

SENATE STAFF ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

BILL: CS/SB 1046

SPONSOR: Education Committee and Senator Pruitt

SUBJECT: Teach Florida Program

DATE: April 9, 2001 REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	White	O'Farrell	ED	Favorable/CS
2.	_____	_____	AED	_____
3.	_____	_____	AP	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____

I. Summary:

This Committee Substitute creates a scholarship loan program for aspiring teachers. The program provides an award equal to tuition¹ and other fees for up to full-time enrollment in a state community college or university, plus an education allowance.

- A recipient may qualify in high school or at any point during college enrollment.
 - Eligibility requirements for high school graduates are the same as for the Bright Futures Merit Scholarship.
 - Eligibility requirements for college students are the same as for Bright Futures Merit Scholarship renewals.
 - Recipients in the junior or senior years of college must be enrolled in an approved teacher preparation program.
 - Part-time enrollment is authorized.
 - Renewal and restoration of the scholarship loan are very similar to the Bright Futures Scholarship requirements.
- The loan may be repaid by teaching in a publicly funded school in Florida for the same number of semesters as the scholarship was earned.

This bill creates the following section of the Florida Statutes: 240.4061.

II. Present Situation:

Need for Teachers

¹ Technically, in the Florida Statutes the word "tuition" means the out-of-state matriculation fees. Since the bill uses the term "tuition and other fees" it is not necessary to correct the reference because "other fees" will include regular matriculation fees paid by Florida residents.

The Florida Office of Economic and Demographic Research projects a need for a total of 162,296 new teachers in Florida between now and 2010. This year, 14,366 teachers are expected to resign or terminate their employment, and 1,081 additional teachers will be needed to accommodate growing student enrollments. Last year, almost 9 percent of Florida's teaching force needed to be replaced.

Florida's increasing student population, especially at the secondary school level, has increased the need for teachers. In Florida, 52 of the 67 school districts have increased their student population since 1995. Statewide, the student population has grown by more than 200,000 students. Student growth means that 11,400 additional teachers will be needed to accommodate higher enrollments.

Only about 6,000 teacher candidates graduate each year from state-approved teacher education programs.

Existing Programs

Florida has several programs designed to make available fellowships, forgivable loans, or tuition reimbursement for teachers who agree to teach in Florida's public schools for a number of years. These include:

- Student fellowship program (s. 231.6215, F.S.), which if funded will provide annual forgivable loans of \$6500 to rising juniors who agree to teach in Florida for 3 years. Fellows must complete a major in a content area other than teaching and attain teaching expertise through a 12-month program designed by the university or college.
- Minority Teacher Education Scholars Program and the Florida Fund for Minority Teachers (ss. 240.4128 and 240.4129, F.S.)
- Critical Teacher Shortage Tuition Reimbursement Program (s. 240.4064, F.S.)
- Critical Teacher Shortage Student Loan Forgiveness Program (s. 231.621, F.S.)
- Florida Teacher Scholarship and Forgivable Loan Program (s. 240.4063, F.S.)
- Grants for teachers for special training in exceptional student education (s. 240.405, F.S.)

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The legislation under consideration creates a scholarship loan program for aspiring teachers, named the *Teach Florida Program*. The program provides an award equal to tuition and other fees for full-time enrollment in a state community college or university, plus an education allowance. A recipient may qualify in high school or college to enroll in an associate-in-arts program or an approved teacher preparation program. Part-time enrollment is authorized. Renewal and restoration of the scholarship loan are authorized as for Bright Futures Scholarship awards. The loan may be repaid by teaching in a publicly funded school in Florida for the same number of semesters as the scholarship was earned.

The Teach Florida Program is not an entitlement, which means that it will be competitive. The bill requires the Legislature to appropriate funds for 5,000 scholarships annually, but that requirement is not binding upon future Legislatures. The Department of Education will administer the program and may adopt rules; these provisions will enable the program to continue even if the Legislature does not fully fund it.

