

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Appropriations

BILL: SB 7070
 INTRODUCER: Education Committee and Senator Diaz
 SUBJECT: K-12 Education
 DATE: April 17, 2019 REVISED: _____

| | ANALYST | STAFF DIRECTOR | REFERENCE | ACTION |
|----|--------------------------------|----------------|-----------|---------------------------------------|
| | Bouck, Brick, Graf, Olenick | Sikes | | ED Submitted as Committee Bill |
| 1. | Underhill | Elwell | AED | Recommend: Fav/CS |
| 2. | Underhill | Kynoch | AP | Pre-meeting |

I. Summary:

SB 7070 establishes and modifies K-12 education programs to support students and families, public schools, and teachers. The bill expands educational choice and opportunity for low-income families, supports public schools by expanding student support services and reducing regulations, and benefits teachers by removing teacher certification barriers and providing incentive awards. Specifically, the bill:

- Provides additional educational options and support for families by:
 - Creating the Family Empowerment Scholarship to help a specified number of students from low-income families attend an eligible private school and to reduce the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship waitlist.
 - Authorizing unallocated funds under the Hope Scholarship Program to be used to fund the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship.
- Provides support for public schools, teachers, and principals by:
 - Modifying the Best and Brightest Teachers and Principals Scholarship Programs to provide recruitment, retention, and recognition bonus funds to teachers, and modifying awards to principals based on the academic improvement of schools.
 - Modifying teacher certification requirements relating to the general knowledge examination and requiring changes to specified certification examination fees.
 - Removing school district requirements relating to an educational plant survey and cost per student station restrictions when only local funds are used for facility construction.
 - Modifying funding for wraparound services by establishing a categorical program to help district-managed turnaround schools offer services to improve the academic and community welfare of students and families, subject to a school plan.
 - Promoting the expansion of, and funding for, community schools to engage and support parents and community organizations to improve student learning and well-being.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2019.

II. Present Situation:

The present situation for the relevant portions of the bill is discussed under the Effect of Proposed Changes of this bill analysis.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Family Empowerment Scholarship

Present Situation

Florida law has established scholarship programs to promote school choice and assist parents in the placement of their children in diverse educational settings.¹ Currently, the following four state school choice scholarship programs are available to students to attend private schools in the state:

- The Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program (FTC scholarship program) was established in 2001.² The FTC scholarship program enables corporate taxpayers to make private, voluntary contributions to non-profit scholarship-funding organizations (SFOs), which provide scholarships to expand educational opportunities for families that have limited financial resources.³ During the 2017-2018 school year, 108,098 students attended 1,818 private schools with an FTC scholarship.⁴
- The John M. McKay Scholarship for Students with Disabilities Program (McKay scholarship program) was established in 2002.⁵ The McKay scholarship program provides a parent of a student with a disability⁶ who has an individual educational plan or a 504 accommodation plan the option to attend a public school other than the one to which the student is assigned or to receive a scholarship to a private school of choice.⁷ The program is administered by the Department of Education (DOE).⁸ During the 2017-2018 school year, 31,044 special needs students attended 1,482 private schools with a McKay scholarship.⁹
- The Gardiner Scholarship Program was established in 2014¹⁰ to provide the parent of an eligible child¹¹ with a disability options to better meet the individual educational needs of the

¹ Sections 1002.385, 1002.39, 1002.395, 1002.40, and 1002.411, F.S.

² Section 1002.395, F.S.; *see s. 5, ch. 2001-225, L.O.F.*

³ Section 1002.395(1)(b), F.S.

⁴ Florida Department of Education, *Fast Facts & Program Statistics* (Sep. 2018), available at <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/5606/urlt/FTC-Sept-2018.pdf>.

⁵ Section 104, ch. 2002-387, L.O.F.

⁶ Students with disabilities include K-12 students who are documented as having an intellectual disability; a speech impairment; a language impairment; a hearing impairment, including deafness; a visual impairment, including blindness; a dual sensory impairment; an orthopedic impairment; another health impairment; an emotional or behavioral disability; a specific learning disability, including, but not limited to, dyslexia, dyscalculia, or developmental aphasia; a traumatic brain injury; a developmental delay; or autism spectrum disorder. Section 1002.39(1)(b), F.S.

⁷ Section 1002.39(1), F.S.

⁸ *Id.* at (13).

⁹ Florida Department of Education, *Fact Sheet – McKay Scholarship Program* (Sep. 2018), available at <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/5606/urlt/McKay-Sept.pdf>.

¹⁰ Section 16, ch. 2014-184, L.O.F.

¹¹ Section 1002.385(1) and (3), F.S.

child.¹² Funds are distributed to a qualified SFO to establish accounts for eligible students.¹³ During the 2017-2018 school year, 10,258 students¹⁴ received the Gardiner scholarship.

- The Hope Scholarship Program was established in 2018¹⁵ to provide the parent of a public school student who was subjected to an incident of battery, harassment, hazing, bullying, kidnapping, physical attack, robbery, sexual offense, harassment, assault, battery, threat, intimidation, or fighting at school, as defined by the DOE, with the option to transfer the student to another public school or a scholarship to attend an eligible private school.¹⁶ To date, there have been 166 applications and a total of 91 students awarded the scholarship.¹⁷

Parent and Student Responsibilities for Program Participation

For a student to participate in state scholarship programs, the parent must meet certain conditions specified in law. For instance, the parent must:¹⁸

- Comply with the private schools policies;
- Request the scholarship at least 60 days prior to the date of the first scholarship payment, and;
- Notify the school district when the parent withdraws his or her student to attend an eligible private school.

Additionally, a student must:

- Take the norm referenced assessment offered by the private school or other statewide assessments as appropriate; and
- Remain in attendance throughout the school year.

Private School Eligibility and Obligations

A private school that chooses to participate in a state scholarship program must comply with certain statutory requirements.¹⁹

¹² Students with disabilities include K-12 students who are documented as having Autism spectrum disorder, as defined in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition, published by the American Psychiatric Association; cerebral palsy, as defined in s. 393.063(6); Down syndrome, as defined in s. 393.063(15); an intellectual disability, as defined in s. 393.063(24); Phelan-McDermid syndrome, as defined in s. 393.063(28); Prader-Willi syndrome, as defined in s. 393.063(29); spina bifida, as defined in s. 393.063(40); being a high-risk child, as defined in s. 393.063(23)(a); muscular dystrophy; Williams syndrome; rare diseases which affect patient populations of fewer than 200,000 individuals in the United States, as defined by the National Organization for Rare Disorders; anaphylaxis; deaf; visually impaired; traumatic brain injured; hospital or homebound; or identification as dual sensory impaired, as defined by rules of the State Board of Education and evidenced by reports from local school districts. The term “hospital or homebound” includes a student who has a medically diagnosed physical or psychiatric condition or illness, as defined by the state board in rule, and who is confined to the home or hospital for more than 6 months. Section 1002.385(2)(d), F.S.

