### Tab 1  
Tab 1 SB 86 by Baxley; (Compare to H 00281) Student Financial Aid

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DocID</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Note</th>
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<tr>
<td>594362</td>
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<td>ED, Baxley</td>
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### Tab 2  
Tab 2 SB 1372 by Burgess; (Similar to CS/H 00003) Literacy Improvement

### Tab 3  
Tab 3 SB 1898 by Rodriguez; (Similar to H 07011) Student Literacy
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BILL NO.</th>
<th>BILL DESCRIPTION and SENATE COMMITTEE ACTIONS</th>
<th>COMMITTEE ACTION</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SB 86</td>
<td>Student Financial Aid; Requiring that eligibility for state financial aid awards and tuition assistance grants be reevaluated each term and identify students' program of study; revising the formula for calculating how Florida Public Student Assistance Grant Program funds are distributed; authorizing a Bright Futures Scholarship recipient to apply the unused portion of a Florida Academic Scholars award or Florida Medallion Scholars award toward graduate study for a specified academic year; establishing the Florida Bright Opportunities Grant Program; establishing the Florida Endeavor Scholarship Program, etc.</td>
<td>ED 03/09/2021 Temporarily Postponed ED 03/16/2021 AED AP</td>
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<tr>
<td>SB 1372</td>
<td>Literacy Improvement; Establishing the New Worlds Reading Initiative under the Department of Education; requiring the administrator, in consultation with a specified entity, to develop a selection of books; requiring the administrator to coordinate monthly book distribution to certain students; requiring the administrator to assist with local implementation of the initiative; requiring that a certain notification include information about the initiative, etc.</td>
<td>ED 03/16/2021 AED AP</td>
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PUBLIC TESTIMONY WILL BE RECEIVED FROM ROOM A3 AT THE DONALD L. TUCKER CIVIC CENTER, 505 W PENSACOLA STREET, TALLAHASSEE, FL 32301
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TAB</th>
<th>BILL NO. and INTRODUCER</th>
<th>BILL DESCRIPTION and SENATE COMMITTEE ACTIONS</th>
<th>COMMITTEE ACTION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>SB 1898</td>
<td>Student Literacy: Revising and providing duties for the Just Read, Florida! Office within the Department of Education; requiring the Department of Education, in consultation with the Office of Early Learning, to implement a coordinated screening and progress monitoring system for students in the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program through grade 8; requiring certain students to participate in a certain coordinated screening and progress monitoring system; creating the “Reading Achievement Initiative for Scholastic Excellence Act”, etc.</td>
<td>ED 03/16/2021 AED AP</td>
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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 Education

BILL: SB 86
INTRODUCER: Senator Baxley
SUBJECT: Student Financial Aid
DATE: March 15, 2021

I. Summary:

SB 86 modifies provisions relating to postsecondary financial aid programs, and establishes new financial aid programs for Pell Grant eligible students and students without a high school diploma. Specifically, the bill:

- Modifies general eligibility for state financial aid by:
  - Requiring the Board of Governors (BOG) and State Board of Education (SBE) to each approve a list of career certificate, undergraduate, and graduate degree programs that lead directly to employment.
  - Specifying that, beginning in the 2022-2023 academic year and thereafter, student eligibility for financial aid or tuition assistance is determined by enrollment in a program of study on a certificate and degree list approved by the BOG or SBE.

- Establishes the Florida Bright Opportunities Grant Program for Pell Grant-eligible students with a tuition and registration fee balance at a Florida College System (FCS) institution or career center after application of all federal gift aid and state financial assistance.

- Modifies the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program by:
  - Changing the Florida Academic Scholars (FAS) and Florida Medallion Scholars (FMS) awards to an amount specified in the General Appropriations Act (GAA).
  - Specifying that beginning in the 2022-2023 academic year, the number of credit hours funded under a Bright Futures award is reduced by the number of credit hours earned through articulated acceleration mechanisms.
  - Creating additional alternative eligibility options for FAS and FMS awards for students who earn an associate degree through dual enrollment or who earn an Advanced Placement Capstone Diploma.
  - Specifying that, beginning in the 2022-2023 academic year, the authorization to use the unused portion of a FAS or FMS for graduate study must be for a program on an approved list by the BOG or SBE.
• Specifies that the 2021-2022 academic year is the final year of initial eligibility for nonresident students to qualify for the Benacquisto Scholarship Program, and modifies the award to as specified in the GAA.
• Establishes the Florida Endeavor Scholarship Program for students without a high school diploma or equivalent who are enrolled at a career center or FCS institution.
• Clarifies that postsecondary tuition and fee exemptions apply to a student who is currently in the custody of the Department of Children and Families or a specified relative or nonrelative, or who was at the time he or she reached 18 years of age.

For fiscal year 2021-2022, the funding required for the Florida Bright Opportunities Grant Program and the Florida Endeavor Scholarship Program is subject to an appropriation in the General Appropriations Act. The impact on state funding starting in 2022-2023 is expected to be a net positive to the state budget, but is indeterminate at this time. See Section V.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2021.

II. Present Situation:

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

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Identification of Certificate and Degree Programs Aligned to Labor Market Demand

Present Situation

Board of Governors - Programs of Strategic Emphasis

The Programs of Strategic Emphasis (PSE) exists as one of several tools for aligning the degree production goals of the State University System with the economic and workforce needs of Florida.1 Periodically, the Board of Governors (BOG) revises the PSE list through an analysis of the current reports and data of key economic and workforce councils in Florida. These “key councils” include Enterprise Florida, Inc., the Council of 100, the Florida Chamber of Commerce, and the Department of Economic Opportunity.2 This process identifies occupational areas with high demand for postsecondary graduates and provides an opportunity to identify emerging and evolving business sectors and occupations.3 The current list of PSE includes 8684 programs in the following areas:5

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5 Board of Governors, Methodology for Updating Programs of Strategic Emphasis
The BOG tracked their baccalaureate graduates into the workforce and found 92 percent of the graduates were employed one year after graduation, with 71 percent employed full-time. The PSE degree fields accounted for the top five fields of study where baccalaureate graduates were found employed full-time one year after graduation.

**Department of Education – Career and Technical Education Audit**

Governor Ron DeSantis issued Executive Order Number 19-31 to chart a course for Florida to become number one in the nation in workforce education, with the goal of ensuring students are prepared to succeed in jobs of the future and satisfy Florida’s growing workforce demands. Governor DeSantis directed the Commissioner of Education (commissioner) to audit course offerings in career and technical education (CTE).

Additionally, the order directed the commissioner to develop a methodology for annual audits to include a review of student outcomes and alignment between:

- Programs offered at K-12 and postsecondary levels;
- Professional-level industry certifications; and
- High-growth, high-demand and high-wage employment opportunities.

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6 Largely based upon the annual State Board of Education list of critical teacher shortage areas.
7 Based primarily on the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity workforce projections.
8 Includes degree programs that assist in making the SUS globally competitive can be found throughout the system across many disciplines, especially within the sciences, engineering, and information technology programs.
9 Includes science, technology, engineering, and mathematics disciplines. The primary references used were the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, the Department of Homeland Security, the National Science Foundation, and the Washington State Education Research and Data Center.
11 Florida Board of Governors, *Baccalaureate Follow-up Study: Employment and Education Outcomes 1, 5, and 10 Years After Graduation (August 2020)* available at [https://www.flbog.edu/wp-content/uploads/TAWA_03b_Baccalaureate_Follow-up_CE.pdf](https://www.flbog.edu/wp-content/uploads/TAWA_03b_Baccalaureate_Follow-up_CE.pdf). The current study was based on individual-level data for 349,543 graduates from the State University Data System (SUDS). These records were matched to records from the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) and the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO). Id.
12 Id. Engineering Technician; Engineering; Computer & Information Sciences; Business & Marketing; and Education.
15 Id.
The commissioner is required to annually recommend CTE programs that should be eliminated and programs that should be added based on audit results.

The CTE audit is comprised of a statewide review of programs, local program review, and sharing information and best practices. The CTE methodology includes the following:16

- A statewide assessment of programs based on the extent to which there are data that support the demand for the program at statewide and regional levels.17
- A statewide assessment of programs based on their performance on key institutional measures of program quality.18
- A local review of programs that did not meet statewide benchmarks based on local or industry labor market needs and institutional performance.19

**Effect of Proposed Changes**

The bill creates s. 1009.46, F.S., to establish the duties of postsecondary educational institutions for state financial aid and tuition assistance programs. Specifically, the bill:

- Requires that each participating institution verify student eligibility for funding by reporting the program of study to the Department of Education using the most recent classification of instructional programs (CIP) taxonomy.20
- Requires, by December 31, 2021, the BOG and State Board of Education (SBE) each approve a list of career certificate, undergraduate and graduate degree programs offered by a district career enter, charter technical career center, FCS institution, or state university, which lead directly to employment, to be updated annually by December 31. In determining which programs will be included on the list, the BOG and SBE must:
  - Consider national, state, and regional industry demand;
  - Identify occupations, current job openings, estimates of job growth, and employment wages; and
  - Include appropriate certificate and degree programs offered by eligible independent colleges and universities.
- Codifies certain existing requirements from SBE rule21 related to applications for and disbursement of funds, student eligibility and notifications, reporting, and fund remittance, with sanctions for noncompliance.

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21 Rule 6A-20.002, F.A.C.
General Eligibility for State Financial Aid and Tuition Assistance

Present Situation

The general student eligibility requirements for state financial aid awards and tuition assistance grants consist of the following:

- Achievement of the academic requirements of and acceptance at a state university or FCS institution; a nursing diploma school approved by the Florida Board of Nursing; a Florida college or university which is accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the SBE; a Florida institution the credits of which are acceptable for transfer to state universities; a career center; or a private career institution accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the SBE.

- Residency in Florida for no less than one year preceding the award of aid or a tuition assistance grant.

- Submission of certification attesting to the accuracy, completeness, and correctness of information provided to demonstrate a student’s eligibility to receive state financial aid awards or tuition assistance grants.

Eligibility for renewal of undergraduate or career certificate financial aid awards must be evaluated at the end of the second semester or third quarter of each academic year. To be eligible for renewal a student must:

- Earn a minimum 2.0 grade point average (GPA); and

- Earn, for undergraduate full-time study, 12 credits per term or the equivalent for the number of terms for which aid was received or have earned, for career certificate study, at least the equivalent in clock hours of 6 semester credit hours per term or the equivalent for the number of terms for which aid was received.

A student who fails to meet the required GPA for renewal may be granted a probationary award for one academic year to earn the required GPA for subsequent renewal. A student who fails to meet the minimum number of credits required for renewal must lose his or her eligibility for one academic year, after which the student may reapply.

Effect of Proposed Changes

The bill amends s. 1009.40, F.S., to add a funding eligibility requirement. The bill specifies that financial aid awards and tuition assistance grants must be reevaluated each term based on the program of study to which the student has been admitted and is enrolled. Beginning in the 2022-2023 academic year and thereafter, student eligibility for funding is determined by

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22 Section 1009.40(1)(a), F.S.
23 Resident status for purposes of receiving state financial aid awards is determined in the same manner as resident status for tuition purposes pursuant to s. 1009.21. Section 1009.40(1)(a)2., F.S.
24 Section 1009.40(1)(b), F.S.
25 Section 1009.40(1)(b)3. and 4., F.S.
26 District and charter technical career centers offer career certificate and non-college-credit advanced technology diploma (ATD). FCS institutions offer bachelor’s degree programs; associate in arts, associate in science, and associate in applied science programs; technical certificate and ATD programs; and advanced technical certificates programs. Rule 6A-14.030, F.A.C. State universities offer baccalaureate programs, as well as graduate degree programs, such as, master’s; specialist; advanced master’s; non-doctoral; and doctoral. Board of Governors Regulation 8.011.
enrollment in a program of study on a certificate and degree list approved by the BOG or SBE, as follows:

- For a student who has been admitted to and enrolled in a certificate or degree program, the student is eligible only if the program in which the student is enrolled is on an approved list.
- For a student who has not yet been admitted to a program (e.g., an associate in arts student or a bachelor’s degree student prior to admittance to a chosen degree program), eligibility is limited to 60 credit hours or until the student is enrolled in a program that is not on an approved list, whichever comes first.
- The program on an approved list applies to a student’s initial enrollment at the postsecondary institution, or when the student is admitted to and enrolled in a program. Any changes to the certificate and degree list after the student has enrolled would not negatively impact the student.

The bill also amends s. 1009.40, F.S., to include in the general eligibility requirements relating to Florida residency the Bright Opportunity Scholarship Program, Florida Endeavor Scholarship, Last Mile College Completion Program, and Florida Farmworker Student Scholarship Program.  

**Need-based Financial Aid**

**Present Situation**

**Federal Financial Aid**

The Pell Grant is the largest federal grant program offered to undergraduate students and is designed to assist students from low-income households. To qualify for a Pell Grant, a student must demonstrate financial need through completing a Free Application for Federal Student Financial Aid (FAFSA).  

The award amount a student receives is dependent on the student’s expected family contribution (EFC), the institution cost of attendance (COA), full-time or part-time status, and plans to attend school for a full academic year or less.

