



Evaluation of the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program

Participation, Compliance and Test Scores in 2021-22

Carolyn D. Herrington Toby Park-Gaghan

Bodunrin Akinrinmade

**Learning Systems Institute
Florida State University**

June 2023

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report details the 2021-22 academic year evaluation for the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship (FTC) Program, as required by the 2022 Florida Statutes, s. 1002.395(9)(f). The fifteenth in a series of annual reports, this evaluation is the eighth of those conducted by the Florida State University, Learning Systems Institute (LSI). This report provides a summary of key findings, details about test score collection, 2021-22 test score results of program participants, gain scores from 2020-21 to 2021-22 of program participants, school-level average gain scores for schools with at least 30 participating students, attributes of new program participants in 2021-22, and the performance of program participants who return to Florida public schools.

Similar to the several most recent reports, this report also does not compare the performance of FTC students to public school students. Due to the difference in the tests that each group takes, such a comparison may not be valid.

LSI was designated as the independent research organization and was directed to conduct the annual evaluation of the FTC Program. This report presents data collected by LSI for students participating in the 2021-22 academic year. The main findings include:

Participating private school compliance with protocol:

- Compliance with program testing requirements was high in 2021-22. Participating private schools reported test scores for 90.3 percent of program participants in grades 3-10. This was slightly higher than the last year's score reporting (89.0 percent). Compared to the last year, the percentage of students with missing or unusable tests was somewhat higher in 2021-22 at 5.9 percent. This rate was 4.1 percent last year.

Differential program participation rates for different groups of students and families:

- Newly participating FTC students in 2021-22 were more likely to be black and less likely to be Hispanic than non-participant eligible students. Also, they were less likely to be English-language learners than were non-participants. The share of new FTC students who were free-lunch eligible was somewhat higher than the share of free-lunch eligible, non-participant students. Lastly, compared to eligible non-participant students, new FTC students had poorer test performance both in English Language Arts (ELA) and math before entering the FTC Program and they tended to come from lower-performing public schools.

- Former FTC students who returned to the public schools had poorer test performance in both reading and math during their last year in the FTC Program, compared to FTC students who remained in the FTC Program. Specifically, FTC students who returned to the public schools had a 44.3rd normal curve equivalent score in reading and a 39.0th normal curve equivalent score in math, while FTC students who remained in the program scored at the 46.9th normal curve equivalent in reading and the 41.5th normal curve equivalent in math.
- Former FTC students who returned to the public schools also had lower performance in both ELA and math during their first year back in the public schools, compared to low-income public school students who never participated in the FTC Program. Former FTC students who returned to the public schools performed at the 39.6th Florida percentile in ELA and the 39.3rd Florida percentile in math, while other subsidized meal-eligible public school students who never participated in the FTC Program performed at the 43.6th Florida percentile in ELA and the 45.1st Florida percentile in math.

Test scores of program participants, 2021-22:

- FTC students scored at the 46.9th normal curve equivalent in reading and the 42.0th normal curve equivalent in math.
- In terms of gains in math and reading from 2020-21 to 2021-22, the typical FTC student tended to maintain his or her relative position in comparison with all students nationally both in math and reading. It is important to note that the FTC students are being compared to all students nationally and not just students from low-income families.

1. BACKGROUND

This report details the 2021-22 academic year evaluation results of the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship (FTC) Program, as required by the 2022 Florida Statutes, s. 1002.395(9)(f). The fifteenth in a series of annual reports, this evaluation is the eighth of those conducted by the Florida State University Learning Systems Institute (LSI). This report provides a summary of key findings, details about test score collection, 2021-22 test score results of program participants, gain scores from 2020-21 to 2021-22, test score gains of individual schools with at least 30 or more students, attributes of new program participants in 2021-22, and the performance of program participants who return to Florida public schools. Similar to the seven previous reports, this report also does not compare the performance of FTC students to public school students. Due to the difference in the tests that each group takes, such a comparison may not be valid. While FTC students take a nationally norm-referenced test, public school students take the Florida Standards Assessments (FSA) Test. Because there is no correspondence between the FSA and the nationally norm-referenced tests that FTC students take, the independent research organization tasked with this evaluation, LSI, holds that it is not valid to make these comparisons.

Pursuant to the Florida Statutes, s. 1002.395(9)(f) that require an independent evaluation of the FTC Program, LSI has been tasked with conducting these annual evaluations of the FTC Program since the year 2014. This report provides the results of the 2021-22 academic year evaluation of the FTC Program.

2. TEST SCORE COLLECTION IN 2021-22

Data collection protocol

As mandated by the 2022 Florida Statutes, s. 1002.395(8)(b)(1), participating private schools administered a nationally norm-referenced test approved by the Florida Department of Education (FDOE). The state designates an approved list of tests from which to choose: the ACT Aspire, Comprehensive Testing Program, Curriculum Associates i-Ready Assessments, Educational Development Series, Iowa Assessments, Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, Iowa Tests of Educational Development, Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement, NWEA Measures of Academic Progress, Pivot INSPECT Summative Assessment, PSAT/NMSQT, Scantron Performance Series, Stanford Achievement Test, STAR (Math Enterprise, Reading Enterprise), TerraNova, or Wide Range Achievement Test. Alternatively, participating students may be administered the FSA in accordance with 1002.395(7)(e).

Data collection took place during the year 2021-22, in which private schools sent students' test scores to LSI. The 1,655 private schools that had participating students in grades 3 through 10 during the 2021-22 school year were contacted by LSI in fall 2021, spring 2022 and again throughout spring and summer 2022 to encourage compliance with score reporting. Schools were provided a roster of participating FTC students in grades 3 to 10, which was obtained in late fall 2021 from the Scholarship Funding Organizations.¹ From the 1,655 private schools with participating FTC students, 57,998 students were enrolled in grades 3 to 10, the

¹ This roster is based on actual payments made to schools and is thus thought to contain a more precise representation of participating students than rosters from earlier in the school year.

grades mandated for testing per the 2022 Florida Statutes, s. 1002.395(8)(b)(1). If schools had any missing or invalid student scores, they were instructed to provide an explanation backed by evidence, most commonly in the form of a notarized letter, for each missing or invalid student score.

Participating private school compliance with protocol

Score reporting in 2021-22

A majority of schools were in compliance with test score reporting for the academic year 2021-22. Regarding test score submission, most schools sent photocopied test score sheets that had been scored by the testing company. In a small number of cases where tests had been hand-scored, schools were instructed to send detailed test administration and scoring procedures. Throughout the spring and summer of 2022, LSI followed up with schools that had sent invalid test score results, including missing or incomplete test scores.

Test score sheets were sent to LSI via a secure, online score portal. As test score data was received, six data entry staff members recorded students' test scores and test information in the secure score portal. The scores were then reconciled with the original scores to ensure the highest accuracy. Test scores are deleted following one year after this double-entry and reconciliation procedure to ensure student privacy as mandated by s. 1002.22(2)(d) of the Florida Statutes.

To obtain information about prior public schooling records, the electronic database of students' test scores, including information from student scholarship

applications provided by the Scholarship Funding Organizations, was sent to the FDOE using its secure file share system. FTC student records were matched to FDOE records in order to include information about students' FSA scores, public schooling history, free/reduced lunch status, limited English proficiency, and disability status. A unique FDOE identification number replaced students' identifying information. The FDOE then returned via secure file share the matched and comparison data that were de-identified and stripped of any personal information. These de-identified data were then used for analysis.

There were 1,655 FTC participating schools with students in grades 3 through 10 in 2021-22. The majority of the FTC participating schools provided evidence of test administration consistent with the specifications of the program. One hundred and six participating schools, serving 1,254 testing-eligible students, closed or did not report scores for any participating students.² There were 57,998 students in relevant grades participating in the FTC Program in 2021-22. Valid, legible test scores were received for 52,384 FTC students, which represents 90.3 percent of all expected test scores received.

² LSI reported these non-compliant schools to the Florida Department of Education.

Table 1: Distribution of score reporting percentages: 2021-22 and prior ten years

	Academic year										
	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	20-21	21-22
Legible, valid scores received	93.5	96.4	92.3	90.0	95.9	95.6	95.8	94.0	93.3	89.0	90.3
Not enrolled at time of testing	3.5	2.1	5.1	0.8	0.4	2.2	1.5	4.0	2.9	2.4	2.1
Ineligible for testing	0.4	0.4	1.2	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.1
School closed/suspended	0.4	0.1	0.7	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.0	1.9	0.1
Student sick/absent	0.8	0.9	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.9	0.7	0.8	2.5	1.5
Missing/unusable test	0.3	0.3	1.2	7.9	2.5	1.1	1.1	0.8	2.8	4.1	5.9
Note: Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.											

The rate of legible, valid scores received was high in 2021-22. As seen in Table 1, private schools reported test scores for 90.3 percent of program participants in grades 3-10. This is slightly higher than last year's score reporting (89.0 percent). Compared to the last year, the percentage of students with missing or unusable tests was higher in 2021-22 at 5.9 percent (as compared to 4.1 percent last year), and there was a decrease in students who were sick/absent (1.5 percent as compared to 2.5 percent last year). Finally, there was a decrease in schools that were closed/suspended (0.1 percent as compared to 1.9 percent last year).

Table 2: Distribution of percent and number of students with legible, valid scores: 2021-22 and prior ten years.

Academic Year	Number of students	Number of students with legible, valid scores	Percent of students with legible, valid scores
2010-2011	17,724	16,575	93.5
2011-2012	19,284	18,583	96.4
2012-2013	26,595	24,534	92.3
2013-2014	30,036	27,020	90.0
2014-2015	36,106	34,469	95.9
2015-2016	43,270	41,372	95.3
2016-2017	55,148	52,580	95.8
2017-2018	62,429	58,716	94.0
2018-2019	60,081	56,043	93.3
2020-2021	64,835	57,700	89.0
2021-2022	57,998	52,385	90.3

In 2021-22 the number of students in relevant grades participating in the program was 57,988. This is lower compared to 2020-21, where the number of students in relevant grades participating in the program was 64,835. As can be seen in Table 2, the number of enrolled students in relevant grades remains higher in recent years compared to early years of the program.

