

# Pennsylvania State Board of Private Licensed Schools

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2020-2021 Academic Year  
Annual Report on Private Licensed Schools

Submitted to the Education Committees of the  
Pennsylvania Senate and House of Representatives  
by the State Board of Private Licensed Schools

September 2022



**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA**  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

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## **2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT ON PRIVATE LICENSED SCHOOLS IN PENNSYLVANIA**

### **Introduction**

The Private Licensed Schools Act (Act 174 of 1986) created the State Board of Private Licensed Schools as an administrative board in the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Three previous boards regulating trade schools, business schools, and correspondence schools were merged.

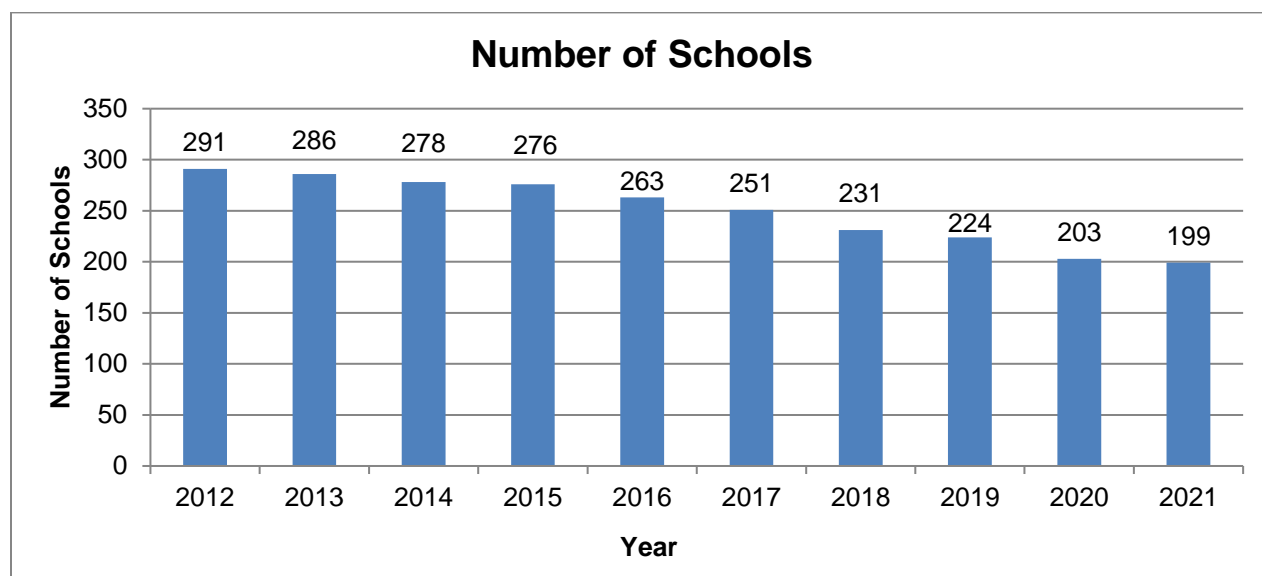
In accordance with the Act, one of the Board's responsibilities is to provide an annual statistical report to the PA state Education committees of the Senate and House of Representatives. The report must include information on graduation rates, job placement of graduates, tuition, board action on complaints, and the processing time for complaints. This report meets the statutory requirement for academic year 2020-2021.

Private Licensed Schools provide postsecondary career and trade education. Some career and trade schools, such as cosmetology schools, barber schools, and flight schools, fall under the jurisdiction of other state boards or government agencies and are exempt from the Board's oversight. Three of the schools are currently approved by the Board to offer adult's proprietary high school diploma awards via distance education.

This report provides data and statistics on instruction at schools under the Board's jurisdiction. This report does not offer data or statistics for contracted training provided to businesses or employers, training provided to individuals for professional development, training provided to individuals for recreational or avocational purposes, training provided to individuals which is ancillary to the sale of a product, training provided one-on-one as tutoring, or training offered by colleges, universities, or secondary career and trade schools to adults because the Board does not regulate these activities.

