

Legislative Session Update

Volume I, Issue 2

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A More In-Depth Dive into House Bill 550I

During the full House Appropriations Committee meeting on Wednesday, March 27, House Higher Education Appropriations Chairman Rep. Randy Fine stated that state colleges and universities should function more like state agencies. State agencies currently return operating funds that go unspent back to the state at the end of the fiscal year. While [House Bill 550I](#), a budget conforming bill, a bill that specifies changes in the general appropriations act (GAA), would not necessarily require the colleges to return unspent operating dollars, it would place some restrictions and minimize local District Boards of Trustees' (DBOT) authority through additional legislative oversight. The House Staff Analysis on HB 550I can be found [here](#).

The House Higher Education Appropriations Staff collected data from the Florida Department of Education (DOE) and drafted the spreadsheet below. The Fund 7 total reserve balance in this spreadsheet is being used to demonstrate the House's belief that colleges should require legislative approval to transfer funds from Fund 1 to Fund 7. Additionally, the 5% statutory reserve requirement of operating funds would be increased to 7%; however, if a college falls below the 7%, then it would be required to submit a plan to get to the 7%. If the amount is above the 7%, then the college would have to submit a spending plan for their excess carry forward balance. It is important to note that the Legislature meets in the beginning of

January of an even year (election year) and the beginning of March of an odd year for a 60-day Legislative Session—the only time a college could acquire approval for the transfer of funds. Therefore, should a request to transfer fall the day after Sine Die, the last day of Session, then approval could take anywhere from 8 months to a year. Local DBOTs would also operate under restrictions for transferring state appropriated funds from a college's operating budget to direct-support organizations (DSOs) for purposes of personal services (i.e. Foundation staff) if a DSO's fund balance, not net assets, is \$50M or more. A fund transfer for colleges, whose DSO fund balance is \$50M+, could only occur for purposes of funds pledged for capital projects.

Florida College System FY 2017-18 Summary of Accounts

	GL Code	(1) Current Funds - Unrestricted	(2) Current Funds - Restricted	(3) Auxiliary Funds	(4) Loan & Endowment Funds	(5) Scholarship Funds	(6) Agency Funds	(7) Unexpended Plant Funds	(8) Debt Service Funds	(9) Invested in Plant Funds	Total All Funds
Reserved for Encumbrance	30100	39,156,230	12,201,977	573,641	152,000	16,098	6,049	149,833,722			201,939,716
Reserved for Performance Based Incentive Funds	30200										
Reserved for Academic Improvement Trust Funds	30300		187,506								187,506
Reserved for Other Required Purposes	30400	14,691,200	37,178	1,201,261							15,929,639
Reserved for Staff & Program Development	30500	548,733									548,733
Reserved for Student Activities Funds	30600		3,441,512								3,441,512
Reserved for Matching Grants	30700	500,000						1,000,000			1,500,000
Fund Balance - Board Designated	30900	70,672,766		1,000,000	18,601,124			12,700,601			102,974,491
Fund Balance - Grantor	31000		10,181,002		9,746,007	2,256,640		28,724,564	365,550		51,273,763
Fund Balance - College	31100	284,073,541	56,550,879	168,426,860	135,197,850	15,485,783	(9,108)	890,319,336	450,313	1,387,760,254	2,938,255,707
Invested In Plant	31200									-2,687,468,130	2,687,468,130
TOTAL RESERVE & UNALLOCATED FUND BALANCES		409,642,471	82,600,053	171,201,762	163,696,982	17,758,521	(3,059)	1,082,578,222	815,863	4,075,228,384	6,003,519,198

* House Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee Staff Analysis 03/27/2019

LEGISLATION OF INTEREST

Appropriations

HB 5501: Higher Education/Public Education Capital Outlay (PECO)

Sponsor: Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee; Rep. Randy Fine

On Tuesday, March 19, the House Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee passed the proposed committee bill ([PCB HEA 19-01](#)) by a vote of 10-0. The Proposed Committee Bill was assigned the number 5501 and is considered a budget conforming bill. It limits the ability of colleges and universities to transfer state funds to any other fund within the institution (i.e. Fund 1 to Fund 7) or direct support organization (DSO) without specific authorization from the Legislature. Beginning July 1, 2019, college transfers of any state appropriation to DSOs with a fund balance of greater than \$50 million may only include funds pledged for capital projects.