¹³ Section 1002.385(12)(e), F.S.

¹⁴ Florida Department of Education, *Fact Sheet – The Gardiner Scholarship Program* (Dec. 2017), available at <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/5606/urlt/Gardiner.pdf>.

¹⁵ Section 16, ch. 2018-6, L.O.F.

¹⁶ Section 1002.40(1), F.S.

¹⁷ Presentation to the Committee on Education, The Florida Senate (Feb. 5, 2019), *Step Up For Students*, available at http://www.flsenate.gov/PublishedContent/Committees/2018-2020/ED/MeetingRecords/MeetingPacket_4388.pdf at 80.

¹⁸ Sections 1002.395(10), 1002.39(5), 1002.385(11), 1002.40(6), F.S.

¹⁹ Requirements include notifying the department of its intent to participate in the scholarship program; providing to the department or SFO all documentation required for a student’s participation prior to scholarship payment; meeting the applicable state and local health, safety, and welfare laws, code, and rules; employing teachers who meet specified

Accordingly, a private school that chooses to participate in a state scholarship program must submit to the DOE a Scholarship Compliance Form²⁰ and has 60 days to resolve any outstanding compliance issues.²¹ To renew the school's eligibility for participation in a state scholarship program, the participating private school must submit the Scholarship Compliance Form, Private School Annual Survey,²² and fiscal soundness documentation.²³

During the 2017-2018 school year, 2,650 private schools filed the annual private school database survey form to register with the DOE.²⁴ During that same year, 1,978 private schools participated in at least one state scholarship program,²⁵ serving approximately 151,059 students.²⁶

School District Obligations

Generally, school districts are required to notify parents of scholarship opportunities available under the various scholarship programs and, if the family chooses participate in the statewide assessment program, to make such assessments available.²⁷

Department of Education Obligations

Florida law requires that the Department of Education (DOE) oversee certain aspects of state scholarship programs. For instance, the DOE must:²⁸

- Cross-check students against public school enrollment data and each scholarship program to avoid duplication;
- Approve nationally norm-referenced tests;
- Monitor private school compliance and take administrative action when warranted;
- Upon request of an eligible private school, provide at no cost to the school the statewide assessment and any related materials for administering the assessment;

requirements; demonstrating fiscal soundness and accountability; each employee and contracted personnel with direct student contact, upon employment or engagement to provide services, to undergo a state and national background screening. Section 1002.421, F.S.

²⁰ The Scholarship Compliance Form delineates private school reporting requirements specified pursuant to s. 1002.42, F.S., and statutory and regulatory requirements related to the areas of school location and contact information; school ownership; affiliation; financial solvency; school administration; school staffing; school program; student health, safety, and welfare; student records; school facility; and submission of the scholarship compliance form. Rule 6A-6.03315(4), F.A.C.

²¹ Rule 6A-6.03315(3), F.A.C.

²² The Department of Education must organize, maintain, and annually update a database of educational institutions within the state coming within the provisions of this section. There must be included in the database of each institution the name, address, and telephone number of the institution; the type of institution; the names of administrative officers; the enrollment by grade or special group (e.g., career education and exceptional child education); the number of graduates; the number of instructional and administrative personnel. Section 1002.42(2)(a), F.S.

²³ Fiscal soundness is demonstrated by filing with the Department of Education a surety bond or letter of credit for the amount equal to the scholarship funds for any quarter. Section 1002.421(1)(f), F.S.

²⁴ Florida Department of Education, *Florida's Private Schools – 2017-18 Annual Report*, available at <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7562/urlt/PS-AnnualReport1718.pdf> at 2.

²⁵ Staff analysis based on 1,978 private schools that participated in at least one state scholarship program during 2017-2018 school year. Email, Florida Department of Education (Jan. 12, 2018)

²⁶ Florida Department of Education, *Facts and Figures – 2017-18, Florida Tax Credit, McKay, Gardiner*, available at <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/5606/urlt/FTC-Sept-2018.pdf> at 1, <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/5606/urlt/McKay-Sept.pdf> at 1, <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/5606/urlt/Gardiner.pdf> at 1.

²⁷ See ss. 1002.385(7), 1002.395(10), 1002.40(6), 1002.411(6), F.S.

²⁸ See generally ss. 1002.39 and 1002.421, F.S.

- Process and issue McKay scholarship payments; and
- Ensure a private school meets the accountability provisions of s. 1002.421, F.S.

Scholarship Funding and Payment

The DOE administers the John M. McKay Scholarship for Students with Disabilities Program.²⁹ The program is funded through the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP), and the scholarship is equal to the portion of the amount that a student would generate through the FEFP at his or her assigned public school or the private school's tuition, whichever is less.³⁰ The DOE processes and issues McKay scholarship payment at least 4 times per year with an average of 30,000 checks issued each quarter.³¹

The DOE approves eligible nonprofit organizations as SFOs to administer the other three scholarship programs that allow students to attend a private school.³² SFOs administer the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship, Gardiner Scholarship, and Hope Scholarship. The Gardiner Scholarship is funded with general revenue funds in the General Appropriations Act with an average award of \$10,418 per scholarship.³³ The Florida Tax Credit Scholarship is funded via corporate tax credits to private entities that receive a dollar-for-dollar tax credit on five different state taxes for contributions to SFOs. Full scholarships are worth 88, 92 and 96 percent of the state average unweighted full-time equivalent (FTE) funding amount in the FEFP for public school students, which is \$6,519 for grades K-5, \$6,815 for grades 6-8, and \$7,111 for grades 9-12 in the 2018-2019 fiscal year. The Hope Scholarship is funded via a tax credit contribution on the purchase of a motor vehicle. The Hope Scholarship began receiving contributions October 1, 2018, and, to date, over \$14.1 million has been contributed.³⁴

Effect of Proposed Changes

Scholarship Eligibility

The bill creates s. 1002.394, F.S., establishing the Family Empowerment Scholarship Program (FES) to expand educational opportunities for children of families with limited financial resources. The bill specifies that a student is eligible for an FES if the student meets the following criteria:

- The student is on a direct certification list;³⁵ or
- The student's household income does not exceed 260 percent of the federal poverty level; or

²⁹ Department of Education, *Presentation before the Senate Education Committee 2/5/2019*, available at http://www.flsenate.gov/PublishedContent/Committees/2018-2020/ED/MeetingRecords/MeetingPacket_4388.pdf, at 61.

