. So is my education.

We empower Florida students with personalized PreK3-12 education scholarships.



See Our Programs

20+
Years funding futures.

98.9%
Funds received are used for scholarships.

1M+
Scholarships funded to Florida students.

Learn more about our scholarship options...



FLORIDA CHOICE SCHOLARSHIPS
FAMILY EMPOWERMENT SCHOLARSHIP FOR EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS
FLORIDA TAX CREDIT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM
PERSONALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM



FAMILY EMPOWERMENT SCHOLARSHIP FOR STUDENTS WITH UNIQUE ABILITIES
PARENT/GUARDIAN HANDBOOK



HOPE SCHOLARSHIP
PARENT HANDBOOK



NEW WORLDS SCHOLARSHIP ACCOUNTS
PARENT/GUARDIAN HANDBOOK





Thank You!