

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF FINAL BILL ANALYSIS

BILL #: HB 315 Reading Achievement Initiative for Scholastic Excellence Program

SPONSOR(S): Williams and others

TIED BILLS: None. **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:** SB 46

FINAL HOUSE FLOOR ACTION: 114 Y's

0 N's

GOVERNOR'S ACTION: Approved

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

HB 315 passed the House on March 6, 2024, as SB 46.

In July 2021, the Reading Achievement Initiative for Scholastic Excellence (RAISE) program was established within the Florida Department of Education to improve literacy outcomes for all students. Under the RAISE program, regional literacy support teams assist schools serving students in kindergarten through grade 5 that are underperforming based on school progress monitoring and statewide, standardized English Language Arts assessment results.

The RAISE program also includes a tutoring program whereby high school juniors and seniors meeting minimum criteria may serve as tutors during the school day for students in kindergarten through grade 3 enrolled at a school identified for the program. The hours that a high school student spends tutoring through the RAISE program may be counted as community-service hours to meet the requirements for graduation and the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship.

The bill authorizes school districts participating in the RAISE tutoring program to offer the program after the school day and to provide a stipend to instructional personnel and high school students serving as tutors during after-school hours.

The bill specifies that unpaid hours of tutoring continue to count towards meeting community service requirements for high school graduation and the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship.

The bill does not have a fiscal impact. See Fiscal Comments.

The bill was approved by the Governor on April 2, 2024, ch. 2024-46, L.O.F., and will become effective on July 1, 2024.

I. SUBSTANTIVE INFORMATION

A. EFFECT OF CHANGES:

Present Situation

Reading Achievement Initiative for Scholastic Excellence

In 2021, the Florida Legislature established the Reading Achievement Initiative for Scholastic Excellence (RAISE) program within the Florida Department of Education (DOE).¹ The mission of the RAISE program is to improve policies and practices that support improved literacy outcomes for all students.² The program provides instructional supports to school districts, school administrators, and instructional personnel in implementing:³

- evidence-based reading instruction proven to accelerate progress of students exhibiting a reading deficiency;
- differentiated instruction based on screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring, or student assessment data to meet students' specific reading needs; and
- explicit and systematic reading strategies to develop phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension with more extensive opportunities for guided practice, error correction, and feedback.

Under the RAISE program, the DOE established 20 literacy support regions and regional support teams in Florida to assist schools in improving low reading scores.⁴ Eligible schools include:⁵

- schools serving students in kindergarten through grade 5 where 50 percent of the students score below a Level 3 on the statewide, standardized English Language Arts (ELA) assessment for any grade level; and
- schools where 50 percent or more of students in kindergarten through grade 3 are not on track to pass the grade 3 ELA assessment based on data from the coordinated screening and progress monitoring system.⁶

Schools identified for supports are required to implement a school improvement plan with strategies to improve reading performance.⁷ The table below shows the number of schools which have been identified for supports under the RAISE program.

School Year	Number of Schools Identified Under the RAISE program
2023-2024 ⁸	1,184
2022-2023 ⁹	1,061

Tutoring Program

¹ Section 17, ch. 2021-9, Laws of Fla., codified at s.1008.365(2), F.S.

² Florida Department of Education, *Impact of House Bill 7011 on Schoolwide Improvement Plan Requirements for Schools Identified Under Reading Achievement Initiative for Scholastic Excellence* (2021), available at <https://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-9270/dps-2021-146.pdf>.

³ Section 1008.365(2)(a)-(c), F.S.

⁴ Section 1008.365(3), F.S.; see also Florida Department of Education, *RAISE Regions*, available at <https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7539/urlt/JRFSRLDFINALMAP.pdf>.

⁵ Section 1008.365(4), F.S.

⁶ Section 1008.25(8), F.S. (requiring the DOE to procure and require the use of a statewide, standardized progress monitoring system for the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program and public schools with students in kindergarten through grade 8 beginning with the 2022-2023 school year).

⁷ Section 1008.365(4), F.S.

⁸ Florida Department of Education, *Identifying RAISE Schools for 2023-2024*, available at <https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7539/urlt/2223RAISE-SchID.pdf>.

⁹ Florida Department of Education, *RAISE Schools Identification 2022-2023*, available at <https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7539/urlt/2223RAISE-SchID-DPS2022-123a.pdf>.

As part of the RAISE program, the DOE established a tutoring program and developed training to prepare eligible high school students to tutor students in kindergarten through grade 3. Participating high school students must be trained in effective reading tutoring practices and content, based on evidence-based practices grounded in the science of reading and aligned to the State Board of Education adopted ELA standards.¹⁰

To be eligible to participate in the tutoring program, a student must be a rising high school junior or senior and meet the following requirements:¹¹

- have a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or higher;
- have no history of out-of-school suspensions or expulsions;
- be on track to complete all core course requirements to graduate; and
- have written recommendations from at least two present or former high school teachers of record or extracurricular activity sponsors.