³⁰ Section 1002.39(10), F.S.

³¹ Department of Education, *Presentation before the Senate Education Committee 2/5/2019*, available at http://www.flsenate.gov/PublishedContent/Committees/2018-2020/ED/MeetingRecords/MeetingPacket_4388.pdf, at slide 13, titled "Department Responsibilities," at 61.

³² See ss. 1002.385, 1002.39, 1002.395, and 1002.40.

³³ Florida Department of Education, *Fact Sheet – The Gardiner Scholarship Program* (Dec. 2017), available at <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/5606/urlt/Gardiner.pdf>.

³⁴ Step Up For Students, *Presentation before the Senate Education Committee 2/5/2019*, available at http://www.flsenate.gov/PublishedContent/Committees/2018-2020/ED/MeetingRecords/MeetingPacket_4388.pdf, at 80.

³⁵ "Direct certification list" means the certified list of children who qualify for the food assistance program, the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Program, or the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations provided to the Department of Education by the Department of Children and Families.

- The student is currently placed, or during the previous fiscal year was placed, in foster care or in out-of-home care, regardless of the student's household income-level; and
- The student is eligible to enroll in kindergarten or has spent the prior school year in attendance at a public school.³⁶

In addition, to be eligible for a FES, a student cannot receive any other educational scholarship and must not be enrolled in a:

- Public school or school operating for the purpose of providing educational services to youth in a Department of Juvenile Justice commitment program;
- Home education program or private tutoring program as defined in law; or
- Virtual school, correspondence school, or distance learning program that receives state funds.

The bill also specifies that a scholarship recipient is eligible to participate until the student graduates from high school or attains the age of 21 years, whichever occurs first.

Parents and Student Responsibilities for Program Participation

Similar to other existing state scholarship programs such as the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship³⁷ and the McKay Scholarship program,³⁸ to participate in the FES Program, a parent must:

- Obtain acceptance for admission to a private school and request a scholarship from the DOE at least 60 days before the date of the first scholarship payment;
- Inform the applicable school district;
- Comply with private school policies;
- Ensure that the participating student takes the norm-referenced assessment test. The parent may also choose to have the student participate in the statewide assessments.
 - If a parent chooses to have their child participate in the statewide assessments the parent will be responsible for transportation to the assessment site.
- Restrictively endorse the scholarship warrant to the private school for deposit into the account of the private school.

Additionally, students must remain in attendance throughout the year unless excused by the school for illness or good cause.

Private School Eligibility and Obligations

Similar to other existing state scholarship programs, the bill requires private schools participating in the FES to comply with the state choice scholarship program accountability provisions in s. 1002.421, F.S., and requires private schools to annually administer or make provisions for students in grades 3 through 10 to take one of the nationally norm-referenced tests identified by the DOE or the statewide assessments.

³⁶ "Prior school year in attendance" means that the student was enrolled and reported by a school district for funding during the preceding October and February FEFP surveys in kindergarten through grade 12. This provision does not apply to a member of the United States Armed Forces who transfers to a school in this state due to a parent's permanent change of station orders, nor does it apply to a foster child who otherwise meets other eligibility requirements.

³⁷ Section 1002.395(7), F.S.

³⁸ Section 1002.39(2)(b) and (8), F.S.

School District and Department of Education Obligations

The DOE and the school districts must publish specified information about the FES on their respective website homepages. School districts must inform all households receiving free and reduced lunch about the FES by April 1 of each year. Schools districts must also notify participating students and their parents about locations and times to take statewide assessments.

Scholarship Funding and Payment

The bill establishes the FES for up to 15,000 students annually on a first-come, first-served basis, beginning in the 2019-2020 school year. Beginning in the 2020-2021 school year, the number of students participating in the scholarship program may increase in accordance with the percentage increase in the state's public school student population. The bill specifies that the FES will be funded through the FEFP, and administered by the DOE.

The bill requires:

- The calculated scholarship amount for a student must be 95 percent of the unweighted FTE funding amount at the district level for the state fiscal year or the amount of the private school's tuition and fees, whichever is less.
- School districts to report all students who are attending a private school under this program. The students attending private schools under the FES must be reported separately from other students reported for purposes of the FEFP.
- The Chief Financial Officer to make scholarship payments in four equal payments no later than September 1, November 1, February 1, and April 1 of each school year that the scholarship is in force and must make the first quarter scholarship payment no later than October 1, 2019.

Additionally, the bill requires the DOE to:

- Cross-check the list of participating scholarship students with the public school enrollment lists prior to each scholarship payment to avoid duplication.
- Request from the Department of Financial Services a sample of endorsed warrants to review and confirm compliance with endorsement requirements.

The bill requires, similar to the McKay Scholarship Program³⁹ the State Board of Education to adopt rules to administer the FES program, and specifies that:

- No liability must arise on the part of the state based on the award or use of the Family Empowerment Scholarship.
- The inclusion of eligible private schools within options available to the Florida public school students does not expand the regulatory authority of the state.