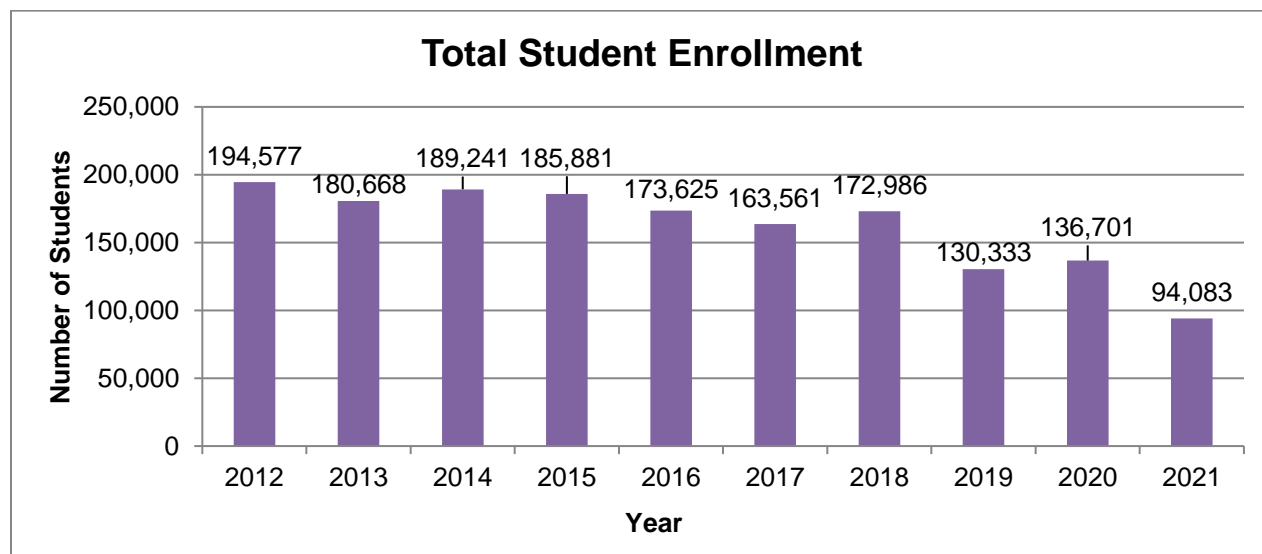
Most of the schools licensed by the Board offer classroom-based instruction in a brick-and-mortar school. This instruction can be blended or supplemented with online instruction. A smaller number of schools operate exclusively as providers of distance education or correspondence instruction. Because the nature of these two kinds of schools differs significantly, some data are presented separately for the schools that offer distance education exclusively.

### All Private Licensed Schools Year-by-Year Trends



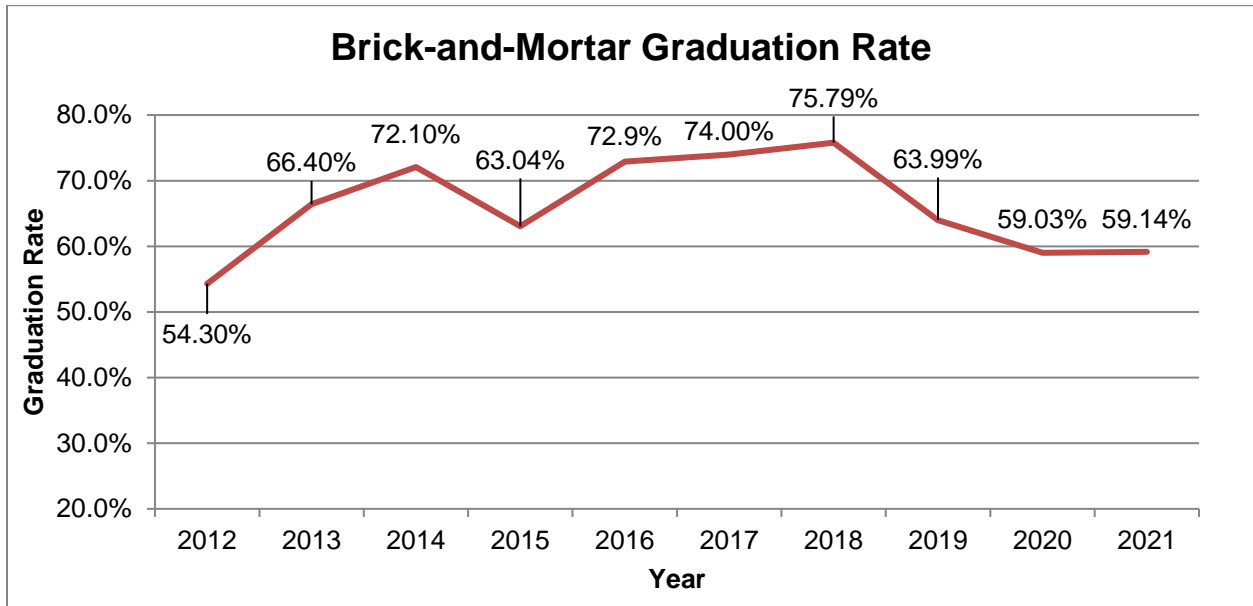
In 2020-2021, there were 199 licensed/registered Private Licensed Schools, with a total enrollment of 94,083 students. Since 2012, the total number of schools has decreased by 32 percent. The number of students enrolled has decreased by 66 percent. (See below.)

