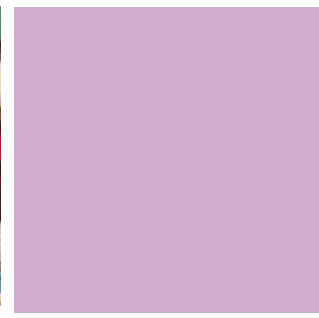
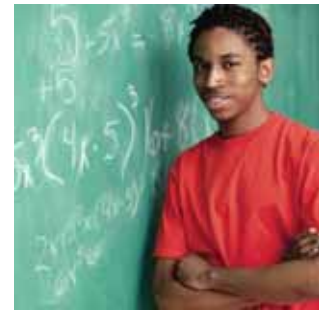
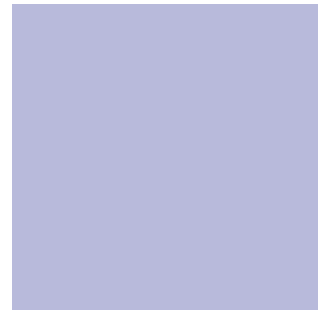




# School CHOICE Options

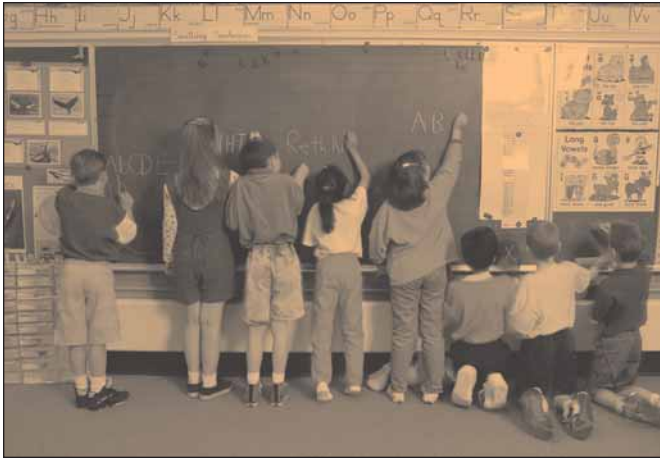
Florida Continues to Lead the Nation



**FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
Increasing the Quantity and Improving the Quality of Educational Options







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*“We’re committed to school choice because equal opportunity starts with equal options for education. And because the competition of choice drives positive change in our public schools.”*

— Governor Jeb Bush  
State of the State Address to the Florida Legislature  
March 7, 2006



## Florida: Leading the Nation in School Choice Options

Ensuring that every child receives a quality education is one of the highest priorities for Florida citizens. School choice empowers parents and gives them a tool to use in making sure their children get the very best education possible. School choice programs in Florida are in high demand and growing as an increasing number of families take advantage of their right and responsibility to select the appropriate learning option for their children.

Florida's A+ Education Plan was the impetus for policies and programs that thrust Florida into the spotlight as a national leader in providing parents and students with a wide array of school choice options. A key principle of the plan is for every student to gain a year's worth of knowledge in a year's time. If the schools that students are assigned to attend cannot provide this, then their parents should be free to choose another school that best meets the learning needs of their children.

Eight strategic imperatives have been identified by Florida's State Board of Education as part of a long-range planning effort to improve Florida's education system. One of the imperatives, ***Increase the Quantity and Improve the Quality of Education Options***, places a priority on expanding the quantity and improving the quality of school choice options for Florida families. Support for this initiative, coupled with Florida's groundbreaking

legislation, is resulting in additional choice programs and resources being made available to Florida's families. These programs allow children to get the education they deserve while simultaneously providing an incentive for innovation and improvement across the educational system.

School choice is not about one type of school being better than another. It is about letting parents who know, love, and share the fate of their children make the decision about how and where their child will be educated. School choice is the right thing to do for children and a good thing to do for schools.

Florida's emphasis on providing numerous school choice options for families and students is based on three basic principles:

- Every student has different learning needs so there is no one best school for everyone
- Diversity in school structure and programs is necessary to accommodate all students and enable them to succeed
- Students will achieve more if they and their parents or guardians have freely chosen a learning environment.



# SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS

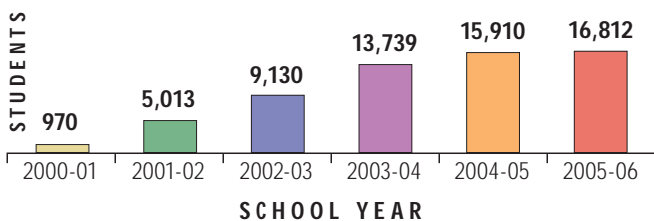
Florida's variety of school choice options for parents and students includes scholarship programs that give parents choices so their children are offered the best opportunities to learn. Florida's three scholarship programs allow parents unprecedented choice among public and private schools.

## John M. McKay Scholarships for Students with Disabilities Program

The John M. McKay Scholarships for Students with Disabilities Program, commonly known as the McKay Scholarship Program, allows parents of students with disabilities to choose the best academic environment for their children. This scholarship program provides a variety of options allowing parents to make informed choices. Eligible students include students with disabilities who have an individual educational plan (IEP), and who were enrolled and reported for funding by a Florida school district. Students from military families from other states or countries may also be eligible. Parents have the option of choosing another public school or applying for a scholarship for their child to attend an eligible private school.

The McKay Scholarship Program empowers parents to make informed decisions regarding their child's educational future. Over the past few years, thousands of parents have chosen the McKay Scholarship Program, making this the largest and fastest growing scholarship program in Florida.

### Florida's Premier Scholarship Program Shows Strong and Steady Growth in Student Enrollment

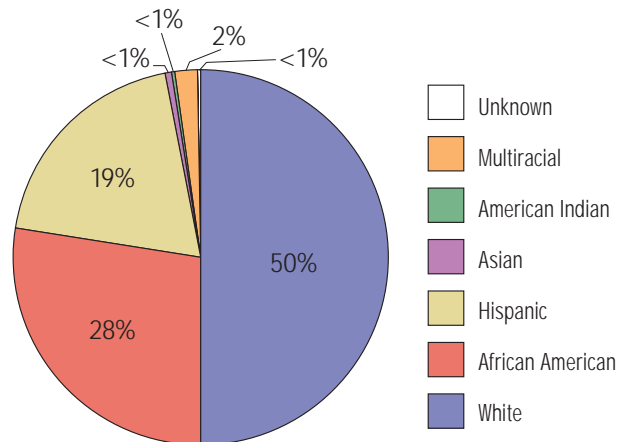


Note: Data for 2005-06 reflect student participation through February 1, 2006.



Slightly more than half of all students participating in the McKay Scholarship Program in 2005-2006 are white. African-American students represent the second largest student group with almost 28% student participation, followed by Hispanic students with nearly 19% participation.