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27 Sections 1009.71, F.S.; 1009.711, F.S.; 1009.75, F.S.; and 1009.894, F.S.
29 The EFC is calculated according to a formula established by law. The student’s family’s taxed and untaxed income, assets, and benefits (such as unemployment or Social Security) all could be considered in the formula. Also considered are the student’s family size and the number of family members who will attend college or career school during the year. Federal Student Aid, How Aid Is Calculated, What’s the Expected Family Contribution (EFC)?, [https://studentaid.gov/complete-aid-process/how-calculated#efc](https://studentaid.gov/complete-aid-process/how-calculated#efc) (last visited March 4, 2021).
30 COA is the amount it will cost a student to go to school. Most two-year and four-year colleges calculate their COA to show the total cost for the school year. The COA is the estimate of tuition and fees, cost of room and board (or living expenses), cost of books, supplies, transportation, loan fees, and miscellaneous expenses, allowance for child care or other dependent care, costs related to a disability, and reasonable costs for eligible study-abroad programs. Federal Student Aid, What does cost of attendance (COA) mean?, [https://studentaid.gov/help-center/answers/article/what-does-cost-of-attendance-mean](https://studentaid.gov/help-center/answers/article/what-does-cost-of-attendance-mean) (last visited March 4, 2021).
The Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG) provides an award to undergraduate students with exceptional financial need. The FSEOG award is between $100 and $4,000 a year, depending on the student’s financial need, the amount of other aid awarded to the student, and the availability of limited federal funds allocated to the student’s school for the program. This is unlike the Pell Grant program, which provides awards to every eligible student.

**Florida Student Assistance Grant Program**

The Florida Student Assistance Grant (FSAG) Program, created in 1972, is Florida’s largest need-based grant program, consisting of FSAG Public, FSAG Career Education (FSAG-CE), FSAG Private, and FSAG Postsecondary. The FSAG Program provides state need-based assistance grants to students who meet general eligibility requirements, demonstrate financial need, and meet enrollment requirements as specified by each program. The FSAG Program is administered by participating institutions in accordance with SBE rule.

The funds appropriated for the FSAG Program must be distributed to eligible institutions in accordance with a formula approved by the SBE. The formula must consider at least the prior year’s distribution of funds, the number of eligible applicants who did not receive awards, the standardization of the EFC, and provisions for unused funds. The formula must account for changes in the number of eligible students across all student assistance grant programs.

In 2019-2020, the FSAG programs disbursed approximately $270 million to nearly 175,000 students.

In addition, the FSAG Public, FSAG Private, and FSAG Postsecondary programs provide for deposit of funds appropriated by the Legislature for grants through the FSAG program into the State Student Financial Assistance Trust Fund. The FSAG-CE program does not have this provision.

For the 2021-22 award year, the Federal Pell Grant award is between $650 to $6,495. The 2018-2019 average cost for taking 30 credit hours at an FCS institution was $3,209. Because

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33 Id.


35 Section 1009.40, F.S.

36 Sections 1009.50(6), 1009.505(5), 1009.51(6), and 1009.52(7), F.S. See also Rule 6A-20.031, F.A.C. Postsecondary educational institution administrative responsibilities for state student aid and tuition assistance programs are outlined in Rule 6A-20.002, F.A.C.

37 Sections 1009.50(4)(a), 1009.51(4)(a), and 1009.52(4)(a), F.S.


39 Sections 1009.50(5), 1009.51(5), and 1009.52(6), F.S.


the Pell Grant award amounts vary based on the circumstances of each student, some students who meet the family income threshold for a Pell award may still have a balance of tuition and fees not covered by the federal and state gift aid they are eligible to receive.

Effect of Proposed Changes

The bill creates s. 1009.71, F.S., to establish the Florida Bright Opportunities Grant Program. The program is for Pell Grant-eligible students at FCS institutions and career centers who have a tuition and registration fee balance after all federal and state gift aid has been applied to their account. Specifically, the program:

- Award applies to certificate, applied technology diploma (ATD), or associate degree programs only at FCS institutions or career centers.
- Award covers the balance of tuition and registration fees, plus a book stipend, and is awarded on a first-come first-served basis.
- Requires the student to meet the following general eligibility requirements for state financial aid awards and tuition assistance grants:
  - Residency in Florida for at least one year prior to award of aid or tuition assistance grant;
  - Certification attesting to the accuracy, completeness, and correctness of information provided; and
  - Beginning in the 2022-2023 academic year and thereafter, student enrollment in a program of study in a certificate and degree list approved by the BOG or SBE. Eligibility for state financial aid awards and tuition assistance grants must be reevaluated each term based on the program of study to which the student has been admitted and is enrolled.
- Does not allow an institution to impose additional criteria to determine a student’s eligibility.
- Student must be enrolled for at least six credit hours per term, or the equivalent clock hours.
- Limits the award to 8-10 semesters as specified in current law regarding financial aid eligibility.42
- Specifies requirements for the distribution and remittance of program funds, similar to FSAG programs.

Florida Student Assistance Grant Program

The bill removes obsolete provisions regarding standardization of the EFC and unused funds in the distribution formula and removes unnecessary requirements related to the State Student Financial Assistance Trust Fund for FSAG programs.

Merit-based Financial Aid

Present Situation

Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program

The Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program (Bright Futures program) was established in 199743 as a lottery-funded scholarship program to reward a Florida high school graduate who merits recognition for high academic achievement and who enrolls in a degree program,

42 Section 1009.40(3), F.S.
43 Section 2, ch. 1997-77, L.O.F.
certificate program, or applied technology program at an eligible Florida public or private postsecondary education institution. The DOE is responsible for issuing awards for the Bright Futures program annually.

The Bright Futures program consists of the following awards:
- Florida Academic Scholarship (FAS);
- Florida Medallion Scholarship (FMS); and
- Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholarship (FGSV) and Florida Gold Seal CAPE Scholarship.

Similarities and differences in specified provisions to qualify for FAS and FMS awards are depicted in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>16 High School Course Credits</th>
<th>High School Weighted Bright Futures GPA</th>
<th>College Entrance Exams by High School Graduation Year (ACT/SAT)</th>
<th>Service Hours</th>
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<tr>
<td>FAS</td>
<td>4 - English (three must include substantial writing) 4 - Mathematics (at or above the Algebra I level) 3 - Natural Science (two must have substantial laboratory)</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>29/1330</td>
<td>100 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>FMS</td>
<td>3 - Social Science 2 - World Language (sequential, in same language)</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>25/1210</td>
<td>75 hours</td>
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</table>

Students who have demonstrated academic merit through a recognition program may be eligible for Bright Futures without having to meet one or more of the requirements.

The recognition programs that do not require college entrance exam scores include:
- National Merit Finalists and Scholars;
- National Hispanic Scholars;
- Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) Diploma; and
- International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma.

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44 A student who receives any award under the Bright Futures program and is enrolled in a nonpublic postsecondary education institution receives a fixed award calculated by using the average tuition and fee calculation as prescribed by the Department of Education for full-time attendance at a public postsecondary education institution at the comparable level. Section 1009.538, F.S.
45 Section 1009.53(5), F.S.
46 Section 1009.53(2), F.S.
47 Section 1009.534, F.S.
48 Section 1009.535, F.S.
49 Section 1009.536, F.S.
50 Section 1009.531, F.S.
51 Section 1009.534(1), F.S. and 1009.535(1), F.S.
FAS award recipients receive an award equal to the amount necessary to pay of 100 percent of tuition and applicable fees and an additional stipend for textbooks as specified in the General Appropriations Act (GAA). FMS award recipients receive an award equal to the amount necessary to pay of 75 percent of tuition and applicable fees.

A student may receive an FAS or FMS award for a maximum of 100 percent of the number of credit hours required to complete an associate degree program, a baccalaureate degree program, or a postsecondary career certificate program.

Florida Bright Futures Scholarship recipients who graduate with a baccalaureate degree in seven semesters, or the equivalent or fewer hours, and wish to pursue graduate study may apply the unused portion of their FAS or FMS award toward one semester of graduate study, not to exceed 15 semester hours paid at the undergraduate rate.

For the 2019-2020 fiscal year, a total of $618,607,165 was disbursed through the Bright Futures to 111,973 students.

**Benacquisto Scholarship Program**

The Benacquisto Scholarship Program (scholarship) was created in 2014 to reward a Florida high school graduate who achieves recognition as a National Merit Scholar (NMS) and enrolls in a baccalaureate degree program at an eligible Florida public or independent postsecondary educational institution.

In addition to achieving recognition as an NMS, in order to be eligible for an award under the scholarship, a student must:

- Be a state resident as determined by statute and SBE rules;

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53 Section 1009.534(2), F.S.
54 Section 1009.535(2), F.S. Beginning in the fall 2021 semester, a Florida Medallion Scholar who is enrolled in an associate degree program at an FCS institution is eligible for an award equal to the amount necessary to pay 100 percent of tuition and specified fees to assist with the payment of educational expenses. Section 1009.535(2), F.S.
55 Section 1009.532(3)(a), F.S.
56 Section 1009.5341, F.S.
58 The scholarship was renamed in 2016 from the Florida National Merit Scholar Incentive Program to the Benacquisto Scholarship Program. Section 26, ch. 2016-237, L.O.F.
60 Section 1009.893(2), F.S.
61 Section 1009.893(4)(a), F.S.
• Earn a standard Florida high school diploma or its equivalent pursuant to statute, unless:
  o The student completes a home education program pursuant to statute;\textsuperscript{62} or
  o The student earns a high school diploma from a non-Florida school while living with a parent who is on military or public service assignment out of this state;
• Be accepted by and enroll in a Florida public or independent postsecondary educational institution that is regionally accredited; and
• Be enrolled full-time in a baccalaureate degree program at an eligible regionally accredited Florida public or independent postsecondary educational institution during the fall academic term following high school graduation.

In 2018, eligibility was expanded to allow out-of-state students to qualify for a scholarship.\textsuperscript{63}

Scholarship recipients attending a public postsecondary institution, who qualify as a Florida resident, receive an award equal to the institutional cost of attendance (COA) minus the sum of the student’s Florida Bright Futures Scholarship and NMS award. Scholarship recipients attending a public postsecondary institution, who qualify as non-residents of Florida, receive an award equal to the institutional COA for a Florida resident minus the student’s NMS award.\textsuperscript{64}

In the 2019-2020 fiscal year, the scholarship distributed $21.6 million to 1,377 students, of which 202 were non-Florida residents. The average award was $15,650.\textsuperscript{66}

\textit{Effect of Proposed Changes}

\textbf{Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program}

The bill modifies ss. 1009.534 and 1009.535, F.S., relating FAS and FMS awards. Specifically, the bill:

• Changes the FAS and FMS award from the award necessary to pay a specified percentage of tuition and specified fees to an award as specified in the GAA.
• Changes the FMS award for a FCS student in an associate degree program from an award necessary to pay the specified percentage of tuition and specified fees to an award as specified in the GAA.
• Simplifies the reference to the required college entrance exam scores.\textsuperscript{67}
• Removes reference to a national achievement program no longer available through the National Merit Scholarship Corporation.
• Updates the reference to the National Hispanic Recognition Program to include all Recognition Programs administered by the College Board, which includes African American

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{62} Section 1002.41, F.S.
\textsuperscript{63} Section 22, ch. 2018-4, L.O.F. See s. 1009.893(4)(b), F.S.
\textsuperscript{64} Section 1009.893(5)(a), F.S.
\textsuperscript{65} Section 1009.893(5)(b), F.S.
\textsuperscript{67} Program eligibility requires specified scores on the SAT and ACT. Section 1009.531(6), F.S.
\end{footnotesize}
• Beginning for graduates in 2021-2022, adds additional alternative eligibility options: earned associates degree through dual enrollment or AP Capstone Diploma with scores of 4 or higher on 6 AP exams. Therefore, these students are not required to submit scores for college entrance exams.

The bill modifies s. 1009.5341, F.S., the use of Bright Futures funds for graduate study, as follows:
  o For 2021-2022, recipients may use the unused portion of their FAS or FMS award for graduate study, without semester or credit hours limit. However, the bill does not change the provision in s. 1009.531, F.S., limiting usage of a Bright Futures award to five years after high school graduation.
  o Beginning in 2022-2023, recipients may use the unused portion of their FAS or FMS award for graduate study only in a certificate or degree field on an approved BOG or SBE list required in the bill.

The bill modifies s. 1009.53, F.S., to update the DOE notification process and ability to certify forward funds. Specifically, the bill:
• Modifies the notification process from beginning in January calendar year to beginning in September school year, to provide families more time to plan for students’ postsecondary plans
• Removes unnecessary provisions relating to DOE authorization to certify forward 10 percent of allocated funds, and to federal loan programs.

The bill modifies s. 1009.532, F.S., related to Bright Futures renewal awards, to reduce the number of credit hours that can be funded by Bright Futures by the number of credit hours earned through articulated acceleration mechanisms for students initially funded in 2022-2023 academic year.69

**Benacquisto Scholarship Program**

The bill modifies s. 1009.898, F.S., to modify initial eligibility and remove award provisions related to COA. Specifically, the bill:
• Specifies that the 2021-2022 academic year is the final year of initial eligibility for nonresident students. However, current nonresident students receiving a scholarship may continue to receive renewal awards.

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69 Articulated acceleration mechanisms are available to shorten the time necessary for a student to complete the requirements associated with the conference of a high school diploma and a postsecondary degree, broaden the scope of curricular options available to students, or increase the depth of study available for a particular subject. Articulated acceleration mechanisms include, but are not limited to, dual enrollment, advanced placement, credit by examination, IB Program, and AICE Program. Section 1007.27(1), F.S. First-time-in-college (FTIC) FAS students at a state university brought an average of 25.5 accelerated credits and FTIC FMS students at a state university were awarded an average of 18 accelerated credits. Email, Florida Board of Governors, Jason Jones (Nov. 2, 2020).
• Modifies the award to remove the requirement that the award level is tied to the cost of attendance for students who attend public and private educational institutions, and instead sets the award as specified in the GAA.