Enrollment declines between 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 are consistent with enrollment declines in other postsecondary education sectors. Similar to community colleges and other public and private colleges, the COVID-19 pandemic, which started in March 2020, caused many private licensed schools to cease in-person training for a period of time due to restrictions in healthcare settings and the close personal contact required for the training (i.e., massage therapy, nurse aide, dental hygiene, etc.). While many students could continue their studies through distance education, those that could not were forced to take a leave of absence or withdraw from their education.

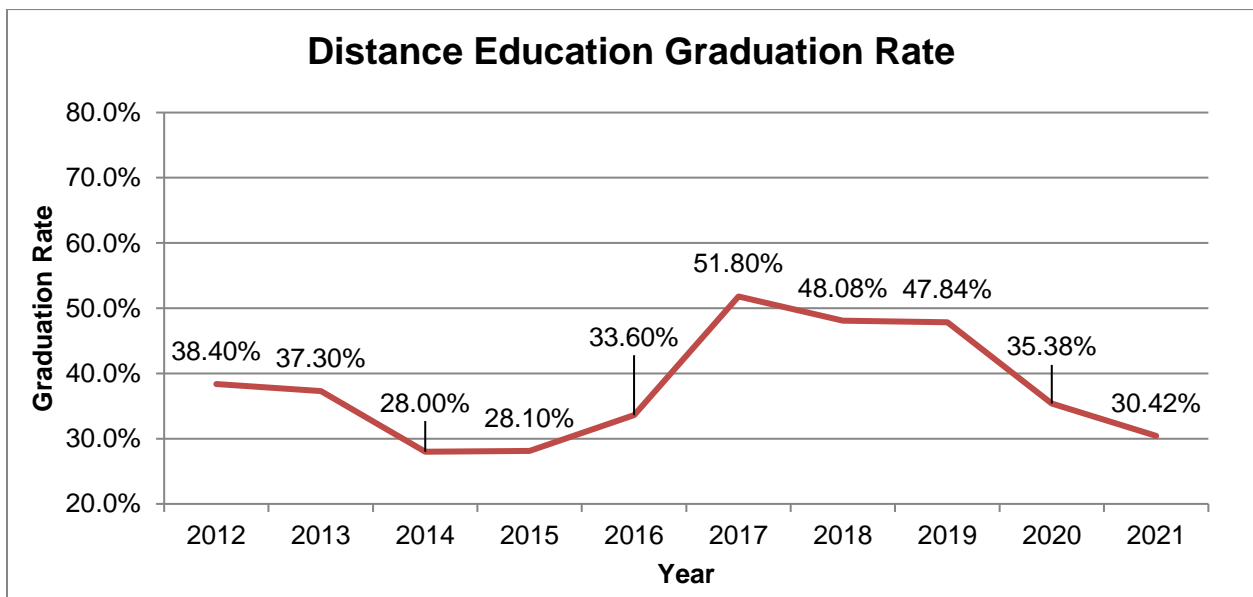


## Year-by-Year Trends

The graduation rate at Private Licensed Schools has fluctuated over the last 10 years. The graduation rate at brick-and-mortar schools in 2021 was 59 percent.