The bill authorizes universities and colleges to use their carry forward funds each year for operations, maintenance, or to finish previously funded PECO projects. While the Division of Florida Colleges currently has a method by which it ranks Fixed Capital Outlay projects, this bill would require the Board of Governors and State Board of Education to develop a points based methodology to rank projects for recommendation for funding.

HB 5501 provides that any new construction, renovation or remodeling project that has not received an appropriation in a previous year may only be considered for the prioritized list if:

- **The institution has allocated funding equal to no less than 10 percent (for Colleges), or 15 percent (for State Universities) of the total project cost or the project is needed to preserve the safety of persons using the facility or the project is consistent with a strategic legislative initiative;**
- **A plan is provided to reserve an amount of funds in an escrow account, specific to the project, into which shall be deposited each year an amount equal to 3 percent of the building's value for future maintenance; and**
- **There is sufficient PECO cash which is not needed to complete previously funded previously PECO projects.**

The bill modifies standards for calculating space needs by colleges and universities. **The current utilization rate representing "100% utilized" consists of classrooms that are 60% occupied for 40 hours per week. The bill changes utilization rates for classrooms to 80% occupied for 60 hours per week to be considered fully utilized, and for teaching lab space to be 85% utilized for 40 hours a week. HB 5501 has been placed on Special Order to be heard by the full House on Tuesday, April 2. It is expected to pass along with the budget.**

HB 4909: The Florida College System Self-Insurance Consortium

Sponsor: Rep. Elizabeth Anne Fetterhoff

This bill is an appropriations request on behalf of the Florida College System. Through the FCS self-insurance consortium, the FCS requested support through this bill for extraordinary losses from the last two hurricane seasons along with other losses associated with fires, floods, and tornadoes that impact various colleges over the last few years. The total cost requested is \$18.67M.

The bill has not yet been heard in its first of two committees of reference, House Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee.

Dual Enrollment

HB 189 / SB 1342: Postsecondary Education for Secondary Students

Sponsors: Rep. Ardian Zika and Sen. Kelli Stargel

House Bill 189 renames the “collegiate high school program” to the “early college acceleration program” and expands the program from 1 to 2 years. It deletes the requirement for a separate early college program contract and requires each dual enrollment articulation agreement between a Florida College System institution and a school district to establish at least one early college program. It also states that dual enrollment instructional materials be provided to students in a home education program at no cost.

Senate Bill 1342 expands upon HB 189’s language. In the Senate Bill, home school and private school students would not be responsible for the costs associated with instructional materials, tuition, and fees, including registration and laboratory fees. Therefore, colleges would be expected to absorb this cost, as no funding has been identified to offset these costs.

On March 19, HB 189 passed out of the House PreK-12 Innovation Subcommittee 13-0. **It has been placed on the House Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee agenda to be heard on Monday, April 1, at 1:00pm.**

SB 1342 was temporarily postponed on Tuesday, March 26, in the Senate Education Committee due to the committee running out of time. It is expected to be considered in the same committee on Tuesday, April 2, at 10:00am.

Workforce Education

SB 190: Education

Sponsor: Sen. Kelli Stargel

In addition to modifying the requirements associated with the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program (Bright Futures program), SB 190 removes the \$15M cap of performance funding for industry certifications to FCS institutions and school district workforce education programs. As a result, FCS institutions and school districts may be fully funded for earned certifications, which is subject to legislative appropriation. Its companion bill, HB 189, does not include this specific workforce language.

Senate Bill 190 has passed unanimously out of the Senate Education Committee and Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Education. It has not yet been placed on the agenda for full Appropriations, its last committee stop before heading to the Senate Floor.

SB 522: Apprenticeship Programs

Sponsor: Sen. Manny Diaz, Jr.

Senate Bill 522 establishes a new reporting requirement and funding source to expand apprenticeship and preapprenticeship opportunities. Specifically, the bill requires the Department of Education (DOE) to report specified information to the Legislature and the State Apprentice Advisory Council regarding apprenticeship and preapprenticeship training in Florida. The bill also requires DOE to provide information on its website explaining how a Florida College System institution or a school district may assume the responsibilities of a local education agency for the purposes of administering an apprenticeship program. This legislation creates the Florida Apprenticeship Grant (FLAG) Program, which provides eligibility for grant awards to registered apprenticeship

[Workforce Education continued...](#)

program sponsors who do not require assistance from a career educational institution. Similar FLAG language can be found in [HB 7071](#).

