

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

BILL #: HB 957 Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program
SPONSOR(S): Kendrick
TIED BILLS: IDEN./SIM. BILLS: SB 2262

Table with 4 columns: REFERENCE, ACTION, ANALYST, STAFF DIRECTOR. Row 1: 1) Committee on Education Innovation & Career Preparation, 6 Y, 0 N, Beagle, White.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

The Florida Medallion Scholars (FMS) award is one of three lottery funded scholarships available to Florida students under the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program (Bright Futures). FMS recipients enrolled in a state university or community college baccalaureate degree program are eligible for an award amounting to 75% of tuition and fees.

Home education students are eligible for FMS scholarships if they attended a home education program during grades 11 and 12. Such students must satisfy the general requirements for Bright Futures eligibility. They must also achieve a score identified by the State Board of Education (SBE) on the combined verbal and quantitative parts of the Scholastic Aptitude Test- Reasoning Test (SAT), or an equivalent score on the ACT Assessment Program (ACT).

The Department of Education (DOE) Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA) has established separate test score requirements for home education students depending on the type of home education curriculum that the student participated in. Home education students who successfully complete an approved college-preparatory curriculum offered through a Florida public school, private school, or dual enrollment program must achieve the same standardized test score as other FMS applicants.

House Bill 957 amends s. 1009.535, F.S., to codify OSFA's current test score requirements for home education students. The bill requires a home education student who successfully completes a SBE approved college-preparatory curriculum offered through a Florida public school, private school, or dual enrollment program must achieve the standard eligibility score set by the SBE on the SAT, or an equivalent ACT score, in order to be eligible for the FMS award.

The bill does not appear to have a fiscal impact on state or local governments.

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. HOUSE PRINCIPLES ANALYSIS:

The bill does not appear to implicate any of the House Principles.

B. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

Present Situation

The FMS award is one of three lottery funded scholarships available to Florida students under the Bright Futures program. FMS scholarship recipients enrolled in a state university or community college baccalaureate degree program are eligible for an award amounting to 75% of tuition and fees. Recipients enrolled in a community college associate degree program are eligible for an award amounting to 100% of tuition and fees for college credit courses. Recipients enrolled in a nonpublic postsecondary education institution are eligible for an award amounting to 75% of the tuition and fees charged by a comparable public postsecondary education institution.¹

For initial FMS award eligibility, a student must satisfy the general eligibility requirements for Bright Futures. A student must:

- Be a Florida resident;
- Earn a standard Florida high school diploma or its equivalent;
- Be accepted by and enroll in an eligible Florida public or independent postsecondary education institution;
- Enroll in at least 6 semester credit hours or the equivalent in quarter hours or clock hours.
- Not have been found guilty of, or entered a plea of no contest to, a felony charge, unless the student has been granted clemency by the state; and
- Apply for a scholarship before high school graduation.²

Generally, a student must complete 15 credits in high school-level college-preparatory³ coursework and achieve a weighted⁴ grade point average (GPA) of 3.0. The student must also achieve a 970 on the combined verbal and quantitative parts of the SAT, or a score of 20 on the ACT.⁵ Students recognized as scholars or finalists by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation or as a scholar by the National

¹ Section 1009.535(2), F.S.

² Section 1009.531(1), F.S.

³ Section 1004.02, F.S. (This section defines "College-preparatory instruction" to mean "courses through which a high school graduate who applies for any college credit program may attain the communication and computation skills necessary to enroll in college credit instruction." In addition, Section 1001.02, F.S., requires the SBE to identify college-preparatory high school coursework and postsecondary-level coursework that prepares students with the academic skills necessary to succeed in postsecondary education. The college-preparatory courses that a student must take to satisfy the FMS eligibility requirements are those courses reviewed and approved by the SBE, and listed in the course code directory. See Florida Department of Education, *2007-2008 Florida Course Code Directory and Personnel Assignments* (February 2007) available at <http://www.fldoe.org/bii/curriculum/CCD/0708.asp>).

⁴ For purposes of calculating a student's weighted GPA, the DOE is required to assign additional weighting to Advanced Placement, pre-International Baccalaureate, International Baccalaureate, International General Certificate of Secondary Education, Advanced International Certificate of Education, academic dual enrollment courses, and other courses it identifies as academically rigorous. The additional weight assigned to a course pursuant to this subsection shall not exceed 0.5 per course. See Section 1009.531(3), F.S.