Comparison of students with legible, valid test scores to scholarship population

Although the rate of successful score reporting was high in 2021-22 at 90.3 percent, there were 9.7 percent of students whose expected scores were not received. Thus, it was still important to examine whether the students whose test scores were successfully reported are comparable to the population enrolled in 2021-22.

For this analysis, we used data from the families' scholarship applications. We found differences between students whose test scores were successfully reported and those whose scores were not successfully reported in terms of their family incomes, their parents' marital status, their sex and race. This finding was consistent with previous years' findings. Students whose scores were successfully reported come from families with higher incomes (averaging \$40,966 versus \$37,763) and with parents more likely to be married (93.0 percent successful reporting for married parents versus 88.2 percent for non-married parents). Moreover, students whose scores were successfully reported were more likely to be white (92.9 percent reporting) compared to Black (86.0 percent reporting and Hispanic (91.2 percent reporting); and female (91.0 percent reporting) compared to male (89.7 percent reporting). We cannot make any claims about whether students with missing test scores would have had higher or lower gain scores than those with test scores available.

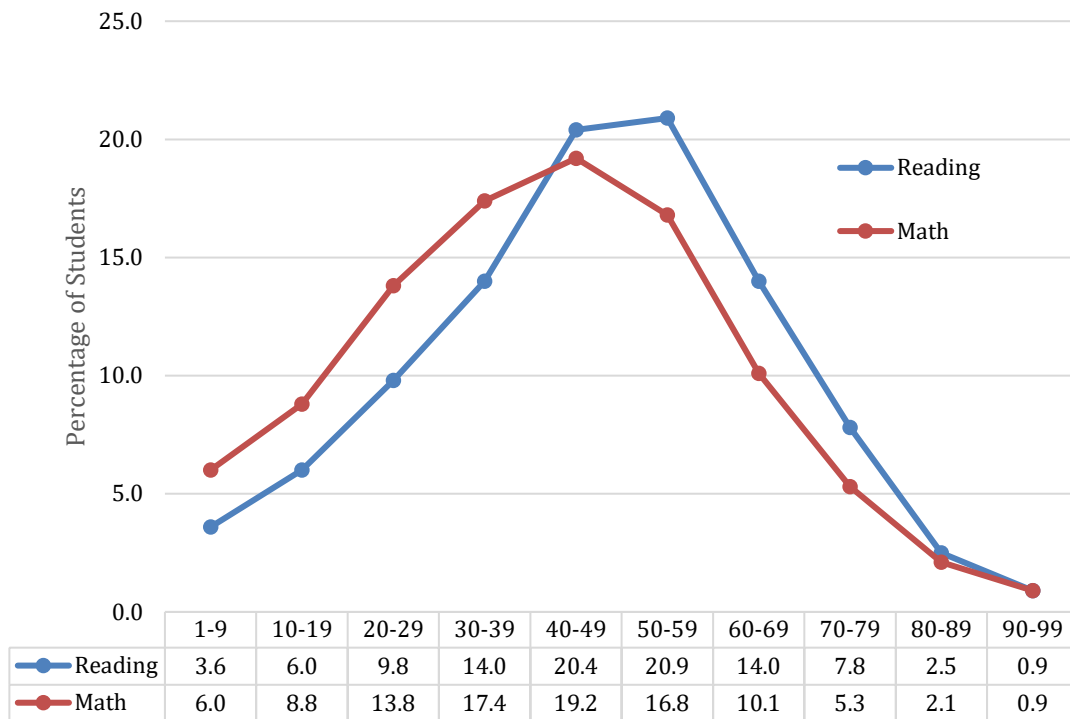
3. TEST SCORES OF FTC STUDENTS IN 2021-22

We report test scores in the form of the normal curve equivalent (NCE) scores. The NCE is a normalized standard score with a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 21.06. The scale corresponds to national percentile ranks (NPR) at 1, 50, and 99. As reported in the previous section, schools administered different nationally norm-referenced tests approved by the FDOE. Reporting test scores as normal curve equivalent scores ensure reasonable comparability across schools and program

participants. Moreover, normal curve equivalent scores convey information about students' rankings compared with normal standards.

Figure 1 presents the basic distribution of reading and math scores of FTC students participating in the program 2021-22. Most of the students were in the middle of the test score distributions. The average normal curve equivalent score for FTC students was 46.9 reading and 42.0 in math in 2021-22. In terms of corresponding national percentile rankings, the typical student in the FTC Program scored at the 46.2 national percentile in reading and the 39.2 national percentile in math.

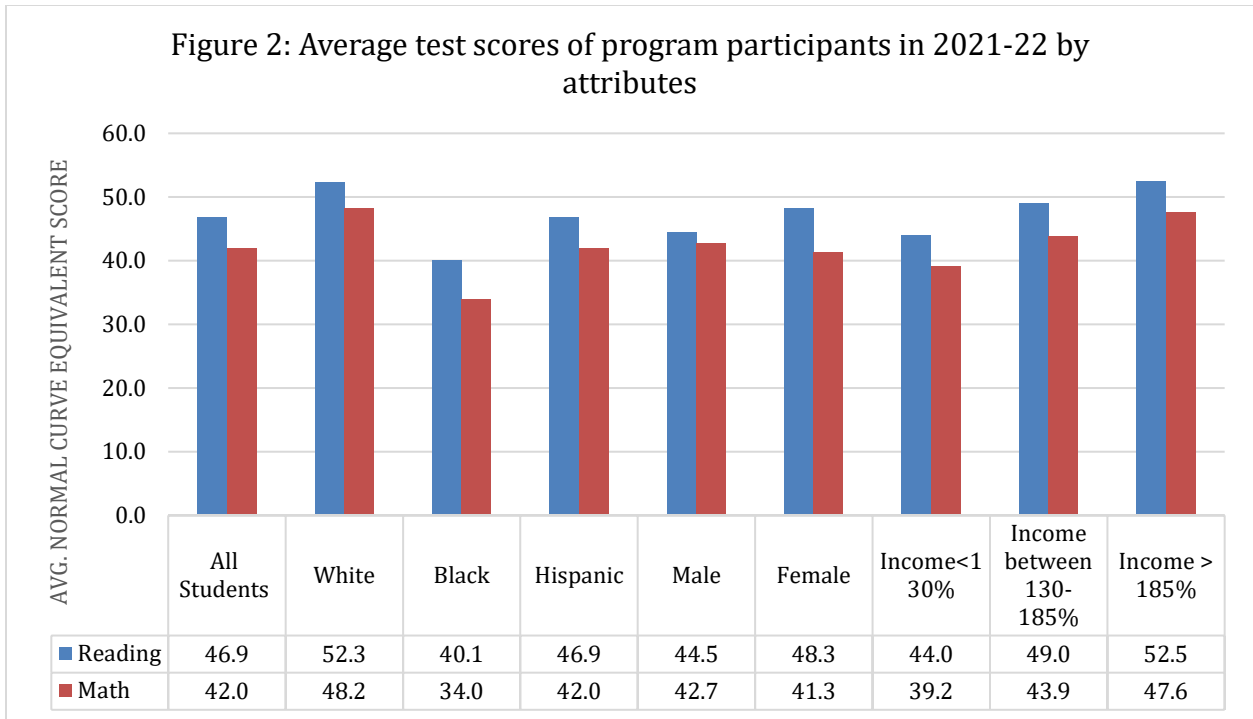
Figure 1: Distribution of normal curve equivalent scores of FTC students, 2021-22



Average test scores in 2021-22 by attributes of program participants

We provided a breakdown of test scores of 2021-22 program participants by race/ethnicity, sex, and family income. Family income is expressed in terms of likely eligibility for the federal free or reduced lunch program based upon self-reported income collected from the Scholarship Funding Organizations (SFOs).³ Students from families who have incomes below 130 percent of the federal poverty line are eligible for free school meals, while those from families with incomes between 130 and 185 percent of the poverty line are eligible for reduced-price meals.

³ LSI used data from the SFOs for these analyses.



As seen in Figure 2, white participants had higher mean scores than Black and Hispanic participants. While mean scores of males are slightly higher than that of females in math, females tended to perform better than males did in reading. Lastly, relatively higher-income families tended to score better than relatively lower-income families. In general, these trends are similar to the trends found in previous years.