On March 12, SB 522 passed unanimously out of the Senate Education Committee and has two more committee stops, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Education and full Appropriations Committee.

[HB 661 / SB 770: Alternative High School Graduation Requirements](#)

Sponsor: Rep. Wyman Duggan and Sen. Travis Hutson

House Bill 661 would create a career and technical education (CTE) pathway option that would allow for eligible students to acquire a CTE diploma instead of a traditional standard high school diploma. The courses must result in a program completion and an industry certification.

Additionally, the legislation requires principles to meet and discuss with students, who have a cumulative grade point average that falls below 2.0, CTE pathway options.

This bill is yet to be heard in any of its referred committees.

Its companion bill, SB 770, however, is moving through the Senate.

Senate Bill 770 includes similar CTE pathway option language found in HB 661. It also modifies the 24-credit pathway for earning a standard high school diploma by revising computer science credit substitution for mathematics or science credits, and creates a mechanism for the review of the sufficiency of career education course standards to meet the Algebra I credit requirement. **Receipt of a standard high school diploma awarded through the CTE pathway option requires the student's successful completion of at least 18 credits.**

The legislation revises the acceleration mechanism component for the school grade calculation for high schools by specifying that dual enrollment courses include career clock-hour dual enrollment courses.

The bill creates the Florida Pathways to Career Opportunities Grant Program to enable high school and Florida College System institutions to offer applied learning opportunities for students in high-demand career pathways linked to occupations that will provide students with middle-level and high-level wages. Similar language can be found in [Senate Bill 1588](#), relating to Enhancing Florida's Workforce, by Sen. Diaz.

It also increases from 15 to 30, the limit on the number of CAPE Digital Tool Certificates that must be identified annually. Additionally, the legislation restores middle grades career education and planning course requirements which were eliminated in 2017, with some modifications.

It requires district school boards to declare a "College and Career Decision Day" to recognize high school seniors and encourage them to prepare for college and pursue advanced career pathways. The bill also requires DOE to provide assistance to specified entities in notifying students, parents, and members of the community about apprenticeship and preapprenticeship opportunities.

On March 19, Senate Bill 770 passed unanimously out of the Senate Education Committee. It has two additional committees in which to be heard, Senate Innovation Industry & Technology and full Appropriations.

HB 7055: Career Education

Sponsors: PreK-12 Innovation Subcommittee; Rep. Wyman Duggan; and Rep. Ralph Massullo, Jr.

According to legislative staff, HB 7055, originally a proposed committee bill (PCB PKI 19-01), was crafted in order to help meet growing workforce demand and provide students flexibility and options to pursue advanced career pathways.

The bill revises the school grades formula to recognize career certificate clock hour dual enrollment and establishes formal career dual enrollment agreements between high schools and career centers. It offsets some high school courses by allowing students with an industry certification to earn two mathematics credits for Algebra I. It also allows for a computer science credit to substitute for a mathematics or science credit and requires a biennial review of career education courses for alignment with high school graduation requirements.

The legislation requires the Department of Education to provide assistance in increasing public awareness of apprenticeship and preapprenticeship opportunities and eliminates industry certifications that are not aligned to industry needs.

Similar to SB 770, HB 7055 establishes a “College and Career Decision Day” to recognize high school seniors for their postsecondary education and career plans. It also doubles the cap on career and professional education (CAPE) Digital Tool certificates the State Board of Education may identify for weighted FTE funding and reestablishes a middle grades career planning course requirement.

On March 6, HB 7055 passed unanimously out of the House PreK-12 Innovation Subcommittee. On Monday, March 25, it was heard in the House PreK-12 Appropriations Subcommittee and passed 11-0. It is now in the proper posture to be heard in its last committee of reference, the House Education Committee.

HB 7071: Postsecondary Workforce Education

Sponsor: Higher Education & Career Readiness Subcommittee; Rep. Amber Mariano

House Bill 7071 started as a Proposed Committee Bill (PCB HEC 19-02), which promotes apprenticeships and creates the “Strengthening Alignment between Industry and Learning (SAIL) to 60” Initiative and establishing a statewide attainment goal to increase the percentage of working-age adults (ages 25-64) who hold a high-value postsecondary certificate, degree, or training experience to 60 percent by the year 2030. The legislation renames the Higher Education Coordinating Council (HECC) as the Florida Talent Development Council, revising its membership, and would require the council to develop a strategic plan for talent development in Florida.