### Race/Ethnicity of McKay Scholarship Students



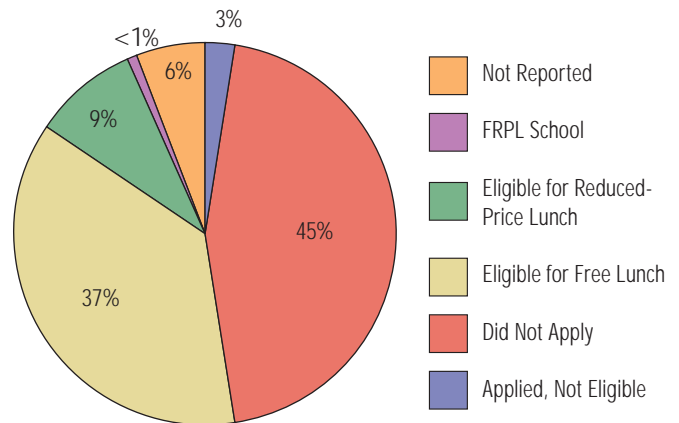
Of students receiving McKay Scholarships in 2005-06, 34% are enrolled in kindergarten through grade five, 36% in grades six through eight, and 30% in grades nine through twelve. Almost two-thirds of the McKay scholarship students are male. Forty-six percent (46%) are eligible for the federal free and reduced-price lunch program, an indicator that their families have limited financial resources.

### Grade Level Distribution of McKay Scholarship Students

Grade	Students	Percentage
K	57	<1%
1	434	3%
2	748	4%
3	1,152	7%
4	1,587	9%
5	1,723	10%
6	1,980	12%
7	2,075	12%
8	1,976	12%
9	1,834	11%
10	1,454	9%
11	1,084	4%
12	708	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,812</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



### McKay Scholarship Student Eligibility for Free and Reduced-Price Lunch

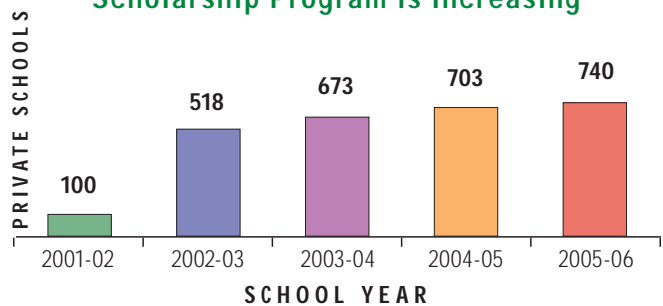


### Gender Distribution of McKay Scholarship Students

Gender	Students	Percentage
Female	5,399	32%
Male	11,413	68%
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,812</b>	<b>100%</b>

The McKay Scholarship Program offers parent-directed choices and student-directed funding. During the 2004-05 school year, \$97.2 million was paid to scholarship program participants. Scholarships for individual students enrolled during the 2005-06 school year range from \$4,805 to \$20,703, with an average scholarship amount of \$6,897. Currently for the 2005-06 school year, 740 private schools are participating in the McKay Scholarship Program. Private schools participating in the program must document compliance with eligibility requirements specified in law.

### Private School Participation in the McKay Scholarship Program is Increasing





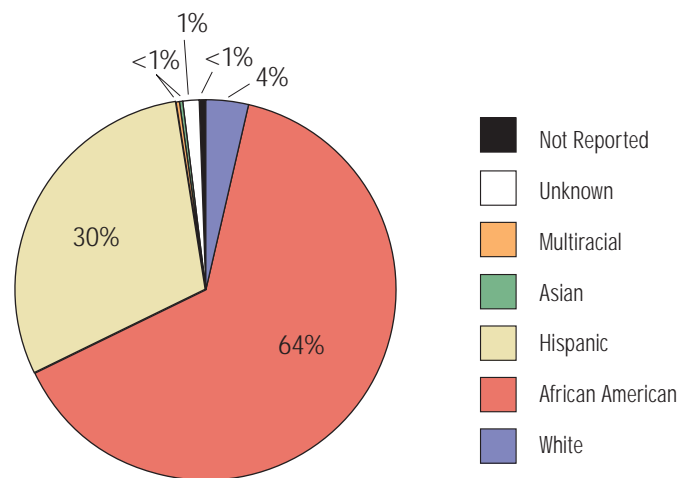
## Opportunity Scholarship Program

The only program of its kind in the nation, the Opportunity Scholarship Program created under Florida's A+ Education Plan, reflects the state's commitment to higher educational standards for students. The Opportunity Scholarship Program launched Florida's scholarship movement by allowing parents to choose a higher-performing public school or an eligible private school of their choice if their children attend, or are assigned to attend, a failing Florida public school. Students entering kindergarten or first grade who have been notified that their assigned school is a failing school may also be eligible to participate.

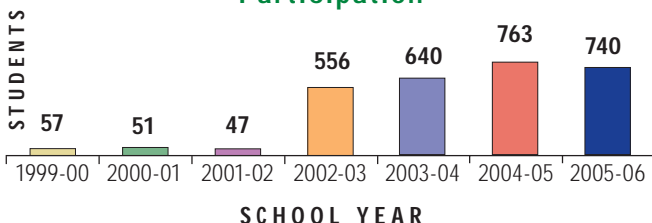
For the purpose of the Opportunity Scholarship Program, a school is considered to be failing if it has received two "F" grades within four consecutive school years. In the year in which the school receives a second "F," eligible students can take advantage of the options under this program.

Of the 740 Opportunity Scholarship students who enrolled in private schools for the 2005-06 school year, most of whom come from low-income families, 64% are African American and 30% are Hispanic. Opportunity Scholarships give these students educational choices rather than trapping them in low-performing public schools.

Race/Ethnicity of Opportunity Scholarship Students



Opportunity Scholarship Student Participation

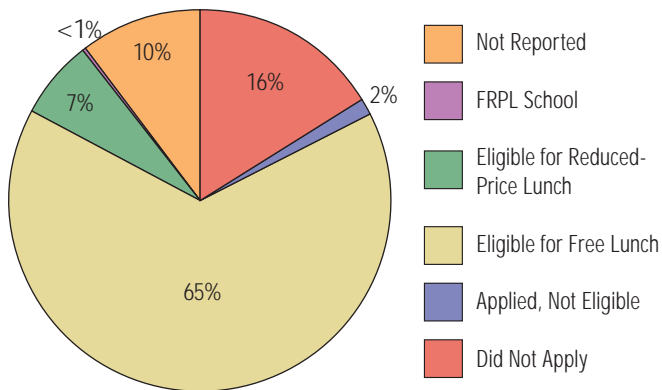


Note: Data for 2005-06 reflect student participation through February 1, 2006.