Florida Tax Credit Scholarship

The bill also provides that, beginning with the 2019-2020 fiscal year, up to 50 percent of unallocated prior fiscal year contributions received by a scholarship-funding organization from motor vehicle tax credits under the Hope Scholarship Program may be used to fund the Florida Tax Credit (FTC) Scholarship if the state contributions are insufficient to fund the students eligible for the program. Scholarship funding organizations must separately account for each

³⁹ Section 1002.39(13), F.S.

eligible student who receives an FTC scholarship from the unallocated Hope Scholarship funds. This may help to provide more children with a FTC scholarship and reduce the current waitlist of 12,974 children.⁴⁰

Best and Brightest Teacher and Principal Scholarship Programs

Present Situation

The Best and Brightest Teacher Scholarship Program provides eligible classroom teachers with an award based on the teacher's evaluation rating and performance on the SAT or ACT standardized assessment. Each award has its own eligibility requirements that districts must review and administer locally. Eligible classroom teachers receive awards under the program as follows:

- Teachers who are evaluated as “highly effective”⁴¹ and who scored at or above the 80th percentile nationally on either the SAT or the ACT at the time the assessment was taken are provided an award of \$6,000. In the 2017-2018 fiscal year, 9,229 classroom teachers received this award.⁴²
- First-year teachers who have not yet been evaluated can qualify for a \$6,000 scholarship if the teacher scored at or above the 80th percentile on the SAT or ACT at the time the assessment was taken.⁴³ In the 2017-2018 fiscal year, 586 first-year classroom teachers received this award.⁴⁴
- Teachers who are evaluated as “highly effective”⁴⁵ are provided an award of \$1,200, including teachers who earned the \$6,000 award based on the teachers' SAT or ACT score. In the 2017-2018 fiscal year, 82,790 classroom teachers received this award.⁴⁶
- Teachers who are evaluated as “effective”⁴⁷ may receive an award of up to \$800.⁴⁸ In the 2017-2018 fiscal year, 72,126 classroom teachers received this award.⁴⁹

The \$1,200 and \$800 Best and Brightest Teacher Scholarship awards are only authorized for the 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years.

The Best and Brightest Principal Scholarship Program provides scholarships to principals who have served as principal at the school for at least the last 2 consecutive school years and the faculty at his or her school has a ratio of best and brightest teachers to other classroom teachers that is at the 80th percentile or higher, statewide, for that school type (elementary, middle, high, or combination).⁵⁰

⁴⁰ Department of Education, *Presentation before the Senate Education Committee 2/5/2019*, available at http://www.flsenate.gov/PublishedContent/Committees/2018-2020/ED/MeetingRecords/MeetingPacket_4388.pdf, at 71.

⁴¹ As determined by the district evaluation system pursuant to s. 1012.34, F.S.

⁴² Email, Florida Department of Education, (Feb. 25, 2019).

⁴³ Section 1012.731(3)(a), F.S.

⁴⁴ Email, Florida Department of Education, (Feb. 25, 2019).

⁴⁵ As determined by the district evaluation system pursuant to s. 1012.34, F.S.

⁴⁶ Email, Florida Department of Education, (Feb. 25, 2019).

⁴⁷ As determined by the district evaluation system pursuant to s. 1012.34, F.S.

⁴⁸ Section 1012.731(3)(c), F.S.

⁴⁹ Email, Florida Department of Education, (Feb. 25, 2019).

⁵⁰ Section 1012.732(3), F.S.

A best and brightest principal receives a scholarship of:

- \$5,000 if the principal is assigned to a Title I school; or
- \$4,000 if the principal is not assigned to a Title I school.

In the 2017-2018 fiscal year, principals qualified for Best and Brightest Principal Scholarships as follows:

- 318 principals received the \$5,000 award and
- 320 principals received the \$4,000 award.⁵¹

In addition to the monetary award, a school district must provide best and brightest principals with the same autonomy provided to principals participating in the Principal Autonomy Program Initiative (PAPI) concerning budgetary and personnel decisions.

Effect of Proposed Changes

The bill reconfigures both the Florida Best and Brightest Teacher Program and the Florida Best and Brightest Principal Program. The Best and Brightest Teacher Program is revised to authorize three types of awards – recruitment, retention and recognition – each with distinct criteria for determining eligibility. The Best and Brightest Principal Program is based on the academic improvement of the school. The funding for both programs is provided from a new categorical within the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP).

The bill amends s. 1012.731, F.S., to restructure the Florida Best and Brightest Teacher Program to recruit, retain, and recognize teachers who meet the needs of the state and achieve success in the classroom. The bill removes a teacher’s performance on the SAT or ACT as a factor in determining eligibility for the award. The bill establishes the following best and brightest teacher awards:

- Recruitment awards for newly hired teachers who are a content expert, based on criteria established by the department, in mathematics, science, computer science, reading, or civics.
- Retention awards for teachers rated as “highly effective” or “effective” the preceding year, and currently teaching in a school that has demonstrated academic improvement, as evidenced by the school improving an average of three percentage points or more in the percentage of total possible points achieved for determining school grades over the prior 3 years.
- Recognition awards for teachers rated as “highly effective” and selected by the school principal based on performance criteria and policies adopted by the district school board.

All awards amounts for the program will be specified annually in the General Appropriations Act (GAA). The recognition awards must be provided from remaining funds available after the payment of all other teacher recruitment and retention awards and principal awards.

The bill amends s. 1012.732, F.S., to base the Florida Best and Brightest Principal Program on school performance. A principal is eligible for an award if he or she has served as school principal at his or her school for at least 4 consecutive school years, including the current school year, and the school has demonstrated academic improvement, as evidenced by the school

⁵¹ Email, Florida Department of Education, (Feb. 25, 2019).

improving an average of three percentage points or more in the percentage of total possible points achieved for determining school grades over the prior 3 years. Awards amounts for the program will be specified annually in the GAA.

The bill amends s. 1011.62, F.S., to establish the Florida Best and Brightest Teacher and Principal Allocation within the FEFP. Each school district will be provided an allocation based on the district's proportionate share of FEFP base funding for best and brightest teacher and principal awards as established within those programs.

The changes to the Best and Brightest Teacher Program broaden the availability of awards to newly hired and established classroom teachers. Both the teacher and principal program also align award eligibility with the performance of the school.

Teacher Certification

Present Situation

In order for a person to serve as an educator in a traditional public school, charter school, virtual school, or other publicly operated school, the person must hold a certificate issued by the Florida Department of Education (DOE).⁵² Certification requirements are established to assure that public school teachers in this state are professionally qualified and possess appropriate skills in reading, writing, and mathematics, and adequate pedagogical knowledge, including the use of technology to enhance student learning. The certification requirements also assure teachers possess the relevant subject matter competence so as to demonstrate an acceptable level of professional performance.⁵³

Types of Educator Certificates

The DOE identifies appropriate educator certification for the instruction of specified courses in an annual publication of a directory of course code numbers for all programs and courses funded through the Florida Education Finance Program.⁵⁴

The DOE issues three types of educator certificates:⁵⁵

- A professional certificate is the highest type of full-time certificate issued. The professional certificate is a 5-year renewable certificate.⁵⁶
- A temporary certificate is a 3-year nonrenewable certificate issued to an applicant who does not qualify for a professional certificate.⁵⁷

⁵² Sections 1012.55(1) and 1002.33(12)(f), F.S.