Students without a High School Diploma or Equivalent

Present Situation

In order to be eligible for a state financial aid award, a student must achieve the academic requirements of and acceptance at a public postsecondary institution, or specified private institution. Generally, a student is required to have a high school diploma or high school equivalency diploma to enroll in an FCS institution, and students must have a high school diploma for admission to a state university. Eligibility for federal financial aid requires a high school diploma or a recognized equivalent, completion of a home education program, or enrolling in an eligible career pathway program and meeting one of the "ability-to-benefit" alternatives.

Between 2015 and 2019, 11.9 percent of persons age 25 and older living in Florida did not have a high school diploma or equivalent. The dropout rate for Florida’s 2019-20 high school cohort was 3.1 percent. Only 44 percent of Florida’s 2017-18 high school drop outs were found employed and three percent were found continuing their education at a postsecondary institution.

Effect of Proposed Changes

The bill creates s. 1009.711, F.S., to establish the Florida Endeavor Scholarship. The program is for students without a high school diploma or equivalent who are enrolled at a career center or FCS institution. Specifically, the program:

• Award applies to students who did not earn a high school credential prior to enrolling in a career certificate or non-college-credit ATD program, or in a General Education Program at a FCS institution, district career center, or a charter technical career center.
• Requires the student to meet the following general eligibility requirements for state financial aid awards and tuition assistance grants:
  o Residency in Florida for at least one year prior to award of aid or tuition assistance grant;

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70 Section 1009.40(1)(a), F.S.
71 Section 1007.263(2)(a), F.S. Students may also have a home education affidavit, or demonstrated competency in college credit postsecondary coursework. Id. A student who has been awarded a certificate of completion is eligible to enroll in certificate career education programs. Section 1007.263(4), F.S.
72 Board of Governors Regulation 6.002.
73 Federal Student Aid, Basic Eligibility Criteria, https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/eligibility/requirements (last visited March 5, 2021). A student in an eligible career pathway program may demonstrate readiness for higher education by completion of an approved “ability to benefit” test, or completing six credit hours or equivalent course work. Id.
Certification attesting to the accuracy, completeness, and correctness of information provided; and
Beginning in the 2022-2023 academic year and thereafter, student enrollment in a program of study on a certificate and degree list approved by the BOG or SBE. Eligibility for state financial aid awards and tuition assistance grants must be reevaluated each term based on the program of study to which the student has been admitted and is enrolled.

- Does not allow an institution to impose additional criteria to determine a student’s eligibility.
- Requires the student to earn at least 225 clock hours with a minimum 2.5 postsecondary GPA.
- Award covers tuition and registration fees for certificate or non-college-credit ATD program at a career center or FCS institution, and is awarded on a first-come first-served basis, with priority for returning students.
- Specifies requirements for the distribution and remittance of program funds.

Fee Waivers and Exemptions

Present Situation

All students in workforce education programs, FCS institutions, and state universities must be charged fees unless a fee waiver or exemption applies. Tuition and fee exemptions can be distinguished from fee waivers or educational benefits. An exemption is “provided for certain students who are, by statutory definition, exempt from the payment of tuition and fees, including lab fees” and may generally include students who are in dual enrollment, apprenticeship programs, welfare transition, and in the custody of a relative, among other categories. In contrast, waivers transpire when students have their fees waived or forgiven by an institution. Examples of waivers include those related to state employees, college employees and their dependents, Purple Heart recipients, and certain classroom teachers.

A student who is or was at the time he or she reached 18 years of age in the custody of the Department of Children and Families (DCF) or in the custody of a relative or nonrelative specified in law, is exempt from the payment of tuition and fees at a state university, FCS institution, or Florida school district that provides workforce education programs. Such exemption includes fees associated with enrollment in applied academics for adult education instruction and remains valid until the student reaches 28 years of age. Such exemptions are outlined by year in the following tables:

State University System DCF Specified Fee Exemptions by Academic Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017-18</th>
<th>2018-19</th>
<th>2019-20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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77 Federal Student Aid Ability-to-Benefit Alternative requires students without a diploma or GED to complete six credit hours or equivalent (225 clock hours course work). Federal Student Aid, Basic Eligibility Criteria, Eligibility Requirements [Federal Student Aid](http://www.federalstudentaid.ed.gov) (last visited March 5, 2021).

78 Section 1009.22, 1009.23, and 1009.24, F.S., respectively.


80 Section 39.5085, F.S., or s. 39.6225, F.S.

81 Section 1009.25(1)(c) and (d), F.S.

82 Florida Board of Governors (BOG) ODA Analysis (Nov. 9, 2020), Email, Troy Miller, Deputy Chief Data Officer, BOG (Nov. 10, 2020) (on file with the Senate Committee on Education).
### Florida College System DCF Specified Fee Exemptions by Academic Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017-18</th>
<th>2018-19</th>
<th>2019-20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Headcount</td>
<td>Amount</td>
<td>Headcount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adopted from DCF Services</td>
<td>1,459</td>
<td>$2,459,399</td>
<td>1,735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Custody of DCF</td>
<td>2,459</td>
<td>$4,281,744</td>
<td>2,464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Custody of a Relative</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>$501,827</td>
<td>318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,201</strong></td>
<td><strong>$7,242,970</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,517</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is unclear to what extent all postsecondary institutions apply the tuition and fee exemptions to students who qualify for the exemption and begin postsecondary education before the age of 18.\(^{84}\)

**Effect of Proposed Changes**

The bill amends s. 1009.25, F.S., to clarify that tuition and fee exemptions apply to a student who is currently in the custody of the Department of Children and Families (DCF) or in the custody of a relative or nonrelative defined in law, or was so at the time he or she reached 18 years of age. Therefore, the bill may reduce confusion in the identification of students under DCF custody who are eligible for a tuition and fee exemption, specifically those students who enroll at a postsecondary institution prior to the age of 18.

### IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. **Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:**

   None.

B. **Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:**

   None.

C. **Trust Funds Restrictions:**

   None.

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D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

For fiscal year 2021-2022, the funding required for the Florida Bright Opportunities Grant Program and the Florida Endeavor Scholarship Program is subject to an appropriation in the General Appropriations Act.

The provisions of the bill that make changes to existing programs are expected to have a net positive effect on the state budget starting with the 2022-2023 fiscal year. Although additional students may qualify for Bright Futures through high school acceleration programs, Bright Futures students may no longer be eligible for funding if they are not enrolled in a degree program on the approved list. In addition, there would be a reduced cost to the state as it relates to the Benacquisto Scholarship program, as the state would no longer be funding new non-resident students. The net effect of these provisions is indeterminate at this time.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill substantially amends the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 1009.25, 1009.40, 1009.46, 1009.50, 1009.505, 1009.51, 1009.52, 1009.53, 1009.532, 1009.534, 1009.5341, 1009.535, 1009.71, 1009.711, and 1009.893.
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.
The Committee on Education (Baxley) recommended the following:

**Senate Amendment (with title amendment)**

Delete everything after the enacting clause and insert:

Section 1. Section 1006.75, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

1006.75 State university career planning and information.—

(1) To assist students and families in making better-informed decisions about educational options and future employment opportunities, the Board of Governors of the State University System shall publicly publish an online dashboard.
The dashboard must present data, by academic discipline, of graduates of state universities, including at least the following information:

(a) Post-graduation median salary 1, 5, and 10 years after graduation;
(b) Median student loan debt;
(c) Debt-to-income ratio;
(d) Estimated monthly loan payment as a percentage of gross monthly income; and
(e) The percentage of graduates who have continued their education beyond the baccalaureate level.

(2) The online dashboard must be available by January 1, 2022. A link to the dashboard shall be prominently displayed on each state university’s office of admissions website.

(3)(a) Each state university board of trustees shall adopt procedures to connect undergraduate students to career planning, coaching, and related programs during the first academic year of the student’s enrollment. Such procedures must be approved by the Board of Governors and include placing a hold on student registration before the end of the first year of each student’s enrollment. To lift the hold and register for classes, each student shall:

1. Register with the university’s career center;
2. Complete a career readiness training module provided by the career center; and
3. Be directed to the dashboard established in subsection (1).

(b) The Board of Governors of the State University System shall review and approve each university’s procedures by March
Section 2. Paragraphs (c) and (d) of subsection (1) of section 1009.25, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

1009.25 Fee exemptions.—

(1) The following students are exempt from the payment of tuition and fees, including lab fees, at a school district that provides workforce education programs, Florida College System institution, or state university:

(c) A student who is, or was at the time he or she reached 18 years of age, in the custody of the Department of Children and Families or who, after spending at least 6 months in the custody of the department after reaching 16 years of age, was placed in a guardianship by the court. Such exemption includes fees associated with enrollment in applied academics for adult education instruction. The exemption remains valid until the student reaches 28 years of age.

(d) A student who is, or was at the time he or she reached 18 years of age, in the custody of a relative or nonrelative under s. 39.5085 or s. 39.6225 or who was adopted from the Department of Children and Families after May 5, 1997. Such exemption includes fees associated with enrollment in applied academics for adult education instruction. The exemption remains valid until the student reaches 28 years of age.

Section 3. Paragraph (a) of subsection (1) of section 1009.40, Florida Statutes, is amended, and paragraph (c) is added to that subsection, to read:

1009.40 General requirements for student eligibility for state financial aid awards and tuition assistance grants.—

(1)(a) The general requirements for eligibility of students
for state financial aid awards and tuition assistance grants consist of the following:

1. Achievement of the academic requirements of and acceptance at a state university or Florida College System institution; a nursing diploma school approved by the Florida Board of Nursing; a Florida college or university which is accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the State Board of Education; a Florida institution the credits of which are acceptable for transfer to state universities; a career center; or a private career institution accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the State Board of Education.

2. Residency in this state for no less than 1 year preceding the award of aid or a tuition assistance grant for a program established pursuant to s. 1009.50, s. 1009.505, s. 1009.51, s. 1009.52, s. 1009.53, s. 1009.60, s. 1009.62, s. 1009.71, s. 1009.711, s. 1009.72, s. 1009.73, s. 1009.75, s. 1009.77, s. 1009.89, or s. 1009.891, or s. 1009.894. Residency in this state must be for purposes other than to obtain an education. Resident status for purposes of receiving state financial aid awards shall be determined in the same manner as resident status for tuition purposes pursuant to s. 1009.21.

3. Submission of certification attesting to the accuracy, completeness, and correctness of information provided to demonstrate a student’s eligibility to receive state financial aid awards or tuition assistance grants. Falsification of such information shall result in the denial of a pending application and revocation of an award or grant currently held to the extent that no further payments shall be made. Additionally, students who knowingly make false statements in order to receive state
financial aid awards or tuition assistance grants commit a misdemeanor of the second degree subject to the provisions of s. 837.06 and shall be required to return all state financial aid awards or tuition assistance grants wrongfully obtained.

(c) Eligibility for funding for state merit-based scholarship program awards under the Bright Futures Scholarship Program and the Benacquisto Scholarship Program is contingent upon a student meeting the minimum requirements specified in paragraphs (a) and (b) and any additional requirements specified in ss. 1009.531, 1009.532, 1009.534, 1009.535, 1009.536, and 1009.893, subject to the following:

1. Beginning with students who initially receive an award in the 2023-2024 academic year:

   a. A student enrolled in an associate in arts degree program, or a student enrolled in a state university who has not been admitted to an academic program, may receive an award up to the maximum amount established for the scholarship program for a maximum of 60 credit hours.

   b. A student enrolled in a certificate program, technical diploma program, career degree program, or major as a part of a baccalaureate degree program:

      (I) May receive an award up to the maximum amount established for the program if the certificate, diploma, career degree, or major is not identified on the list established pursuant to s. 1009.46(2)(a).

      (II) May receive a reduced award from the maximum established for the program in the General Appropriations Act if the certificate, diploma, career degree, or major is identified on the list established pursuant to s. 1009.46(2)(a).
2. Student eligibility for a reduced award from the maximum award established for the scholarship program, as determined in the General Appropriations Act, applies to a program of study that was identified on the list pursuant to s. 1009.46(2)(a) at the time of the student’s initial enrollment, or if the student changes his or her major program to a program identified on the list. A student may receive a maximum award established for the program if the program of study is removed from the list after the student’s initial enrollment, but before the student’s admission to the major.

3. Before disbursement of an award, each postsecondary educational institution shall verify that the funding level a student is provided aligns with the provisions established in this paragraph.

Section 4. Section 1009.46, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

1009.46 Duties relating to state financial aid and tuition assistance programs.—

(1)(a) Each postsecondary educational institution that receives state funds for state financial aid and tuition assistance programs shall:

1. Complete and return the annual application for state aid funds in the format and by the date established by the Department of Education;

2. Maintain complete, accurate, and auditable student records documenting the institution’s administration of state financial aid and tuition assistance funds;

3. Verify eligibility of enrolled students with the department each academic term;
4. Report each student’s program of study to the department using the most recent classification of instructional programs taxonomy for the certificate or degree level as developed by the United States Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics;

5. Disburse state financial aid and tuition assistance to eligible students;

6. Notify students annually regarding the renewal requirements for each state-funded award for which they are eligible;

7. Complete and return to the department all reports for the administration of state funds in the format and by the date established by the department;

8. Complete and return to the department all legislatively required reports in the format and by the date established by the department;

9. Retain required records for the later of 5 years or until such records are audited and any audit exceptions are resolved; and

10. Refund to the department any undisbursed advances within 60 days after the end of the regular registration period each fall and spring term, within 30 days after the end of the summer term, or within 60 days after the date a student’s ineligibility is determined.

(b) These requirements do not preclude higher standards specified in other sections of this part or rules of the State Board of Education.

(c) An institution that fails to perform its duties in administering state financial aid or tuition assistance programs

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must be placed on probation by the department.

1. The department shall provide allocations on a reimbursement basis to a participating institution that fails to timely remit undisbursed funds for the previous academic year.

