

2019

Legislative Session Update

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A More In-Depth Look at House Bill 7071, Workforce Legislation

On Wednesday, April 3, the House Education Committee heard and passed a revised version of House Bill 7071, legislation relating to workforce education. The proposed committee substitute, which is basically a strike-all bill due to significant changes, included language from House Bill 7055. A core component of this legislation includes an expansion of apprenticeship and preapprenticeship programs. One of the provisions in the revised version requires the Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) to identify apprenticeship programs that could substitute for the required educational training otherwise required for occupational licensure. It also requires the Chancellor of the State University System and the Chancellor

of the FCS to develop recommendations for increasing outreach efforts and a strategy for creating and implementing a “Last Mile” scholarship program. This program would provide financial assistance to students who are within 12 credit hours of completing their first associate or baccalaureate degree. In addition to the language requiring reverse transfer, the bill would require state universities to notify students of the criteria and process for requesting an associate in arts certificate during orientation and provide additional notification to students upon completing the requirements for an associate in arts degree. Some significant provisions from HB 7055 that were amended onto HB 7071 include specific requirements for career clock-hour dual enrollment

courses and preapprenticeship programs to satisfy the acceleration component for school grades. It also specifies that a career dual enrollment agreement must determine how transportation will be provided to students who are unable to provide their own transportation. This is important to note, as it may have an impact on dual enrollment for career education programs at postsecondary institutions by increasing accessibility through school district transportation. One last piece to recognize is the requirement for the Department of Education to annually review K-12 and postsecondary career and technical education offerings and phase out certain offerings. Additional information on the modified HB 7071 can be found [here](#).

House and Senate Pass Respective Budgets

The Senate passed a \$90.3 billion budget on Wednesday, April 3, and the House passed their \$89.9 billion budget on Thursday, April 4. There is close to a \$400 million gap between proposed budgets. With regards to higher education funding, the House and Senate are approximately \$255 million apart. The **House** provides minimal to no additional funding to FCS institution base budgets from last year, maintains the \$60 million in performance funding (\$30 million state/\$30 million institutional), and cut 2.5% from state university system institutions budgets. The **Senate**, however, provides an increase of close to \$104 million, which includes numerous changes such as \$15.5 million in compression, \$22.5 million in general operating funds through the formula, and \$40 million for performance funding (\$28 million for “2+2” Student Success Incentive Funds and \$12 million for the Work Florida Incentive Fund). There would not be any institutional investment for performance. More details on these funds can be found [here](#) (pages 16, 39-40, and 97-104).

With regards to Public Education Capital Outlay (PECO), there has been a recommendation by the House to remove some college and university construction projects from the list, even if the project had received funds in previous years from the state. Additionally, only PECO projects that were “approved” in Section 13 by the House would be eligible to use their carry forward funds, as authorized in proposed HB 5501, to complete these projects. No PECO funds were allocated for FCS or SUS institutions—neither new construction nor deferred maintenance. Information on this recommendation can be found in [House Bill 5001](#), the General Appropriations Act, on page 400 of the bill, sections 13, 14, & 15. Please note that this language is not in the Senate proposed budget, [Senate Bill 2500](#).

Additionally, budget conforming bills, such as HB 5501, were temporarily postponed and not brought up for consideration on the House Floor during the debate on the House proposed budget. Normally, budget conforming bills are heard during this time. It has been stated that this was due to Senate President Bill Galvano believing that policy bills should be heard as policy bills and budget bills as budget bills. Some budget conforming bills combine both policy and budget in their language. Now that each proposed budget has been passed by their respective Chambers, it is expected that Budget Conference may begin as early as April 22. This will occur once budget allocations are agreed upon by both the House and Senate.

LEGISLATION OF INTEREST

Appropriations

HB 550I: Higher Education/Public Education Capital Outlay (PECO)

Sponsor: Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee; Rep. Randy Fine

House Bill 550I was placed on Special Order to be heard by the House along with HB 500I, the General Appropriations Act, on Wednesday, April 3; however, it was temporarily postponed and is yet to be brought up for consideration. A more detailed summary of the bill can be found [here](#). HB 550I 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 550I 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 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.

Subcommittees are no longer meeting, so the bill is not expected to be heard in the House; however, on Monday, April 1, the appropriation request was placed into the proposed Senate Budget, **SB 2500** on page 6—Line Item 18, through an [amendment](#) that was filed by Sen. Rob Bradley, the Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman. It provides \$18,668,823 in nonrecurring funds from the PECO and Debt Service Trust Fund for the Florida College System Risk Management Insurance Consortium. It is expected that this item will come up during Budget Conference.