This legislation, similar to SB 522, creates the Florida Apprenticeship Grant (FLAG) Program, subject to an appropriation in the General Appropriation Act (GAA), to provide competitive grants to career centers, charter technical career centers, Florida College System (FCS) institutions, and other entities authorized to sponsor apprenticeship programs for the purpose of expanding existing programs and establishing new apprenticeship programs.

The bill revises the statutory characteristics of an apprenticeable occupation and modifies the requirements for the two public members appointed to the State Apprenticeship Council by the Governor to be independent of any joint or non-joint organizations. It also redefines “journeymen” as

HB 7071 continued...

“journeyworkers” and includes special provisions for veterans, minorities, and women in apprenticeship programs.

Additionally, statewide articulation agreements must provide for a reverse transfer agreement for FCS AA degree-seeking students who transfer to a state university prior to earning their associate in arts degree. Similar reverse transfer language can be found in HB 839.

House Bill 7071 also requires that each career center and FCS institution with overlapping service areas execute and annually submit to DOE a career pathways agreement for each certificate program offered by the career center.

The bill also requires each school district and FCS institution receiving state appropriations for workforce education programs to maintain adequate and accurate records for funding and expenditures.

This legislation passed unanimously out of the House Higher Education & Career Readiness Subcommittee on March 13. **On Tuesday, March 26, it was heard and passed the House Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee by a vote of 10-0.** Its next and last committee of reference is the House Education Committee.

Reverse Transfer

HB 839: Organization & Operation of State Universities

Sponsor: Rep. Ray Rodrigues

This legislation requires that the statewide articulation agreement between the State Board of Education and the Board of Governors provides for a reverse transfer agreement for FCS associate in arts degree-seeking students who transfer to a state university early or prior to earning their associate in arts (AA) degree.

If a student earned a majority of the credit hours toward an AA degree from an FCS institution, then the student must be awarded this degree by that FCS institution upon completion of the degree requirements at the state university. Similar reverse transfer language can also be found in [SB 1296](#) by Sen. Diaz, SB 1308, HB 1407, and HB 7071.

HB 839 passed unanimously out of the House Higher Education & Career Readiness Subcommittee on March 13. **On March 26, the bill was heard and passed the House Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee with amendments by a vote of 9-2 (Reps. Alexander and Joseph).** Its last committee of reference is the full Education Committee before coming to the House Floor for a vote.

One of the amendments that passed was offered by the bill sponsor and requires the State Board of Education and Florida College System institutions to submit recommendations to the Legislature regarding the development and implementation of a fully performance-based funding model. This report must be submitted by October 1, 2020.

Reverse Transfer continued...

SB 1308 / HB 1407: Pathways to College and Career Success / Postsecondary Education

Sponsors: Sen. Keith Perry and Rep. Mel Ponder

On March 19, the Senate Education Committee passed SB 1308 by a unanimous vote. This legislation requires the Commissioner of Education (commissioner) to conduct an annual review of career and technical education offerings in the K-12 education system, career centers, and the Florida College System (FCS) to determine their alignment with employer demand, postsecondary degree or certificate programs, and industry certifications. As a result of the review, the commissioner must phase out programs not aligned to the needs of employers or do not provide completers with middle- or higher-wage jobs. This review will also encourage school districts and FCS institutions to offer new programs that are in demand by employers.

In addition to reverse transfer language, this legislation would authorize a state university or FCS institution to waive tuition and fees for a student who was enrolled between 5 and 10 years ago, and who successfully completed all but the equivalent of 10 percent of the required coursework for an associate or bachelor's degree.

Senate Bill 1308 has two more committees, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Education and full Appropriations, prior to coming to the Floor for a full Senate vote.

House Bill 1407 includes the provisions stated above including performance funding for dual enrollment and collegiate high school programs for FCS institutions. This funding is contingent upon a specific appropriation in the state budget. In this bill, each FCS institution would be provided \$1,000 for each home education and private school student who completes at least one course through a dual enrollment program. Each FLCS institution would also receive \$1,000 for each student who earns an AA degree through a collegiate high school program.

House Bill 1407 has yet to be heard in any of its referred committees.

Direct Support Organizations (DSO)

SB 1744 / HB 7051: Higher Education

Sponsors: Sen. Dennis Baxley and Rep. Cord Byrd

Senate Bill 1744 requires the State Board of Education to establish criteria for the review and approval of new facilities and programs at Florida College System institutions to ensure the well-planned development, coordination, and operation of the Florida College System and to avoid duplication of facilities or programs.