⁵³ Section 1012.54, F.S.

⁵⁴ Section 1012.55(1)(c), F.S.

⁵⁵ Section 1012.55, F.S.

⁵⁶ Section 1012.56(1)-(3) and (7), F.S.

⁵⁷ Section 1012.56(7)(b), F.S.; Rule 6A-4.004(1), F.A.C. A temporary certificate may be extended for two years owing to serious illness or injury of applicant, military service of applicant's spouse, or other extraordinary extenuating circumstances. The temporary certificate may also be extended for one year if the certificate holder is rated effective or highly effective based solely on a student learning growth formula approved by the Commissioner of Education. The department must also reissue the temporary certificate or two additional years upon approval by the Commissioner of Education. Section 1012.56(7), F.S.

- An Athletic Coaching certificate covers a full-time or part-time individual who is employed as an athletic coach in any public school in any district of the state.⁵⁸

Eligibility Criteria for Educator Certification

In addition to general eligibility criteria,⁵⁹ an individual must demonstrate mastery of general knowledge, subject area knowledge, and professional preparation and education competence to be issued a professional certificate.⁶⁰ The DOE must issue a temporary certificate to an individual who meets general eligibility criteria and has demonstrated subject area competence.⁶¹

Mastery of General Knowledge

The general knowledge examination is composed of four subtests: essay; English language skills; reading; and mathematics.⁶² A teacher issued a temporary certificate must demonstrate mastery of general knowledge by achieving passing scores on all subtests within one calendar year of the date of employment under the temporary certificate.⁶³ A school district may not continue the employment beyond one year of a teacher with a temporary certificate who has not demonstrated mastery of general knowledge.⁶⁴

Florida law provides options for a teacher to demonstrate mastery of general knowledge.⁶⁵ Such options include achieving passing scores on the general knowledge examination required by State Board of Education (SBE) rule,⁶⁶ holding a specified teaching certificate, completing specified postsecondary teaching experience, or achieving passing scores on the Graduate Record Examination.

Certification Examination Fees

The SBE is required to, in rule,⁶⁷ establish separate fees for applications, examinations, certification, certification renewal, late renewal, recordmaking, and recordkeeping. Each fee must be based on DOE estimates of the revenue required to implement the Florida law relating to

⁵⁸ Section 1012.55(2)(a), F.S.

⁵⁹ Section 1012.56(2)(a)-(f), F.S.

⁶⁰ Section 1012.56(2)(g)-(i).

⁶¹ Section 1012.56(5), F.S.

⁶² Rule 6A-4.0021(7)(a), F.A.C.

⁶³ Section 1012.56(7), F.S.

⁶⁴ *Id.* However, individuals who are employed under contract at the end of the 1 calendar year time period may continue to be employed through the end of the school year in which they have been contracted. *Id.*

⁶⁵ Section 1012.56(3), F.S.

⁶⁶ In 2014, the general knowledge test was redeveloped to match the increased rigor of competencies and skills required for teacher certification. The SBE also approved new higher passing scores for the examination. These new passing scores for all subtests of the General Knowledge Test became effective January 1, 2015. State Board of Education, *Approval of Amendment to Rule 6A-4.0021, Florida Teacher Certification Examinations* (Nov. 18, 2014), available at <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/9931/urlt/0109031-40021.pdf>. The cut scores were set for a beginning effective teacher, one that is likely to have successful students in his or her classroom as opposed to the prior standard, which was minimum competency. State Board of Education, *Nov. 18, 2014 Meeting Minutes* (Jan. 14, 2015), available at <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/9971/urlt/minutes11415.pdf>, at 7.

⁶⁷ Section 1012.59, F.S. Rule 6A-4.0021, F.A.C.

certification of school personnel. Each examination fee must be sufficient to cover the actual cost of developing and administering the examination.⁶⁸

The certification examination fees are as follows:⁶⁹

- General Knowledge:
 - Initial (first-time) registration - \$130.00
 - Retake (any subtest or full battery) - \$150.00
- Professional Education:
 - Initial (first-time) registration - \$150.00
 - Retake (any subtest or full battery) - \$170.00
- Subject Area Examinations:
 - Initial (first-time) registration – \$200.00
 - Single subtest retake - \$150.00
 - Two subtest retake - \$200.00
 - Three subtest and full battery retake - \$220.00

The SBE is required to waive initial general knowledge, professional education, and subject area examination fees and certification fees for specified members or honorably discharged veterans of the United States Armed Forces or reserves, and their spouses.⁷⁰

Effect of Proposed Changes

Temporary Certificate

The bill amends s. 1012.56, F.S., to remove the requirement that a teacher issued a temporary certificate must demonstrate mastery of general knowledge by achieving passing scores on all subtests within one calendar year of the date of employment. The bill also removes the prohibition on a school district from continuing employment beyond one year for a teacher with a temporary certificate who has not demonstrated mastery of general knowledge.

The bill retains the requirement for a teacher to demonstrate mastery of general knowledge as a condition for issuance of a professional certificate, but extends the time to demonstrate mastery of general knowledge for the validity period of the temporary certificate. This extension of the time allotted to demonstrate mastery might allow more teachers who do not possess passing scores to continue employment beyond the first year.

Mastery of General Knowledge

The bill amends s. 1012.56, F.S., to require a school district that employs an individual who does not achieve passing scores on any subtest of the general knowledge examination to provide information regarding the availability of state-level and district-level supports and instruction to assist that individual in achieving a passing score. Such information must include, but is not limited to:

⁶⁸ Section 1012.59, F.S. The proceeds from the certification fees and other specified revenue is deposited to the “Educational Certification and Service Trust Fund” and disbursed for the payment of expenses incurred by the Educational Practices Commission and in the printing of forms and bulletins and the issuing of certificates. *Id.* at (2).

⁶⁹ Rule 6A-4.0021(4)(b)-(e), F.A.C.

⁷⁰ Section 1012.59(3), F.S.

- State-level test information guides;
- School district test preparation resources; and
- Preparation courses offered by state universities and FCS institutions.

This may result in increased school district activity to help teachers achieve passing scores, and may result in more teachers passing the general knowledge examination.