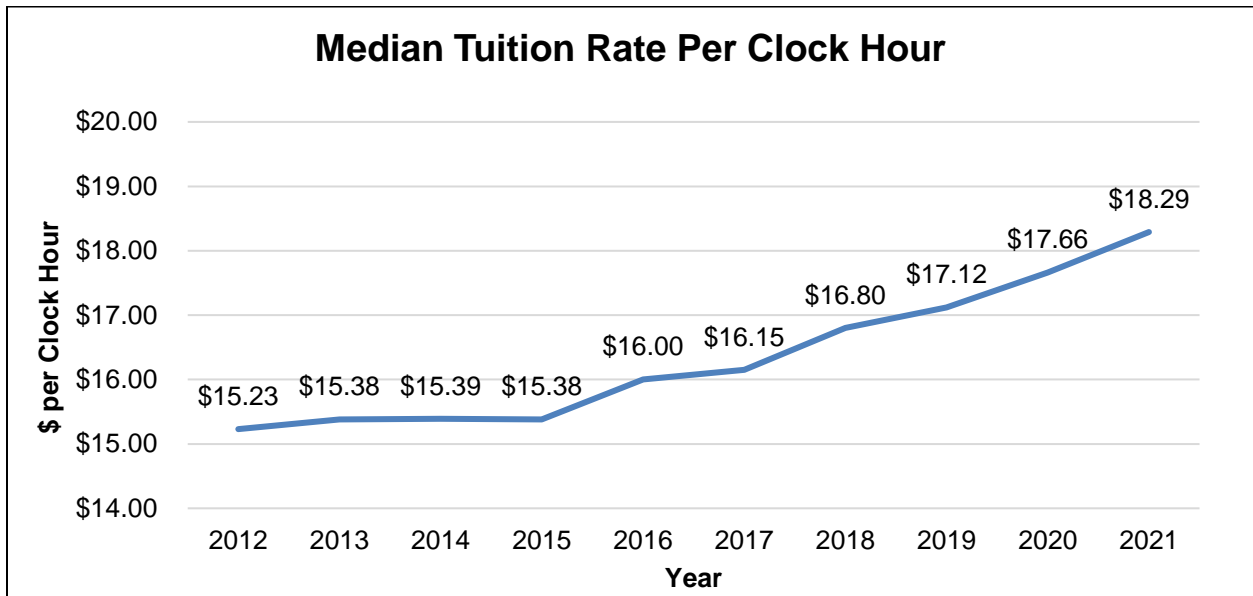
The graduation rate at distance education schools in 2021 was 30 percent.