This legislation also includes DSO language that would restrict the authority of our local Boards of Trustees to transfer college funds to our foundations for personal services. DSOs would also be restricted from using state funds for travel expenses. Additionally, beginning July 1, 2019, college transfers of any state appropriation to DSOs with a fund balance of greater than \$50 million may only include funds pledged for capital projects.

Additionally, the bill restricts FCS institutions and their DSOs from constructing, accepting, or purchasing property or facilities if general revenue funds will be required for operation or maintenance upon project completion or in subsequent years of operation, unless the Legislature grants approval.

Direct Support Organizations continued...

SB 1744 would require the Commissioner of Education to report to the State Board of Education any findings by the Auditor General that a district school board or Florida College System institution is acting without statutory authority or contrary to state law. The State Board of Education shall require the district school board or Florida College System institution board of trustees to document compliance with the law.

In addition to the content included in SB 1744, HB 7051 would require all FCS institutions to report annually to the Legislature the amount of state appropriations transferred to any DSO during the previous fiscal year, the purpose for which the funds were transferred and the remaining balance of any funds transferred.

SB 1744 has not yet been placed on the Senate Education Committee, its first committee of reference. It has two additional committee stops, as well—Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Education and full Appropriations.

HB 7051, the companion bill to SB 1744, was previously a proposed committee bill (PCB HEC 19-01), and passed out of the House Higher Education & Career Readiness Subcommittee on March 6 by a vote of 14-0. On March 21, the bill was heard in the House Public Integrity & Ethics Committee and passed unanimously. **On March 28, the House Education Committee, its last House committee stop, passed with amendments that would impact universities by a vote of 15-0. It is now in the proper posture to be brought up for consideration on the House Floor for a full House vote.**

Articulation

SB 194: Higher Education

Sponsors: Sen. Kelli Stargel

On March 19, the Senate Education Committee unanimously passed SB 194, legislation that would establish the “2+2” targeted pathway program. Specifically, the bill requires that by the 2019-2020 academic year, each college must execute at least one “2+2” targeted pathway articulation agreement with one or more state universities. In the same token, each state university must execute at least one “2+2” targeted pathway articulation agreement with one or more colleges. The legislation requires the “2+2” targeted pathway articulation agreement to provide students who graduate with an AA degree and who meet specified requirements guaranteed access to the state university and a baccalaureate degree program at that university, in accordance with the terms of the agreement.

Senate Bill 194 is now waiting to be placed on the agenda for the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Education. Its final committee of reference is full Appropriations.

Intercollegiate Athletics

HB 789 / SB 798: Florida College System Institutions Offering Baccalaureate Degree Programs / Baccalaureate Degree Access

Sponsors: Rep. Rene Plasencia and Sen. Debbie Mayfield

Intercollegiate Athletics continued...

HB 789 and SB 798 authorize FCS institutions that offer one or more baccalaureate degree programs the ability to participate in 4-year intercollegiate athletics. The bills would allow students enrolled in a 4-year baccalaureate program at an FCS institution to compete in their sport for 4-years without having to transfer to another institution. Additionally, under the governance of a four-year athletic governing body, a college's athletic program could offer additional scholarships based on the governing body's guidelines.

HB 789 passed out of the House Higher Education & Career Readiness Subcommittee by a unanimous vote on March 20. **It was heard in the House Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee on Tuesday, March 26, and passed by a vote of 9-0.** Its last committee of reference is the House Education Committee.

SB 798 is slated to be heard in the Senate Education Committee on Tuesday, April 2, at 10:00am. Should it pass, its remaining committees include Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Education, and full Appropriations.

Military / Veterans

HB 217 / SB 442: Postsecondary Education for Certain Military Personnel

Sponsors: Reps. Adam Hattersley & Mel Ponder and Sen. Tom Lee

This legislation would require the Board of Governors to adopt regulations and the State Board of Education to adopt rules to create a uniform system to enable servicemembers and veterans of the United States Armed Forces to earn academic college credit at public postsecondary educational institutions for college-level training, education, and experience acquired in the military.

It would also require state universities, FCS institutions, career centers operated by a school district, and charter technical centers to waive the transcript fee for active duty members and honorably discharged veterans of the United States Armed Forces, and their spouses and dependents.