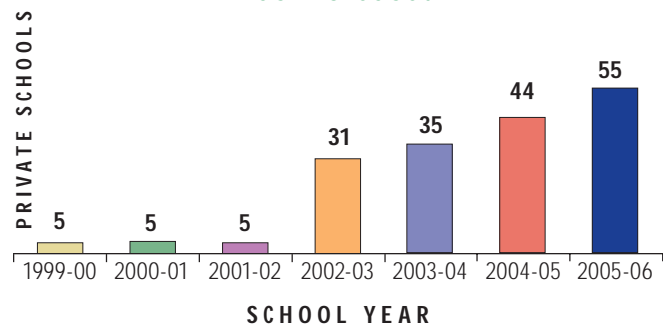
### Opportunity Scholarship Student Eligibility for Free and Reduced-Price Lunch



The number of participating private schools in the scholarship program has steadily increased over the past four years. During the 2004-05 school year, 44 private schools participated in Florida's Opportunity Scholarship Program. Currently, 55 private schools are participating for the 2005-06 school year.

In January 2006, the Florida Supreme Court issued a ruling declaring the private school option of the Opportunity Scholarship Program unconstitutional. This option allowed parents to choose for their child to receive a publicly-funded education in a private school. The court's ruling will apply after the 2005-06 school year, thereby allowing currently enrolled scholarship students to retain their scholarships and remain in their private school through the end of the school term. The court's ruling did not affect the Opportunity Scholarship public school choice option, which allows parents to move their child from a failing public school to a higher-performing public school.

### Private School Participation in the Opportunity Scholarship Program Has Increased



Note: Data for 2005-06 reflect participating schools as of February 1, 2006.

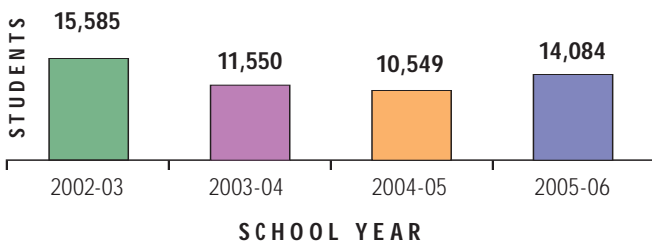


## Corporate Tax Credit Scholarship Program

The newest of Florida's three state scholarship programs, the Corporate Tax Credit Scholarship Program was established to encourage private, voluntary contributions from corporate donors to non-profit scholarship funding organizations that award scholarships to children from low-income families. Under this program, which the state legislature passed in 2001, corporations can receive a dollar for dollar tax credit up to 75% of their state income tax liability, and the state may award a maximum of \$88 million in credits each year. This program expands educational opportunities and school choice for children of families that have limited financial resources.

Scholarship payments for over 14,000 students were made in February 2006. Current participation in 2005-06 reflects a 33% increase in enrollment from the 2004-05 school year.

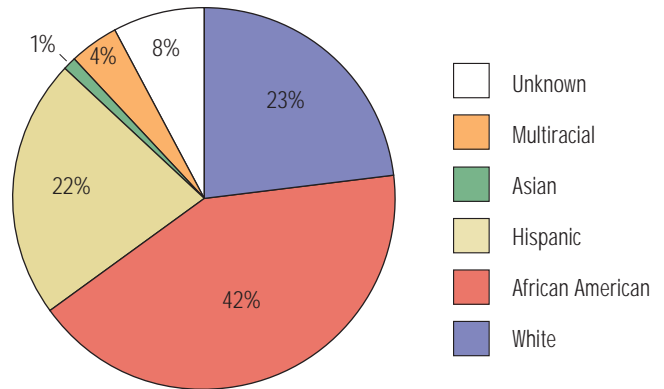
### School Choice for Thousands of Low-Income Students



Note: Data for 2005-06 include students enrolled as of February 1, 2006.

Approximately 42% of students participating in the Corporate Tax Credit Scholarship as of February 1, 2006 are African American. White students comprise the next largest population with 23% participation, followed closely by the Hispanic population with 22% participation.

### Race/Ethnicity of Corporate Tax Credit Scholarship Students



### Scholarship Funding Organizations and Private School Partners

Scholarship Funding Organizations (SFOs) are responsible for the receipt and distribution of corporate funds to eligible and participating private schools in Florida. The scholarships to attend an eligible private school are worth \$3,500 or the cost of tuition plus books and transportation, whichever is less. Scholarships to attend a public school in an adjacent district are worth \$500 per student for transportation.

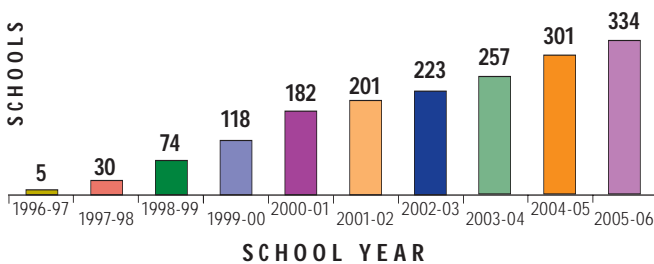
Currently for the 2005-06 school year, three SFOs and 895 schools are participating in the Corporate Tax Credit Scholarship program.



## Charter Schools

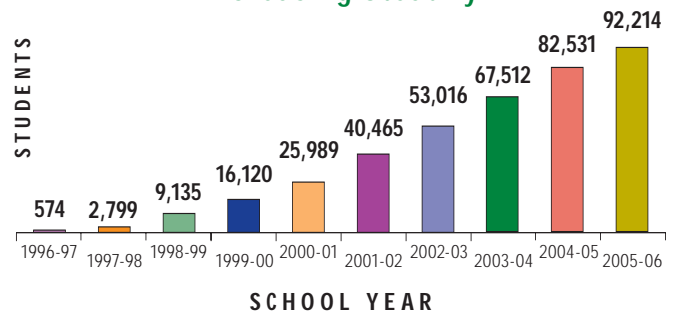
Charter schools are public schools that are independently operated and committed to academic achievement. Since 1996 in Florida, charter schools have played a key role in increasing parental options in public education and providing innovative learning opportunities for students. With 334 charter schools currently operating in 2005-06, Florida has the third highest number of charter schools in the nation. From schools specializing in the performing arts to focusing on technical training, Florida's charter schools cover the spectrum of educational needs.