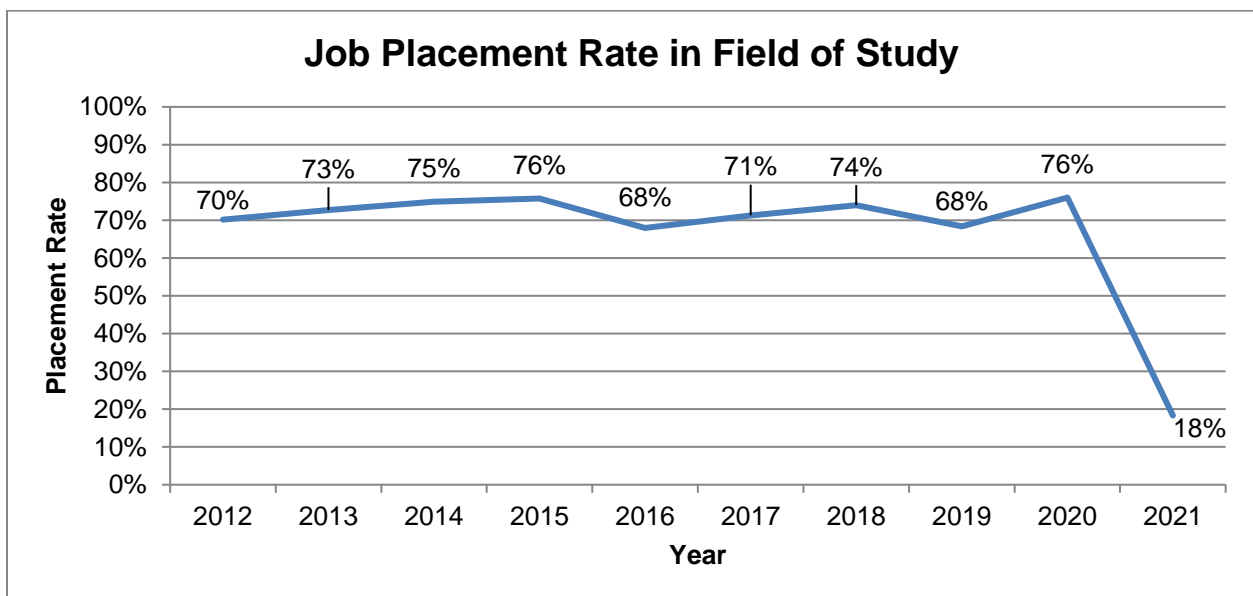
## Year-by-Year Trends

Tuition has increased steadily over the past 10 years.

Since 2012, there has been a 20 percent increase in the median tuition-per-clock-hour of instruction at brick-and-mortar schools. The shortest program offered consists of 14 clock hours; the longest program offered consists of 3,406 clock hours.

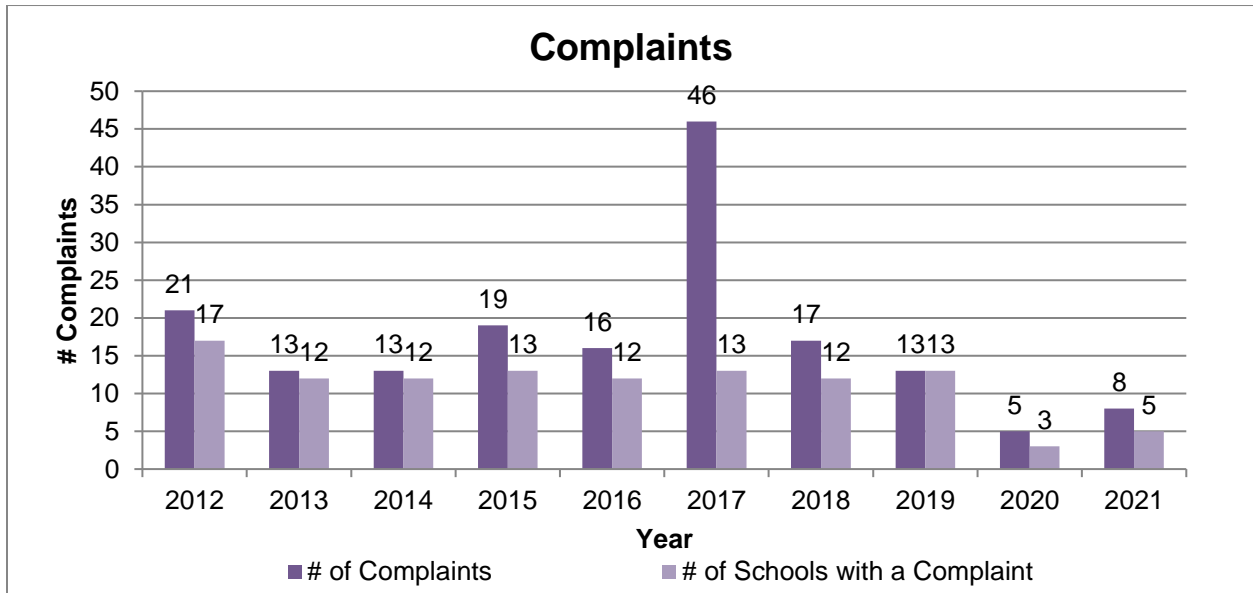


Over the past 10 years, job placement rates for graduates of Private Licensed Schools in their chosen field of study have varied with a significant decrease in 2021 due to employment challenges presented by the pandemic and immediate opportunities for increased wages at service jobs in the post-pandemic economy. Schools report job placement data, by program, for students who graduated in the previous academic year. Private Licensed Schools are not required to track job placement; data is self-reported by schools and is not third-party verified.



## Year-by-Year Trends

Student complaints against Private Licensed Schools have varied slightly over the past 10 years with a recent decline. The spike in 2017 was due to several complaints by students in one program at a single school.





