

The changing face of Florida public education

In little more than a generation, the face of public education in Florida has changed dramatically. Students who once were simply assigned to a school based on where they lived are now treated to an expanding array of options as public schools customize education to meet the needs of different types of students. In this environment, the lines between public, private, district, charter, traditional and choice are forever blurred. Consider these enrollment numbers, gathered from 2008-09 state Department of Education data (unless otherwise noted):

343,004 – Open Enrollment

Students in 55 of the state's 67 districts can choose school through "open enrollment" plans.

223,023 – Choice Programs

Students choose from fundamental schools, career options, academic and special programs.

144,409 – Advanced Placement

This is the number of students taking at least one AP class.

121,930 – PreKindergarten Scholarships

Four-year-olds who attended VPK in private schools at a cost of \$313-million.

118,169 – Charter Schools

Students attended 389 private charter schools at an estimated cost of \$768-million.

71,750 – Florida Virtual School

Students completed 154,125 online semester courses at a cost of \$87-million.

66,259 – Tutoring

Low-income, struggling students are eligible for federally funded private tutoring.

60,913 – Home Schools

These students are reported to the state as receiving education at home.

35,323 – Dual Enrollment

Students in 2007-08 took college-credit classes at all 28 community colleges and some state universities.

32,848 – Career and Professional Academies

Students pursue career and professional interests in schools and programs throughout the state.

24,871 – Tax Credit Scholarships

Low-income students attended 1,002 different private schools on scholarships at a cost of \$89-million.

20,530 – McKay Scholarships

Students with disabilities attended 897 different private schools on scholarships at a cost of \$134-million.

18,111 – Guaranteed School Transfers

Students can choose a different school if they are assigned to one that fails state or federal standards.

10,207 – International Baccalaureate

Students in 2007-08 were enrolled in IB programs at 46 high, 16 middle and 10 elementary schools.

2,525 – Advanced International Certificate of Education

Students enroll in AICE programs in 11th and 12th grades.

1,072 – K-8 Virtual School

Elementary students received online instruction from a private company at a cost of \$5-million.