### Florida's Charter Schools are Growing by Near Record Numbers



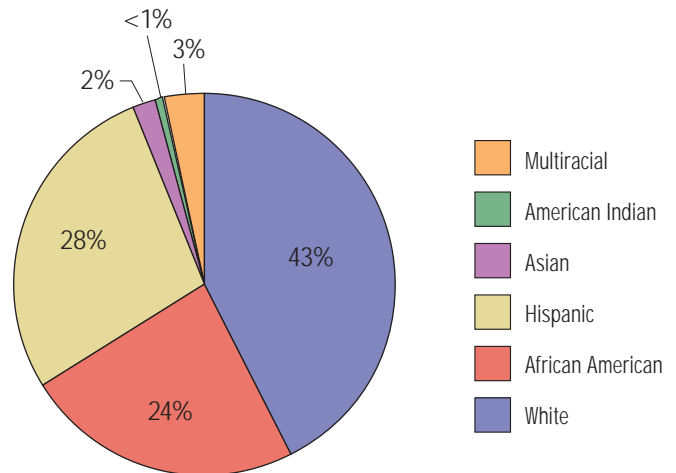
Florida's charter schools strive to provide parents with smaller classes, alternative curriculum and more chances for parental involvement. While authorized and financially supported by local school districts, charter schools are largely free to provide innovative education, and often provide more effective programs and choice to underserved groups of students. Over 92,000 charter school students were reported during the October 2005 state survey of student membership.

### School Enrollment in Charter Schools is Increasing Steadily



Parents of students in Florida charter schools were surveyed in 2003 to determine their satisfaction with their children's schools. Nearly 70% of the parents surveyed graded their child's charter school an "A+" or "A" and 21% graded their child's school a "B."

### Race/Ethnicity of Charter School Students

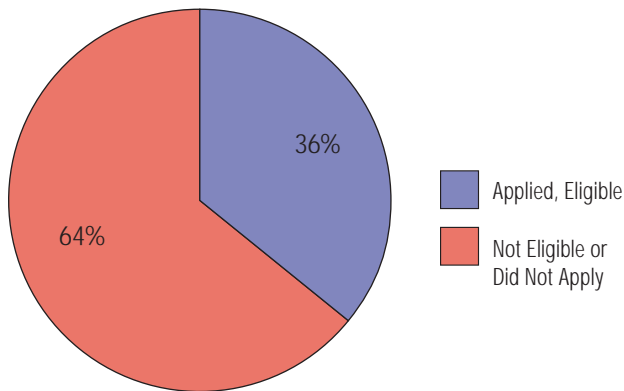


Nearly one half of students enrolled in charter schools as of February 1, 2006 are white. Hispanics represent the next largest population with 28% participation, followed by African Americans with 24% participation.

Approximately 36% of students who applied for the federal free and reduced-price lunch program within charter schools were determined eligible for the 2005-06 school year.



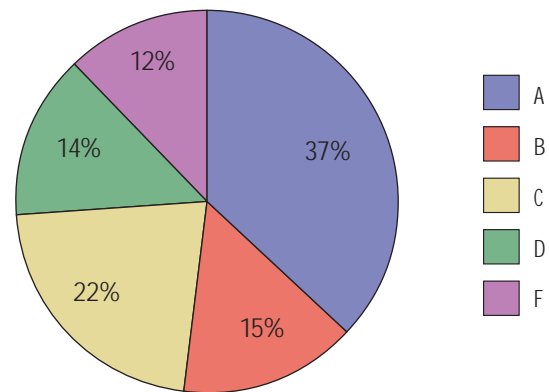
### Charter School Student Eligibility for Free and Reduced-Price Lunch



### Charter Schools Are Measuring Up to the Challenge

In 2004-05, 100 or 39%, of charter schools met all the criteria for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), as compared with 1,022 or 35% of traditional public schools. Studies have shown that charter schools make great strides in closing the achievement gap for students who are struggling academically. When students enter a charter school, they are often performing below their traditional public school counterparts. As a result, the average scores for charter-school students often initially lag behind the average scores of traditional public school students. Research evaluating Florida's charter schools shows, however, that this achievement gap soon narrows.

### 2004-05 Charter School Grades



Over half of the 181 operating charter schools that were graded for the 2004-05 school year received a school performance grade of "A" or "B."

### Charter Technical Career Centers

Charter technical career centers provide a learning environment that better serves the needs of a specific population group or a group of occupations, thus promoting diversity and choices within the public education and postsecondary technical education communities. A charter technical career center may be formed by creating a new school or converting an existing school district or community college program to charter technical status. The center operates under a charter granted by a district school board, a community college board of trustees, or a consortium of one or more district school boards and community college boards of trustees. Three charter technical centers served over 8,700 Florida students in 2004-05.





## Virtual Education

### Florida Virtual School — Any Time, Any Place, Any Path, Any Pace

Florida has led the way with groundbreaking legislation that makes online learning possible and fundable. The Florida Legislature initially funded the Florida Virtual School (FLVS) as a grant-based pilot project in 1997, pioneering Florida's first Internet-based, public high school. Since 2001, the FLVS has functioned as a special independent public school district governed by a Board of Trustees appointed by the Governor.

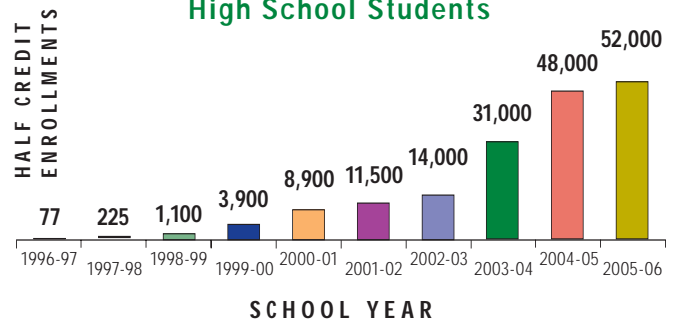
The FLVS currently offers over 80 online courses to students in grades six through twelve which include everything from general to honors to Advanced Placement. Courses are free to Florida middle and high school students, including public, charter, private, and home educated students. Priority is given to students who need expanded access to courses to meet their educational goals. This includes students who:

- Are home schooled
- Attend low performing schools
- Attend rural, inner-city, or other schools that may have limited course offerings
- Seek to obtain a high school diploma at least one semester early.

Parents of FLVS students were surveyed in the spring of 2005 to determine their satisfaction with their child's virtual school experience. Over

80% of the parents who were surveyed believed that their child learned more or the same through virtual school courses than in traditional high school courses. Only 3% thought they learned less.

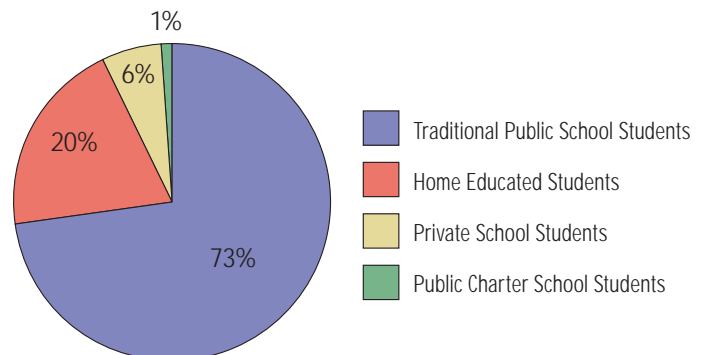
### Florida is Experiencing Phenomenal Growth in Virtual Enrollment of Middle and High School Students



Note: Data for 2005-06 reflect half-credit enrollments as of January 23, 2006.