## **Brick-and-Mortar Schools 2020-2021 Data**

### **Number of Schools**

Total Number of Private Licensed Schools:	199
Number of Licensed/Registered Brick-and-Mortar Schools:	192
Licensed Brick-and-Mortar Schools in PA:	191
Registered Out-of-State Schools that Recruit in PA:	1

*Note: The remaining seven schools are distance education schools. Data on these schools are reported beginning on page 8.*

New Brick-and Mortar School Licenses/Registration Issued:	8
2020-2021 (or anticipated) total enrollment of New Brick-and-Mortar Schools:	528
Brick-and-Mortar School Closures:	10
2019-2020 total (final) enrollment of Brick-and-Mortar schools closed in 2020-2021:	0

### **Enrollment**

Total Enrollment in All Private Licensed/Registered Schools:	94,083
Enrollment in Brick-and-Mortar Schools:	29,079

### **Graduation Rate**

Graduation Rate at Brick-and-Mortar Schools:	59 percent
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### **Placement of Graduates**

Graduates Placed in Field of Study:	18 percent
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*Note: Private Licensed Schools are not required to track job placement. Placement rates are self-reported by schools and are not third-party verified.*

### **Tuition**

Schools report tuition for each program, but the Board of Private Licensed Schools does not regulate tuition rates.

Tuition ranged from \$3.33 to \$80.71 per hour of instruction.

Median tuition per hour of instruction:	\$18.29
Mean tuition per hour of instruction:	\$19.72

## Data on Brick-and-Mortar Schools

### Complaints

Number of Student Complaints Against All Schools:	8
Number of Complaints against Brick-and-Mortar Schools:	8
Number of Schools Involved:	5
Average Amount of Time to Resolve a Complaint:	181 days

The average time to resolve a student complaint over the past 10 years has been 66 days. The average amount of time to resolve a complaint increased 2020-2021 due to three schools failing to respond in a timely manner to five of the eight complaints.

### Enforcement Actions

Number of Fines Imposed Against All Schools:	7
Number of Fines Against Brick-and-Mortar Schools	6
Total Amount of Fines:	\$5,000

*Note: Fines can be issued for violations that are not related to student complaints. Fines can be issued for violations identified during compliance audits and site visits, based on information received by the public or other licensed/registered schools, through advertising, or in applications submitted by the school.*

## **Distance Education Schools 2020-2021 Data**

### **Number of Schools**

Total Number of Private Licensed Schools:	199
Number of Licensed/Registered Distance Education Schools:	7
Licensed Distance Education Schools in PA:	6
Registered Out-of-State Schools that Recruit in PA:	1
New Distance Education School Licenses Issued:	1
Distance Education School Closures:	1

### **Enrollment**

Total Enrollment in All Private Licensed Schools:	94,083
Enrollment in Distance Education Schools:	64,004
Enrollment in High School Diploma Programs:	53,311
Enrollment in Career Training Programs:	11,693

### **Graduation Rate**

Graduation Rate Distance Education Schools:	30 percent
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### **Placement of Graduates**

Private Licensed Schools are not required to track job placement. Placement rates are self-reported by schools and are not third-party verified. Distance education schools rarely report this data. Three distance education schools voluntarily reported job placement rates. The first school reported a job placement rate in the field of study of 100 percent. The second school reported a job placement rate of 79.6 percent. The third school reported a job placement rate of 4.8 percent.

### **Tuition**

Schools report tuition for each program, but the Board does not regulate tuition rates.

Tuition ranged from \$8.44 to \$79.22 per lesson. There is no standard for the length or content contained in each lesson.

## Data on Distance Education Schools

### Complaints

Number of Student Complaints Against All Schools:	8
Number of Complaints against Distance Education Schools:	0
Number of Schools Involved:	0
Average Amount of Time to Resolve a Complaint:	n/a

The average time to resolve a student complaint over the past 7 years has been 33 days.

### Enforcement Actions

Number of Fines Imposed Against All Schools:	7
Number of Fines Against Distance Education Schools	1
Total Amount of Fines:	\$2,500

*Note: Fines can be issued for violations that are not related to student complaints. Fines can be issued for violations identified during compliance audits and site visits, based on information received by the public or other licensed/registered schools, through advertising, or in applications submitted by the school.*