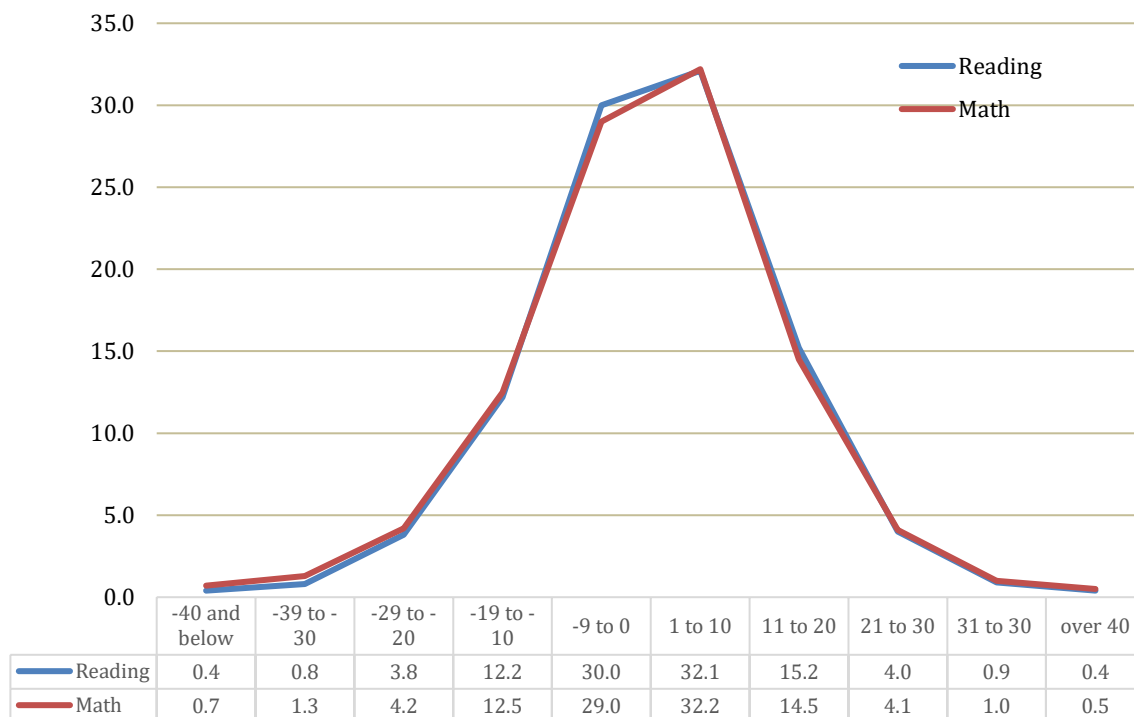
4. GAIN SCORES FROM 2020-21 TO 2021-22

Test score gains for FTC students

Test score gains for FTC students are calculated as required by the 2022 Florida Statutes, s. 1002.395(9)(f). Gain scores can be interpreted as changes in normal curve equivalent scores for program participants from 2020-21 to 2021-22 since test scores in both years are measured in terms of normal curve equivalent scores. We should note that this analysis is vulnerable to ceiling effects (where students whose scores were high in 2020-21 cannot gain much more) and floor

effects (where students whose scores were low in 2020-21 cannot lose much more ground). Ceiling and floor effects were of less concern for students whose initial score falls in the middle portions of the initial test score distributions, which was the case for the majority of students participating in the FTC Scholarship Program.

Figure 3: Distribution of test score gains for FTC students, 2020-21 to 2021-22



Gain scores were calculated for 14,349 FTC students with legible reading scores and 14,543 FTC students with legible math scores in both 2020-21 and 2021-22. Figure 3 presents the basic distribution of reading and math gain scores of FTC students participating in the program in 2021-22. While most of the students were in the middle of the gain score distributions, considerable variation in the individual student gain scores was observed. The mean gain score for FTC students was 0.7

normal curve equivalent in reading and 0.3 normal curve equivalent in math. This means that the typical FTC student tended to maintain his or her relative position in comparison with others nationwide. It is important to note that these national comparisons pertain to all students nationally, and not just students from low-income families. However, we cannot make any claims about whether the gain scores of FTC students would have been higher or lower if they were compared against only students from low-income families nationally.

School-level differences in average gain scores, 2020-21 to 2021-22

We calculated average gain scores from 2020-21 to 2021-22 at the school level as well. Individual level variation in the gain scores examined in the preceding section was composed of both individual and school level differences. By using gain scores aggregated to the school level, we examined the variation in gain scores across schools.

Figure 4: Distribution of school average gains for FTC students, 2020-21 to 2021-22

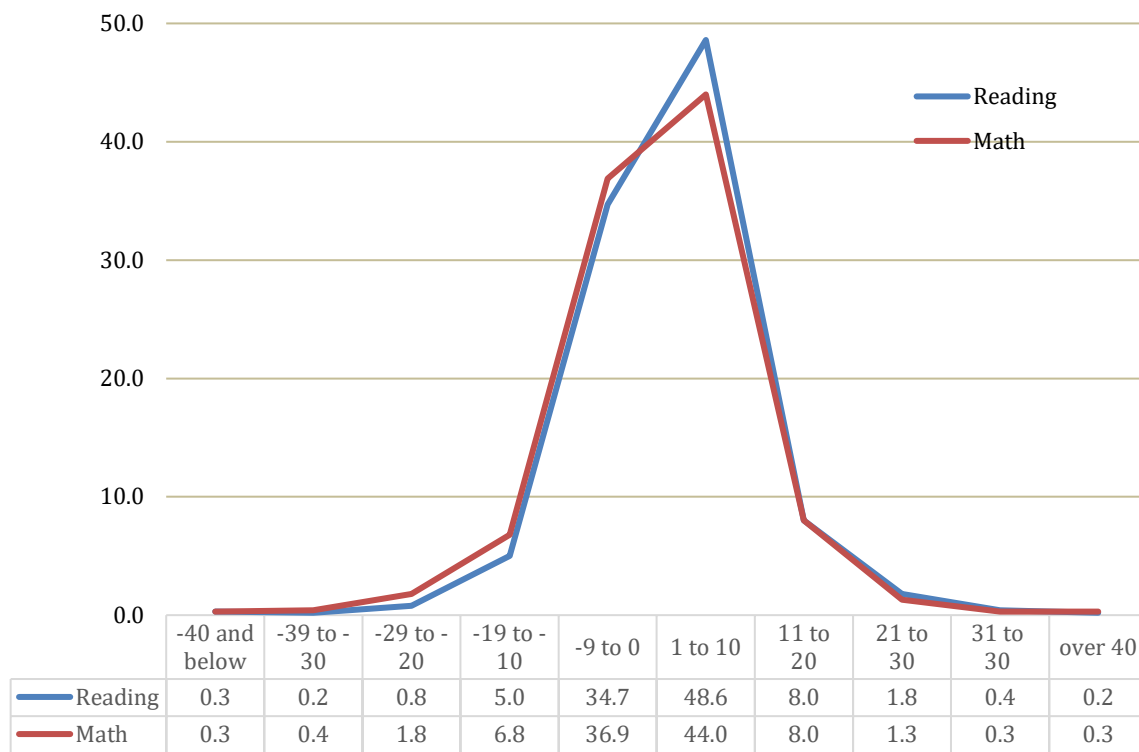
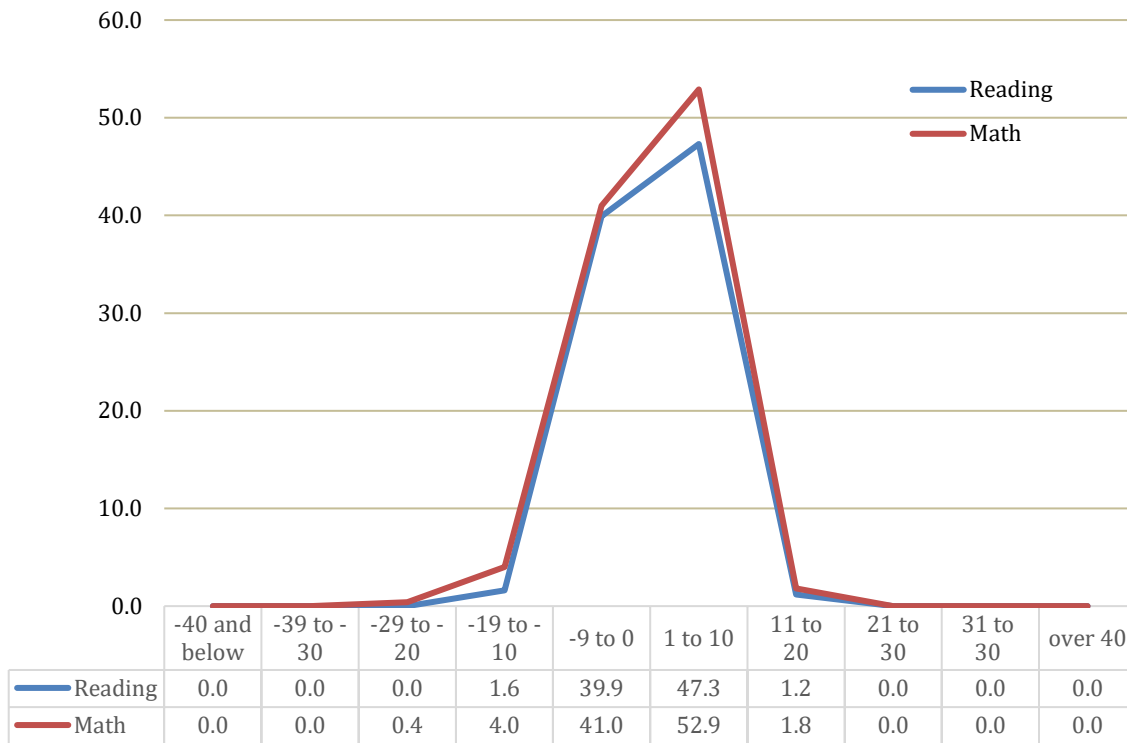


Figure 4 presents the basic distribution of school average reading and math gain scores for FTC students participating in the program in 2021-22. The average gain scores were concentrated in the middle of the distribution. Of the average gain scores, 83.3 percent of the schools had an average gain score in reading between -10 to 10 points. In math, gain scores were also concentrated in the middle of the distribution with 80.9% between -10 to 10 points.

Figure 5: Distribution of school average gains for FTC students, 2020-21 to 2021-22, schools with 10+ gain scores



It is important to note that observed between-school variation in Figure 4 doesn't reflect "true" school-level differences since noise in individual test scores is still manifested as part of the school-level average gain scores. The degree to which school-average gains reflect "true" school effects increases as the number of students in the school increases. For example, when we looked at the same distribution only including schools with 10 or more FTC students, the distribution of school-average gains became more compressed. As can be seen in Figure 5, 87.2 percent of school average gains in reading and 93.9 percent of school average gains in math were between -10 to 10 points. In Figure 4, these numbers were 83.3 percent and 80.9

percent, correspondingly. These findings suggest that there was a non-trivial contribution of the noise to the between-school variability observed in Figure 4.

Individual school average gain scores, 2020-21 to 2021-22

We calculated average gain scores for schools with 30 or more participating students as required by the relevant Florida statutes. It is important to note that average gain scores are not a definitive measure of a school's performance. They only serve as one among many other indicators of a school's performance.