High school students that participate as tutors must be recruited, trained, and deployed by the school district. Tutoring must occur during the school day, on school district property, and under the supervision of instructional personnel who are school district employees.¹²

A high school student may earn up to three elective credits for high school graduation based on the verified number of hours the student spends tutoring. The hours may be counted towards community service requirements for high school graduation and the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program.¹³

The DOE must designate a high school student who provides at least 75 verified hours of tutoring in the RAISE program as a New Worlds Scholar and award him or her a commemorative pin for this designation.¹⁴

Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program

The Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program is a lottery-funded scholarship program for Florida high school graduates who demonstrate high academic achievement and enroll in a degree, certificate, or applied technology program at an eligible Florida public or private postsecondary education institution.¹⁵

The Bright Futures Program consists of the:¹⁶

- Florida Academic Scholarship (FAS), which provides for an award equal to the amount necessary to pay 100 percent of tuition and applicable fees and an additional stipend for textbooks as specified in the General Appropriations Act;¹⁷
- Florida Medallion Scholarship (FMS), which provides for an award equal to the amount necessary to pay 75 percent of tuition and fees; however, an eligible FMS recipient enrolled at a Florida College System institution is eligible for an award amount equal to the amount necessary to pay 100 percent of tuition and fees;¹⁸
- Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholarship (FGSV) and the Florida Gold Seal Career and Professional Education Scholarship (CAPE), which provide for an award for a maximum of 100 percent of the number of credit hours or equivalent clock hours required to complete an applied

¹⁰ Section 1008.365(8), F.S. and Rule 6A-6.0531, F.A.C.; *see also*, Florida Department of Education, *RAISE Highschool Tutoring Program*, available at <https://www.fldoe.org/academics/standards/just-read-fl/tutoring.shtml>.

¹¹ *Id.* at (8)(a).

¹² *Id.* at (8)(b).

¹³ *Id.* at (8)(c).

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ Section 1009.53(1), F.S.

¹⁶ Section 1009.53(2), F.S.

¹⁷ Section 1009.534(2), F.S.

¹⁸ Section 1009.535(2), F.S.

technology diploma, associate in applied science or associate in science degree, or a postsecondary career certificate program.¹⁹

A Florida high school student who wishes to qualify for a Bright Futures Program award must graduate from a Florida public high school with a standard high school diploma, graduate from a private high school registered with the DOE, earn a general education diploma, complete a home education program, or graduate from a non-Florida high school.²⁰ The various awards also have separate requirements for completed credits, grade-point average (GPA), and scores on college entrance exams.²¹ The table below shows the GPA, college entrance exam scores, number of volunteer service hours, and number of paid service hours needed for the FAS and FMS.²²

Type of Award	High School Weighted Bright Futures GPA	College Entrance Exams by High School Graduation Year (ACT/CLT/SAT)	Volunteer Service Hours	Paid Service Hours	Combination of Volunteer/Paid Hours
Florida Academic Scholars (FAS)	3.50	2023-24 Graduates 29/96/1340	100 hours	100 hours	100 hours
		2024-25 Graduates 29/96/1340			
Florida Medallion Scholars (FMS)	3.00	2023-24 Graduates 25/84/1210	75 hours	100 hours	100 hours
		2024-25 Graduates 25/84/1210			

High school students must complete 30 volunteer service hours, 100 paid hours, or the combination of 100 total hours to be eligible for the Florida Gold Seal CAPE Scholarship and the Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholarship.²³

The district school board and administrators of a nonpublic school establish the activities and process for documentation of service hours. Except for credit earned through service-learning courses, students may not receive payment or academic credit for the service hours performed.²⁴

In the 2022-23 academic year, 117,586 students received a disbursement from the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship and disbursements totaled \$598,468,957.²⁵

Effect of the Bill

The bill authorizes school districts participating in the RAISE tutoring program to offer the program after the school day and to provide a stipend to instructional personnel and high school students serving as tutors during after-school hours.

¹⁹ Section 1009.532(3), F.S.; see also *2023-24 Bright Futures Student Handbook, Chapter 2: What You Need to Know Now That You Are Eligible* (July 1, 2023), at 3-4, available at <https://www.floridastudentfinancialaidsg.org/PDF/BFHandbookChapter2.pdf>.

²⁰ Florida Department of Education, *2023-24 Bright Futures Student Handbook, Chapter 1: Initial Eligibility Requirements* (Aug. 2023), at 2-3, available at <https://www.floridastudentfinancialaidsg.org/PDF/BFHandbookChapter1.pdf>. A student living with a parent who is on military or public service assignment may graduate from a non-Florida high school.

²¹ *Id.* at 3-8.

²² *Id.* at 3.

²³ *Id.* at 6 and 8; see also section 100.536(1)(e), F.S.

²⁴ *Id.* at 4-5.

²⁵ Florida Student Financial Aid, *Florida Bright Futures Student Counts and Total Costs, Report A*, available at <https://www.floridastudentfinancialaidsg.org/PDF/PSI/BFReportsA.pdf>.

The bill specifies that unpaid hours of tutoring continue to count towards meeting community service requirements for high school graduation and the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

See Fiscal Comments.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

None.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

Because the bill authorizes, but does not require, a school district to provide stipends to instructional personnel or high school students that provide RAISE tutoring during after-school hours, the bill has no fiscal impact.