⁵ Section 1009.535(1)(a), F.S. (This section also lists the Scholastic Assessment Test and the recentered Scholastic Assessment Test of the College Entrance Examination as authorized assessments for FMS eligibility. According to the DOE, these are obsolete versions of the SAT that are no longer used. See also Florida Department of Education, Office of Student Financial Assistance, *Initial Eligibility Requirements of 2008 High School Graduates* (Accessed March 12, 2008) available at <http://www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org/SSFAD/bf/fmsrequire.htm>).

Hispanic Recognition Program, who have not completed the community service requirements for a Florida Academic Scholars award, may also qualify for a FMS award.⁶

Home education students are also eligible for Bright Futures scholarships, including FMS scholarships.⁷ Such students must satisfy the general eligibility requirements for Bright Futures. In addition, the student must have attended a home education program during grades 11 and 12. The student must also achieve a designated score on the SAT or its equivalent ACT score.⁸

The DOE OSFA has established separate test score requirements for home education students depending on the type of home education curriculum that the student participated in. Home education students who successfully complete a SBE approved college-preparatory curriculum offered through a Florida public school, private school, or dual enrollment program must achieve the same score required for other FMS applicants: (a) 970 on the SAT; or (b) 20 on the ACT. Home education students who complete a commercially offered home education curricula or a home education curricula developed in another state must achieve a score that is at least 100 points higher than the standard eligibility score, i.e., a 1070, on the combined verbal and quantitative parts of the SAT, or an equivalent score of 23 on the ACT.⁹ Neither statute nor rule reflects this variance.

OSFA has implemented separate test score requirements for students who take non-state approved home education curricula because it is difficult to quantify whether the courses taken via such curricula are college-preparatory in nature. Because state approved home education curricula are based upon, or comparable to, Florida's high school curriculum, whether a student has completed the required college-preparatory coursework, and the student's mastery thereof, can be readily determined for the purposes of FMS award eligibility. This is not the case for commercially offered home education curricula or home education curricula developed in other states.¹⁰

Effect of Proposed Changes

House Bill 957 amends s. 1009.535, F.S., to codify OSFA's current test score requirements for home education students. The bill requires a home education student who successfully completes a SBE approved college-preparatory curriculum offered through a Florida public school, private school, or dual enrollment program for home education students must achieve the standard eligibility score set by the SBE on the SAT, or an equivalent ACT score, in order to be eligible for the FMS award. The bill further provides that a home education student who completes a non-SBE approved home education curriculum must achieve a score of at least 100 points higher than the SAT score set by the SBE, or an equivalent ACT score, for FMS award eligibility. The bill also clarifies that, to be eligible for the FMS award, a home education student must have attended a home education program in *at least* grades 11 and 12.

C. SECTION DIRECTORY:

Section 1.: Amending s. 1009.535, F.S.; amending the FMS program eligibility requirements for home education students; codifying current test score requirement for home education students.

Section 2.: Providing an effective date.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

⁶ Section 1009.535(1), F.S.

⁷ Section 1002.41(5), F.S.

⁸ Section 1009.535(1)(b), F.S.

⁹ Florida Department of Education, Office of Student Financial Assistance, *Initial Eligibility Requirements of 2008 High School Graduates* (Accessed March 12, 2008) available at <http://www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org/SSFAD/bf/fmsrequire.htm>.

¹⁰ Correspondence with Theresa Antworth, Florida Department of Education, Office of Student Financial Assistance, March 12, 2008.

1. Revenues:

The bill does not appear to have a fiscal impact on state revenues.

2. Expenditures:

The bill does not appear to have a fiscal impact on state expenditures.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

The bill does not appear to have a fiscal impact on local revenues.

2. Expenditures:

The bill does not appear to have a fiscal impact on local expenditures.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

The bill does not appear to have a direct economic impact on the private sector.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

None.

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

The bill does not require counties or municipalities to take an action requiring the expenditure of funds.

The bill does not reduce the authority that counties or municipalities have to raise revenue in the aggregate.

The bill does not reduce the percentage of state tax shared with counties or municipalities.

2. Other:

None.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

None.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

None.

D. STATEMENT OF THE SPONSOR

IV. AMENDMENTS/COUNCIL SUBSTITUTE CHANGES