The average gain score for a school in a single year can be an extremely noisy measure of a school's contribution to student test scores. As discussed in the previous section, this measure is less reliable for schools where a small number of students contribute to the average school gain score. As the number of students gets smaller in a given school, the likelihood of noise dominating the average gain score increases. Examining average gain scores only for schools with 30 or more participating students increased the likelihood of getting a more precise measure of average gain scores of individual schools.

In addition to the average gain scores for 2021-22, we also calculated average gain scores over three years from 2018-19 through 2021-22. This added extra observations for schools and hence provided more accurate average gain scores for individual schools. Moreover, school gain scores calculated by a three-year moving average of gain scores is less likely driven by "regression to the mean" compared to one-year average gain scores. Regression to the mean is the phenomenon that if a variable, such as a test score, is extreme on its first measurement, it will tend to be closer to the average on its second measurement and, if it is extreme on its second

measurement, it will tend to have been closer to the average on its first. In this context, if a school had particularly high average scores in 2020-21, the likelihood of observing a negative average gain score for that school in 2021-22 increases. On the other hand, if a school had particularly low average scores in 2020-21, the likelihood of observing a positive average gain score in 2021-22 for that school increases. Using average gain scores across the last three years balances out particularly positive and particularly negative scores over time, and thus helps to lessen the likelihood of making faulty inferences driven by regression to the mean. The risk of having faulty observed results due to regression to the mean is another reason to treat one-year average gain scores for individual schools extremely cautiously.

Average gain scores for the 97 schools that submitted valid test scores for 30 or more students in both 2020-21 and 2021-22 are reported in the Appendix. Gain scores are reported for reading, math, and combined reading and math (by averaging schools' average reading and math scores) for 2021-22 as well as for the last three years' average. Since a three-year moving average is a more reliable measure of a school's average gain scores than one year's gain scores, we based inferences on the three-year average gain scores. We identified schools with average gain scores that are statistically distinguishable from zero (at the 95 percent confidence level in a two-tailed test). We highlighted the cells if the three years average gain score—either positively or negatively—was statistically significant from zero.

When interpreting gain scores, one should keep in mind that an average gain score of zero means that, on average, students in that school are maintaining their position relative to the national distribution. It doesn't mean that students in that

school are not gaining. If a school has statistically positive average gain, it means that, on average, students in that school improved their position in the national distribution (with 95% certainty). If a school has statistically negative average gain, it means that, on average, students in that school worsened their position in the national distribution (with 95% certainty).

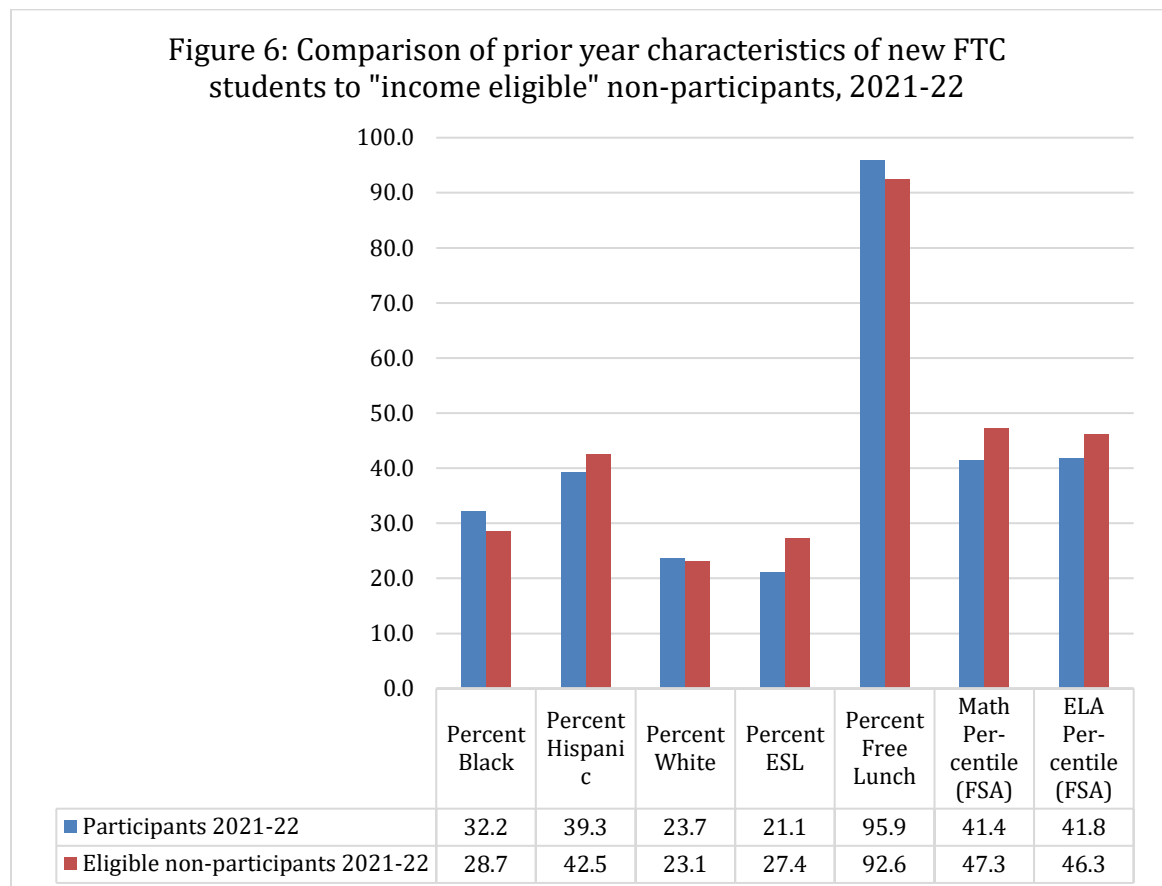
5. ATTRIBUTES OF NEW PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS IN 2021-22

Previous reports noted that newly participating FTC students tended to be lower achieving and more disadvantaged than students who were eligible for the program but did not participate. We examined attributes of new FTC students in 2021-22 in order to see whether they were systematically different from eligible non-participant students before participating in the FTC Program in 2021-22 as well.

In order to make plausible comparisons among students who spent the 2020-21 academic year in Florida public schools, we compared students who entered the FTC Scholarship Program in 2021-22 to subsidized school meal eligible students who did not enter the program in that year but stayed free or reduced-price lunch eligible in 2021-22. We excluded students with disabilities who could participate in the McKay Scholarship Program. We limited the analysis to students who had taken either a reading or math test in public school in 2020-21. We also restricted analysis to students who would be in grade 10 or below in 2021-22. With these criteria, we compared 2,831 new students in the FTC Scholarship Program in 2021-22 to 497,161 students who remained in the public schools and continued on subsidized school lunches in 2021-22. We used FDOE records for these comparisons.

Comparison of characteristics of new FTC students and non-participant students

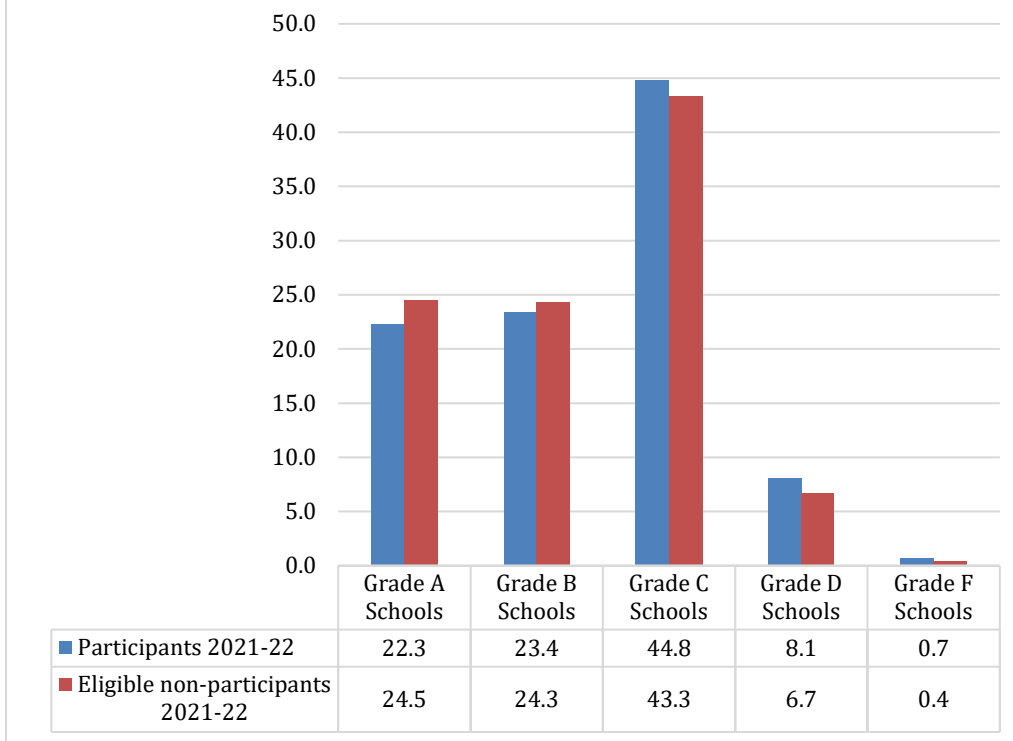
Newly participating FTC students in 2021-22 were more likely to be black and less likely to be Hispanic than students who were eligible but did not participate as seen in Figure 6. Also, they were slightly less likely to be English-language learners (ELL) than were non-participants. While both new FTC students and non-participant students were eligible for subsidized lunch in the 2021-22 school year, the share of new FTC students who were free-lunch eligible was somewhat higher than the share of free-lunch eligible, non-participant students. Lastly, compared to eligible non-participant students, new FTC students had poorer test performance both in ELA and math before entering the FTC Program.



