

SCHOLARSHIP/FINANCIAL AID

CS/SB 354 — Bright Futures Scholarship Program

by Appropriations Committee and Senators Carlton, Lynn, and Crist

The bill repeals s. 1009.539, F.S., the law requiring recipients of a Bright Futures Academic Scholars or Medallion Scholars award to complete the CLEP examination in the following five areas: English, humanities, mathematics, natural sciences, and social sciences. These examinations must be taken prior to enrolling in any course for which credit may be earned through the CLEP examinations. Each community college and each university must pay for the cost of each CLEP examination required by the law, not to exceed \$46 per examination. The cost is approximately \$8 million annually. The CLEP pass rate declined from over 60% to about 22% after this law was enacted. This resulted in an estimated cost of \$80 per credit hour earned through CLEP examinations.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2003.

Vote: Senate 40-0; House 114-0

CS/SB 638 — Student Tuition Assistance

by Appropriations Committee and Senators Clary, Hill, Campbell, Bennett, Webster, Bullard, Atwater, and Fasano

This bill creates the Access to Better Learning and Education Grant Program. The grant program is limited to full-time Florida resident students seeking a baccalaureate degree from a for-profit college or university that is located in the state and accredited by SACS, or a nonprofit college or university, chartered out of state yet located in the state for 10 years or more and accredited by a region accrediting agency. The schools should not be a state university or community college and should have a secular purpose.

The annual amount of the grant is to be established in the General Appropriations Act and the program is to be implemented only to the extent it is specifically funded and authorized by law.

The grant program is not related to a student's need for financial assistance.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.

Vote: Senate 35-2; House 104-7

STATE UNIVERSITIES

CS/SB 680 — Florida Gulf Coast University

by Education Committee and Senators Saunders and Aronberg

The bill authorizes Florida Gulf Coast University to offer a Bachelor of Science in Human Performance degree program with a concentration in athletic training.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.

Vote: Senate 39-0; House 116-0

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

CS/SB 162 – American Sign Language

by Education Committee and Senators Wise and Fasano

This bill establishes statutory authority for all public schools to offer American Sign Language (ASL) for foreign language credit. It also requires school boards to advise students taking ASL as a foreign language that postsecondary schools outside of Florida may not accept these course credits as satisfying foreign language entrance requirements.

Florida ASL teachers will be required to be certified by the Florida American Sign Language Teachers Association and may also be certified by the Department of Education. A task force established by the bill will prepare a report for the Commissioner of Education on developing and maintaining ASL courses as a part of a school curriculum. The Commissioner of Education will encourage postsecondary institutions to offer ASL courses and to implement a plan for accepting secondary school credits in ASL as credits in a foreign language.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2003.

Vote: Senate 38-0; House 117-0

HB 915 — K-20 Education Accountability

by Rep. Pickens and others (CS/SB 2296 by Education Committee and Senators Carlton and Wilson)

Accountability

This bill amends s. 1008.31, F.S., by establishing a unified system of accountability, which will be used to measure the K-20 education system's performance. The bill revises the performance-based funding requirements to provide that the State Board of Education must adopt a

performance-based budgeting system for all education delivery systems by the following schedule:

By December 1, 2003:

- The State Board of Education must adopt common definitions, measures, standards, and performance improvement targets. The State Board of Education must use the state core and sector-specific measures to evaluate the progress of each sector in meeting the systemwide goals, and advise the delivery systems of their progress so the systems may develop plans and implement the performance-based budgeting system. The implementation of performance-based budgeting must allow a delivery system one year to demonstrate achievement of specified performance standards prior to a performance-related reduction in appropriations.

By July 1, 2004:

- The Department of Education must collect data required to establish progress, rewards, and sanctions during the 2003-2004 fiscal year.

By December 1, 2004:

- The Department of Education must recommend to the Legislature a formula for performance-based funding that applies accountability standards for the individual components of the public education system at every level.

Effective FY 2004-2005:

- If approved by the Legislature, performance-based funds shall be allocated based on progress in meeting specified standards.

Concordance Study on Equivalent Scores for High School Graduation

The bill requires the State Board of Education to conduct a study to determine if equivalent scores can be ascertained on certain national standardized examinations in lieu of passing scores on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) for high school graduation. At a minimum, the State Board of Education must analyze the PSAT, PLAN, SAT, ACT, and the College Placement Test to determine if equivalent scores can be ascertained. If equivalent scores can be determined, the State Board of Education may adopt the scores with students who are eligible to graduate in the 2003-2004 academic year and thereafter being eligible to use the equivalent scores in lieu of the FCAT for high school graduation purposes.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.