2. The department may suspend or revoke an institution’s eligibility to participate in state-funded programs if the institution fails to provide the required audits, fails to resolve audit findings, or fails to timely provide statutorily required reports by established deadlines.

(2)(a) By December 31, 2021, the Board of Governors, the State Board of Education, and the Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida shall each identify and publish a list of career certificate and undergraduate and graduate degree programs offered by a district career center, charter technical career center, Florida College System institution, independent college or university, or state university, as applicable, which do not lead directly to employment.

(b) In determining which programs will be included on a list, the Board of Governors, the State Board of Education, and the Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida shall consider national, state, and regional industry demand for certificateholders and graduates of such degree programs. For each certificate and degree program listed, the Board of Governors and the State Board of Education must identify occupations, current job openings, estimates of job growth, and employment wages. The State Board of Education list must include programs at independent colleges and universities licensed by the Commission for Independent Education.

(c) The Board of Governors, the State Board of Education,
and the Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida must publish the methodology used in determining whether programs were included on a list.

(d) The respective lists must be updated annually, by December 31, to be effective in the next academic year.

Section 5. Paragraph (a) of subsection (4) and subsection (5) of section 1009.50, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

1009.50 Florida Public Student Assistance Grant Program; eligibility for grants.—

(4)(a) The funds appropriated for the Florida Public Student Assistance Grant Program shall be distributed to eligible institutions in accordance with a formula approved by the State Board of Education. The formula must consider at least the prior year’s distribution of funds and the number of eligible applicants who did not receive awards, the standardization of the expected family contribution, and provisions for unused funds. The formula must account for changes in the number of eligible students across all student assistance grant programs established pursuant to this section and ss. 1009.505, 1009.51, and 1009.52.

(5) Funds appropriated by the Legislature for state student assistance grants may be deposited in the State Student Financial Assistance Trust Fund. Notwithstanding ss. 216.301 and 216.351, any balance in the trust fund at the end of any fiscal year which has been allocated to the Florida Public Student Assistance Grant Program shall remain therein and shall be available for carrying out the purposes of this section.

Section 6. Subsection (5) of section 1009.505, Florida
1009.50 Florida Public Postsecondary Career Education Student Assistance Grant Program.—

(5) Funds appropriated by the Legislature for state student assistance grants may be deposited in the State Student Financial Assistance Trust Fund. Notwithstanding s. 216.301 and pursuant to s. 216.351, any balance in the trust fund at the end of any fiscal year which has been allocated to the Florida Public Postsecondary Career Education Student Assistance Grant Program shall remain therein and shall be available for carrying out the purposes of this section.

Section 7. Paragraph (a) of subsection (4) and subsection (5) of section 1009.51, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

1009.51 Florida Private Student Assistance Grant Program;
eligibility for grants.—

(4)(a) The funds appropriated for the Florida Private Student Assistance Grant Program shall be distributed to eligible institutions in accordance with a formula approved by the State Board of Education. The formula must consider at least the prior year’s distribution of funds and the number of eligible applicants who did not receive awards, the standardization of the expected family contribution, and provisions for unused funds. The formula must account for changes in the number of eligible students across all student assistance grant programs established pursuant to this section and ss. 1009.50, 1009.505, and 1009.52.

(5) Funds appropriated by the Legislature for Florida private student assistance grants may be deposited in the State Student Financial Assistance Trust Fund. Notwithstanding s.
Section 8. Paragraph (a) of subsection (4) and subsection (6) of section 1009.52, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

1009.52 Florida Postsecondary Student Assistance Grant Program; eligibility for grants.—

(4)(a) The funds appropriated for the Florida Postsecondary Student Assistance Grant Program shall be distributed to eligible institutions in accordance with a formula approved by the State Board of Education. The formula must consider at least the prior year’s distribution of funds and the number of eligible applicants who did not receive awards, the standardization of the expected family contribution, and provisions for unused funds. The formula must account for changes in the number of eligible students across all student assistance grant programs established pursuant to this section and ss. 1009.50, 1009.505, and 1009.51.

(6) Funds appropriated by the Legislature for Florida postsecondary student assistance grants may be deposited in the State Student Financial Assistance Trust Fund. Notwithstanding s. 216.301 and pursuant to s. 216.351, any balance in the trust fund at the end of any fiscal year which has been allocated to the Florida Postsecondary Student Assistance Grant Program shall remain therein and shall be available for carrying out the purposes of this section and as otherwise provided by law.

Section 9. Subsections (3), (4), and (7) of section...
1009.53, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

1009.53 Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program.—

(3) The Department of Education shall administer the Bright Futures Scholarship Program according to rules and procedures established by the State Board of Education. A single application must be sufficient for a student to apply for any of the awards. The department shall advertise the availability of the scholarship program and shall notify students, teachers, parents, certified school counselors, and principals or other relevant school administrators of the criteria and application procedures. The department must begin this process of notification no later than September 1 of each year.

(4) Funding for the Bright Futures Scholarship Program must be allocated from the Education Enhancement Trust Fund and must be provided before allocations from that fund are calculated for disbursement to other educational entities.

(a) If funds appropriated are not adequate to provide the maximum allowable award to each eligible applicant, awards in all components of the program must be prorated using the same percentage reduction.

(b) Notwithstanding s. 216.301, if all funds allocated to the Bright Futures Scholarship Program are not used in any fiscal year, up to 10 percent of the total allocation may be carried forward and used for awards in the following year.

(7) A student may receive only one type of award from the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program at any given time, but may transfer from one type of award to another through the renewal application process, if the student’s eligibility status changes. However, a student is not eligible to transfer from a
Florida Medallion Scholarship, a Florida Gold Seal CAPE Scholarship, or a Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholarship to a Florida Academic Scholarship. A student who receives an award from the program may also receive a federal family education loan or a federal direct loan, and the value of the award must be considered in the certification or calculation of the student’s loan eligibility.

Section 10. Paragraph (c) is added to subsection (3) of section 1009.532, Florida Statutes, to read:

1009.532 Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program; student eligibility requirements for renewal awards.—

(3) Notwithstanding paragraph (a), beginning with students initially funded in the 2022-2023 academic year, the maximum number of credit hours which can be awarded must be reduced by the number of postsecondary credit hours the student has earned from articulated acceleration mechanisms under s. 1007.27 which are accepted by the postsecondary educational institution toward the requirements of a career certificate, an applied technology diploma, an associate in applied science degree, or an associate in science degree or in partial fulfillment of general education coursework requirements of an associate or baccalaureate degree.

Section 11. Subsections (1) and (2) of section 1009.534, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

1009.534 Florida Academic Scholars award.—

(1) A student is eligible for a Florida Academic Scholars award if he or she meets the general eligibility requirements for the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program and:

(a) Has achieved a 3.5 weighted grade point average as
calculated pursuant to s. 1009.531, or its equivalent, in high school courses that are designated by the State Board of Education as college-preparatory academic courses and has attained at least the score required under s. 1009.531(6)(a) on the combined verbal and quantitative parts of the Scholastic Aptitude Test, the Scholastic Assessment Test, or the recentered Scholastic Assessment Test of the College Entrance Examination, or an equivalent score on the ACT Assessment Program;

(b) Has attended a home education program according to s. 1002.41 during grades 11 and 12, has completed the International Baccalaureate curriculum but failed to earn the International Baccalaureate Diploma, or has completed the Advanced International Certificate of Education curriculum but failed to earn the Advanced International Certificate of Education Diploma, and has attained at least the score required under s. 1009.531(6)(a) on the combined verbal and quantitative parts of the Scholastic Aptitude Test, the Scholastic Assessment Test, or the recentered Scholastic Assessment Test of the College Entrance Examination, or an equivalent score on the ACT Assessment Program;

(c) Has been awarded an International Baccalaureate Diploma from the International Baccalaureate Office or an Advanced International Certificate of Education Diploma from the University of Cambridge International Examinations Office;

(d) Has been recognized by the merit or achievement programs of the National Merit Scholarship Corporation as a scholar or finalist; or

(e) Has been granted academic honors by one or more of the College Board National Recognition Programs for students from

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underrepresented communities; or recognized by the National Hispanic Recognition Program as a scholar recipient

(f) For a high school student who graduated in the 2021-2022 academic year and thereafter:

1. Has earned an associate degree with a minimum postsecondary cumulative grade point average of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale before graduating from high school; or

2. Has earned a College Board Advanced Placement Capstone Diploma with scores of 4 or higher on six Advanced Placement examinations.

The student must complete a program of volunteer service work, as approved by the district school board, the administrators of a nonpublic school, or the Department of Education for home education program students, which must include a minimum of 75 hours of service work for high school students graduating in the 2010-2011 academic year and 100 hours of service work for high school students graduating in the 2011-2012 academic year and thereafter. The student must identify a social or civic issue or a professional area that interests him or her, develop a plan for his or her personal involvement in addressing the issue or learning about the area, and, through papers or other presentations, evaluate and reflect upon his or her experience. Except for credit earned through service-learning courses adopted pursuant to s. 1003.497, the student may not receive remuneration or academic credit for the volunteer service work performed. Such work may include, but is not limited to, a business or governmental internship, work for a nonprofit community service organization, or activities on behalf of a
candidate for public office. The hours of volunteer service must be documented in writing, and the document must be signed by the student, the student’s parent or guardian, and a representative of the organization for which the student performed the volunteer service work.

(2) A Florida Academic Scholar who is enrolled in a certificate, diploma, associate, or baccalaureate degree program at a public or nonpublic postsecondary educational institution is eligible for an award equal to the amount specified necessary to pay 100 percent of tuition and fees established under ss. 1009.22(3), (5), (6), and (7); 1009.23(3), (4), (7), (8), (10), and (11); and 1009.24(4), (7)–(13), (14)(r), and (16), as applicable, and is eligible for an additional stipend for textbooks, to assist with the payment of educational expenses as funds are specifically appropriated in the General Appropriations Act to assist with the payment of educational expenses.

Section 12. Section 1009.5341, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1009.5341 Florida Bright Futures Scholarship awards for graduate study.—

(1) For the 2021-2022 academic year, Florida Bright Futures Scholarship recipients who graduate in the 2010-2011 academic year and thereafter with a baccalaureate degree in 7 semesters, or the equivalent or fewer hours, and wish to pursue graduate study may apply the unused portion of their Florida Academic Scholars award or Florida Medallion Scholars award toward 1 semester of graduate study, not to exceed 15 semester hours paid at the undergraduate rate. A baccalaureate degree may include,
but is not limited to, college credits earned through articulated acceleration mechanisms pursuant to s. 1007.27.

(2) Beginning with the 2022-2023 academic year, a Florida Bright Futures Scholarship recipient may apply the unused portion of his or her Florida Academic Scholars award or Florida Medallion Scholars award toward graduate study in a degree field that is not identified on a list developed pursuant to s. 1009.46(2)(a), which must be paid at the undergraduate rate.

Section 13. Subsections (1) and (2) of section 1009.535, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

1009.535 Florida Medallion Scholars award.—

(1) A student is eligible for a Florida Medallion Scholars award if he or she meets the general eligibility requirements for the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program and:

(a) Has achieved a weighted grade point average of 3.0 as calculated pursuant to s. 1009.531, or the equivalent, in high school courses that are designated by the State Board of Education as college-preparatory academic courses and has attained at least the score required under s. 1009.531(6)(b) on the combined verbal and quantitative parts of the Scholastic Aptitude Test, the Scholastic Assessment Test, or the recentered Scholastic Assessment Test of the College Entrance Examination, or an equivalent score on the ACT Assessment Program;

(b) Has completed the International Baccalaureate curriculum but failed to earn the International Baccalaureate Diploma or has completed the Advanced International Certificate of Education curriculum but failed to earn the Advanced International Certificate of Education Diploma, and has attained at least the score required under s. 1009.531(6)(b) on the...
combined verbal and quantitative parts of the Scholastic Aptitude Test, the Scholastic Assessment Test, or the recentered Scholastic Assessment Test of the College Entrance Examination, or an equivalent score on the ACT Assessment Program;

c) Has attended a home education program according to s. 1002.41 during grades 11 and 12 and has attained at least the score required under s. 1009.531(6)(b) on the combined verbal and quantitative parts of the Scholastic Aptitude Test, the Scholastic Assessment Test, or the recentered Scholastic Assessment Test of the College Entrance Examination, or an equivalent score on the ACT Assessment Program;

d) Has been recognized by the merit or achievement program of the National Merit Scholarship Corporation as a scholar or finalist but has not completed the program of volunteer service work required under s. 1009.534; or

e) Has been granted academic honors by one or more of the College Board National Recognition Programs for students from underrepresented communities recognized by the National Hispanic Recognition Program as a scholar, but has not completed the program of volunteer service work required under s. 1009.534; or

f) For a high school student who graduates in the 2021-2022 academic year and thereafter:

1. Has earned an associate degree with a minimum cumulative postsecondary grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale before graduating from high school; or

2. Has earned an Advanced Placement Capstone Diploma with scores of 3 or higher on six Advanced Placement Examinations.

A high school student graduating in the 2011-2012 academic year
and thereafter must complete at least 75 hours of volunteer service work approved by the district school board, the administrators of a nonpublic school, or the Department of Education for home education program students. The student must identify a social or civic issue or a professional area that interests him or her, develop a plan for his or her personal involvement in addressing the issue or learning about the area, and, through papers or other presentations, evaluate and reflect upon his or her experience. Except for credit earned through service-learning courses adopted pursuant to s. 1003.497, the student may not receive remuneration or academic credit for volunteer service work performed. Such work may include, but is not limited to, a business or governmental internship, work for a nonprofit community service organization, or activities on behalf of a candidate for public office. The hours of volunteer service must be documented in writing, and the document must be signed by the student, the student’s parent or guardian, and a representative of the organization for which the student performed the volunteer service work.