Comparison of new FTC students and non-participant students in terms of performance of their schools in 2020-21

In Florida, each public school is assigned a school grade (A-F) based on student performance. We compared new FTC students and eligible non-participant students in terms of the performance of the schools that they attended in the 2020-21 school year. In this year, however, school grades were optional and school grade were not reported for 2019-20 for any school in Florida. As such, we use the school graders from the 2018-19 school year—the last valid year school grades were available for all schools prior to 2020-21. We observed that the percentage of new FTC students who came from high performing public schools is lower than the percentage of eligible non-participant students. On a scale of A-F, with A being the highest performing schools, 22.3 percent of new FTC students were in schools graded "A", before attending a school in the FTC Program, while 24.5 percent of eligible non-participant students were in schools graded "A" in the 2020-21 school year. At the other end of the spectrum, 8.8 percent of new FTC students were in schools graded "D" or "F", as compared with 7.1 percent of eligible non-participant students who were in schools graded "D" or "F" (see Figure 7).

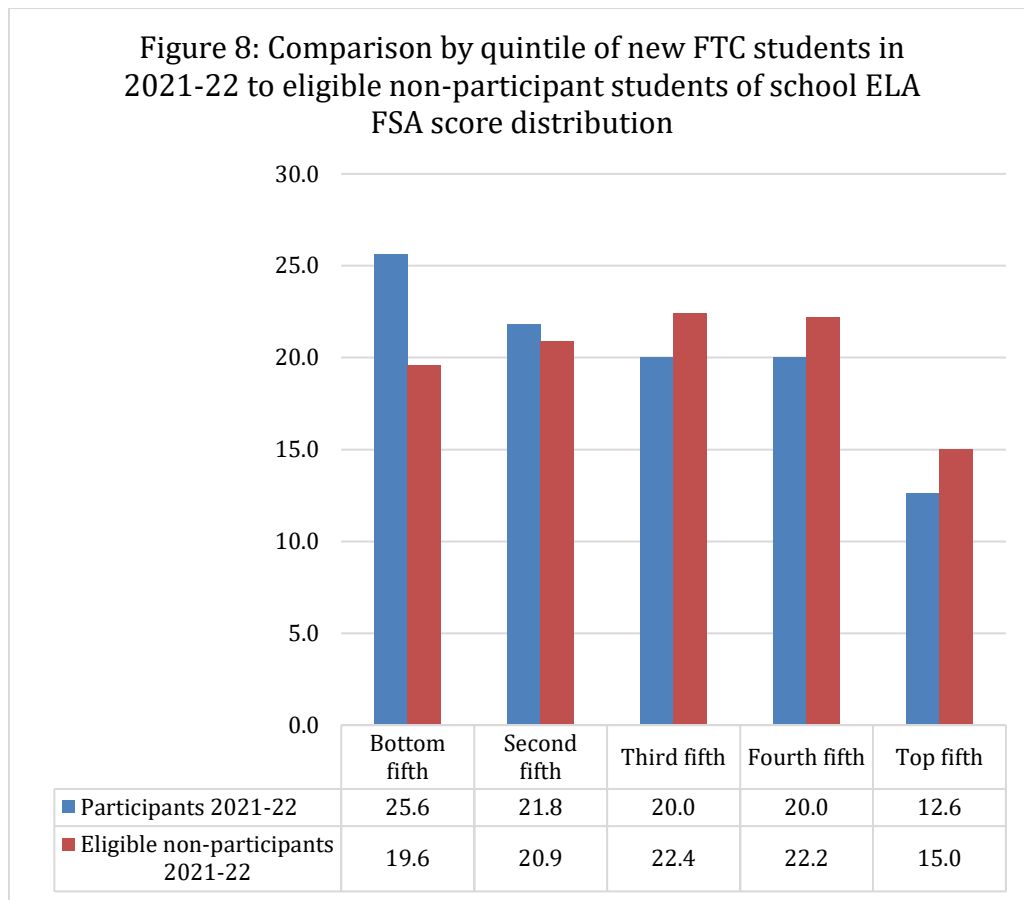
Figure 7: Comparison of the share of new FTC participants by the performance of their previously attended public school to eligible non-participants



Comparison of new FTC students and non-participant students within their schools in terms of performance in 2020-21

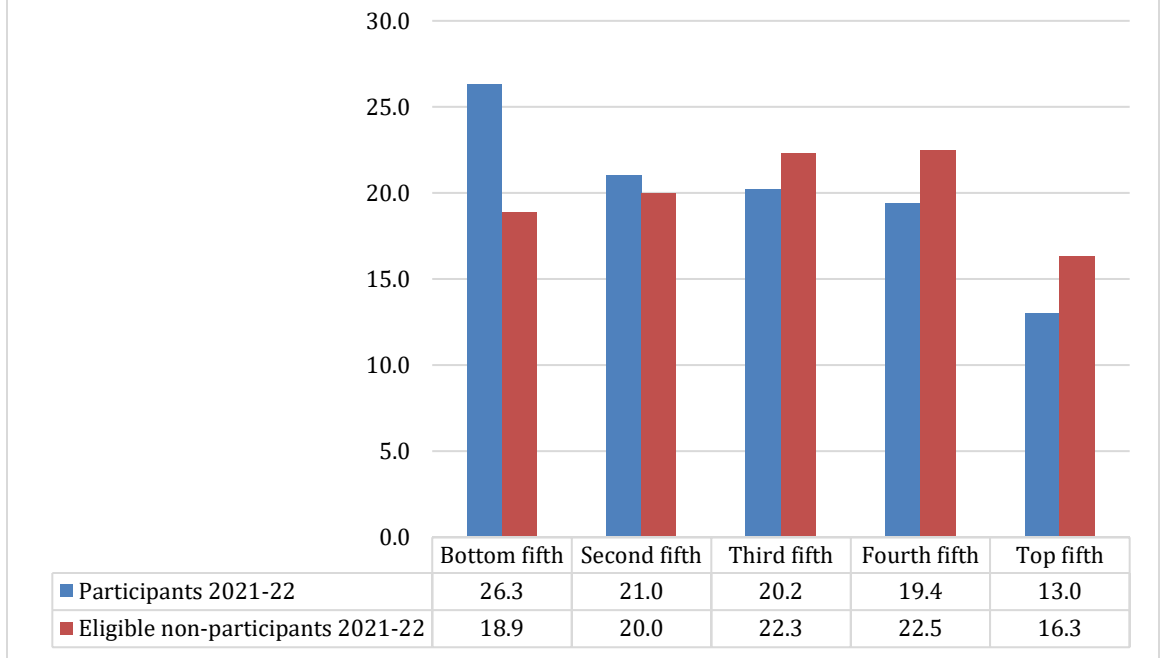
We also examined new FTC students' performance relative to eligible non-participant students in their own schools before entering the FTC Program. In the previous years, FTC students were more likely to be low performing students in their schools before attending the program regardless of the performance of the school that they were in. A similar pattern was observed this year (see Figure 8). The percentage of new FTC students in the bottom fifth of their prior public school's ELA FSA test score distribution was higher (25.6 percent) than non-participating students (19.6 percent). At the top fifth of the distribution, as observed in the previous years,

the percentage of new FTC students was lower (12.6 percent) compared to non-participating students (15.0 percent).



For the math FSA test score distribution, 26.3 percent of new FTC students were in the bottom fifth of their prior public school's math distribution, while 18.9 percent of non-participating eligible students were in the bottom fifth of the distribution. At the top of the math test score distribution, 13.0 percent of new FTC students were in the top fifth of the distribution, as compared with 16.3 percent of eligible non-participating students in the top fifth of the distribution (see Figure 9).

Figure 9: Comparison by quintile of new FTC students in 2021-22 to eligible non-participant students of school math FSA score distribution



Findings regarding the attributes of new program participants suggest that new FTC students in 2021-22 – compared to subsidized lunch eligible, non-participant students – were relatively lower-performing prior to entering the FTC Program. Moreover, they were more likely to come from low performing public schools and less likely to be high performing students in their prior public schools before attending the program.

6. PERFORMANCE OF PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS WHO RETURN TO FLORIDA

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

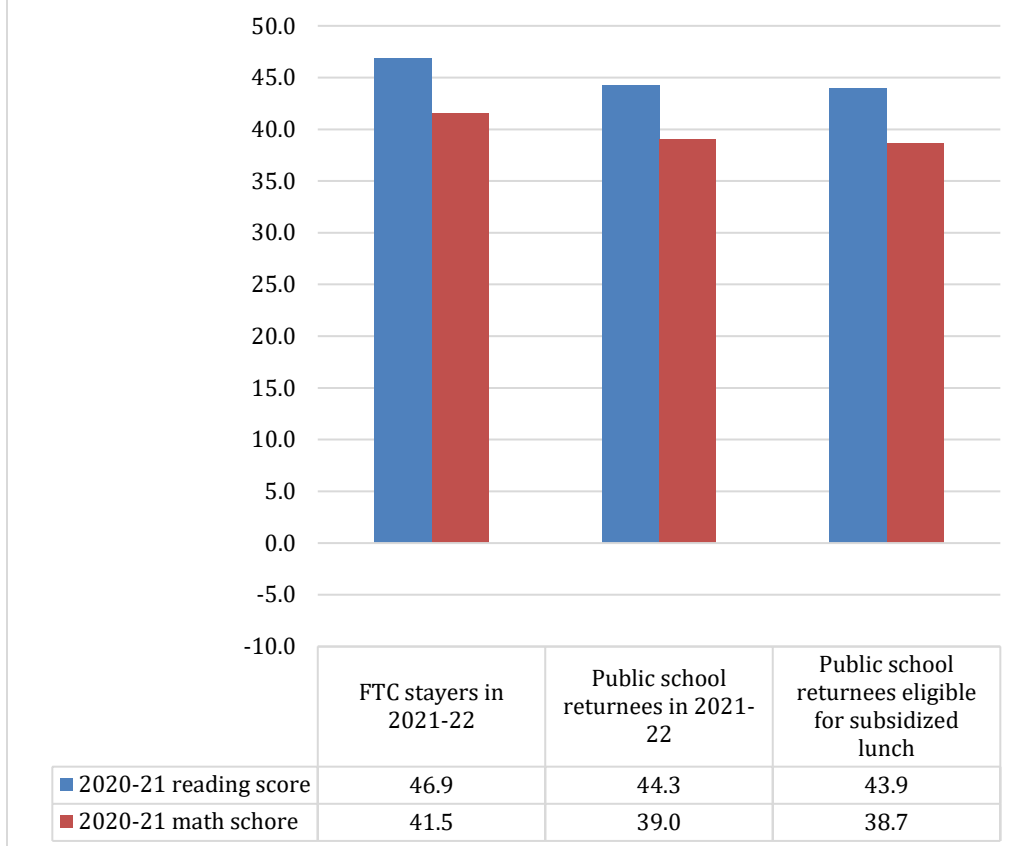
In this section, we compared FTC students who returned to public schools in 2021-22 after participating in the FTC Program to those who remained in the FTC Program in 2021-22. We also compared program returnees to Florida public school

students who never left the public schools. It is important to note that one cannot make any claims about the effects of participation in the FTC Program based on these comparisons, as there are likely factors beyond FTC participation that may influence students' performance. These comparisons only provide additional insights about the performance of the students who participate in the FTC Program.