The majority (73%) of students enrolled in the Florida Virtual School are public school students. Approximately 20% are home educated students.

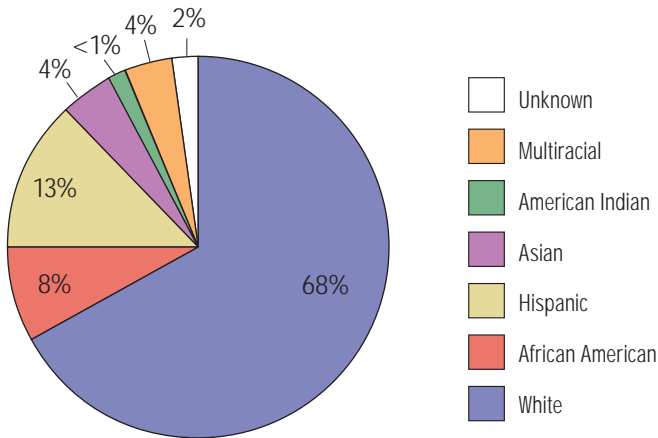
### Distribution of Florida Virtual School Students





A majority of the students enrolled at Florida Virtual School for the 2005-06 school year are white. Hispanics represent the next largest student population with 13% participation, followed by African Americans with 8% participation.

**Race/Ethnicity of Virtual School Students**



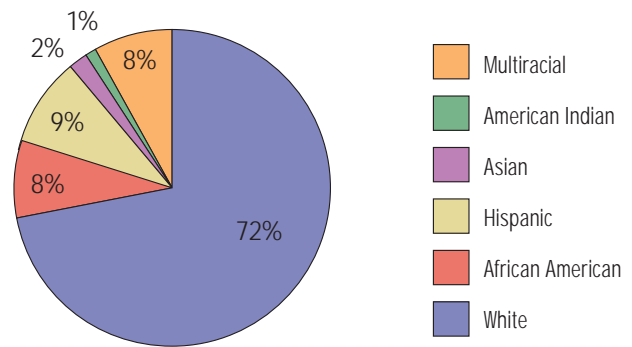
that over 90% of parents were satisfied with their child's progress, the instructional support received from teachers, the curriculum, and the technical support that was provided. Both schools received a "B" school performance grade in the 2004-05 school year.

**Florida's Pilot Virtual Programs: Determining Potential for K-8 Online Learning**

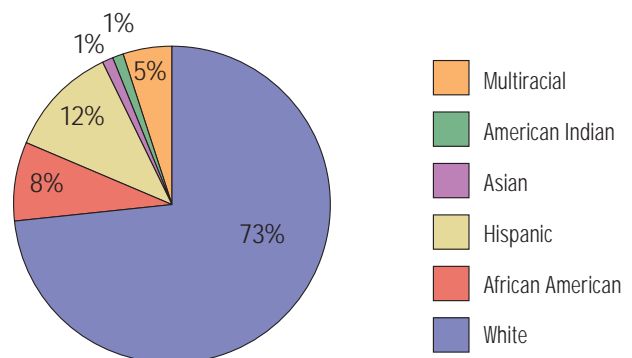
In recognizing that virtual education has tremendous potential for students of all ages, the Florida Legislature currently funds a full-time pilot program to determine the effectiveness of online learning for elementary and middle school students. The K-8 Florida Virtual Schools Pilot Program, which includes the Florida Virtual Academy and Florida Connections Academy, was initially funded for the 2003-04 school year. The Legislature continues to fund the pilot program through 2005-06 for students who were enrolled in a Florida public school the previous year, previously enrolled in one of the pilot schools as well as their siblings, or entering kindergarten or first grade.

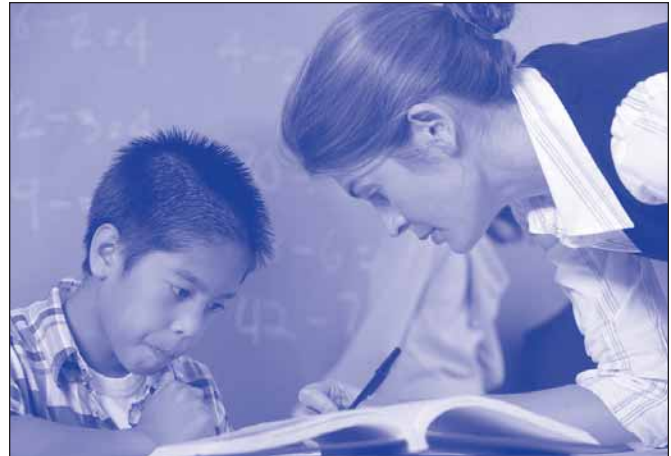
As with all pilot programs, this program is a "test" to determine the viability of the program for other Florida students. For 2005-06, enrollment for each pilot participating school has reached the 500 student limit. Over 70% of students enrolled at Connections Academy and the Florida Virtual Academy are white. Results from parent surveys conducted for the 2004-05 school year indicated

**Race/Ethnicity of Students Enrolled in Connections Academy**



**Race/Ethnicity of Students Enrolled in Florida Virtual Academy**





## Controlled Open Enrollment

In 1996, Florida legislators enacted a law recognizing the value of providing numerous and meaningful options for students and their parents. In requiring each school district to develop an open enrollment choice plan, the legislature expressed the belief that public school choice will:

- Cultivate constructive competition
- Serve as an impetus for academic improvement
- Foster greater accountability within the school system.

The law requires each district school board to develop a plan describing the controlled open enrollment public education delivery system that will allow student school assignments to be made using parental choice as a significant factor. Controlled open enrollment emphasizes the rights of families to choose among existing public schools. Rather than being assigned to a public school by a school district based on attendance zones, parents may choose a school from anywhere within the district or, if not geographically feasible, from within established zones or boundaries within the district. Districts must submit their controlled open enrollment plans to the Department of Education on an annual basis.

## Other Public School Options

Various options are used across Florida to respond to the unique learning needs of every school district's students and communities. The most common form of public school choice is offering a variety of courses and electives to meet graduation requirements for high school and allowing students to select the courses that will best meet their learning needs. Among the other choice options being implemented by districts used to meet student and parental needs are magnet schools, career academies, and intensive nationally and internationally recognized instructional programs.

