

## 2014 Legislative Report

### I. Legislation Impacting Private Schools

#### A. Florida Personal Learning Scholarship Accounts (Passed)

- Provides options for parent of children with disabilities to better meet the individual educational needs of child. Parent must register the child for attendance purposes in:
  1. Parochial, religious, or denominational or school
  2. Private school
  3. Home education program
  
- Open to a Florida student in grades K-12 who has an IEP or a diagnosis from a licensed physician or psychologist for one of the disabilities as defined in s. 393.063 are eligible. The specific disabilities are:
  - autism; cerebral palsy; Down syndrome; an intellectual disability; Prader-Willi syndrome; or Spina bifida; Williams syndrome; or
  - a high-risk child in kindergarten identified with one or more of the following:
    1. A developmental delay in cognition, language, or physical development.
    2. A child surviving a catastrophic infectious or traumatic illness known to be associated with developmental delay
    3. A child with a parent or guardian with developmental disabilities who requires assistance in meeting the child's developmental needs.
    4. A child who has a physical or genetic anomaly associated with developmental disability.
  
- Student will be awarded a scholarship amount based on a Level III matrix which will be approximately \$10,000. If the parent chooses to request an IEP from the school district, the amount of payment shall be adjusted as needed when the district completes the matrix.
  
- The funds can be used for:
  1. Instructional materials, including digital devices, digital periphery devices, and assistive technology devices that allow a student to access instruction or instructional content.
  2. Curriculum which is a complete course of study for a particular content area or grade level, including any required supplemental materials
  3. Specialized services by approved providers that are selected by the parent including, but are not limited to:
    - Applied behavior analysis
    - Speech-language
    - Occupational therapy

- Physical therapy
- Listening and spoken language for the deaf or hard of hearing
- 4. Tuition or fees associated with enrollment in approved private schools, private tutoring programs, private virtual education programs, FLVS, district virtual programs, Massive Open Online Courses or postsecondary educational institutions.
- 5. Fees for norm-referenced, AP exams, industry certification, SAT, ACT and other assessments.
- 6. Contracted services provided by a school district
- 7. Contributions to Florida Pre-paid College Program.
- Parent will need to apply to a Scholarship Funding Organization by the date established for the 2014-15 school year. Scholarships will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. Participation will be limited to the \$18.4 million set aside for the program in the budget.
- Administrative rules still have to be written by DOE over the summer which will provide more detail.

**B. Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program (Passed)**

- Does not require private school to administer state assessments or require students to take the state assessments.
- Does not allow the Step Up (SFO) to use the 3% administrative fee for professional development.
- Prohibits the SFO from using any administrative funds for lobbying or political activities.
- Requires the SFO to refund the application fee if a student is not enrolled in a private school within 12 months.
- Removes the prior public school requirement to qualify for a scholarship.
- Allows student to enroll at any grade level from kindergarten to grade 12.
- Raises eligible household incomes in 2016-17 from 230% to 260% above the federal poverty level.
- Allows a student in foster care or in out-of-home care to remain eligible for a scholarship until age 21.
- Raises the scholarship amount in 2016-17 from 80% to 82% of unweighted FTE funding amount for a public school student.
- Provides partial scholarships to students. Scholarship is reduced by
  - 12% if the household income is between 200% -215% of the federal poverty level
  - 26% if the household income is between 215%- 230% of the federal poverty level
  - 40% if the household income is between 230% -245% of the federal poverty level
  - 50% if the household income is between 245% -260% of the federal poverty level
- Requires that private school report the nationally norm-referenced test or the state assessment scores (voluntary participation) for participating students in grades 3 -10 to the Learning System Institute at Florida State University.

- The Learning System Institute will report the student performance of participating students in the program compared to the public school students with the same socio-economic background.
- On an individual school basis, the annual report must include student performance for each participating private school in which at least 51 percent of the total enrolled students in the private school participated in the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program in the prior school year. The report shall be according to each participating private school, and for participating students, in which there are at least 30 participating students who have scores for tests administered.
- The Learning System Institute may reduce the cell size of participating students from 30 to 10 if it is determined that personally identifiable information will not be disclosed in accordance with FERPA as described in 34 C.F.R. 99.12.
- Adds a statement to protect private schools:

“The purpose of this section is not to prescribe the standards or curriculum for private schools. A private school retains the authority to determine its own standards and curriculum.”

**C. HB7069 Early Learning (Died)**

**D. Uniform Transfer of High School Credits (s.1003.4282(8) FS)**

- Beginning with the 2012-2013 school year, if a student transfers to a Florida public high school from out of country, out of state, a private school, or a home education program and the student's transcript shows a credit in Algebra I, the student must pass the statewide, standardized Algebra I EOC assessment in order to earn a standard high school diploma unless the student earned a comparative score, passed a statewide assessment in Algebra I administered by the transferring entity, or passed the statewide mathematics assessment the transferring entity uses to satisfy the requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 20U.S.C. s. 6301. If a student's transcript shows a credit in high school reading or English Language Arts II or III, in order to earn a standard high school diploma, the student must take and pass the statewide, standardized grade 10 Reading assessment or, when implemented, the grade 10 ELA assessment, or earn a concordant score.
- If a transfer student's transcript shows a final course grade and course credit in Algebra I, Geometry, Biology I, or United States History, the transferring course final grade and credit shall be honored without the student taking the requisite statewide, standardized EOC assessment and without the assessment results constituting 30 percent of the student's final course grade.