Vote: Senate 39-0; House 116-0

CS/SB 1522 — Student’s Education/Parent and Family Involvement

by Education Committee and Senators Constantine and Bullard

The bill creates the “Family and School Partnership for Student Achievement Act” in s. 1002.23, F.S., to provide parents with information about their child’s educational progress and opportunities for parental involvement, as well as to provide a framework for building and strengthening partnerships between parents, teachers, principals, district school superintendents, and other personnel.

The Department of Education must develop guidelines for a parent guide and a specific checklist and must establish a parent response center to help parents and families. District school boards must: adopt rules to strengthen family involvement and family empowerment; submit a copy of the rules to the Department of Education; and develop and disseminate a parent guide to successful student achievement, as well as a checklist of parental actions to strengthen parental involvement. The State Board of Education must annually review each district’s compliance with the requirements in the act and must use all appropriate enforcement action.

District school superintendents and principals must fully support and cooperate in implementing the new law. The bill requires that parents of public school students receive accurate and timely information about their children’s schools, as well as information on ways to help their child to succeed in school, including help with reading proficiency. Report cards must include a designation of a student’s performance or nonperformance at grade level.

Teachers who receive certain bonuses under the Dale Hickam Excellent Teaching Program must provide instruction to help other teachers work more effectively with the families of their students. Inservice activities for instructional personnel under the School Community Professional Development Act must include parent involvement.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2003.

Vote: Senate 38-0; House 82-35

HB 1739 — Access to Postsecondary Education

by Education K-20 Committee and others (SB 2576 by Senators Wise and Lynn)

The bill (Chapter 2003-8, L.O.F.) creates the “Enhanced New Needed Opportunity for Better Life and Education for Students with Disabilities (ENNOBLES) Act” and defines the term “student with a disability.” The bill also eliminates the requirement that students complete the credit for life management skills in grade 9 or grade 10. District school boards must provide

instruction to prepare students with disabilities to demonstrate proficiency in the skills and competencies needed for successful grade-to-grade progression and high school graduation.

The bill provides for waiving the requirement to earn a passing score on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) in order to receive a standard high school diploma. This waiver applies to a student with a disability, as defined in s. 1007.02(2), F.S., for whom the individual educational plan (IEP) committee determines that the FCAT cannot accurately measure the student's abilities, taking into consideration all allowable accommodations. The bill provides the criteria for the waiver to be granted. Students who have been awarded a special diploma or a certificate of completion are eligible to enroll in certificate career education programs. Students with disabilities may be eligible for reasonable substitution for admission, graduation, and upper-level division requirements of public postsecondary educational institutions, in accordance with the newly created provisions of law.

The rules of the community college boards of trustees must include admissions counseling for all students entering career credit programs and requires counseling to include the option of using tests to measure achievement of basic skills for career programs, as prescribed in s. 1004.91, F.S. Under the bill, the State Board of Education must:

- Adopt rules, including those for test accommodations and modifications of procedures, as needed for students with disabilities.
- Develop substitute admission requirements where appropriate.
- Conduct a review of the extent to which authorized acceleration mechanisms are currently used by school districts and public postsecondary educational institutions.
- Submit a report to the Governor and the Legislature by December 31, 2003.

These provisions became law upon approval by the Governor on April 24, 2003.

Vote: Senate 38-0; House 116-0

CS/SB 1838 — Instructional Materials

by Education Committee and Senator Aronberg

The bill requires publishers to provide and price adopted instructional materials on an individual basis in order for school districts to buy individual materials in core subject areas, rather than as a part of an adopted package or bundle.

The bill makes changes to the following deadlines: appointing members of the state instructional materials committees; advertising bids for instructional materials; receiving sealed bids by the Department of Education; notifying the department about the materials that will be used in the school district; and beginning the adoption term for instructional materials. Specified sections of the bill affect only new adoptions, beginning with the 2004-2005 adoption cycle.

Also, the bill deletes the existing purchase order schedule. District school boards may issue purchase orders subsequent to February 1 in an aggregate amount that does not exceed 90 percent of the current year's allocation. Districts are responsible for any amount of money that is committed in purchase orders in excess of the district's allocation for the next year.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2003.

Vote: Senate 40-0; House 119-0

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

CS/SB 2156 — Florida High School Activities Association

by Education Committee and Senator Diaz de la Portilla

The bill amends ss. 1006.18 and 1006.20, F.S., relating to the Florida High School Activities Association. The bill renames the Association as the Florida High School Athletic Association and increases membership on the Board of Directors. Any entity appointing a member to the Board is required to examine the ethnic and demographic composition of the board when selecting a candidate and make appointments that reflect state demographic and population trends. Language relating to medical examinations of students prior to participation in athletic competition is clarified.

Statutory cross references relating to cheerleader safety standards are amended.

The bill repeals obsolete language relating to an examination and resultant report.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.

Vote: Senate 40-0; House 109-5