Teacher Certification Examination Fees

The bill amends s. 1012.59, F.S., to modify the requirement that the SBE establish in rule various certification fees. Specifically, the bill removes the provision that examination fees must be sufficient to cover the actual cost of developing and administering the examination and requires that the rule specify the following fees:

- Initial registration for first-time test takers.
- Retake of the full battery of subtests of an examination, if applicable. The retake fee for the full battery of subtests may not exceed the fee for the initial registration.
- Retake for each subtest of an examination. The retake fee for each subtest must be prorated based on the number of subtests within the examination.

Such registration and retake fees may make teacher certification examinations more affordable for potential and current teachers.

Educational Facilities

Present Situation

Educational Plant Survey

At least every 5 years, each board⁷¹ must arrange for an educational plant survey to aid in formulating plans for housing the educational program and student population, faculty, administrators, staff, and auxiliary and ancillary services of the district or campus, including consideration of the local comprehensive plan.⁷²

Florida law specifies that a district may only use funds for capital outlay for educational, auxiliary, and ancillary facilities without a recommendation from the Department of Education (DOE) for approval by the State Board of Education from the following sources:⁷³

- The local capital outlay improvement fund, consisting of funds that come from and are a part of the district's basic operating budget;
- A bond approved by taxpayers through a referendum;
- One-half cent sales surtax revenue;
- One cent local governmental surtax revenue;
- Impact fees; and
- Private gifts or donations.

⁷¹ "Board," unless otherwise specified, means a district school board, a Florida College System institution board of trustees, a state university board of trustees, and the Board of Trustees for the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind. Section 1013.01(3), F.S.

⁷² Section 1013.31(1), F.S.

⁷³ *Id.* at (a) and (d).

Funds for Comprehensive Educational Plant Needs

Current law prohibits a district school board from using funds from specified sources, including the nonvoted 1.5-mill levy of ad valorem property taxes, for any new construction of educational plant space with a total cost per student station exceeding:⁷⁴

- \$22,996 for an elementary school;
- \$24,833 for a middle school; or
- \$32,256 for a high school.⁷⁵

A district school board may not use funds from any source for the new construction of educational plant space with a total cost per student station exceeding the cost per student station limits unless a contract for architectural and design services or for construction management services was executed before July 1, 2017.⁷⁶ A district school board in violation of the cost per student station limits is ineligible for Public Education Capital Outlay (PECO) funds for 3 years and subject to supervision by an oversight committee, whose members are specified by law.⁷⁷

Florida law specifies that the cost per student station include contract costs, legal and administrative costs, fees of architects and engineers, furniture and equipment, and site improvement costs.⁷⁸ Cost per student station does not include the costs of purchasing or leasing the construction site, making related offsite improvements, securing entries, checkpoint construction, lighting specifically designed for entry point security, security cameras, automatic locks and locking devices, electronic security systems, fencing designed to prevent intruder entry into a building, bullet-proof glass, or other capital construction items approved by the school safety specialist to ensure building security for new educational, auxiliary, or ancillary facilities.⁷⁹

Effect of Proposed Changes

The bill provides school districts additional flexibility for constructing facilities by including the funds generated by a 1.5-mill levy of ad valorem property taxes with the existing funds the district can use for capital outlay for educational, auxiliary, or ancillary facilities without requiring a survey recommendation. The bill also provides that a school district may not exceed the cost per student station limits established by law when using state funds for new construction; however this limitation does not apply to new construction using only local funds. The bill also specifies that the commissioner's ability to withhold capital outlay funds as a result of a school district's facility needs survey applies only to general revenue funds or state trust funds.

⁷⁴ Section 1013.64(6)(b)1., F.S.

⁷⁵ Florida Department of Education, *Cost Per Student Station (Feb. 2019)*, available at <http://edr.state.fl.us/Content/conferences/peco/studentstation.pdf>.

⁷⁶ Section 1013.64(6)(b)3., F.S.

⁷⁷ Section 1013.64(6)(c), F.S.

⁷⁸ Section 1013.64(6)(d), F.S.

⁷⁹ *Id.*

The bill requires the Office of Economic and Demographic Research (EDR),⁸⁰ in conjunction with the DOE, to review and revise the cost per student station limits to reflect actual construction costs by December 1, 2019, and subsequently every three years, and to select an industry-recognized construction index to replace the currently-used Consumer Price Index, to be adjusted annually. The revised cost per student station limits must be used by the DOE for computation of the statewide average cost per student station for each instructional level.

The bill amends s. 1013.64, F.S., to eliminate restrictions and sanctions on district school boards related to educational facilities construction. Specifically, the bill removes the requirements for the DOE to make the final determination on district compliance with the cost per student station limits along with the sanctions imposed on school districts for violating the cost per student station limits. The bill also removes the prohibition on district school boards from using funds from any sources for new construction of educational plant space with a total cost per student station in excess of the current limits specified in law. Furthermore, the bill prohibits legal and administrative costs, fees of architects and engineers, furniture and equipment costs, the cost of any security enhancements, the costs of constructing covered walkways, and the costs of public shelter and hurricane hardening requirements from being included in the computation of the cost per student station.

School Improvement and School of Hope Program Awards for Traditional Public Schools

Present Situation

School Improvement

Current law designates any school receiving a grade of “D” or “F” as a school in need of intervention and support.⁸¹ In the first school year after a school earns two consecutive grades of “D” or a grade of “F,” the school district must immediately implement intervention and support strategies.⁸² The intervention and support strategies must address student performance and may include improvement planning; leadership quality improvement; educator quality improvement; professional development; curriculum review, pacing, and alignment across grade levels; and the use of continuous improvement and monitoring plans and processes.⁸³

The school district must submit a district-managed turnaround plan for approval by the State Board of Education (SBE).⁸⁴ The school district must implement the plan for the remainder of the school year and continue the plan for 1 full school year.⁸⁵ A school that does not improve to a grade of “C” or higher following the implementation of the district-managed turnaround plan must either close and reassign the students, close and reopen as a charter school, or contract with an outside entity to operate the school.⁸⁶

⁸⁰ The Office of Economic and Demographic Research (EDR) is a research arm of the Legislature principally concerned with forecasting economic and social trends that affect policy making, revenues, and appropriations. Office of Economic and Demographic Research, *Welcome*, <http://edr.state.fl.us/Content/> (last visited Feb. 28, 2019).