## **E. Budget**

### **Early Learning**

- Provides funding for the purchase and implementation of a Voluntary Prekindergarten research-based pre- and post-assessment. The instrument must assess all domains as identified in the 2011 "Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards for Four-Year-Olds", to the maximum extent possible, and provide valid and reliable data to measure student learning gains.
- Provides funding for the 2014-2015 fiscal year for each student participating in the school year program \$2,437 and in the summer program \$2,080.

### **Florida Resident Access Grant (FRAG)**

- \$3000 for the 2014-15 academic year.

### **Bright Futures Scholarships**

BF award per credit hour or credit hour equivalent for the 2014-2015 academic year shall be as follows:

#### **Academic Scholars**

4-Year Institutions.....	\$103
2-Year Institutions.....	\$ 63
Upper-Division Programs at Florida Colleges....	\$ 71
Career/Technical Centers.....	\$ 52

#### **Medallion Scholars**

4-Year Institutions.....	\$ 77
2-Year Institutions.....	\$ 63
Upper-Division Programs at Florida Colleges....	\$ 53
Career/Technical Centers.....	\$ 39

#### **Gold Seal Vocational Scholars**

Career Certificate Program.....	\$ 39
Applied Technology Diploma Program.....	\$ 39
Technical Degree Education Program.....	\$ 48

The additional stipend for Top Scholars shall be \$44 per credit hour

### **Florida National Merit Scholar Incentive Program**

(New section of Law—s. 1009.893 FS)

- The Florida National Merit Scholar Incentive Program is created to reward any Florida high school graduate who receives recognition as a National Merit Scholar or National Achievement Scholar and who initially enrolls in the 2014-2015 academic year or, later, in a baccalaureate degree program at an eligible

- Florida public or independent postsecondary educational institution.
- An eligible student who is a National Merit Scholar or National Achievement Scholar and who attends a Florida public postsecondary educational institution shall receive an incentive award equal to the institutional cost of attendance minus the sum of the student's Florida Bright Futures Scholarship and National Merit Scholarship or National Achievement Scholarship.
  - An eligible student who is a National Merit Scholar or National Achievement Scholar and who attends a Florida independent postsecondary educational institution shall receive an incentive award equal to the highest cost of attendance at a Florida public university, as reported by the Board of Governors of the State University System, minus the sum of the student's Florida Bright Futures Scholarship and National Merit Scholarship or National Achievement Scholarship.

### **Dual Enrollment**

- The House had language in HB 5101 which would clearly state that private schools do not have to pay tuition or fees for their students participating in dual enrollment. However, the Senate did not think this language was necessary and during the budget negotiations, staff assured the Senators it was not needed. When the final agreed upon amendment was made public and the clarifying language had been removed, several members tried to amend the language into other bills. All of the bills which had amendments died. So, although we tried to get this clarified in the final hour, negotiations left private schools with no clarity about tuition and fees.
- Since this change occurred after Session last year in a FAQ released by DOE Division of State Colleges, we will attempt to get help from the Governor's office to clarify this issue.

## **II. Other Education Legislation**

### **A. SB 850 (Passed)**

- Requires Public schools to have a hazing policy. Law makes hazing a felony under certain conditions and a misdemeanor under other conditions for students in grades 6 -12 (s.1006.135 F.S)
- Requires school districts to provide Digital Tool Certifications for elementary & middle schools in word processing; spreadsheets; sound, motion, and color presentations; digital arts; cyber security; and coding.

### **B. HB 5101 Computer science and technology instruction (Passed)**

(New section of Law—s. 1007.2616 FS)

(1) Public schools shall provide students in grades K-12 opportunities for learning computer science, including, but not limited to, computer coding and computer programming. Such opportunities may include coding instruction in elementary school and middle school, instruction to develop students' computer usage and digital literacy skills in middle school, and courses in computer science, computer coding, and computer programming in high school, including earning related industry certifications.

(2) Elementary schools and middle schools may establish digital classrooms in which students are provided opportunities to improve digital literacy and competency; to learn digital skills, such as coding, multiple media presentation, and the manipulation of multiple digital graphic images; and to earn digital tool certificates and certifications pursuant to s. 1003.4203 and grade-appropriate, technology-related industry certifications.

(3) High schools may provide students opportunities to take computer science courses to satisfy high school graduation requirements, including, but not limited to, the following:

(a) High school computer science courses of sufficient rigor, as identified by the commissioner, such that one credit in computer science and the earning of related industry certifications constitute the equivalent of up to one credit of the mathematics requirement, with the exception of Algebra I or higher-level mathematics, or up to one credit of the science requirement, with the exception of Biology I or higher-level science, for high school graduation. Computer science courses and technology-related industry certifications that are identified as eligible for meeting mathematics or science requirements for high school graduation shall be included in the Course Code Directory.

(b) High school computer technology courses in 3D rapid prototype printing of sufficient rigor, as identified by the commissioner, such that one or more credits in such courses and related industry certifications earned may satisfy up to two credits of mathematics required for high school graduation with the exception of Algebra I. Computer technology courses in 3D rapid prototype printing and related industry certifications that are identified as eligible for meeting mathematics requirements for high school graduation shall be included in the Course Code Directory.