Comparison of 2020-21 performance of public school returnees and FTC stayers in 2021-22

We first compared FTC students who returned to the public school system in Florida in 2021-22 to those who remained in private schools under the FTC Program in terms of their national norm-referenced test performance in 2020-21. The typical student who left the program scored at the 44.3rd normal curve equivalent in reading and 39.0th normal curve equivalent in math in 2020-21, while the typical FTC student who remained in the program in 2021-22 scored at the 46.9th normal curve equivalent in reading and the 41.5th normal curve equivalent in math (See Figure 10).

Figure 10: 2020-21 test score performance of students remaining in the FTC Program in 2021-22 versus those who leave the program



This finding can be an understatement of the difference between these two groups, since all students who remained in the FTC Program were still income-eligible to participate while some students who left the program may not have met eligibility criteria anymore in 2020-21. In order to have more comparable groups in terms of income range, we limited the public school returnees to those participating in the National School Lunch Program in 2021-22. We found that the average returnee who is free/reduced lunch eligible in 2021-22 scored at the 43.9th normal curve equivalent in reading and scored at the 38.7th normal curve equivalent in math in

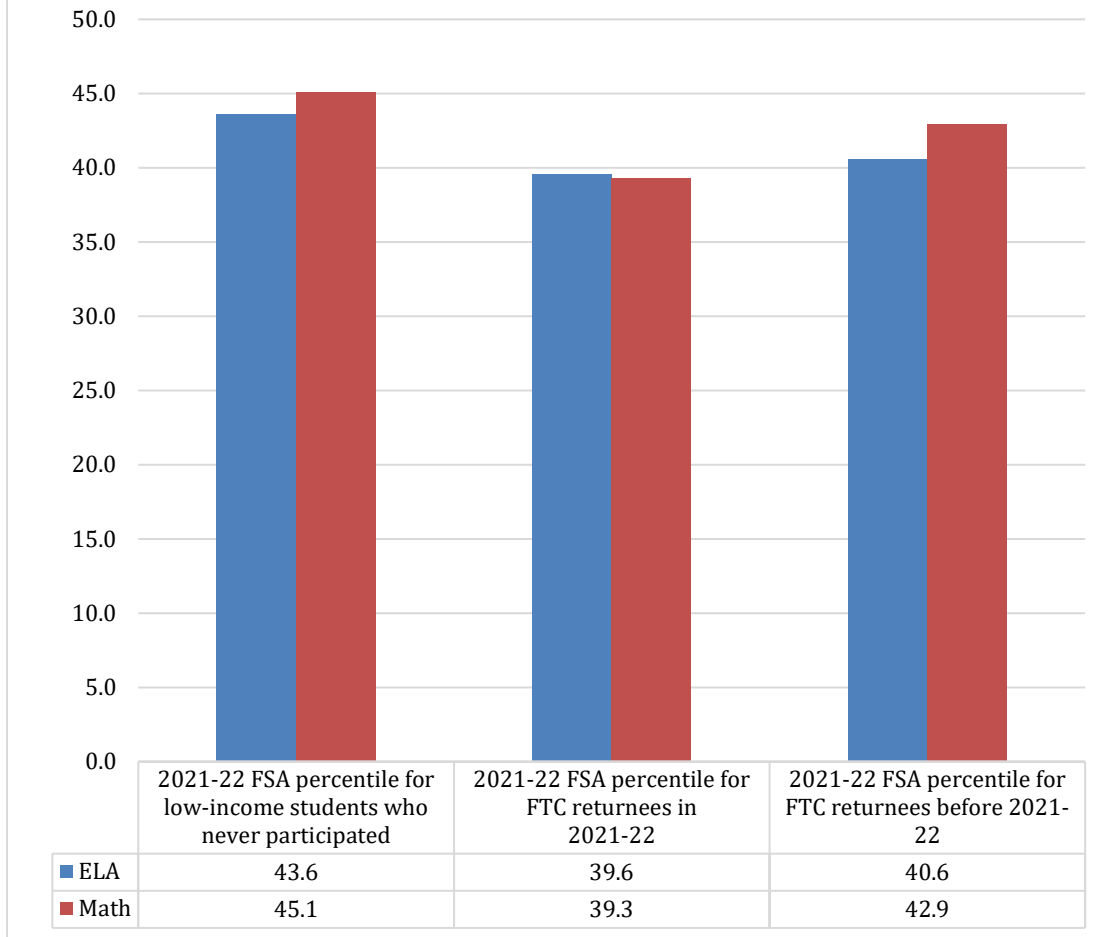
2020-21, which was somewhat lower than the performance of all returnees as expected.

These findings suggest that as lower-performing public school students are more likely to leave public schools to attend a private school under the FTC Program, FTC students who struggle in private schools are somewhat more likely to return to the public schools. This is consistent with previous years' observations.

Comparison of 2021-22 FSA performance of public school returnees and low income public school students

Next, we compared the performance of FTC students who returned to the public schools to the performance of subsidized meal-eligible public school students who never participated in the FTC Program. As can be seen in Figure 11, FTC Program participants who return to the public schools performed worse on the FSA than did other subsidized meal recipients who never participated in the FTC Program. The difference is particularly large for FTC returnees in 2021-22, who performed at the 39.6th Florida percentile in ELA and 39.3rd Florida percentile in math while public school students who never participated in the FTC Program performed at the 43.6th Florida percentile in ELA and 45.1st Florida percentile in math in 2021-22.

Figure 11: 2021-22 FSA performance of FTC returning to public schools in Florida



As we mentioned before, based on these comparisons one cannot make any claims about the effects of participation in the FTC Program since evidence suggests that FTC students who returned to the public schools in 2021-22 and public school students who never participated in the FTC Program represent two different populations of students. Findings indicated that poorly performing public school students are more likely to participate in the program in the first place. Moreover, FTC students who return to public schools tend to be those who are performing worse than the average FTC student. Based on these observations, we cannot associate poor

performance of FTC returnees with possible negative effects of the FTC Program on participating students.

7. CONCLUSION

This report shares findings on the compliance and performance of private schools that participated in the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program in 2021-22. Compliance with program testing requirements was high in 2021-22. Private schools reported test scores for 90.3 percent of program participants in grades 3-10.

FTC students scored at the 46.9th normal curve equivalent in reading and the 42.0th normal curve equivalent in math in 2021-22. In terms of gains in math and reading from 2020-21 to 2021-22, the typical FTC student tended to maintain their relative position in comparison with all students nationally both in math and reading. It is important to note that these comparisons pertain to all students nationally, and not just students from low-income families. However, we cannot make any claims about whether gain scores of FTC students would have been higher or lower if they were compared against only students from low-income families nationally.

As in prior years, lower-performing public school students eligible for the FTC Program were more likely to attend a private school under the FTC Program and FTC students who struggle in these schools were more likely to return to the public schools. FTC students who returned to the public schools in Florida had substantially lower test scores than other subsidized meal-eligible public school students who never participated in the FTC Program. However, based on the available evidence, poor performance of FTC returnees cannot be associated with possible negative

effects of the FTC Program on participating students. Given selection of students into and out of the FTC Program, the former FTC students who returned to public schools would have been expected to perform more poorly than the typical low-income public school students.

APPENDIX

Appendix Table: Average gain scores in 2021-22 and three-year moving average of gain scores from 2018-19 to 2021-22 for schools with 30 or more students with gain scores in 2021-22.

Notes: Cells report average gain scores. We shade cells where the difference between an individual school's three-year moving average gain score is statistically significant from zero (at the 95 percent confidence interval).

These school-level gain scores are not intended to be a comprehensive analysis of school performance.

As noted in the main body of this report, average gain scores are not a definitive measure of a school's performance. They only serve as one among many other indicators of a school's performance. The average gain score for a school in a single year can be an extremely noisy measure of a school's contribution to student test scores. This measure is less reliable for schools where a small number of students contribute to the average school gain score. As the number of students gets smaller in a given school, the likelihood of noise dominating the average gain score increases. For this reason, we also compute the three-year moving average gain score. However, when interpreting gain scores, one should keep in mind that an average gain score of zero means that, on average, students in that school are maintaining their position in the national distribution. It doesn't mean that students in that school are not gaining.