⁸¹ Section 1008.33(3)(b), F.S.

⁸² Section 1008.33(4)(a), F.S.

⁸³ Section 1008.33(3)(c), F.S.

⁸⁴ Section 1008.33(4)(a), F.S.

⁸⁵ *Id.*

⁸⁶ Section 1008.33(4)(b), F.S.

Schools of Hope Program Awards for Traditional Public Schools

A traditional public school that is required to submit an initial turnaround plan for implementation under current law⁸⁷ is eligible to receive additional funding from the Schools of Hope Program based on the strength of the school's plan for implementation and its focus on evidence-based interventions that lead to student success by providing wrap-around services that leverage community assets, improve school and community collaboration, and develop family and community partnerships.⁸⁸ A maximum of 25 schools may be awarded up to \$2,000 per full-time equivalent (FTE) student. The SBE evaluates the turnaround plans and determines which of the eligible schools will receive an award.⁸⁹

In the 2017-2018 academic year, 25 traditional public schools were approved by the SBE to receive a Schools of Hope Program award. In the 2018-2019 academic year, 14 traditional public schools were approved by the SBE to receive a School of Hope Program award.⁹⁰

Effects of Proposed Changes

The bill amends s. 1002.333, F.S., to remove the Schools of Hope Program awards for traditional public schools. The bill subsequently creates a new categorical program, the Turnaround Schools Supplemental Services Allocation (allocation), within the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP). The allocation provides funding to schools in, or exiting, turnaround status as provided under current law. The allocation provides schools with up to \$500 per-FTE to offer services designed to improve the overall academic and community welfare of the school's students and families. The services may include, but are not limited to:

- An extended school day or school year;
- Tutorial or after-school programs;
- Student and parent counseling; and
- Models that encourage students to complete high school and attend postsecondary education or training, set high academic expectations, and inspire character development.

Before receiving the allocation, a school district must annually submit a plan for implementation to the district school board. The bill requires the plan to include descriptions of specified academic and support services. The plan must be submitted to the district school board by August 1, and to the Commissioner of Education by September 1.

Schools implementing a turnaround option may receive funding from the allocation for a maximum of four continuous fiscal years. A school that exits turnaround with a grade of "C" or higher will remain eligible to receive the allocation for a maximum of two continuous fiscal years after exiting turnaround status.

⁸⁷ Section 1008.33(4), F.S.

⁸⁸ Section 1002.333(10)(b), F.S.

⁸⁹ Section 1002.333(10)(c), F.S.

⁹⁰ Florida Department of Education, *Schools of Hope Traditional Public Schools Grant*, Presentation to House Education Committee on Feb. 12, 2019, available at

<https://www.myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Documents/loaddoc.aspx?PublicationType=Committees&CommitteeId=2996&Session=2019&DocumentType=Meeting%20Packets&FileName=edc%202-12-19.pdf>.

Community Schools

Present Situation

A community school is both a physical place as well as a set of partnerships between a school and other community resources.⁹¹ Community Partnership Schools (CPS) is a community school model in which four community partners – a school district, a university or college, a nonprofit organization, or a health care provider – commit to a long term partnership to establish, develop and sustain a CPS. The primary commitment of core partners is to work together to address student needs and offer any available social or institutional resources to help meet those needs.⁹²

In 2010, the University of Central Florida (UCF) and the Children’s Home Society of Florida started development of the first community school of its kind. As a result of increasing demand, UCF founded the Center for Community Schools in 2014 to provide technical assistance, procure legislative funding, as well as provide structure and fidelity to the program.⁹³ As of February 2019 there are 17 Community Schools across the state.⁹⁴

Establishment

In order to establish a CPS a school system must identify core partners with sufficient resources that are willing to commit, often through a Memorandum of Understanding, to support the endeavor for a minimum of 25 years.

In addition, each school system wishing to establish a CPS must develop its own sustainability plan, conduct a community assessment, and provide a 25 percent local match in funds or in-kind services. The majority of CPS resources are provided by the core partners and community organizations already funded to provide the services.⁹⁵

Additionally, in order to become a partner, interested initiatives must submit an application that is reviewed by a grants committee, which evaluates the application based on specified criteria.⁹⁶

Once a school implements the CPS standards and successfully operates for a full year, the school is eligible to become a University of Central Florida – Community Partnership School (UCF-CPS). A UCF-CPS school must demonstrate appropriate alignment with the core components of the model and reach implementation benchmarks on 12 different standards.⁹⁷ Once the school has become a UCF-CPS, the school is eligible to receive CPS development technical assistance

⁹¹ Community resources include facilities, volunteers, interns, in-kind donations, on-site programs and services.

⁹² See University of Central Florida, Center for Community Schools, *Community Partnership Schools Model*, (2019) available at

[https://www.myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Documents/loadaddoc.aspx?PublicationType=Committees&CommitteeId=3017&Session=2019&DocumentType=Meeting Packets&FileName=pki 2-7-19.pdf](https://www.myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Documents/loadaddoc.aspx?PublicationType=Committees&CommitteeId=3017&Session=2019&DocumentType=Meeting%20Packets&FileName=pki%202-7-19.pdf) at 8-12.

⁹³ *Id.* at 42.

⁹⁴ *Id.* at 35.

⁹⁵ *Id.* at 16.

⁹⁶ The Criteria for evaluation include need, partner commitment, partner capacity, project goals, and a diversified budget. *Id.*

⁹⁷ 1) Partnership 2) Governance, Structure and Leadership 3) Foundational Principles 4) Staffing 5) Integrated Community School Framework 6) After-school Programs and Services 7) Comprehensive Wellness Services 8) Parent and Community Involvement 9) Volunteering 10) School Climate 11) Evaluation 12) Sustainability. *Id.* at 49.

and apply for available planning or implementation grants.⁹⁸ Schools that do not reach certification status are provided with on-going support and may annually reapply for certification. Schools that reach certification status must re-certify every three years.⁹⁹

Funding and impact

In fiscal year 2018-2019, the Legislature provided \$1.4 million to 9 Community Partnership Schools serving 8,508 students. Between July and December 2018, activities and services at these schools included:¹⁰⁰

- 1,572 students participating in 61,689 hours of enrichment programming;
- 1,682 students receiving 26,260 hours of academic support or tutoring;
- Families and the community contributing 14,964 volunteer hours and 3,663 mentor hours;
- 1,096 students receiving dental services;
- 1,360 students receiving eye care or vision services; and
- 273 students receiving medical services.