(2) A Florida Medallion Scholar who is enrolled in a certificate, diploma, associate, or baccalaureate degree program at a public or nonpublic postsecondary educational institution is eligible, beginning in the fall 2018 semester, for an award equal to the amount specified in the General Appropriations Act necessary to pay 75 percent of tuition and fees established under ss. 1009.22(3), (5), (6), and (7); 1009.23(3), (4), (7), (8), (10), and (11); and 1009.24(4), (7)-(13), (14)(r), and (16), as applicable, to assist with the payment of educational expenses. Beginning in the fall 2021
semester, a Florida Medallion Scholar who is enrolled in an associate degree program at a Florida College System institution is eligible for an award equal to the amount specified in the General Appropriations Act necessary to pay 100 percent of tuition and fees established under s. 1009.23(3), (4), (7), (8), (10), and (11) to assist with the payment of educational expenses.

Section 14. Section 1009.71, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

1009.71 Florida Bright Opportunities Grant Program.—
(1) ESTABLISHMENT; PURPOSE.—The Florida Bright Opportunities Grant Program is established and shall be administered by the participating institutions in accordance with rules of the State Board of Education. The program shall provide an award equal to the amount necessary to cover tuition and registration fees, after applying all other federal and state financial aid, for eligible students at a Florida College System institution, a career center operated by a district school board under s. 1001.44, or a charter technical career center under s. 1002.34.

(2) ELIGIBILITY.—In order to be eligible for the program, a student must have a tuition and registration fee balance not covered by all federal financial and state financial aid, and:

(a) Be enrolled as a student seeking a degree or career certificate in an associate degree, technical certificate, applied technology diploma, or clock hour certificate program at a Florida College System institution, or a clock hour career certificate or diploma program at a district career center or charter technical career center. The students must be enrolled...
for at least 6 semester hours or the equivalent per term at a
Florida College System institution, district career center, or
charter technical career center;

(b) Meet the requirements under s. 1009.40(1)(a)2. and 3.
and (c); and

(c) Qualify and remain eligible each academic year for the
Pell Grant.

An institution may not impose additional criteria to determine a
student’s eligibility to receive a grant under this section.

(3) GRANT AWARD.—The program shall:

(a) Cover remaining tuition and registration fees, with a
stipend for books as specified in the General Appropriations
Act, for eligible students after all other federal and state
financial aid is applied to tuition and fees.

(b) Be allocated, subject to the availability of funding,
on a first-come, first-served basis. The award may not exceed
the cost of tuition and fees at that institution, plus a stipend
for books as determined in the General Appropriations Act.

Returning students shall receive priority over new students.

(4) AWARD DURATION.—A student is eligible to receive an
award for the number of semesters or quarters specified in s.
1009.40(3).

(5) DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS.—

(a) The funds appropriated for the program must be
distributed to eligible institutions in accordance with a
formula approved by the State Board of Education. The formula
must take into account at least the prior year’s distribution of
funds and the number of eligible applicants who did not receive
awards.

(b) Subject to appropriation by the Legislature, payment of grants must be transmitted to the institution in advance of the registration period. Institutions shall notify students of the amount of their awards.

(c) The eligibility status of each student to receive a disbursement must be determined by each institution as of the end of its regular registration period, inclusive of a drop-add period. Institutions may not be required to reevaluate a student’s eligibility status after this date for purposes of changing eligibility determinations previously made.

(d) Each participating institution shall report to the department by the established date the number of students eligible for the program for each academic term. Each institution also shall report to the department any necessary demographic and eligibility data for such students.

(e) Institutions shall certify to the department within 30 days after the end of regular registration each term the amount of funds disbursed to each student. Institutions shall remit to the department any undisbursed advances for the fall, spring, and summer terms within 30 days after the end of the summer term.

(6) RULES.—The State Board of Education shall adopt rules to implement this section.

Section 15. Section 1009.711, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

1009.711 Florida Endeavor Scholarship Program.—

(1) ESTABLISHMENT; PURPOSE.—The Florida Endeavor Scholarship Program is established and shall be administered by
participating institutions in accordance with rules of the State Board of Education. The program shall provide an award equal to the amount necessary to cover tuition, registration, and testing fees, including high school equivalency diploma test fees, for eligible students at a Florida College System institution, a career center operated by a district school board under s. 1001.44, or a charter technical career center under s. 1002.34.

(2) ELIGIBILITY.—In order to be eligible for the program, a student may not have earned a high school credential before enrolling at the institution, and must:

(a) Be enrolled in a career certificate or noncollege-credit applied technology diploma program or in a General Education Program at a Florida College System institution, a district career center, or a charter technical career center;

(b) Meet the requirements under s. 1009.40(1)(a)2. and 3. and (c);

(c) Demonstrate readiness for enrollment in a postsecondary clock hour program. The student shall:

1. Meet the basic skills assessment requirement for the certificate or diploma program;

2. Demonstrate grade 9 level or above literacy and numeracy skills on an assessment approved by the State Board of Education for basic skills; or

3. Enroll for at least one term in a school district or Florida College System institution Integrated Education and Training program.

(d) To maintain eligibility after the initial term of enrollment, a student must demonstrate progress toward the completion of a clock hour certificate or diploma program.
through attendance and successful completion of program standards. A student who does not maintain attendance and progress toward completion of courses in the program is not eligible for a renewal award.

An institution may not impose additional criteria to determine a student’s initial eligibility to receive a grant under this section.

(3) SCHOLARSHIP AWARD.—A student is eligible to receive an award equal to the amount to cover tuition and registration fees for a career certificate or applied technology diploma program for the number of semesters or quarters specified in s. 1009.40(3). The award may not exceed the cost of tuition and registration fees at that institution. The institution shall award scholarships subject to the availability of funding, on a first-come, first-served basis. Returning students must be given priority over new students.

(4) DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS.—

(a) The funds appropriated for the program must be distributed to eligible institutions in accordance with a formula approved by the State Board of Education. The formula must take into account at least the prior year’s distribution of funds and the number of eligible applicants who did not receive awards.

(b) Subject to the appropriation of funds by the Legislature, the department shall transmit payment of grants to the institution in advance of the registration period. Institutions shall notify students of the amount of their awards.
(c) The eligibility status of each student to receive a disbursement must be determined by each institution as of the end of its regular registration period, inclusive of a drop-add period. Institutions may not be required to reevaluate a student’s eligibility status after this date for purposes of changing eligibility determinations previously made.

(d) Each participating institution shall report to the department by the established date the number of students eligible for the program for each academic term. Each institution also shall report to the department any necessary demographic and eligibility data for such students.

(e) Institutions shall certify to the department within 30 days after the end of regular registration each term the amount of funds disbursed to each student. Institutions shall remit to the department any undisbursed advances for the fall, spring, and summer terms within 30 days after the end of the summer term.

(5) RULES.—The State Board of Education shall adopt rules to implement this section.

Section 16. Paragraph (b) of subsection (4) and subsection (5) of section 1009.893, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

1009.893 Benacquisto Scholarship Program.—

(4) In order to be eligible for an initial award under the scholarship program, a student must meet the requirements of paragraph (a) or paragraph (b).

(b) A student who initially enrolls in a baccalaureate degree program in the 2018-2019 through 2021-2022 academic years or later and who is not a resident of this state, as determined in s. 1009.40 and rules of the State Board of
Education, must:

1. Physically reside in this state on or near the campus of the postsecondary educational institution in which the student is enrolled;

2. Earn a high school diploma from a school outside Florida which is comparable to a standard Florida high school diploma or its equivalent pursuant to s. 1002.3105, s. 1003.4281, s. 1003.4282, or s. 1003.435 or must complete a home education program in another state; and

3. Be accepted by and enrolled full-time in a baccalaureate degree program at an eligible regionally accredited Florida public or independent postsecondary educational institution during the fall academic term following high school graduation.

(5)(a)1. An eligible student who meets the requirements of paragraph (4)(a), who is a National Merit Scholar, and who attends a Florida public postsecondary educational institution shall receive a scholarship award as specified in the General Appropriations Act equal to the institutional cost of attendance minus the sum of the student’s Florida Bright Futures Scholarship and National Merit Scholarship.

2. An eligible student who meets the requirements of paragraph (4)(b), who is a National Merit Scholar, and who attends a Florida public postsecondary educational institution shall receive a scholarship award as specified in the General Appropriations Act equal to the institutional cost of attendance for a resident of this state minus the student’s National Merit Scholarship. Such student is exempt from the payment of out-of-state fees.

(b) An eligible student who is a National Merit Scholar and
who attends a Florida independent postsecondary educational institution shall receive a scholarship award as specified in the General Appropriations Act equal to the highest cost of attendance for a resident of this state enrolled at a Florida public university, as reported by the Board of Governors of the State University System, minus the sum of the student’s Florida Bright Futures Scholarship and National Merit Scholarship.

Section 17. This act shall take effect July 1, 2021.

______________________________ T I T L E  A M E N D M E N T ____________________________

And the title is amended as follows:

Delete everything before the enacting clause and insert:

A bill to be entitled An act relating to student financial aid; creating s. 1006.75, F.S.; requiring the Board of Governors of the State University System to create an online dashboard; specifying minimum information to be included in the dashboard; requiring the dashboard to be available by a specified date; requiring each state university office of admissions website to contain a link to the dashboard; requiring each state university board of trustees to adopt certain procedures; requiring the procedures to include placing a hold on certain students’ registration; specifying the requirements for students to lift the hold; requiring the Board of Governors to approve such procedures by a specified date; amending s. 1009.25, F.S.; making technical changes; amending s. 1009.40, F.S.; conforming
provisions to changes made by the act; revising eligibility for an award under the Bright Futures Scholarship Program or the Benacquisto Scholarship Program; specifying funding award levels for students initially funded in a certain academic year; requiring postsecondary educational institutions to verify funding levels before award disbursement; creating s. 1009.46, F.S.; specifying the duties of certain postsecondary educational institutions with regard to financial aid and tuition assistance programs; specifying penalties for noncompliance; requiring the Board of Governors, the State Board of Education, and the Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida to each approve, by a specified date, a list of career certificate and undergraduate and graduate degree programs that they determine do not lead directly to employment; requiring that each list include specified information; requiring that the state board list include programs at independent colleges and universities licensed by the Commission for Independent Education; requiring each entity to publish the methodology used in determining whether programs are included on the list; requiring that the lists be updated annually, by a specified date, to be effective the next academic year; amending s. 1009.50, F.S.; revising the formula for calculating how Florida Public Student Assistance Grant Program funds are distributed; deleting a provision authorizing Florida Public Student Assistance Grant Program funds to be
deposited in the State Student Financial Assistance
Trust Fund; deleting a provision requiring any balance
in the trust fund which was allocated to the Florida
Public Student Assistance Grant Program at the end of
the fiscal year to remain therein; amending s.
1009.505, F.S.; deleting a provision authorizing
Florida Public Postsecondary Career Education Student
Assistance Grant Program funds to be deposited in the
trust fund; deleting a provision requiring any balance
in the trust fund which was allocated to the Florida
Public Postsecondary Career Education Student
Assistance Grant Program at the end of the fiscal year
to remain therein; amending s. 1009.51, F.S.; revising
the formula for calculating how Florida Private
Student Assistance Grant Program funds are
distributed; deleting a provision authorizing Florida
Private Student Assistance Grant Program funds to be
deposited in the trust fund; deleting a provision
requiring any balance in the trust fund which was
allocated to the Florida Private Student Assistance
Grant Program at the end of the fiscal year to remain
therein; amending s. 1009.52, F.S.; revising the
formula for how Florida Postsecondary Student
Assistance Grant Program funds are distributed;
deleting a provision authorizing Florida Postsecondary
Student Assistance Grant Program funds to be deposited
in the trust fund; deleting a provision requiring any
balance in the trust fund which was allocated to the
Florida Postsecondary Student Assistance Grant Program
at the end of the fiscal year to remain therein;
amending s. 1009.53, F.S.; requiring the Department of
Education to advertise the Florida Bright Futures
Scholarship Program to specified persons no later than
a specified date of each year; deleting a provision
authorizing unused Florida Bright Futures Scholarship
Program funds to be carried forward; deleting a
provision authorizing certain students to receive
specified loans; amending s. 1009.532, F.S.;
requiring, beginning with a specified academic year,
that the maximum number of credit hours which can be
awarded under the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship
Program be reduced by the number of postsecondary
credit hours the student has earned from certain
articulated acceleration mechanisms which are applied
toward certificate, diploma, or specified degree
requirements or to general education requirements;
amending s. 1009.534, F.S.; revising and expanding
eligibility requirements of the Florida Academic
Scholars award; providing that a Florida Academic
Scholar is eligible for an award equal to the amount
specified in the General Appropriations Act; amending
s. 1009.5341, F.S.; authorizing a Florida Bright
Futures Scholarship recipient to apply the unused
portion of a Florida Academic Scholars award or
Florida Medallion Scholars award toward graduate study
for a specified academic year; authorizing a Florida
Bright Futures Scholarship recipient to apply the
unused portion of a Florida Academic Scholars award or
Florida Medallion Scholars award toward graduate study in a specified degree field, paid at the undergraduate rate, beginning with a specified academic year; amending s. 1009.535, F.S.; revising and expanding eligibility for a Florida Medallion Scholars award; providing a Florida Medallion Scholar is eligible for an award equal to the amount specified in the General Appropriations Act; creating s. 1009.71, F.S.; establishing the Florida Bright Opportunities Grant Program; requiring the program to be administered by the participating institutions subject to state board rules; providing the purpose of the program; specifying eligibility requirements for the program; prohibiting institutions from imposing additional eligibility requirements on students; requiring the program to cover remaining tuition and fees for eligible students after the application of all other federal and state financial aid, with a stipend for books as specified in the General Appropriations Act; requiring program awards to be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis; requiring returning students to receive priority over new students; providing the duration of the award; requiring funds to be distributed to eligible institutions based on a formula approved by the state board; requiring the formula to take into account specified criteria; requiring grants to be transmitted to institutions in advance of the registration period; requiring institutions to notify students of award amounts;
requiring institutions to determine the eligibility status of each student at a specified time; prohibiting institutions from being required to reevaluate student eligibility after the specified time; requiring institutions to report specified information to the department; requiring institutions to remit to the department any undisbursed advances within a specified timeframe; requiring the state board to adopt rules; creating s. 1009.711, F.S.; establishing the Florida Endeavor Scholarship Program; requiring the award to cover tuition, registration, and testing fees for eligible students at a Florida College System institution, a career center, or a charter technical career center; providing that students who earned a high school credential before enrolling at the institution are not eligible for the program; requiring enrollment in specified programs; requiring that students meet specified statutory requirements; requiring that students demonstrate readiness for enrollment in a postsecondary clock hour program by meeting a specified requirement, demonstrating specified literacy and numeracy skills, or by enrolling in an Integrated Education and Training program; specifying criteria for continuing eligibility and for a renewal award; prohibiting institutions from imposing additional criteria to determine a student’s initial eligibility; providing that students are eligible to receive award amounts equal to certain tuition and registration fees;
requiring program awards to be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis, with returning students given priority over new students; requiring funds to be distributed to eligible institutions based on a formula approved by the state board; requiring that the formula take into account specified criteria; requiring that grants be transmitted to institutions in advance of the registration period; requiring institutions to notify students of award amounts; requiring institutions to determine the eligibility status of each student at a specified time; prohibiting institutions from being required to reevaluate student eligibility after the specified time; requiring institutions to report specified information to the department; requiring institutions to remit to the department any undisbursed advances within a specified timeframe; requiring the state board to adopt rules; amending s. 1009.893, F.S.; requiring a student who enrolls in a baccalaureate degree program in specified academic years to comply with certain requirements to attain a Benacquisto Scholarship; providing that the amount awarded under the program will be as specified in the General Appropriations Act; providing an effective date.
The Committee on Education (Thurston) recommended the following:

**Senate Amendment (with title amendment)**

Delete lines 183 - 543 and insert:

Section 2. Paragraph (a) of subsection (4) of section 1009.50, Florida Statutes, is amended to read: 1009.50 Florida Public Student Assistance Grant Program; eligibility for grants.—

(4)(a) The funds appropriated for the Florida Public Student Assistance Grant Program shall be distributed to eligible institutions in accordance with a formula approved by
the State Board of Education. The formula must consider at least
the prior year’s distribution of funds and the number of
eligible applicants who did not receive awards, the
standardization of the expected family contribution, and
provisions for unused funds. The formula must account for
changes in the number of eligible students across all student
assistance grant programs established pursuant to this section
and ss. 1009.50, 1009.505, and 1009.52.

Section 3. Paragraph (a) of subsection (4) of section
1009.51, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:
1009.51 Florida Private Student Assistance Grant Program;
eligibility for grants.—
(4)(a) The funds appropriated for the Florida Private
Student Assistance Grant Program shall be distributed to
eligible institutions in accordance with a formula approved by
the State Board of Education. The formula must consider at least
the prior year’s distribution of funds and the number of
eligible applicants who did not receive awards, the
standardization of the expected family contribution, and
provisions for unused funds. The formula must account for
changes in the number of eligible students across all student
assistance grant programs established pursuant to this section
and ss. 1009.50, 1009.505, and 1009.52.

Section 4. Paragraph (a) of subsection (4) of section
1009.52, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:
1009.52 Florida Postsecondary Student Assistance Grant
Program; eligibility for grants.—
(4)(a) The funds appropriated for the Florida Postsecondary
Student Assistance Grant Program shall be distributed to
eligible institutions in accordance with a formula approved by
the State Board of Education. The formula must consider at least
the prior year’s distribution of funds and, the number of
eligible applicants who did not receive awards, the
standardization of the expected family contribution, and
provisions for unused funds. The formula must account for
changes in the number of eligible students across all student
assistance grant programs established pursuant to this section
and ss. 1009.50, 1009.505, and 1009.51.

Section 5. Subsection (3) of section 1009.53, Florida
Statistics, is amended to read:

1009.53 Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program.—
(3) The Department of Education shall administer the Bright
Futures Scholarship Program according to rules and procedures
established by the State Board of Education. A single
application must be sufficient for a student to apply for any of
the awards. The department shall advertise the availability of
the scholarship program and shall notify students, teachers,
parents, certified school counselors, and principals or other
relevant school administrators of the criteria and application
procedures. The department must begin this process of
notification no later than September January 1 of each year.

Section 6. Subsections (1) and (2) of section 1009.534,
Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

1009.534 Florida Academic Scholars award.—
(1) A student is eligible for a Florida Academic Scholars
award if he or she meets the general eligibility requirements
for the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program and:
(a) Has achieved a 3.5 weighted grade point average as
calculated pursuant to s. 1009.531, or its equivalent, in high school courses that are designated by the State Board of Education as college-preparatory academic courses and has attained at least the score required under s. 1009.531(6)(a) on the combined verbal and quantitative parts of the Scholastic Aptitude Test, the Scholastic Assessment Test, or the recentered Scholastic Assessment Test of the College Entrance Examination, or an equivalent score on the ACT Assessment Program;

(b) Has attended a home education program according to s. 1002.41 during grades 11 and 12, has completed the International Baccalaureate curriculum but failed to earn the International Baccalaureate Diploma, or has completed the Advanced International Certificate of Education curriculum but failed to earn the Advanced International Certificate of Education Diploma, and has attained at least the score required under s. 1009.531(6)(a) on the combined verbal and quantitative parts of the Scholastic Aptitude Test, the Scholastic Assessment Test, or the recentered Scholastic Assessment Test of the College Entrance Examination, or an equivalent score on the ACT Assessment Program;

(c) Has been awarded an International Baccalaureate Diploma from the International Baccalaureate Office or an Advanced International Certificate of Education Diploma from the University of Cambridge International Examinations Office;

(d) Has been recognized by the merit or achievement programs of the National Merit Scholarship Corporation as a scholar or finalist; or

(e) Has been granted academic honors by one or more of the College Board National Recognition Programs for students from...
underrepresented communities; or recognized by the National Hispanic Recognition Program as a scholar recipient.

(f) For a high school student who graduated in the 2021-2022 academic year and thereafter:

1. Has earned an associate degree with a minimum postsecondary cumulative grade point average of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale before graduating from high school; or

2. Has earned a College Board Advanced Placement Capstone Diploma with scores of 4 or higher on six Advanced Placement examinations.

The student must complete a program of volunteer service work, as approved by the district school board, the administrators of a nonpublic school, or the Department of Education for home education program students, which must include a minimum of 75 hours of service work for high school students graduating in the 2010-2011 academic year and 100 hours of service work for high school students graduating in the 2011-2012 academic year and thereafter. The student must identify a social or civic issue or a professional area that interests him or her, develop a plan for his or her personal involvement in addressing the issue or learning about the area, and, through papers or other presentations, evaluate and reflect upon his or her experience. Except for credit earned through service-learning courses adopted pursuant to s. 1003.497, the student may not receive remuneration or academic credit for the volunteer service work performed. Such work may include, but is not limited to, a business or governmental internship, work for a nonprofit community service organization, or activities on behalf of a...
candidate for public office. The hours of volunteer service must be documented in writing, and the document must be signed by the student, the student’s parent or guardian, and a representative of the organization for which the student performed the volunteer service work.

(2) A Florida Academic Scholar who is enrolled in a certificate, diploma, associate, or baccalaureate degree program at a public or nonpublic postsecondary education institution is eligible for an award equal to the amount specified necessary to pay 100 percent of tuition and fees established under ss. 1009.22(3), (5), (6), and (7); 1009.23(3), (4), (7), (8), (10), and (11); and 1009.24(4), (7), (13), (14)(r), and (16), as applicable, and is eligible for an additional stipend for textbooks, to assist with the payment of educational expenses as funds are specifically appropriated in the General Appropriations Act to assist with the payment of educational expenses.

Section 7. Section 1009.5341, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1009.5341 Florida Bright Futures Scholarship awards for graduate study.—For the 2021-2022 academic year, Florida Bright Futures Scholarship recipients who graduate in the 2010-2011 academic year and thereafter with a baccalaureate degree in 7 semesters, or the equivalent or fewer hours, and wish to pursue graduate study may apply the unused portion of their Florida Academic Scholars award or Florida Medallion Scholars award toward 1 semester of graduate study, not to exceed 15 semester hours paid at the undergraduate rate. A baccalaureate degree may include, but is not limited to, college credits earned through
articulated acceleration mechanisms pursuant to s. 1007.27.

And the title is amended as follows:

Delete lines 3 - 89

and insert:

1009.25, F.S.; making technical changes; amending s. 1009.50, F.S.; revising the formula for calculating how Florida Public Student Assistance Grant Program funds are distributed; amending s. 1009.51, F.S.; revising the formula for calculating how Florida Private Student Assistance Grant Program funds are distributed; amending s. 1009.52, F.S.; revising the formula for how Florida Postsecondary Student Assistance Grant Program funds are distributed; amending s. 1009.53, F.S.; revising the date by which the Department of Education is annually required to advertise the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program to specified persons; amending s. 1009.534, F.S.; revising and expanding eligibility requirements of the Florida Academic Scholars award; providing that a Florida Academic Scholar is eligible for an award equal to the amount specified in the General Appropriations Act; amending s. 1009.5341, F.S.; authorizing a Bright Futures Scholarship recipient to apply the unused portion of a Florida Academic Scholars award or Florida Medallion Scholars award toward graduate study for a specified academic year;
The Committee on Education (Polsky) recommended the following:

**Senate Amendment (with title amendment)**

Between lines 243 and 244 insert:

Section 3. Subsection (1) of section 1009.42, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1009.42 Financial aid appeal process.—

(1)(a) The State Board of Education shall adopt, by rule, procedures for the appeal of:

1. Errors in eligibility determinations, or failure to transfer awards between eligible institutions, made by the
Office of Student Financial Assistance of the Department of Education, regarding applicants’ eligibility for receiving state student financial aid awards; and

2. Beginning with the 2022-2023 academic year, eligibility determinations made under s. 1009.40(1)(c) based solely on whether a student is enrolled in a career certificate or degree program on an approved list developed pursuant to s. 1009.46(2)(a).

(b) The procedures must provide for establishment of a committee to consider appeals that are not resolved by other administrative action. Each committee must be comprised of four members appointed by the Commissioner of Education, including one representative of the Office of Student Financial Assistance; two practicing financial aid administrators from public or private postsecondary institutions in this state, one of whom must be from an institution other than one to which the applicant is seeking admission or enrolled in, as applicable; and one student enrolled in a public postsecondary institution in this state, nominated by the Florida Student Association.

(c) An applicant for state student financial aid may submit an appeal who believes an error has been made in determining eligibility for student financial assistance or who believes the department has failed to transfer an award between eligible institutions may appeal the decision in writing to the Office of Student Financial Assistance based on the circumstances described in subparagraphs (a)1. and 2. The Office of Student Financial Assistance shall investigate the complaint and take appropriate action within 30 days after its receipt of the appeal. Notwithstanding s. 1009.40(1)(c), a student submitting
an appeal under subparagraph (a)2. must be deemed eligible to receive state student financial aid awards if the appeal demonstrates that the student’s chosen program would help the student attain a career in the future. If the student wishes further review of the appeal, the Office of Student Financial Assistance shall forward the appeal to the committee. Within 30 days after the receipt of a request for a hearing, a final decision shall be rendered by the committee established under this section, and a copy of the decision shall be provided to the applicant. The decision rendered by the committee constitutes final agency action.

(d) A description of the financial aid appeals process shall be included in the application form for each state student financial aid program.