SCHOOL NAME	CITY	NUMBER OF GAIN SCORES OBSERVED		AVERAGE GAIN SCORE IN 2021-22			AVERAGE GAIN SCORE FROM 2018-19 TO 2021-22		
		2021-22 SCHOOL YEAR	BETWEEN 2018-19 AND 2021-22	READING+ MATH COMBINED	READING	MATH	READING+ MATH COMBINED	READING	MATH
ABUNDANT LIFE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY	MARGATE	62	134	1.25	-0.21	2.70	-0.37	-1.91	1.16
ADVANCE ACHIEVERS ACADEMY	FLORIDA CITY	56	125	1.48	1.42	1.54	1.25	4.30	-1.80

Appendix continued

		NUMBER OF GAIN SCORES OBSERVED		AVERAGE GAIN SCORE IN 2021-22			AVERAGE GAIN SCORE FROM 2018-19 TO 2021-22		
SCHOOL NAME	CITY	2021-22 SCHOOL YEAR	BETWEEN 2018-19 AND 2021- 22	READING+ MATH COMBINED	READING	MATH	READING+ MATH COMBINED	READING	MATH
AMERICAN YOUTH ACADEMY INC.	TAMPA	76	207	-1.79	-1.93	-1.65	1.58	1.07	2.08
AOPKA CHRISTIAN LEARNING ACADEMY INC.	AOPKA	35	43	-1.87	-2.85	-0.90	1.49	0.66	2.32
ARCHBISHOP EDWARD A. MCCARTHY HIGH SCHOOL	SOUTHWEST RANCHES	40	143	-0.98	-1.20	-0.76	-2.57	0.33	-5.46
ATLANTIC CHRISTIAN ACADEMY OF THE PALM BEAC	WEST PALM BEACH	45	105	-0.80	-0.43	-1.17	0.20	-0.41	0.82
BETH JACOB HIGH SCHOOL INC.	NORTH MIAMI BEACH	42	134	-2.24	-1.37	-3.12	-4.17	-1.86	-6.48
BISHOP KENNY HIGH SCHOOL	JACKSONVILLE	41	155	-5.52	-5.00	-6.03	-6.01	-2.84	-9.17
BISHOP MOORE CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL	ORLANDO	54	156	-4.64	-3.05	-6.22	-7.18	-3.93	-10.43

Appendix continued

		NUMBER OF GAIN SCORES OBSERVED		AVERAGE GAIN SCORE IN 2021-22			AVERAGE GAIN SCORE FROM 2018-19 TO 2021-22		
SCHOOL NAME	CITY	2021-22 SCHOOL YEAR	BETWEEN 2018-19 AND 2021- 22	READING+ MATH COMBINED	READING	MATH	READING+ MATH COMBINED	READING	MATH
BOCA RATON CHRISTIAN SCHOOL	BOCA RATON	36	107	0.23	2.73	-2.27	-0.82	0.62	-2.25
BRADENTON CHRISTIAN SCHOOL	BRADENTON	37	79	-2.90	-0.37	-5.43	-4.34	-1.31	-7.37
BROWARD JUNIOR ACADEMY	PLANTATION	31	80	0.03	3.37	-3.31	-0.72	3.11	-4.55
CALVARY CHAPEL ACADEMY	WEST MELBOURNE	42	67	1.55	1.00	2.10	0.03	-2.25	2.31
CALVARY CHRISTIAN ACADEMY	FT LAUDERDALE	40	197	-2.90	-3.11	-2.69	-0.17	1.77	-2.11
CALVARY CHRISTIAN ACADEMY	ORMOND BEACH	45	116	-2.67	-3.78	-1.56	1.89	1.74	2.05
CALVARY CITY CHRISTIAN ACADEMY PRESCHOOL	ORLANDO	55	145	3.36	2.22	4.49	1.42	0.44	2.40

Appendix continued

		NUMBER OF GAIN SCORES OBSERVED		AVERAGE GAIN SCORE IN 2021-22			AVERAGE GAIN SCORE FROM 2018-19 TO 2021-22		
SCHOOL NAME	CITY	2021-22 SCHOOL YEAR	BETWEEN 2018-19 AND 2021- 22	READING+ MATH COMBINED	READING	MATH	READING+ MATH COMBINED	READING	MATH
CEDAR CREEK CHRISTIAN SCHOOL	JACKSONVILLE	31	76	0.30	-3.96	4.57	2.51	-0.65	5.68
CENTRAL BAPTIST CHRISTIAN SCHOOL	BRANDON	35	68	-9.40	-8.43	-10.37	-4.54	-1.60	-7.47
CENTRAL POINTE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY	KISSIMMEE	33	65	2.28	2.49	2.08	-0.40	2.74	-3.55
CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS HIGH SCHOOL	MIAMI	36	125	-4.12	-3.62	-4.61	-1.03	-1.79	-0.27
COLONIAL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL	HOMESTEAD	42	93	1.90	3.77	0.04	-0.57	1.30	-2.44
COMMUNITY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL	BRADENTON	38	64	0.93	1.51	0.35	2.47	2.66	2.27
DIVINE SAVIOR LUTHERAN ACADEMY	DORAL	40	71	-0.79	-4.06	2.48	-1.11	-4.40	2.18

Appendix continued

		NUMBER OF GAIN SCORES OBSERVED		AVERAGE GAIN SCORE IN 2021-22			AVERAGE GAIN SCORE FROM 2018-19 TO 2021-22		
SCHOOL NAME	CITY	2021-22 SCHOOL YEAR	BETWEEN 2018-19 AND 2021- 22	READING+ MATH COMBINED	READING	MATH	READING+ MATH COMBINED	READING	MATH
EASTLAND CHRISTIAN SCHOOL	ORLANDO	39	105	-1.76	-2.94	-0.57	-2.59	-0.56	-4.62
EDISON PRIVATE SCHOOL	HIALEAH	103	324	3.99	1.87	6.12	-2.75	0.85	-6.36
FAITH CHRISTIAN ACADEMY	ORLANDO	75	170	-1.66	-1.61	-1.71	-0.28	-0.17	-0.38
FIRST ASSEMBLY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL DAYCARE	OCALA	51	134	-1.79	-0.92	-2.66	0.50	0.08	0.92
FIRST BAPTIST CHRISTIAN ACADEMY	BUNNELL	33	84	-3.98	-4.19	-3.77	-1.99	1.87	-5.86
FIRST COAST CHRISTIAN SCHOOL	JACKSONVILLE	69	147	0.30	0.98	-0.39	-2.06	0.68	-4.81
FLORIDA CHRISTIAN SCHOOL	MIAMI	43	103	-1.43	-6.30	3.43	-5.46	-6.00	-4.91

Appendix continued

		NUMBER OF GAIN SCORES OBSERVED		AVERAGE GAIN SCORE IN 2021-22			AVERAGE GAIN SCORE FROM 2018-19 TO 2021-22		
SCHOOL NAME	CITY	2021-22 SCHOOL YEAR	BETWEEN 2018-19 AND 2021- 22	READING+ MATH COMBINED	READING	MATH	READING+ MATH COMBINED	READING	MATH
FOREST LAKE EDUCATION CENTER	LONGWOOD	46	112	-0.62	-1.62	0.38	1.40	-0.63	3.43
GOOD SHEPHERD CATHOLIC SCHOOL	ORLANDO	35	96	-1.29	0.20	-2.78	1.13	2.29	-0.03
GREATER MIAMI ACADEMY	MIAMI	41	132	-1.69	-2.31	-1.07	1.85	0.33	3.38
GUARDIAN CATHOLIC SCHOOL	JACKSONVILLE	42	98	1.29	1.95	0.63	3.13	3.84	2.42
HEBREW ACADEMY COMMUNITY SCHOOL	MARGATE	31	107	3.20	4.81	1.60	2.24	2.76	1.73
HERITAGE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL	KISSIMMEE	67	184	3.77	5.48	2.06	-1.04	1.86	-3.94
HERITAGE PREPARATORY SCHOOL	ORLANDO	47	133	3.66	4.57	2.75	-2.88	-0.81	-4.95

Appendix continued

		NUMBER OF GAIN SCORES OBSERVED		AVERAGE GAIN SCORE IN 2021-22			AVERAGE GAIN SCORE FROM 2018-19 TO 2021-22		
SCHOOL NAME	CITY	2021-22 SCHOOL YEAR	BETWEEN 2018-19 AND 2021- 22	READING+ MATH COMBINED	READING	MATH	READING+ MATH COMBINED	READING	MATH
HIGHLANDS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY	POMPANO BEACH	51	140	-0.37	0.64	-1.37	-3.50	-0.39	-6.61
HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN SCHOOL	NORTH MIAMI	59	126	0.50	0.59	0.42	3.99	4.84	3.14
HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC SCHOOL	NORTH MIAMI	37	94	3.79	3.39	4.20	2.70	4.04	1.36
HOPE ACADEMY	HOMESTEAD	66	189	4.90	6.06	3.74	-3.09	-0.82	-5.35
HOREB CHRISTIAN SCHOOL	HIALEAH	41	118	2.37	2.82	1.91	-2.85	1.34	-7.03
ICON PREPARATORY SCHOOL	TAMPA	39	38	0.49	-0.27	1.25	0.94	3.35	-1.47
INDIAN ROCKS CHRISTIAN SCHOOL	LARGO	34	114	-4.00	-3.95	-4.05	-3.28	-1.40	-5.15

Appendix continued

		NUMBER OF GAIN SCORES OBSERVED		AVERAGE GAIN SCORE IN 2021-22			AVERAGE GAIN SCORE FROM 2018-19 TO 2021-22		
SCHOOL NAME	CITY	2021-22 SCHOOL YEAR	BETWEEN 2018-19 AND 2021- 22	READING+ MATH COMBINED	READING	MATH	READING+ MATH COMBINED	READING	MATH
KIDS LEARNING CENTER OF SOUTH DADE III	MIAMI	40	90	-4.65	-6.70	-2.60	-2.29	-2.53	-2.06
KINGSWAY CHRISTIAN ACADEMY	ORLANDO	38	129	0.12	0.01	0.23	-6.04	-2.57	-9.51
LA PROGRESIVA PRESBYTERIAN SCHOOL INC.	MIAMI	131	404	-5.87	-0.80	-10.94	-2.02	-0.67	-3.37
LANDMARK CHRISTIAN SCHOOL	HAINES CITY	42	61	15.46	11.78	19.14	6.84	5.54	8.13
LIFE ASSEMBLY OF GOD LIFE ACADEMY	KISSIMMEE	37	111	-2.94	-0.88	-5.00	-4.99	-1.86	-8.12
LINCOLN-MARTI COMMUNITY AGENCY 10	MIAMI	46	118	-5.01	-5.64	-4.39	-0.80	3.55	-5.15
LINCOLN-MARTI COMMUNITY AGENCY 17	HIALEAH	40	109	-4.37	1.79	-10.53	0.75	2.82	-1.32