HB 217 has passed all three of its referred committees by a unanimous vote. It is now ready to be brought up for consideration on the House Floor.

On March 12, SB 442 passed out of the Senate Education Committee by a vote of 8-0. **It was heard on March 26 in the Senate Military and Veterans Affairs and Space Committee and passed unanimously with a strike-all amendment. One provision in the strike-all includes language that authorizes an institution to award credit even if it is not for the purpose of earning a degree or certification. The amendment made the Senate Bill identical to the House Bill. It has one more stop, full Appropriations, before it can be considered by the full Senate.**

HB 501 / SB 1518: Alternative Treatment Options for Veterans

Sponsors: House Health Market Reform Subcommittee & Rep. Mel Ponder and Sen. Tom Wright

This legislation permits the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) to contract with a state university or Florida College System institution to provide alternative

Military / Veterans continued...

treatment options for veterans who have been certified by the VA, or any branch of the U.S. Armed Forces, as having a Traumatic Brain Injury or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Additionally, the bill requires alternative treatment services to be provided under the direction and supervision of a licensed physician, osteopathic physician, chiropractic physician, nurse, psychologist, or a clinical social worker, marriage and family therapist or mental health counselor.

House Bill 501 passed the House Health Market Reform Subcommittee 14-0 on March 19. It is on the agenda to be heard in the House Health Care Appropriations Subcommittee on Tuesday, April 2, at 1:00pm. It has one more committee of reference, the House Health & Human Services Committee.

Senate Bill 1518 authorizes the VA to contract with specified individuals and entities, including but not limited to FCS institutions, to provide alternative treatment options for veterans who have been diagnosed with service-connected PTSD or a TBI by a health care practitioner. The alternative treatment options specified in the bill are: accelerated resolution therapy, equine therapy, hyperbaric oxygen therapy, music therapy, and service animal training therapy.

Senate Bill 1518 is scheduled to be heard in the Senate Health Policy Committee on Monday, April 1, at 1:30pm. The bill has two remaining referred committees, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services and full Appropriations.

Charter Schools

HB 1197 / SB 1668: Charter Schools / School Choice

Sponsors: Rep. Jason Fischer and Sen. Travis Hutson

House Bill 1197 authorizes state universities and Florida College System (FCS) institutions to sponsor charter schools. Present limitations on charter schools operated by an FCS institution with a teacher preparation program are repealed.

The bill provides that the board of trustees of a sponsoring state university or FCS institution is a local educational agency for the purpose of receiving federal funds and accepting responsibility for all requirements in the role.

The legislation also establishes operational funding and capital outlay funding formulas for charter schools sponsored by a state university and FCS institution.

On March 19, the House PreK-12 Innovation Subcommittee passed HB 1197 by a vote of 12-2 (Reps. Fernandez & Goff-Marcil). **It is on the House Appropriations agenda for Tuesday, April 2, at 3:30pm. Its final committee stop will be the House Education Committee.**

Senate Bill 1668 has not yet been placed on a committee agenda. It has three stops: Senate Education, Appropriations Subcommittee on Education, and Appropriations.

Fee Waivers

HB 593 / SB 1164: Postsecondary Fee Waivers

Sponsors: Rep. Jay Trumbull and Sen. George Gainer

House Bill 593 would authorize FCS institutions that serve counties directly impacted by a hurricane, and who experience an enrollment decrease by more than 10 percent as a result, to waive out-of-state fees for a period of 3 years after the hurricane first made landfall. FCS students who qualify for the waiver are eligible to receive the waiver for up to 110 percent of the total number of credit hours required for the degree or certificate program in which the student is enrolled. In order to remain eligible for the fee waiver, a student may not disenroll from the institution for two or more consecutive semesters.

This legislation was drafted to assist FCS institutions serving in Hurricane Michael affected counties and are experiencing enrollment reductions as a result of the hurricane's widespread damage. The out-of-state fee waiver can assist affected FCS institutions to recruit out-of-state students to the institution.

On March 6, HB 593 passed the Higher Education & Career Readiness Subcommittee by a vote of 13-0. It is on the House Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee agenda for Monday, April 1, at 1:00pm. Its final committee is the House Education Committee.

Senate Bill 1164 is identical to HB 593. It will be heard in its first referred committee, Senate Education, on Tuesday, April 2, at 10:00am. It will have two remaining committees in which to be heard, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Education and full Appropriations.

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