The eligibility provisions are generally the same as for Bright Futures Merit Scholars, but the award amount is 100 percent of tuition and fees, rather than 75 percent, and an education allowance is suggested. Most students in the program will also receive Bright Futures Scholarships. The extra scholarship money may be used to pay for other college expenses after tuition and fees are covered.

For the freshman and sophomore years, a scholarship student must enroll in an associate-in-arts degree program and take courses that may be transferred to an approved teacher education program. (Note: Associate-in-arts degree programs are not exclusively offered by community colleges. The scholarship will be available for attendance at a state university or independent college as well.) For the junior and senior years, a scholarship student must be enrolled in an approved teacher education program. Currently all state universities have such a program and so do many nonpublic colleges and universities. A nonpublic college is authorized if it is eligible for the William L. Boyd, IV, Florida Resident Access Grant (FRAG), s. 240.465, F.S. For students in nonpublic college, the scholarship loan will pay the equivalent of fees at a public university.

The qualifications for earning the scholarship loan as a high school student are the same as for Bright Futures Merit Scholars:

- A cumulative GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale in high school courses designated as college preparatory.
- A score of 970 or above on the Scholastic Assessment Test or the equivalent score on the ACT.

The qualifications for earning the scholarship loan as a college student are the same as for Bright Futures Merit Scholarship renewal awards: A GPA of 2.75 or the equivalent for all postsecondary work attempted.

The qualifications for renewing and restoring the scholarship loan are also very similar to the Bright Futures program:

- A GPA of 2.75 for all postsecondary education work attempted.
- A minimum of 12 credits per term for full-time assistance or a minimum of 6 credits per term for part-time assistance. (Note: This is a higher number of credits than is required for Bright Futures.)
- If the grade point average drops below that level, a student may restore the scholarship one time by raising the GPA.

An applicant at either level must declare the intent to repay the scholarship loan with teaching service within 7 years after completion of an approved teacher education program, and a recipient must repay the loan either by teaching or by payment of funds within 10 years after completion of the program of studies.

As with Bright Futures Scholarships, the scholarship loan is available for 110 percent of the number of credit hours required to complete the program.

The bill requires summer institutes at the end of each year of college:

- After the freshman year, the institute will provide a “discovery trip” across Florida, with seminars that focus on multicultural education and diversity.
- After the sophomore year, the seminar will be on classroom management and teacher leadership, staffed by teachers identified by the department as “outstanding.”
- After the junior year, the seminar will be an orientation week to introduce participants to the school system community. This orientation may include a paid internship provided by the school district after the orientation week.

The department may compensate school district staff for work in the summer institutes. The bill does not indicate whether or not students will be required to participate in the summer institutes as a condition of renewing the scholarship. Some of the recipients will not participate if they are not paid to do so and do not risk losing their scholarship.

The effective date is July 1, 2001.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Economic Impact and Fiscal Note:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

Annually 5,000 students will be eligible for a scholarship sufficient to pay tuition and other fees for 2 years at a community college and 2 years in a teacher-education program.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The Department of Education estimates the average scholarship under the program will be \$3,000 per year. Assuming the same rate of renewals as with Bright Futures scholars, the projections for the next 10 years are:

	Student Count	Projected Disbursement	Avg Award + 5% Yearly Tution Increase
2001-2002	5,000	\$15,000,000	\$3,000
2002-2003	8,000	\$25,200,000	\$3,150

2003-2004	10,400	\$34,398,000	\$3,308
2004-2005	12,320	\$42,785,820	\$3,473
2005-2006	12,320	\$44,925,111	\$3,647
2006-2007	12,320	\$47,171,367	\$3,829
2007-2008	12,320	\$49,529,935	\$4,020
2008-2009	12,320	\$52,006,432	\$4,221
2009-2010	12,320	\$54,606,753	\$4,432
2010-2011	12,320	\$57,337,091	\$4,654

The summer institutes will constitute an additional cost. Under the assumption that the discovery trip will not involve travel expense, the cost will depend upon the arrangement the department is able to make with staff. If student participation is voluntary, the cost will be less.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Amendments:

None.

This Senate staff analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's sponsor or the Florida Senate.
