

MARCH 11, 2024

Week 9

SESSION WRAP UP

The 2024 legislative session concluded on time last week, on Friday, March 8, 2024. This year, the Legislature passed 325 of the 1,902 bills that were filed. The approved bills will be sent to the Governor over the next few weeks for signature or veto. The Legislature also approved a final budget totalling \$117.46 billion. The final budget will be presented to the Governor for approval. If the Governor exercises his line-item veto power, we will see those changes in April.

Highlights from the Higher Education budget include:

- Funding for the inclusion of the Florida College System into State Group Health Insurance Plan
- Florida College System Program Fund - \$1.6 billion
- Florida College System Projects - \$133.6 million
 - Including \$2.8 million for FSCJ's Nursing Program Facilities at North Campus
- Student Success Incentive Funds - \$30 million
 - 2+2 Student Success Incentive Funds - \$17 million
 - Work Florida Incentive Funds - \$13 million
- Nursing Education Initiatives - \$59 million
- CAPE Incentive Funds for students who earn Industry Certifications - \$20 million
- Graduation Alternative to Traditional Education (GATE) Program - \$5 million

Bill Tracking

SB 62	The bill amends Florida Statute 1009.21 ("Determination of resident status for tuition purposes.") to allow individuals who have been incarcerated to use evidence of being incarcerated in Florida to establish in state residency to obtain in-state tuition.	SB passed by House and Senate. Not yet sent to the Governor.
HB 149	The bill amends Florida Statute 287.055 ("Acquisition of professional architectural, engineering, landscape architectural, or surveying and mapping services; definitions; procedures; contingent fees prohibited; penalties.") to allow governmental entities (including state colleges) to enter into contracts with construction management entities and program management entities on a continuing contract so long as the individual projects do not exceed \$10M each.	HB passed by House and Senate. Not yet sent to the Governor.
HB 151	The bill amends Florida Statute 121.101 to provide for a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for FRS pension plan members beginning July 1, 2024, which will adjust every July 1 thereafter. The bill also allows retirees, effective from July 1, 2024, to be reemployed after meeting the termination definition without waiting for 6 months to receive both a salary and retirement benefits, with stipulations, The bill increases member contribution rates, increases the allocations to the investment plan accounts for each membership class, and closes the FRS Preservation of Benefits Plan to new members effective July 1, 2026.	HB passed by House and Senate. Not yet sent to the Governor.
HB 917	The bill provides a uniform standard for counties and municipalities to recognize a journey worker. The bill allows district school boards to provide career and industry networking opportunities as an alternative to career fairs. The bill authorizes a student who earns credit for one year of related technical instruction for a registered apprenticeship or preapprenticeship program to use such credit to satisfy high school graduation credit requirements. The bill authorizes an exemption from the career education basic skills assessment to certain students with a private school diploma or home education affidavit. The bill adds to the duties of the Office of Reimagining Education and Career Help to study the status of CTE in each school district within the state and coordinate a statewide report on the supply and demand of nursing occupations. The bill repeals the Florida Talent Development Council. The bill also requires the DOE to convene a CTE workgroup that will identify best practices in CTE pathways from middle school to high school and identify three math pathways that align with skills for success in the corresponding academic programs, postsecondary education, and careers.	HB passed by House and Senate. Not yet sent to the Governor.

HB 1285	<p>As it relates to the FCS, the bill amends Florida Statute 1007.25 to allow for the State Board of Education to set requirements for specialized transfer degrees, and a process for applying for a specialized transfer degree that requires more than 60 hours of coursework for purposes of transfer. The bill repeals the Florida College System institution employment equity accountability program found in Florida Statute 1012.86. The bill authorizes proof of a homestead exemption in Florida to serve as a single, conclusive piece of evidence for a student to prove residency for tuition purposes. The bill also authorizes a pilot program for three FCS institutions to charge an amount not to exceed \$290 per credit hour for nonresident tuition and fees for distance learning. FCS institutions may phase in this nonresident tuition rate by degree program. The bill prevents public postsecondary institutions from prohibiting student employment, with exceptions. As it relates to the Stanley G. Tate Florida Prepaid College Program, the bill revises the definition of the term "tuition differential." The bill also prohibits FCS and SUS board trustees from having business dealings with any entity under their purview during their membership.</p>	HB passed by House and Senate. Not yet sent to the Governor.
HB 1291	<p>The bill amends Florida Statute 1004.04 ("Public accountability and state approval for teacher preparation programs") and 1004.85 ("Postsecondary educator preparation institutes). The bill prohibits teacher preparation program courses from distorting significant historical events or include a curriculum or instruction that teaches identity politics, violates Florida Statute 1000.05, or is based on theories that systemic racism, sexism, oppression, and privilege are inherent in the institutions of the United States and were created to maintain social, political, and economic inequities.</p>	HB passed by House and Senate. Not yet sent to the Governor.
HB 7007	<p>The bill renews the public records and public meeting exemption found in Florida Statute 1004.0962 ("Campus emergency response of a public postsecondary educational institution; public records exemption; public meetings exemption.") It removes certain sections under which plans would be disclosed.</p>	HB passed by House and Senate. Not yet sent to the Governor.
SB 7004	<p>As it related to the FCS, the bill deletes the requirement for the SBE to establish performance metrics for the FCS and removes language related to the annual evaluation of the executive director of the FCS. The bill eliminates the SBE's responsibility to establish the cost of tuition and fees for developmental education and for credit instruction that could have been counted toward AA and AS degrees. The bill also removes outdated language related to the authorization for St. Petersburg College to establish one or more bachelor's degrees.</p>	SB passed by House and Senate. Not yet sent to the Governor.