And the title is amended as follows:
Delete line 15
and insert:
to receive certain funding; amending s. 1009.42, F.S.; revising the postsecondary financial aid appeal process; requiring the State Board of Education to adopt procedures; authorizing students to appeal eligibility determinations based solely on whether the student is enrolled in a career certificate or degree program on certain approved lists; requiring such students to be deemed eligible to receive state student financial aid awards if the appeal demonstrates that the chosen program would help the
students attain a career in the future; creating s. 1009.46, F.S.;
A bill to be entitled An act relating to student financial aid; amending s. 1009.25, F.S.; making technical changes; amending s. 1009.40, F.S.; conforming provisions to changes made by the act; requiring that eligibility for state financial aid awards and tuition assistance grants be reevaluated each term and identify students’ program of study; providing additional eligibility criteria for financial aid awards and tuition assistance grants, beginning with a specified academic year; providing that eligibility for such funds is contingent on enrollment in certain career certificate or degree programs; providing that students who have not yet been admitted to such a program are eligible to receive certain funding; creating s. 1009.46, F.S.; providing the duties of postsecondary educational institutions with regard to financial aid and tuition assistance programs; specifying penalties for noncompliance; requiring the Board of Governors and the State Board of Education to each approve, by a specified date, a list of career certificate and undergraduate and graduate degree programs that they determine lead directly to employment; requiring that each list include specified information; requiring each list to include programs from independent colleges and universities; requiring that the lists be updated annually; amending s. 1009.50, F.S.; revising the formula for calculating how Florida Public Student Assistance Grant Program funds are distributed; deleting a provision authorizing Florida Public Student Assistance Grant Program funds to be deposited in the State Student Financial Assistance Trust Fund; deleting a provision requiring any balance in the trust fund which was allocated to the Florida Public Student Assistance Grant Program at the end of the fiscal year to remain therein; amending s. 1009.505, F.S.; deleting a provision authorizing Florida Private Postsecondary Career Education Student Assistance Grant Program funds to be deposited in the trust fund; deleting a provision requiring any balance in the trust fund which was allocated to the Florida Public Postsecondary Career Education Student Assistance Grant Program at the end of the fiscal year to remain therein; amending s. 1009.51, F.S.; revising the formula for calculating how Florida Private Student Assistance Grant Program funds are distributed; deleting a provision authorizing Florida Private Student Assistance Grant Program funds to be deposited in the trust fund; deleting a provision requiring any balance in the trust fund which was allocated to the Florida Private Student Assistance Grant Program at the end of the fiscal year to remain therein; amending s. 1009.52, F.S.; revising the formula for how Florida Postsecondary Student Assistance Grant Program funds are distributed; deleting a provision authorizing Florida Postsecondary Student Assistance Grant Program funds to be deposited in the trust fund; deleting a provision requiring any balance in the trust fund.
which was allocated to the Florida Postsecondary Student Assistance Grant Program at the end of the fiscal year to remain therein; amending s. 1009.53, F.S.; requiring the Department of Education to advertise the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program to specified persons no later than September 1 of each year; deleting a provision authorizing unused Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program funds to be carried forward; deleting a provision authorizing certain students to receive specified loans; amending s. 1009.532, F.S.; requiring, beginning with a specified academic year, that the maximum number of credit hours which can be awarded under the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program be reduced by the number of postsecondary credit hours the student has earned from certain articulated acceleration mechanisms; amending s. 1009.534, F.S.; revising and expanding eligibility requirements of the Florida Academic Scholars award; providing that a Florida Academic Scholar is eligible for an award equal to the amount specified in the General Appropriations Act; amending s. 1009.5341, F.S.; authorizing a Bright Futures Scholarship recipient to apply the unused portion of a Florida Academic Scholars award or Florida Medallion Scholars award toward graduate study for a specified academic year; authorizing a Bright Futures Scholarship recipient to apply the unused portion of a Florida Academic Scholars award or Florida Medallion Scholars award toward graduate study in a specified degree field, paid at the undergraduate rate, beginning with a specified academic year; amending s. 1009.535, F.S.; revising and expanding eligibility for Florida Medallion Scholars awards; providing that the amount of Florida Medallion Scholars’ awards is as specified in the General Appropriations Act; creating s. 1009.71, F.S.; establishing the Florida Bright Opportunities Grant Program; requiring the program to be administered by the participating institutions subject to state board rules; providing the purpose of the program; specifying eligibility requirements for the program; prohibiting institutions from imposing additional eligibility requirements on students; requiring the program to cover remaining tuition and fees for eligible students after the application of all other federal and state financial aid, with a stipend for books as specified in the General Appropriations Act; requiring program awards to be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis; requiring returning students to receive priority over new students; providing the duration of the award; requiring funds to be distributed to eligible institutions based on a formula approved by the state board; requiring the formula to consider specified criteria; requiring grants to be transmitted to institutions in advance of the registration period; requiring institutions to notify students of award amounts; requiring institutions to determine the eligibility status of...
each student at a specified time; prohibiting institutions from being required to reevaluate student eligibility after the specified time; requiring institutions to report specified information to the department; requiring institutions to remit to the department any undisbursed advances within a specified timeframe; requiring the state board to adopt rules; creating s. 1009.711, F.S.; establishing the Florida Endeavor Scholarship Program; requiring the award to cover tuition and registration fees for eligible students at a Florida College System institution, a career center, or a charter technical career center; specifying eligibility for students without a high school credential; requiring enrollment in specified programs; requiring completion of specified clock hours and a minimum postsecondary grade point average; requiring program awards to be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis; requiring returning students to be given priority over new students; providing the duration of the award; requiring funds to be distributed to eligible institutions based on a formula approved by the state board; requiring the formula to consider specified criteria; requiring grants to be transmitted to institutions in advance of the registration period; requiring institutions to notify students of award amounts; requiring institutions to determine the eligibility status of each student at a specified time; prohibiting institutions from being required to reevaluate student eligibility after the specified time; requiring institutions to report specified information to the department; requiring institutions to remit to the department any undisbursed advances within a specified timeframe; requiring the state board to adopt rules; amending s. 1009.893, F.S.; requiring a student who enrolls in a baccalaureate degree program in specified academic years to comply with certain requirements to attain a Benacquisto Scholarship; providing that the amount awarded under the program will be as specified in the General Appropriations Act; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Paragraphs (c) and (d) of subsection (1) of section 1009.25, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

(1) The following students are exempt from the payment of tuition and fees, including lab fees, at a school district that provides workforce education programs, Florida College System institution, or state university:

(c) A student who is 18 years of age or was at the time he or she reached 18 years of age in the custody of the Department of Children and Families or who, after spending at least 6 months in the custody of the department after reaching 16 years of age, was placed in a guardianship by the court. Such exemption includes fees associated with enrollment in applied academics for adult education instruction. The exemption remains valid until the
A student who has been admitted to such a program:

1. Is eligible to receive an award for each term that he or she is enrolled in the program.

A student who is or was at the time he or she reached 18 years of age in the custody of a relative or nonrelative under s. 39.5085 or s. 39.6225 or who was adopted from the Department of Children and Families after May 5, 1997. Such exemption includes fees associated with enrollment in applied academics for adult education instruction. The exemption remains valid until the student reaches 28 years of age.

Section 2. Paragraph (a) of subsection (1) of section 1009.40, Florida Statutes, is amended, and paragraph (c) is added to that subsection, to read:

1009.40 General requirements for student eligibility for state financial aid awards and tuition assistance grants.—

(1)(a) The general requirements for eligibility of students for state financial aid awards and tuition assistance grants consist of the following:

1. Achievement of the academic requirements of and acceptance at a state university or Florida College System institution; a nursing diploma school approved by the Florida Board of Nursing; a Florida college or university which is accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the State Board of Education; a Florida institution the credits of which are acceptable for transfer to state universities; a career center; or a private career institution accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the State Board of Education.

2. Residency in this state for no less than 1 year preceding the award of aid or a tuition assistance grant for a program established pursuant to s. 1009.50, s. 1009.505, s. 1009.51, s. 1009.52, s. 1009.53, s. 1009.60, s. 1009.62, or s. 1009.71.

(c) Eligibility for state financial aid awards and tuition assistance grants must be reevaluated each term based on the program of study to which the student has been admitted and in which he or she is enrolled. Beginning with the 2022-2023 academic year and thereafter, eligibility for such awards and grants is contingent on the student’s enrollment in a career certificate or degree program on an approved list developed pursuant to s. 1009.46(2)(a).

1. A student who has been admitted to such a program:

a. Is eligible to receive an award for each term that he or she is enrolled in the program.
Section 3. Section 1009.46, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

1009.46 Duties of postsecondary educational institutions for state financial aid and tuition assistance programs.—

(1)(a) Each postsecondary educational institution that receives state funds for state financial aid and tuition assistance programs shall:

1. Complete and return the annual application for state aid funds in the format and by the date established by the department;

2. Maintain complete, accurate, and auditable student records documenting the institution’s administration of state financial aid and tuition assistance funds;

3. Verify eligibility of enrolled students with the department each academic term;

4. Verify eligibility of enrolled students by reporting the program of study to the department using the most recent classification instruction program taxonomy for the certificate or degree level as developed by the United States Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics;

5. Disburse state financial aid and tuition assistance to eligible students;

6. Notify students annually regarding the renewal requirements for each state-funded award for which they are eligible;

7. Complete and return to the department in the format and by the date established by the department all reports for the administration of state funds;

8. Complete and return to the department in the format and by the date established by the department all legislatively required reports;

9. Retain required records for the later of 5 years or until such records are audited and any audit exceptions are resolved; and

10. Refund to the department any undisbursed advances within 60 days after the end of the regular registration each fall and spring term, within 30 days after the end of the summer term, or within 60 days after the date that a student’s ineligibility is determined.

(b) These requirements do not preclude higher standards specified in other sections of this part or rules of the state board.

(c) An institution that fails to perform its duties in administering state financial aid or tuition assistance programs must be placed on probation by the department.

1. The department shall provide allocations on a reimbursement basis to a participating institution that fails to
(4)(a) The funds appropriated for the Florida Public Student Assistance Grant Program shall be distributed to eligible institutions in accordance with a formula approved by the Board of Governors and the State Board of Education. The formula must consider at least the prior year’s distribution of funds and the number of eligible applicants who did not receive awards, the standardization of the expected family contribution, and provisions for unused funds. The formula must account for changes in the number of eligible students across all student assistance grant programs established pursuant to this section and ss. 1009.505, 1009.51, and 1009.52.

(b) In determining which programs will be included on a list, the Board of Governors and the State Board of Education shall consider national, state, and regional industry demand for certificateholders and graduates of such degree programs. For each certificate and degree program listed, the Board of Governors and the State Board of Education must identify occupations, current job openings, estimates of job growth, and employment wages. Each approved list must also include appropriate certificate and degree programs offered by eligible independent colleges and universities.

(c) Each approved list must be updated by each December 31.

Section 4. Paragraph (a) of subsection (4) and subsection (5) of section 1009.50, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

1009.50 Florida Public Student Assistance Grant Program; eligibility for grants.—

(4)(a) The funds appropriated for the Florida Public Student Assistance Grant Program shall be distributed to
Section 6. Paragraph (a) of subsection (4) and subsection (5) of section 1009.51, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

1009.51 Florida Private Student Assistance Grant Program;
eligibility for grants.—

(4)(a) The funds appropriated for the Florida Private Student Assistance Grant Program shall be distributed to eligible institutions in accordance with a formula approved by the State Board of Education. The formula must consider at least the prior year’s distribution of funds and the number of eligible applicants who did not receive awards, the standardization of the expected family contribution, and provisions for unused funds. The formula must account for changes in the number of eligible students across all student assistance grant programs established pursuant to this section and ss. 1009.50, 1009.505, and 1009.52.

(5) Funds appropriated by the Legislature for Florida private student assistance grants may be deposited in the State Student Financial Assistance Trust Fund. Notwithstanding s. 216.301 and pursuant to s. 216.351, any balance in the trust fund at the end of any fiscal year which has been allocated to the Florida Postsecondary Student Assistance Grant Program shall remain therein and shall be available for carrying out the purposes of this section and as otherwise provided by law.

Section 7. Paragraph (a) of subsection (4) and subsection (6) of section 1009.52, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

1009.52 Florida Postsecondary Student Assistance Grant Program; eligibility for grants.—

(4)(a) The funds appropriated for the Florida Postsecondary Student Assistance Grant Program shall be distributed to eligible institutions in accordance with a formula approved by the State Board of Education. The formula must consider at least the prior year’s distribution of funds and the number of eligible applicants who did not receive awards, the standardization of the expected family contribution, and provisions for unused funds. The formula must account for changes in the number of eligible students across all student assistance grant programs established pursuant to this section and ss. 1009.50, 1009.505, and 1009.51.

(6) Funds appropriated by the Legislature for Florida postsecondary student assistance grants may be deposited in the State Student Financial Assistance Trust Fund. Notwithstanding s. 216.301 and pursuant to s. 216.351, any balance in the trust fund at the end of any fiscal year which has been allocated to the Florida Postsecondary Student Assistance Grant Program shall remain therein and shall be available for carrying out the purposes of this section and as otherwise provided by law.

Section 8. Subsections (3), (4), and (7) of section 1009.53, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

1009.53 Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program.—

(3) The Department of Education shall administer the Bright Futures Scholarship Program according to rules and procedures established by the State Board of Education. A single application must be sufficient for a student to apply for any of the awards. The department shall advertise the availability of the scholarship program and shall notify students, teachers, parents, certified school counselors, and principals or other relevant school administrators of the criteria and application procedures. The department must begin this process of...
(4) Funding for the Bright Futures Scholarship Program must be allocated from the Education Enhancement Trust Fund and must be provided before allocations from that fund are calculated for disbursement to other educational entities.

(4A) If funds appropriated are not adequate to provide the maximum allowable award to each eligible applicant, awards in all components of the program must be prorated using the same percentage reduction.

(4B) Notwithstanding s. 216.301, if all funds allocated to the Bright Futures Scholarship Program are not used in any fiscal year, up to 10 percent of the total allocation may be carried forward and used for awards in the following year.

(7) A student may receive only one type of award from the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program at any given time, but may transfer from one type of award to another through the renewal application process, if the student’s eligibility status changes. However, a student is not eligible to transfer from a Florida Medallion Scholarship, a Florida Gold Seal CAPE Scholarship, or a Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholarship to a Florida Academic Scholarship. A student who receives an award from the program may also receive a federal family education loan or a federal direct loan, and the value of the award must be considered in the certification or calculation of the student’s loan eligibility.

Section 9. Paragraph (c) is added to subsection (3) of section 1009.532, Florida Statutes, to read:

1009.532 Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program; student eligibility requirements for renewal awards.—

(c) Notwithstanding paragraph (a), beginning with students initially funded in the 2022-2023 academic year, the maximum number of credit hours which can be awarded must be reduced by the number of postsecondary credit hours the student has earned from articulated acceleration mechanisms under s. 1007.27.