### Magnet Schools

Magnet schools are public schools with a particular theme or academic focus on such topics as medical, criminal justice, science and mathematics, technology, performing arts, International Baccalaureate, and foreign languages. Magnet schools provide parents and students with the option of choosing a school that matches a student's interests. They are designed to attract a variety of students and sometimes enroll students from different districts. Magnet schools offer students specialized programs and create innovative learning approaches in a diverse environment. More than 306,000 Florida students enrolled in magnet schools operating in 20 local school districts during the 2005-06 school year.

## Career Academies

Career academies are small, personalized learning communities within a high school that select a subset of students and teachers for a two-, three-, or four-year span. Students enter a career academy through a voluntary process. They must apply and be accepted with parental knowledge and support.

A career academy includes the following essential elements:

- A small learning community
- A rigorous academic curriculum with a career theme
- Partnerships with employers, the community, and higher education.

By design, these three central elements of a career academy lead to a school that is rigorous, relevant, and relational. Academies draw on the interest students have in learning about some feature of the world of work and integrate career-specific curriculum and instruction into core academic curriculum. Over 400 career academies operate in 32 Florida school districts with a focus on areas including hospitality and tourism, health science, science and technology, and architecture and construction.

## Dual Enrollment

Dual enrollment allows eligible high school students to enroll in postsecondary courses. They earn credit toward high school graduation and at the same time earn credit toward a college degree or technical certificate. All 28 public community colleges and some of the state universities in Florida participate in dual enrollment. Students are permitted to take dual enrollment courses on a part-time basis during school hours, after school, or during the summer term. Dual enrollment students do not have to pay registration, matriculation, or laboratory fees.

## Advanced Placement (AP) Program

The College Board's Advanced Placement (AP) Program is a nationwide program consisting of more than 30 college-level courses and exams offered at participating high schools. Subjects range from art to statistics. Students who earn a qualifying grade of 3 or above on an AP exam can earn college credit or advanced placement or both,



depending on the college or university. Students in Florida's public secondary schools enrolled in AP courses do not have to pay to take the exams.

## Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) Program

The Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) Program is an international curriculum and examination program modeled on the British pre-college curriculum and "A-Level" exams. Florida's public community colleges and universities provide college credit for successfully passed exams. Students in Florida's public secondary schools enrolled in AICE courses do not have to pay to take the exams.

## International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program

The International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program is a rigorous pre-university course of study. The program's comprehensive two-year curriculum allows its graduates to fulfill requirements of many different nations' education systems. Students completing IB courses and internationally standardized examinations are eligible for college credit. The award of credit is based on scores achieved on IB exams. Students can earn up to 30 postsecondary semester credits by participating in this program at the high school level. Approximately 40 Florida high schools participate in the IB program. Students in Florida's public secondary schools enrolled in IB courses do not have to pay to take the exams.



## No Child Left Behind School Choice

The federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 is designed to ensure that children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education. The legislation provides federal resources for students to reach proficiency levels on challenging state academic standards and assessment. Under NCLB, when schools do not meet state targets for improving the achievement of all students, parents are provided with other options for meeting their child's learning needs. Parents whose children are enrolled in Title I schools that are identified in need of improvement, corrective action, or restructuring have the opportunity to transfer their children to a higher-performing public school. If they do so, the local school district must provide transportation.

Parents of students enrolled in schools in need of improvement, corrective action, or restructuring may also have the opportunity for their children to receive supplemental educational services (SES). These services include tutoring and other academic enrichment services provided outside the regular school day and designed to enable children from low-income families to reach academic proficiency. SES tutoring offers eligible students the opportunity to participate in high quality research-based educational programs in subject areas such as reading, language arts, and mathematics. Eligible families choose an SES provider from a state-approved list, and school districts pay for the tutoring services using federal funds.

Public school choice is a critical component of NCLB that can provide students in low-performing Title I schools with the opportunity to obtain a high-quality education. When students are provided quality educational options, and when parents receive information to make informed choices among those options, public school choice can increase both equity and quality in education.

### NCLB Public School Choice Provisions in Florida

Public School Choice with Transportation	
2004-05	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1,426 Title I schools in Florida</li> <li>Approximately 900 Title I schools did not make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for two years and were required to offer parents public school choice with transportation</li> </ul>	
2005-06	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1,386 Title I schools in Florida</li> <li>Approximately 300 Title I schools did not make AYP for two years and are required to offer parents public school choice with transportation</li> </ul>	
Supplemental Educational Services	
2004-05	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>33 of Florida's 1,426 Title I schools did not make AYP for three years and were required to offer SES</li> </ul>	
2005-06	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approximately 700 of Florida's Title I schools did not make AYP for three or more consecutive years and are required to offer SES</li> </ul>	





## Home Education

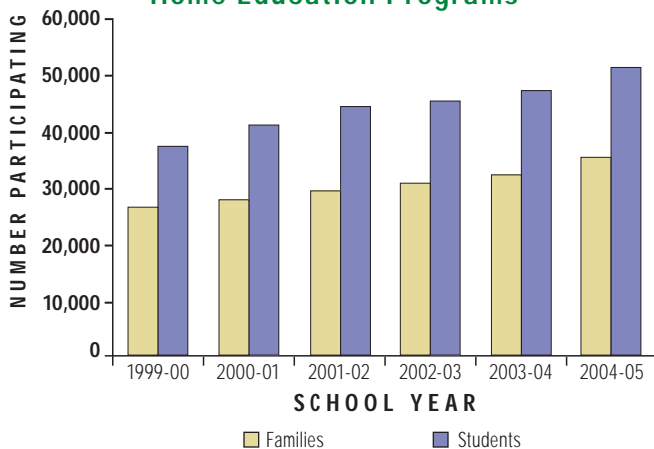
Florida is a long-time supporter of home education and the number of families choosing this education option shows steady growth. Home education is a parent-directed educational choice established by law in Florida in 1985. The law is broad, giving parents considerable freedom to direct their children's education. Home education allows the opportunity to explore and learn at the pace of the individual student while avoiding extensive regulation by the state. More than 51,000 students in over 35,000 Florida families were registered in home education programs in the 2004-05 school year.

Florida has minimal requirements for home education. The state does not require a particular educational background for parents or standard

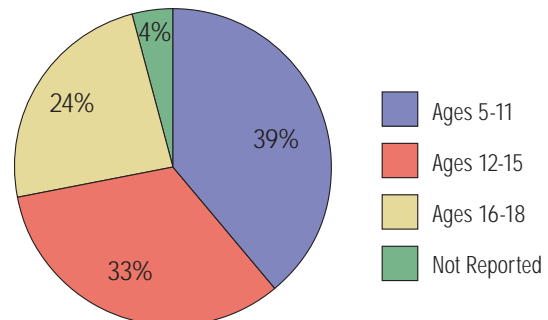
curricula for home educated students. Parents home educating their children are able to be flexible and to tailor or customize the curriculum to the needs of each child. However, a portfolio of records and materials showing student work must be maintained for two years and made available to the school district if requested in writing. There is no attendance requirement for home education students, as the learning environment is not restricted to a regular classroom setting. The law allows parents the flexibility to choose from five annual evaluation methods, enabling them to select the best measure of learning for each student.