SB 7032	<p>This bill creates the Graduation Alternative to Traditional Education (GATE) Program, GATE Scholarship Program, and GATE Student Success Incentive Fund. All three programs are aimed at providing high school students the opportunity to earn postsecondary course credits at no cost to the student while pursuing the completion of a standard high school diploma or equivalent credential. The bill provides eligibility criteria for students to enroll in the GATE Program. The bill exempts students that are enrolled in the GATE program from the payment of tuition, fees, and the costs of instructional materials. To assist Florida College System institutions, school districts, and charter technical career centers in administering the GATE Program, the GATE Scholarship Program reimburses participating institutions for the tuition and fees and instructional materials for students enrolled in the GATE program. Additionally, the bill provides incentive funding for institutions through the GATE Student Success Incentive Fund. The bill specifies that completion of the GATE Program for purposes of performance funding requires a student to earn a standard high school diploma or high school equivalency diploma and a credential on the Master Credentials List within 3 years.</p>	SB passed by Senate and House. Not yet sent to Governor.
HB 473	<p>The bill creates Florida Statute 768.401 ("Limitation on liability for cybersecurity incidents"). It provides that counties, municipalities, political subdivisions (including FCS institutions), and commercial entities that comply with Florida 501.171 and the standards listed in the statute are not liable to those whose data is taken for cybersecurity incidents. Defendants in lawsuits have the burden of demonstrating compliance with the law.</p>	HB passed by House and Senate. Not yet sent to the Governor.
HB 1645	<p>As to the Florida College System, the bill amends Florida Statute 286.29 ("Energy guidelines for Climate-friendly public business.") to eliminate subsection 4, which requires the FCS institution, when using the state purchasing plan, to first define the intended purpose as one of many categories and then select a vehicle for the greatest fuel efficiency available for a given use class when fuel economy data are available.</p>	HB passed by House and Senate. Not yet sent to the Governor.
SB 1746	<p>The bill revises public employee regulations. The bill requires public employees desiring to be in an employee organization to submit a signed form to the bargaining agent, including specific information about dues and the rights of employees regarding union membership. The bill requires employee organizations to submit current financial statements prepared by an independent CPA for registration and renewal. The bill also requires employee organizations representing less than 60% of unit employees to petition for recertification and allows public employers or employees to challenge the accuracy of an organization's renewal application.</p>	SB passed by House and Senate. Not yet sent to the Governor
HB 5101	<p>SB 2516 initially included language to include the Florida College System institutions in the State Group Health Insurance Program. SB 2516 did not pass, but the language was included in HB 5101. The bill adds FCS institution officers and employees, retired FCS institution officers and employees, surviving spouses of deceased institution officers and employees, and terminated FCS institution employees or individuals with continuation coverage who are enrolled in an insurance plan offered by the state group insurance program. The initial open enrollment period for employees of FCS institutions shall begin as soon as practical, but coverage must begin during the 2025 plan year no later than July 31, 2025. The minimum participation period for FCS institutions must be for at least 3 plan years.</p>	HB passed by House and Senate. Not yet sent to the Governor.

SB 7016

The bill creates the TEACH program in Florida Statute 409.91256. It requires the Agency for Health Care Administration to develop an application process for federally qualified health centers, community mental health centers, rural health clinics, and certified community behavioral health clinics to apply for funds to offset administrative costs and loss of revenue associated with establishing, maintaining, or expanding a clinical training program. The facility must agree to, at a minimum, provide appropriate supervision or precepting for one or more of: allopathic or osteopathic residents pursuing a primary care specialty; dental residents; advanced practice registered nursing students pursuing a primary care specialty; nursing students; allopathic or osteopathic medical students; dental students; dental hygiene students; physician assistant students; behavioral health students, including students studying psychology, clinical social work, marriage and family therapy, or mental health counseling. Qualified facilities must provide preference for residents and students enrolled in Florida schools or whose state of legal residence is Florida. Qualified facilities may be reimbursed to offset the administrative costs or lost revenue associated with training students and residents who are enrolled in an accredited educational or residency program in Florida. The program sunsets in 2034. The bill also expands the LINE program. It would include independent schools, colleges, or universities with an accredited nursing program. Additionally, the bill increases the passage rate for the Nursing License Examination, from 70% to 75%, that is required for LPN, associate of science in nursing, and bachelor of science in nursing programs to participate in the LINE Fund.

Passed by Senate and House. Not yet sent to the Governor.

If you have any questions or comments about bills being tracked or other matters not included in the update, please feel free to contact Taylor Mejia, Director of Government and Community Relations.

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