



POLICY BRIEF | PCB 20-01 SCHOOL CHOICE

Florida is at the forefront of the school choice movement, giving families the power to select what is best for their child's education. However, the demand for school choice has led to growing waitlists. A proposed committee bill addresses this by expanding and improving the state's school choice scholarship programs.

PCB 20-01 SCHOOL CHOICE: revises requirements for three scholarship programs to give more families the opportunity choose the school that best meets their child's individual needs.

- The **Gardiner Scholarship (GSP)** provides students with unique abilities a scholarship that can be used to purchase approved services or products (i.e. tuition, instructional materials, curriculum, or specialized services such as speech therapy).
 - The bill allows a student with a disability who turns 3 after September 1 to be placed on the scholarship wait list, instead of making the student to wait for the next program year.
 - It also requires that any scholarship account left unused for two years be closed. Currently, an inactive account can sit for three years before it is shut down.
- The **Family Empowerment Scholarship (FES)** provides additional school choice options for Florida's working-class families. Currently, a scholarship enrollment cap of 0.25% of the state's total public school enrollment prohibits many students from participating.
 - The bill increases the scholarship enrollment cap to 1% of the state's total public school enrolment – which means more students will be able to receive the scholarship.
 - It also prioritizes new applicants from low-income households, in foster or out-of-home care, or who are children of active U.S. military members.
- The **Florida Tax Credit Scholarship (FTC)** awards scholarships to students from families with limited financial resources.
 - The bill allows a FTC scholarship student to remain eligible to participate until the he or she enrolls in public school, graduates from high school or turns 21.

Please refer to the bill text and staff analyses for further information.