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. **On Monday, April 1, HB 189 was heard by the House Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee. An amendment was added to the bill that would exempt private schools from paying for tuition for their dual enrolled students. The bill sponsor, Rep. Zika, admitted during committee that the cost to colleges could be anywhere from \$5-7 million, as that would include home school dual enrolled students taking classes, as well. Colleges already absorb the tuition cost for dual enrolled home school students. Currently, FCS institutions serve close to 3,000 private school dual enrolled students. Most tuition costs for dual enrollment include \$71.98 per credit hour. If the cost per credit hour is multiplied by 3, the cost per course is close to \$216. If the cost for a class is multiplied by 3,000 students, the amount is approximately \$648,000. An estimated number of classes has not yet been identified, but if one student takes a course per semester (Fall, Spring, and Summer), then the colleges would absorb close to \$1,944,000. In the [analysis](#) filed by House staff, it states, “There may be costs to public postsecondary institutions associated with reporting requirements included in the bill, but can likely be absorbed within existing appropriations.”**

On March 19, HB 189 passed out of the House PreK-12 Innovation Subcommittee 13-0. **It is now on the agenda and is expected to be heard on Tuesday, April 9, in the House Education Committee, its last committee stop, at 2:00pm.**

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. **To date, no funding has been identified to offset the tuition costs mentioned above. There is \$550,000 in both the House and Senate proposed budgets to help offset some of the home school instructional materials costs.**

SB 1342 was heard and amended in the Senate Education Committee on Tuesday, April 2, and passed by a unanimous vote. The amendments would modify Florida law regarding student eligibility criteria for participating in dual enrollment by changing the GPA requirement from 3.0 to 2.5. It is important to note that current law, Ch. 1007.271(3), Florida Statutes, states student eligibility requirements for initial and continued enrollment in [career certificate](#) dual enrollment courses is a 2.0 unweighted high school GPA. The amendment to SB 1342 *only* pertains to courses taken for [college credit](#) dual enrollment courses. Additionally, the bill would prohibit a district school board and Florida College System (FCS) institution from limiting student participation in dual enrollment, including early college programs, but creates a waiver from such prohibition based on capacity to accommodate all eligible students. A more in depth summary of SB 1342 can be found [here](#).

SB 1342 is on the agenda to be heard in the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Education at 1:30pm on Tuesday, April 9. It will have one more stop, full Senate Appropriations, prior to being considered by the full Senate.

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 program sponsors who do not require assistance from a career educational institution. similar FLAG language can be found in [HB 707I](#).

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

HB 661/SB 770 continued...

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. It 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. **Much of the language in SB 770 can also be found in HB 7055 and HB 7071.**

On March 19, Senate Bill 770 passed unanimously out of the Senate Education Committee. **It has been placed on the Senate Innovation Industry & Technology Committee agenda for Wednesday, April 10, at 1:30pm. If it passes that committee, its final stop will be Senate Appropriations.**

HB 7055: Career Education

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

As mentioned on page 1, significant portions of HB 7055 were amended onto HB 7071 in the House Education Committee on April 3. According to legislative staff, HB 7055 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 and now HB 7071, 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

[HB 7055 continued...](#)

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. **While it was in the proper posture to be placed on the agenda in its last committee of reference, the House Education Committee, it was not heard as HB 7055. Instead, as previously mentioned, language from the bill was amended onto HB 7071.**

HB 7071: Postsecondary Workforce Education

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

House Bill 7071 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 “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 has passed unanimously out of the House Higher Education & Career Readiness Subcommittee and the House Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee. On April 3, HB 7071 was heard and passed out of the House Education Committee by a unanimous vote with significant amendments \(please see page 1\).](#)

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.

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.

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). **It is now slated to be heard on Tuesday, April 9, at 2:00pm in its last committee of reference, the House Education Committee.**

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

Sponsors: Sen. Keith Perry and Rep. Mel Ponder

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.

On March 19, the Senate Education Committee passed SB 1308 by a unanimous vote. **It has been placed on the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Education agenda to be heard on Tuesday, April 9, at 1:30pm. Its last stop prior to coming to the Floor for a full Senate vote, is the full Appropriations Committee.**

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 for

[SB 1308 / HB 1407 continued...](#)

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. This language is also included in HB 5501.