Parents register with their school district as a single home education family, or families that are home educating their children may cooperatively form a private school. Florida statutes require parents to provide only the names, addresses and birthdates of all children who are enrolled in a home education program. Children of all ages are home educated across the state, and some enter college straight from their courses of study at home.

### Florida has Experienced a Steady Growth in Home Education Programs



### Ages of Home Educated Students According to Reported Birthdates







## Private Schools

More than 366,700 students are enrolled in over 2,304 nonpublic private schools in Florida. Each private school has a stated purpose and philosophy unique to that school. Some place an emphasis on college preparation, some are vocational, and others seek to meet the needs of children with particular learning styles. These schools operate with limited regulation by the state in the areas of health, safety and sanitation.

Each private school is required by Florida law to complete an annual survey that is maintained by the Department of Education as an information database for the public, governmental agencies, and other interested parties. The state is not required to verify the accuracy of the information submitted and inclusion in the database does not imply state accreditation or approval. The Department of Education and the state's nonpublic school organizations work together in serving Florida's diverse student population; the relationship is professional, rather than regulatory.

## Conclusion

Florida's school choice programs enable children to get the education they deserve while simultaneously providing an incentive for all schools to improve. Studies show that Florida's school choice programs are resulting in increased student achievement and parental satisfaction. While Florida leads the nation in school choice options, there is still much work to be done. The highest priority must continue to be improving the quality in all choice programs while empowering parents to make the best educational choices for their children.

### School Choice Benefits for Families and Students

- Promotes increased student achievement
- Increases parental involvement
- Promotes school improvement through constructive competition
- Provides greater accountability within the school system

# SELECTED RESEARCH ON FLORIDA'S SCHOOL CHOICE OPTIONS

## McKay Scholarship Program

- ▶ Greene, Jay P. and Greg Forster. *Vouchers for Special Education Students: An Evaluation of Florida's McKay Scholarship Program*. Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, June 2003.

This study is the first empirical evaluation of the McKay Scholarship Program's performance and is based on two telephone surveys. The study found that parents were much more satisfied with their experiences in private McKay schools than they were with their experiences in the public schools. Survey results indicate that participants in the McKay Scholarship Program are being significantly better served by McKay schools at no additional cost to the taxpayer and no or little additional cost to their families.

Available at: [http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/cr\\_38.htm](http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/cr_38.htm)

## Opportunity Scholarship Program

- ▶ Chakrabarti, Rajashri. *Do Public Schools Facing Vouchers Behave Strategically? Evidence from Florida*. J.F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, October 2005.

The study found strong evidence to conclude that threatened schools tended to focus more on students below the minimum criteria cutoffs rather than equally on all students. The threatened schools focused mostly on writing rather than reading and math. Further, the study did not find much evidence of relative reclassification of low performing students into special education categories exempt from the calculation of grades.

Available at: <http://econpapers.repec.org/paper/wpawuwppe/0512002.htm>



- ▶ Chakrabarti, Rajashri. *Impact of Voucher Design on Public School Performance: Evidence from Florida and Milwaukee Voucher Programs*. J.F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, October 2003.

This paper analyzes two voucher programs and argues that fundamental differences in voucher designs affect public school incentives differently and induce different responses from them. The 1990 Milwaukee experiment is viewed as a "voucher shock" program. Florida's program can be considered a "threat of voucher" program, where schools getting an "F" grade for the first time are exposed to the threat of vouchers, but do not face vouchers unless they get a second "F" within the next three years. The study validates empirically the argument that threatened public schools will improve under the Florida-type program and this improvement will exceed that under the Milwaukee-type program.

Available at: <http://econpapers.repec.org/paper/ecmnam04/221.htm>

- ▶ Greene, Jay P., and Marcus A. Winters. *When Schools Compete: The Effects of Vouchers on Florida Public School Achievement*. New York, N.Y.: Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, August 2003.

According to this study, "Florida's low-performing schools are improving in direct proportion to the challenge they face from voucher competition." The study further

concludes that under Florida's program, the low-performing schools subjected to voucher competition showed the greatest improvements.

Available at: [http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/ewp\\_02.htm](http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/ewp_02.htm)

- ▶ Greene, Jay P. *An Evaluation of the Florida A-Plus Accountability Plan and School Choice Plan*. Manhattan Institute for Policy Research and Research Associate, Program on Education Policy and Governance, Harvard University, February 2001.

This report examined whether schools that faced the prospect of having vouchers offered to their students under Florida's A+ Plan experienced larger improvements in their FCAT scores than other schools. Results showed that schools receiving a failing grade from the state in 1999 and whose students would have been offered tuition vouchers if they failed a second time achieved test score gains more than twice as large as those achieved by other schools. While schools with lower previous FCAT scores across all state-assigned grades improved their test scores, schools with failing grades that faced the prospect of vouchers exhibited especially large gains.

Available at: [http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/cr\\_aplus.htm](http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/cr_aplus.htm)

- ▶ West, Martin R., Paul E. Peterson, and Henry Lee Shattuck. *The Efficacy of Choice Threats within School Accountability Systems: Results from Legislatively-Induced Experiments*. A paper presented before the Annual Conference of the Royal Economic Society, University of Nottingham, March 21-23, 2005.

Stigma and school voucher threats under Florida's A+ Accountability Plan have positive impacts on student performance. Stigma and public school choice threats under the U.S. federal accountability law, No Child Left Behind, do not have similar effects in Florida. Significant impacts of stigma, when combined with the voucher threat, are observed on the test score performance of African Americans, those eligible for free lunch, and those with the lowest initial test scores.

Available at: [http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/pepg/PDF/Papers/West\\_Peterson\\_ChoiceThreats.pdf](http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/pepg/PDF/Papers/West_Peterson_ChoiceThreats.pdf)



## Corporate Income Tax Credit Scholarship Program

- ▶ Collins Center for Public Policy. *The Florida Corporate Income Tax Credit Scholarship Program: A Preliminary Analysis*. Collins Center for Public Policy, Inc., April 2002.

The study concluded that the Corporate Income Tax Credit Scholarship Program will result in slight declines in state tax revenues but that these declines will likely be offset by increases in the amount of statewide net revenue available for education. These net revenues could reach more than \$600 million over the next ten years. Historical trends and very conservative estimates were used in projecting the future impact on state funding for public education.

Available at: [http://www.collinscenter.org/usr\\_doc/Corporate\\_Income\\_Tax\\_Analysis.pdf](http://www.collinscenter.org/usr_doc/Corporate_Income_Tax_Analysis.pdf)

## Charter Schools

- ▶ Greene Jay, Greg Forster, and Marcus Winters. *Apples to Apples: An Evaluation of Charter Schools Serving General Student Populations*. New York, N.Y.: Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, 2003.

