

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

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

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Education Pre-K - 12 Committee

BILL: CS/SB 206

INTRODUCER: Education Pre-K - 12 Committee and Senator Hill

SUBJECT: Academic Achievement

DATE: March 17, 2010 **REVISED:** _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Carrouth	Matthews	ED	Fav/CS
2.	_____	_____	EA	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____

Please see Section VIII. for Additional Information:

A. COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE..... Statement of Substantial Changes

B. AMENDMENTS..... Technical amendments were recommended

Amendments were recommended

Significant amendments were recommended

I. Summary:

The bill encourages district school boards to adopt policies to recognize high school seniors who have been awarded academic scholarships to attend an institution of higher learning.

This bill amends section 1001.43 of the Florida Statutes.

II. Present Situation:

There are currently no provisions in law to encourage or establish recognition of a high school student's acceptance to an institution of higher learning based on academic performance, although athletic scholarships awarded to high school athletes are marked by what is commonly referred to as "National Signing Day." National Signing Day is always on the first Wednesday in February and is legally the first day a high school senior can sign a binding National Letter of Intent¹ for National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) college football.

¹ <http://www.ncaa.org/wps/wcm/connect/nli/nli>

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Under the bill, district school boards would be encouraged to adopt policies to designate the third Tuesday in April of each year as “Academic Scholarship Signing Day” to publicly recognize high school seniors who have been awarded postsecondary academic scholarships. The bill authorizes school boards to provide assemblies or other events for this purpose and students may sign actual or ceremonial documents signifying acceptance of the scholarship. Additionally, a school board may encourage holding these events for the entire student body to reinforce the importance of academic success. The Academic Scholarship Signing Day would be modeled after “letter of intent” signing activities conducted across the nation to celebrate a student athlete’s acceptance of a college athletic scholarship. The purpose of Academic Scholarship Signing Day is to recognize academic achievement with similar fanfare. However, in the case of national letters of intent, those documents are binding upon the student, once sent to the offering institution, unless a student is subsequently granted a release by the institution.² The bill authorizes a student to sign actual or ceremonial documents indicating the student’s acceptance of the scholarship. Unlike the student-athlete who signs a binding letter of intent, a student who signs documents indicating his or her acceptance of the scholarship would still be eligible to receive other scholarships without receiving a release from the scholarship grantor. Additionally, scholarships may be awarded throughout the year and, as a result, the April designation may not capture all students who receive an academic scholarship.

As the bill does not require school districts to adopt an Academic Scholarship Signing Day, school districts already have the authority to recognize students without the bill’s encouragement.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

² The letters of intent are binding in that the student’s eligibility to play sports for another institution may be compromised unless the student is granted a release from the scholarship.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

None.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Additional Information:

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:
(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

CS by the Pre-K – 12 Education Committee on March 17, 2010.

The Committee Substitute encourages district school boards to provide assemblies for the entire student body to recognize students who have been awarded academic scholarships.

B. Amendments:

None.