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. **Also included in SB 1744 and HB 7051 is the prohibition of FCS boards of trustees to authorize the use of state funds for travel expenses by any FCS institution DSO.**

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. The bill has passed the House Public Integrity & Ethics Committee and House Education Committee without opposition. **HB 7051 has been placed on the House Special Order Calendar to be heard on Wednesday, April 10.**

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

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 and the House Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee by unanimous votes. Its last committee of reference is the House Education Committee.

SB 798 was heard in the Senate Education Committee on Tuesday, April 2, and passed by a unanimous vote. 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 Education to adopt rules to create a uniform system to enable servicemembers and veterans of the

[HB 217 / SB 442 continued...](#)

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. The legislation would authorize an institution to award credit even if it is not for the purpose of earning a degree or certification.

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.

SB 442 has passed out of the Senate Education Committee and the Senate Military and Veterans Affairs and Space Committee by unanimous votes. 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: 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 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 has passed the House Health Market Reform Subcommittee and the House Health Care Appropriations Subcommittee by unanimous votes. It is scheduled to be heard in the House Health & Human Services Committee on Tuesday, April 9, at 2:00pm.

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.

On April 1, an amendment was added to Senate Bill 1518, which states that a veteran would qualify to receive alternative treatment if he or she can demonstrate that treatment services were previously sought for PTSD or TBI through the VA or through private health insurance. It also adds reporting requirements for the VA detailing each alternative treatment provided. The bill passed the Senate Health Policy Committee by a 10-0 vote. It is now scheduled to be heard on Tuesday, April 9, at 4:00pm in the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services. Its final stop is full Appropriations prior to being considered by the full Senate.

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 Tuesday, April 2, the House Appropriations Committee heard and passed HB 1197 but not without debate. Some members stated their concern for bypassing local school district boards and going directly to the State Board of Education for charter school approval. The final vote was 19-10, along party lines. Its last committee stop is the House Education Committee. On March 19, the House PreK-12 Innovation Subcommittee passed HB 1197 by a vote of 12-2 (Reps. Fernandez & Goff-Marcil).

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

On Monday, April 1, the House Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee heard and passed HB 593 with some changes. The amendments provide that a student would only remain eligible to receive the out-of-state fee waiver if he or she does not disenroll from the institution for more than one semester, and out-of-state students enrolled under this fee waiver would not be included in the enrollment totals for these institutions by the Education Estimating Conference on Florida College System enrollment.

The bill 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.

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.

HB 593 / SB 1164 continued...

The following Florida College System (FCS) institutions serve Hurricane Michael affected counties:

- Chipola College (Calhoun, Holmes, Jackson, Liberty, and Washington counties).
- Gulf Coast State College (Bay, Franklin and Gulf counties).
- North Florida Community College (Taylor County).
- Tallahassee Community College (Gadsden, Leon, and Wakulla counties).

Of the four colleges serving Hurricane Michael impacted counties, Chipola College and Gulf Coast State College reported decreases in enrollment for Fall 2018 and Spring 2019 semesters.

On March 6, HB 593 passed the Higher Education & Career Readiness Subcommittee by a vote of 13-0. HB 593 has been placed on the House Education Committee agenda to be heard on Tuesday, April 9, at 2:00pm.

Senate Bill 1164 was amended in its first committee, Senate Education, on April 2. Two of the amendments include similar language as the revisions recently made to HB 593. The third amendment that passed clarifies Florida College System (FCS) institutions' authority to grant hurricane related out-of-state fee waivers to specify that such institutions may waive out-of-state fees for the purpose of recruiting students for a period of 3 years, beginning 180 days after the date on which the hurricane directly impacted the counties served by the FCS institution.

SB 1164 has two remaining committees in which to be heard, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Education and full Appropriations.

Public Records

HB 7115: Public Records and Meetings/Postsecondary Education Executive Search

Sponsors: House State Affairs Committee and Rep. Blaise Ingolia

House Bill 7115 was filed originally as a proposed committee bill (**PCB SAC 19-02**).

This legislation would keep from the public the names of those who would be applying for president and provost positions at state colleges and universities. Similar legislation was filed by the House in 2017 but was never considered by the Senate. The names of those who applied but did not make it for final interviews would not be made public. The names of any applicants who become finalists must be released by the state university or FCS institution no later than 30 days before the date of the meeting at which a final action or vote is to be taken on the employment of the applicants. There were numerous members of the public, many who are faculty members, who spoke in opposition to the bill. An analysis on this bill can be found [here](#).

PCB SAC 19-02 was heard by the House State Affairs Committee on Thursday, April 4. It passed unanimously and became HB 7115. No additional referred committees have been assigned.