Appendix continued

		NUMBER OF GAIN SCORES OBSERVED		AVERAGE GAIN SCORE IN 2021-22			AVERAGE GAIN SCORE FROM 2018-19 TO 2021-22		
SCHOOL NAME	CITY	2021-22 SCHOOL YEAR	BETWEEN 2018-19 AND 2021- 22	READING+ MATH COMBINED	READING	MATH	READING+ MATH COMBINED	READING	MATH
LINCOLN-MARTI COMMUNITY AGENCY 28	MIAMI	38	125	0.46	-2.14	3.06	-1.06	0.85	-2.97
LUBAVITCH EDUCATIONAL CENTER INC.	MIAMI	93	282	-1.99	-1.14	-2.84	-4.56	-2.85	-6.28
MIAMI UNION ACADEMY	NORTH MIAMI	45	137	0.85	1.01	0.69	0.21	2.81	-2.39
MONSIGNOR EDWARD PACE HIGH SCHOOL	MIAMI GARDENS	81	295	-3.09	-4.99	-1.19	-5.10	-3.76	-6.44
MORNINGSIDE ACADEMY	PORT ST. LUCIE	38	90	3.09	2.03	4.15	-3.89	-2.08	-5.69
MUSLIM ACADEMY OF GREATER ORLANDO	ORLANDO	33	61	-1.16	-2.44	0.12	-3.27	-1.92	-4.61
NATIVITY CATHOLIC SCHOOL	BRANDON	31	90	0.80	0.08	1.52	-2.88	-3.36	-2.39

Appendix continued

		NUMBER OF GAIN SCORES OBSERVED		AVERAGE GAIN SCORE IN 2021-22			AVERAGE GAIN SCORE FROM 2018-19 TO 2021-22		
SCHOOL NAME	CITY	2021-22 SCHOOL YEAR	BETWEEN 2018-19 AND 2021- 22	READING+ MATH COMBINED	READING	MATH	READING+ MATH COMBINED	READING	MATH
NATIVITY SCHOOL	HOLLYWOOD	39	99	2.22	1.52	2.91	2.96	2.84	3.09
NORTH FLORIDA CHRISTIAN SCHOOL	TALLAHASSEE	45	86	10.41	6.62	14.20	1.51	0.82	2.19
NORTHWEST CHRISTIAN ACADEMY	MIAMI	30	55	-0.98	0.25	-2.21	-2.57	-2.07	-3.06
NUR UL-ISLAM ACADEMY	COOPER CITY	40	137	-1.35	-3.61	0.91	-3.01	-0.43	-5.59
OASIS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY	WINTER HAVEN	37	89	-5.35	-2.92	-7.77	-5.04	-0.84	-9.23
OCALA CHRISTIAN ACADEMY	OCALA	47	128	-0.07	-3.43	3.28	-3.10	-5.24	-0.97
OLD PLANK CHRISTIAN ACADEMY	JACKSONVILLE	32	64	-5.21	-7.48	-2.94	0.20	1.43	-1.04

Appendix continued

		NUMBER OF GAIN SCORES OBSERVED		AVERAGE GAIN SCORE IN 2021-22			AVERAGE GAIN SCORE FROM 2018-19 TO 2021-22		
SCHOOL NAME	CITY	2021-22 SCHOOL YEAR	BETWEEN 2018-19 AND 2021- 22	READING+ MATH COMBINED	READING	MATH	READING+ MATH COMBINED	READING	MATH
ORLANDO CHRISTIAN PREP	ORLANDO	43	103	-0.28	1.32	-1.88	-1.05	1.08	-3.18
OUR LADY QUEEN OF MARTYRS	FORT LAUDERDALE	31	80	4.34	2.81	5.87	1.86	4.11	-0.39
PARK AVENUE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY	TITUSVILLE	36	92	1.77	0.45	3.10	-2.16	-1.12	-3.20
PARSONS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY	JACKSONVILLE	40	20	3.80	2.01	5.60	8.59	4.34	12.84
REAL LIFE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY	CLERMONT	30	74	3.22	2.64	3.80	-0.93	1.97	-3.82
REBORN CHRISTIAN ACADEMY	KISSIMMEE	35	81	-3.87	0.08	-7.82	6.39	8.79	3.99
RESURRECTION CATHOLIC SCHOOL	LAKELAND	31	45	4.04	6.32	1.75	4.90	6.60	3.20

Appendix continued

		NUMBER OF GAIN SCORES OBSERVED		AVERAGE GAIN SCORE IN 2021-22			AVERAGE GAIN SCORE FROM 2018-19 TO 2021-22		
SCHOOL NAME	CITY	2021-22 SCHOOL YEAR	BETWEEN 2018-19 AND 2021- 22	READING+ MATH COMBINED	READING	MATH	READING+ MATH COMBINED	READING	MATH
SACRED HEART CATHOLIC SCHOOL	PINELLAS PARK	38	102	-0.42	0.02	-0.86	-3.29	-0.78	-5.80
SAINT ANDREW CATHOLIC SCHOOL	CORAL SPRINGS	31	80	5.24	1.24	9.23	0.95	1.29	0.61
SAINT BRENDAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	MIAMI	45	116	2.65	1.62	3.68	2.10	1.57	2.62
SAINT BRENDAN HIGH SCHOOL	MIAMI	46	163	-3.89	0.09	-7.87	-5.18	-0.13	-10.23
SAINT CHARLES BORROMEIO PARISH SCHOOL	ORLANDO	31	60	2.21	3.86	0.56	-1.29	0.07	-2.65
SAINT JAMES CATHOLIC SCHOOL	MIAMI	70	179	4.70	3.64	5.75	2.25	4.03	0.46
SAINT JOHN VIANNEY SCHOOL	ORLANDO	43	85	-0.34	-1.24	0.55	-0.04	2.56	-2.64

Appendix continued

		NUMBER OF GAIN SCORES OBSERVED		AVERAGE GAIN SCORE IN 2021-22			AVERAGE GAIN SCORE FROM 2018-19 TO 2021-22		
SCHOOL NAME	CITY	2021-22 SCHOOL YEAR	BETWEEN 2018-19 AND 2021- 22	READING+ MATH COMBINED	READING	MATH	READING+ MATH COMBINED	READING	MATH
SAINT JOSEPH CATHOLIC SCHOOL	WINTER HAVEN	35	79	2.12	2.50	1.73	3.17	2.76	3.59
SAINT JOSEPH PARISH SCHOOL	TAMPA	32	84	-2.32	-2.20	-2.45	-1.04	-1.25	-0.84
SAINT MARYS CATHEDRAL	MIAMI	65	162	3.39	2.55	4.22	0.96	2.56	-0.64
SAINT MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL	MIAMI	41	88	5.00	5.79	4.21	3.46	7.16	-0.24
SEFFNER CHRISTIAN ACADEMY	SEFFNER	40	68	-6.69	-4.31	-9.08	-9.24	-7.47	-11.01
SEVEN RIVERS CHRISTIAN SCHOOL	LECANTO	39	71	-3.29	-2.74	-3.84	-1.40	-3.25	0.46
SONSHINE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY	FT MYERS	36	76	0.53	1.75	-0.69	-5.34	-5.03	-5.65

Appendix continued

		NUMBER OF GAIN SCORES OBSERVED		AVERAGE GAIN SCORE IN 2021-22			AVERAGE GAIN SCORE FROM 2018-19 TO 2021-22		
SCHOOL NAME	CITY	2021-22 SCHOOL YEAR	BETWEEN 2018-19 AND 2021- 22	READING+ MATH COMBINED	READING	MATH	READING+ MATH COMBINED	READING	MATH
SOUTH ORLANDO CHRISTIAN ACADEMY	ORLANDO	55	121	1.19	2.86	-0.48	-2.23	-2.55	-1.91
SOUTHLAND CHRISTIAN SCHOOL	KISSIMMEE	34	109	0.69	1.33	0.05	-1.18	1.30	-3.66
SUNFLOWERS ACADEMY	MIAMI	52	174	6.53	7.67	5.40	-1.47	1.80	-4.73
SUNRISE ACADEMY	ORANGE CITY	30	56	-0.69	0.09	-1.46	0.70	3.88	-2.48
THE POTTER'S HOUSE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY ELEM	JACKSONVILLE	35	109	1.10	-0.37	2.57	1.54	4.72	-1.65
TRINITY CHRISTIAN ACADEMY	JACKSONVILLE	82	219	3.42	0.19	6.64	-1.02	1.09	-3.14
TRINITY CHRISTIAN ACADEMY	DELTONA	74	188	2.14	1.80	2.48	0.98	1.99	-0.04

Appendix continued

		NUMBER OF GAIN SCORES OBSERVED		AVERAGE GAIN SCORE IN 2021-22			AVERAGE GAIN SCORE FROM 2018-19 TO 2021-22		
SCHOOL NAME	CITY	2021-22 SCHOOL YEAR	BETWEEN 2018-19 AND 2021- 22	READING+ MATH COMBINED	READING	MATH	READING+ MATH COMBINED	READING	MATH
UNIVERSAL ACADEMY OF FLORIDA	TAMPA	68	155	5.20	3.42	6.98	-0.25	0.90	-1.41
UNIVERSITY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL	JACKSONVILLE	47	114	1.97	1.45	2.49	-1.44	-1.36	-1.51
WESTWOOD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL	MIAMI	48	127	-0.03	0.28	-0.34	-2.74	0.01	-5.49
WINTER HAVEN CHRISTIAN SCHOOL	WINTER HAVEN	66	139	7.37	4.92	9.82	-0.92	0.32	-2.15