Effect of Proposed Changes

Community School Grant Program

The bill creates s. 1003.64, F.S., establishing the Community School Grant Program (program) to fund and support the planning and implementation of community school programs. The program is intended to improve student success and well-being by engaging and supporting parents and community organizations in their effort to positively impact student learning and development.

The bill specifies that a community school is a public school that receives a grant under the program and that partners, at a minimum, with a community organization, a university or college, and a health care provider to implement programs, beyond the standard hours of instruction, which may include but are not limited to:

- Student enrichment activities;¹⁰¹
- Wellness services; and
- Family engagement programs.

Additionally, the bill requires a community school program director to coordinate with a district school board, college or university, community organizations and health care providers to:

- Facilitate the implementation of community school programs; and
- Comply with specified reporting requirements.

Center for Community Schools

The bill specifies that a Center for Community Schools (center) director, must:

⁹⁸ See University of Central Florida, Center for Community Schools, *Community Partnership Schools Model*, (2019) available at [https://www.myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Documents/loaddoc.aspx?PublicationType=Committees&CommitteeId=3017&Session=2019&DocumentType=Meeting Packets&FileName=pki 2-7-19.pdf](https://www.myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Documents/loaddoc.aspx?PublicationType=Committees&CommitteeId=3017&Session=2019&DocumentType=Meeting%20Packets&FileName=pki%202-7-19.pdf) at 49.

⁹⁹ *Id.* at 36.

¹⁰⁰ *Id.* at 37.

¹⁰¹ Student enrichment activities may include job training, internship opportunities, and career counseling services.

- Disseminate information about community schools to community organizations, district school boards, public college and universities, and regionally accredited not-for-profit independent college and universities.
- Coordinate, facilitate, and oversee the implementation of the community schools that receive a grant to administer the program.
- Submit an annual report to the Commissioner of Education (commissioner) by August 15 of each year.
- Publish on the center’s website the application form for:
 - Implementing a community school program; and
 - Certification by the center as a community school
- Publish and process criteria for:
 - Approving the application for implementing a community school program; and
 - Awarding the certification.
- Establish a process to administer the program funds.
- Promote best practices and provide technical assistance about community schools to community school program directors.

Reporting Requirements

The bill establishes reporting requirements that specify that a community school program director must submit annually by July 1, at a minimum, the following information:

- An assessment of the effectiveness of the community school program in improving student success outcomes;
- Any issues encountered, if any, in the design and execution of the community school program;
- Recommendations for policy funding and investments to improve the implementation and oversight of community school programs and remove any barriers to the expansion of community schools;
- The number of students, families and community members served under the program; and
- Any other information requested by the center director.

The center director must review the report submitted and by August 15 of each year and provide to the commissioner:

- A summary of the information reported by each school that receives a program grant.
- Recommendations for policy and funding investments to improve the implementation and oversight of community school programs and remove barriers, if any, to the expansion of community schools.

The bill requires the commissioner to review the summary and recommendations submitted by the center director and by September 30 of each year, submit an annual report.¹⁰²

The program may help to expand the number of community schools to improve participating students’ wellness needs and students’ performance outcomes. In addition, such reporting

¹⁰² The report must be submitted to the Governor, President of the Senate, and Speaker of the House of Representatives, and must, at a minimum, include information on the status of community schools and the commissioner’s recommendation for policy and funding investments to improve and expand community schools.

requirements may help provide accountability, and guide the legislature to identify the benefits of the program.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2019.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

Only one state school choice scholarship program - the Opportunity Scholarship Program has been successfully challenged on constitutional adequacy and no aid grounds.¹⁰³ Aside from the Opportunity Scholarship Program, no other Florida school choice scholarship program has been declared unconstitutional. The general constitutional challenges have been brought under the state constitutional provisions governing the adequacy of the public education system¹⁰⁴ and the no aid provision.¹⁰⁵

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

¹⁰³ See *Bush v. Holmes*, 886 So.2d 340 (Fla. 1st DCA 2004), *affirmed on other grounds*, 919 So.2d 392 (Fla. 2006).

¹⁰⁴ Article IX, s. 1, Fla. Const., providing that “[a]dequate provision shall be made by law for a uniform, efficient, safe, secure, and high quality system of free public schools that allows students to obtain a high quality education and for the establishment, maintenance, and operation of institutions of higher learning and other public education programs that the needs of the people require.”

¹⁰⁵ Article I, s. 3., Fla. Const., providing that “[n]o revenue of the state or any political subdivision or agency thereof shall ever be taken from the public treasury directly or indirectly in aid of any church, sect, or religious denomination or in aid of any sectarian institution.”

B. Private Sector Impact:

The Family Empowerment Scholarships may allow low-income families to send their children to private schools, which may not have been an affordable option previously.

The Florida Tax Credit Scholarship program (FTC) will be able to access up to 50 percent of the prior year balance of unspent revenue from a tax credit for motor vehicle purchases for the Hope Scholarship program if the tax credit funding from other sources is insufficient to fund eligible students for the FTC. This may increase the number of FTC scholarship available for low-income families to send their children to private schools.

The bill reduces the costs of teacher certification exam retake fees, which may save prospective teachers money as they attempt to become certified.

The bill provides school districts with additional flexibility for constructing educational facilities, which may lead to additional school construction, benefitting the construction industry.

C. Government Sector Impact:

This bill does not require an appropriation; however, for the Florida Best and Brightest Teacher and Principal Programs, the Turnaround School Supplemental Services Allocation, and the Community Partnership Grants Program, funding is subject to legislative appropriation. Funding for the Florida Empowerment Scholarship Program will be provided from the appropriation for the FEFP.

The requirement that the State Board of Education reduce teacher certification examination fees for retakes may reduce revenue with which to support examination development and certification activities.

The bill may enable school districts to proceed with additional school construction by disconnecting already-available local funds from the cost per student station limits and the need for a survey recommendation.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill substantially amends the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 1002.333, 1002.40, 1008.33, 1011.62, 1011.71, 1012.56, 1012.59, 1012.731, 1012.732, 1013.31, and 1013.64.

This bill creates the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 1002.394 and 1003.64.

IX. Additional Information:

A. **Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:**
(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. **Amendments:**

None.

This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.