This study compared charter schools serving similar populations in 11 states for one year. The researchers found that mathematics and reading scores were higher in charter schools serving the general student population than in

nearby traditional public schools, with charter schools in Florida and Texas realizing the strongest gains.

Available at: [http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/ewp\\_01.htm](http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/ewp_01.htm)

- ▶ Florida Department of Education. *Student Achievement in Florida's Charter Schools: A Comparison with Traditional Public Schools*. June 2005.

The study found that while the scores for charter schools often initially lag behind the average scores of their counterparts in traditional public schools, this achievement gap soon narrows. Using an appropriate statistical model, the study concluded that charter schools match the learning gains of traditional public schools.

Available at: [http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/pdf/Charter\\_Schools\\_student\\_achievement.pdf](http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/pdf/Charter_Schools_student_achievement.pdf)

- ▶ Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability. *Charter School Performance Comparable to Other Public Schools; Stronger Accountability Needed*. OPPAGA, an office of the Florida Legislature, April 2005.

The study concluded that, on average, charter school students are academically behind when they enter their charter school compared to students remaining in traditional public schools. For this reason charter school students are slightly less likely to meet grade-level standards compared to students in other public schools. Most charter school students achieve comparable learning gains in math and reading as similar students in traditional public schools. However, students who are furthest behind make slightly more progress in charter high schools than do students in traditional public high schools.

Available at: <http://www.oppaga.state.fl.us/reports/pdf/0521rpt.pdf>

- ▶ Sass, Tim. *Charter Schools and Student Achievement in Florida*. Education Finance and Policy, Vol.1, Issue 1, Winter 2006.

The study compared the growth of individual charter school students and conventional public school students over a period of three years. While test scores for students in newer



charter schools is lower, the data shows that by their second year of operation new charter schools reach a par with the average traditional public school in reading. By their fourth year of operation they are even with the average traditional public school in math. The author also found that competition from charter schools is associated with improved math and reading scores in nearby traditional public schools.

Available at: <http://mitpress.mit.edu/catalog/item/default.asp?ttype=6&tid=19570>

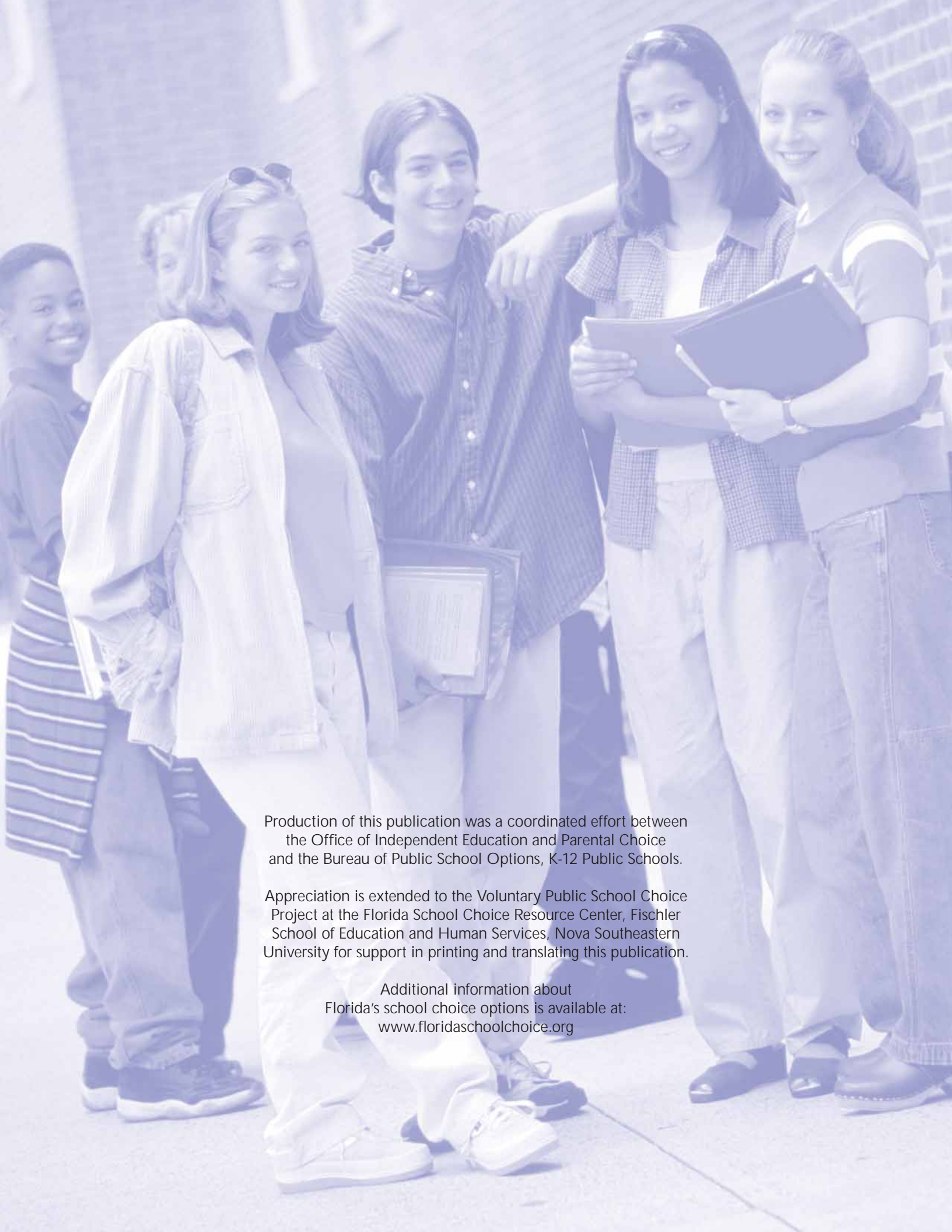
## Virtual Education

- ▶ Florida Virtual School. *FLVS Evaluation Report 2004-2005*.

An external comprehensive evaluation of the Florida Virtual School was conducted in 2004-2005 to provide information on processes and outcomes related to the school. The report includes findings of surveys with students, districts and parents.

Available at: [http://www.flvs.net/educators/annual\\_external\\_evaluations.php](http://www.flvs.net/educators/annual_external_evaluations.php)





Production of this publication was a coordinated effort between the Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice and the Bureau of Public School Options, K-12 Public Schools.

Appreciation is extended to the Voluntary Public School Choice Project at the Florida School Choice Resource Center, Fischler School of Education and Human Services, Nova Southeastern University for support in printing and translating this publication.

Additional information about Florida's school choice options is available at:  
[www.floridaschoolchoice.org](http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org)





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