Section 10. Subsections (1) and (2) of section 1009.534, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

1009.534 Florida Academic Scholars award.—

(1) A student is eligible for a Florida Academic Scholars award if he or she meets the general eligibility requirements for the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program and:

(a) Has achieved a 3.5 weighted grade point average as calculated pursuant to s. 1009.531, or its equivalent, in high school courses that are designated by the State Board of Education as college-preparatory academic courses and has attained at least the score required under s. 1009.531(6)(a) on the combined verbal and quantitative parts of the Scholastic Aptitude Test, the Scholastic Assessment Test, or the recentered Scholastic Assessment Test of the College Entrance Examination, or an equivalent score on the ACT Assessment Program;

(b) Has attended a home education program according to s. 1002.41 during grades 11 and 12, has completed the International Baccalaureate curriculum but failed to earn the International Baccalaureate Diploma, or has completed the Advanced International Certificate of Education curriculum but failed to earn the Advanced International Certificate of Education Diploma, and has attained at least the score required under s. 1009.531(6)(a) on the combined verbal and quantitative parts of

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Section 11. Section 1009.5341, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1009.5341 Florida Bright Futures Scholarship awards for graduate study.—

(1) For the 2021-2022 academic year, Florida Bright Futures Scholarship recipients who graduate in the 2010-2011 academic year and thereafter with a baccalaureate degree in 7 semesters, or the equivalent, or fewer hours, and wish to pursue graduate study may apply the unused portion of their Florida Academic Scholars award or Florida Medallion Scholars award toward a semester of graduate study, not to exceed 15 semester hours, paid at the undergraduate rate. A baccalaureate degree may include, but is not limited to, college credits earned through articulated acceleration mechanisms pursuant to s. 1003.27.

(2) Beginning with the 2022-2023 academic year, a Bright Futures scholarship recipient may apply the unused portion of his or her Florida Academic Scholars award or Florida Medallion Scholars award toward graduate study in a degree field on an approved list developed pursuant to s. 1009.46(2)(a), which must be paid at the undergraduate rate.

Section 12. Subsections (1) and (2) of section 1009.535, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

1009.535 Florida Medallion Scholars award.—

(1) A student is eligible for a Florida Medallion Scholars award if he or she meets the general eligibility requirements for the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program and:

(a) Has achieved a weighted grade point average of 3.0 as calculated pursuant to s. 1009.531, or the equivalent, in high school courses that are designated by the State Board of Education as college-preparatory academic courses and has attained at least the score required under s. 1009.531(6)(b) on the combined verbal and quantitative parts of the Scholastic Aptitude Test, the Scholastic Assessment Test, or the recentered Scholastic Assessment Test of the College Entrance Examination, or an equivalent score on the ACT Assessment Program;

(b) Has completed the International Baccalaureate curriculum but failed to earn the International Baccalaureate Diploma or has completed the Advanced International Certificate of Education curriculum but failed to earn the Advanced International Certificate of Education Diploma, and has attained at least the score required under s. 1009.531(6)(b) on the combined verbal and quantitative parts of the Scholastic Aptitude Test, the Scholastic Assessment Test, or the recentered Scholastic Assessment Test of the College Entrance Examination, or an equivalent score on the ACT Assessment Program;

(c) Has attended a home education program according to s. 1002.41 during grades 11 and 12 and has attained at least the score required under s. 1009.531(6)(b) on the combined verbal and quantitative parts of the Scholastic Aptitude Test, the Scholastic Assessment Test, or the recentered Scholastic Assessment Test of the College Entrance Examination, or an equivalent score on the ACT Assessment Program;

(d) Has been recognized by the merit or achievement program of the National Merit Scholarship Corporation as a scholar or finalist but has not completed the program of volunteer service work required under s. 1009.5341; or

(e) Has been granted academic honors by one or more of the
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signed by the student, the student’s parent or guardian, and a representative of the organization for which the student performed the volunteer service work.

(2) A Florida Medallion Scholar who is enrolled in a certificate, diploma, associate, or baccalaureate degree program at a public or nonpublic postsecondary education institution is eligible, beginning in the fall 2018 semester, for an award equal to the amount specified in the General Appropriations Act necessary to pay 75 percent of tuition and fees, after applying all other federal and state financial aid, for eligible students at a Florida College System institution is eligible for an award equal to the amount specified in the General Appropriations Act necessary to pay 100 percent of tuition and fees established under ss. 1009.22(3), (4), (6), and (7); 1009.23(3), (4), (7), (8), (10), and (11); and 1009.24(4), (7), (12), (14)(e), and (16), as applicable, to assist with the payment of educational expenses. Beginning in the fall 2021 semester, a Florida Medallion Scholar who is enrolled in an associate degree program at a Florida College System institution is eligible for an award equal to the amount specified in the General Appropriations Act necessary to pay 100 percent of tuition and fees established under ss. 1009.22(3), (4), (6), (7), (8), (10), and (11) to assist with the payment of educational expenses.

Section 13. Section 1009.71, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

1009.71 Florida Bright Opportunities Grant Program.—
(1) ESTABLISHMENT; PURPOSE.—The Florida Bright Opportunities Grant Program is established and shall be administered by the participating institutions in accordance with rules of the State Board of Education. The program shall provide an award equal to the amount necessary to cover tuition and registration fees, after applying all other federal and state financial aid, for eligible students at a Florida College...
(2) ELIGIBILITY.—In order to be eligible for the program, a student must have a tuition and registration fee balance not covered by all federal financial and state financial aid, and:

(a) Be enrolled as a student seeking a degree or career certificate, in an associate degree, technical certificate, applied technology diploma, or clock hour certificate program at a Florida College System institution, or a clock hour career certificate or diploma program at a district career center or charter technical career center. The students must be enrolled for at least 6 semester hours, or the equivalent per term, at a Florida College System institution, district career center, or charter technical career center;

(b) Meet the requirements under s. 1009.40(1)(a)2. and 3. and (c); and

(c) Qualify and remain eligible each academic year for the Pell Grant.

An institution may not impose additional criteria to determine a student’s eligibility to receive a grant under this section.

(3) GRANT AWARD.—The program shall:

(a) Cover remaining tuition and registration fees, with a stipend for books as specified in the General Appropriations Act, for eligible students after all other federal and state financial aid is applied to tuition and fees.

(b) Be allocated, subject to the availability of funding, on a first-come, first-served basis. The award may not exceed

Subject to appropriation by the Legislature, payment of the cost of tuition and fees at that institution, plus a stipend for books as determined in the General Appropriations Act.

Returning students shall receive priority over new students.

(4) AWARD DURATION.—A student is eligible to receive an award for the number of semesters or quarters specified in s. 1009.40(3).

(5) DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS.—

(a) The funds appropriated for the Florida Bright Opportunities Grant Program must be distributed to eligible institutions in accordance with a formula approved by the State Board of Education. The formula must consider at least the prior year’s distribution of funds and the number of eligible applicants who did not receive awards.

(b) Subject to appropriation by the Legislature, payment of grants must be transmitted to the institution in advance of the registration period. Institutions shall notify students of the amount of their awards.

(c) The eligibility status of each student to receive a disbursement must be determined by each institution as of the end of its regular registration period, inclusive of a drop-add period. Institutions may not be required to reevaluate a student’s eligibility status after this date for purposes of changing eligibility determinations previously made.

(d) Each participating institution shall report to the department by the established date the number of students eligible for the program for each academic term. Each institution also shall report to the department any necessary demographic and eligibility data for such students.

(e) Institutions shall certify to the department within 30
(d) Earn a minimum 2.5 postsecondary grade point average.

Institutions shall notify students of the amount of their disbursement of funds to each student. Institutions shall remit to the department any undisbursed advances for the fall, spring, and summer terms within 30 days after the end of the summer term.

(6) RULES.—The State Board of Education shall adopt rules to implement this section.

Section 14. Section 1009.711, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

1009.711 Florida Endeavor Scholarship Program.—

(1) ESTABLISHMENT; PURPOSE.—The Florida Endeavor Scholarship Program is established and shall be administered by participating institutions in accordance with rules of the State Board of Education. The program shall provide an award equal to the amount necessary to cover tuition and registration fees for eligible students at a Florida College System institution, a district career center operated by a district school board under s. 1001.44, or a charter technical career center under s. 1002.34.

(2) ELIGIBILITY.—In order to be eligible for the program, a student may not have earned a high school credential prior to enrolling at the institution, and must:

(a) Be enrolled in a career certificate or noncollege-credit applied technology diploma program or in a General Education Program at a Florida College System institution, a district career center, or a charter technical career center;

(b) Meet the requirements under s. 1009.40(1)(a)2. and 3., and (c);

(c) Earn at least 225 clock hours; and

(d) Earn a minimum 2.5 postsecondary grade point average.

An institution may not impose additional criteria to determine a student’s eligibility to receive a grant under this section.

(3) SCHOLARSHIP AWARD.—A student is eligible to receive an award equal to the amount to cover tuition and registration fees for a career certificate or applied technology diploma program for the number of semesters or quarters specified in s. 1009.40(3). The award may not exceed the cost of tuition and registration fees at that institution. The institution shall award scholarships subject to the availability of funding, on a first-come, first-served basis. Returning students must be given priority over new students.

(4) DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS.—

(a) The funds appropriated for the Florida Endeavor Scholarship Program must be distributed to eligible institutions in accordance with a formula approved by the State Board of Education. The formula must consider at least the prior year’s distribution of funds and the number of eligible applicants who did not receive awards.

(b) Subject to the appropriation of funds by the Legislature, the department shall transmit payment of grants to the institution in advance of the registration period.

Institutions shall notify students of the amount of their awards.

(c) The eligibility status of each student to receive a disbursement must be determined by each institution as of the end of its regular registration period, inclusive of a drop-add period. Institutions may not be required to reevaluate a student’s eligibility status after this date for purposes of

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2. Earn a high school diploma from a school outside Florida

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3. Be accepted by and enrolled full-time in a baccalaureate degree program at an eligible regionally accredited Florida public or independent postsecondary educational institution during the fall academic term following high school graduation.

(5)(a)1. An eligible student who meets the requirements of paragraph (4)(a), who is a National Merit Scholar, and who attends a Florida public postsecondary educational institution shall receive a scholarship award as specified in the General Appropriations Act equal to the institutional cost of attendance minus the sum of the student’s Florida Bright Futures Scholarship and National Merit Scholarship.

2. An eligible student who meets the requirements of paragraph (4)(b), who is a National Merit Scholar, and who attends a Florida public postsecondary educational institution shall receive a scholarship award as specified in the General Appropriations Act equal to the institutional cost of attendance for a resident of this state minus the student’s National Merit Scholarship. Such student is exempt from the payment of out-of-state fees.

(b) An eligible student who is a National Merit Scholar and who attends a Florida independent postsecondary educational institution shall receive a scholarship award as specified in the General Appropriations Act equal to the highest cost of attendance for a resident of this state enrolled at a Florida public university, as reported by the Board of Governors of the
State University System, minus the sum of the student’s Florida Bright Futures Scholarship and National Merit Scholarship. Section 16. This act shall take effect July 1, 2021.
I. Summary:

SB 1372 establishes the New Worlds Reading Initiative to improve literacy skills and instill a love of reading by providing high-quality free books to students in kindergarten through grade 5 who are reading below grade level. The bill:

- Requires the Department of Education or a contracted third party to administer the program using state funds to pay for half of the cost to provide free books to students.
- Authorizes school districts, and charter schools in nonparticipating school districts, to provide for free monthly book delivery to students in kindergarten through grade 5 who exhibit a substantial deficiency in reading and choose to participate in the program.
- Requires participating school districts or charter schools to partner with a nonprofit organization to implement the initiative and to provide half the cost of the program from local funding sources.
- Requires the administrator to annually report to the Legislature and the Commissioner of Education on the performance of the program.

The bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2021.

II. Present Situation:

Forty-three percent of the students entering kindergarten in 2020 demonstrated literacy skills that fell below grade-level expectations.1 Forty-two percent of third grade students were assessed as

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reading below grade level in 2019. Students who read below grade level at the end of third grade are less likely to graduate high school by age 19.

The availability of learning materials in the home supports children’s language and literacy skills. Children who participate in free book distribution programs between birth to age five experience a positive effect on literacy development.

**Student Reading Progression**

Each district school board is required to establish a comprehensive plan for student progression which must provide for a student's progression from one grade to another based on the student's mastery of English Language Arts, mathematics, science, and social studies standards. The plan must include criteria that emphasize student reading proficiency in kindergarten through grade 3. Students in kindergarten through grade 3 who exhibit a substantial deficiency in reading based upon screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring, or assessment data; statewide assessments; or teacher observations must be provided intensive, explicit, systematic, and multisensory reading interventions immediately following the identification of the reading deficiency.

**Research-Based Reading Instruction Allocation**

The state allocates funding to school districts for research-based reading instruction to students in kindergarten through grade 12. Funds must be used to provide a system of comprehensive reading instruction to students enrolled in kindergarten through grade 12, including, for example:

- Summer reading camps for students in kindergarten through grade 5 who exhibit certain reading deficiencies, depending on grade level.

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6 Section 1008.25(2), F.S.

7 Section 1008.25(5)(a), F.S. Students in kindergarten through grade 2 do not participate in statewide, standardized assessments.

8 Section 1011.62(9), F.S. The state appropriated $130 million to school districts for the research-based reading instruction allocation for the 2020-2021 fiscal year. Specific Appropriations 8 and 92, s. 2, ch. 2020-111, L.O.F.


10 All students in kindergarten through grade 2 who demonstrate a reading deficiency as determined by district and state assessments, and students in grades 3 through 5 who score at Level 1 on the statewide, standardized English Language Arts assessment. Section 1011.62(9)(c)5., F.S.
• Supplemental instructional materials that are grounded in scientifically based reading research as identified by the Just Read, Florida! Office.\textsuperscript{11}

• Intensive interventions for students in kindergarten through grade 12 who have been identified as having a reading deficiency or who are reading below grade level as determined by the statewide, standardized English Language Arts assessment.

District school boards must develop K-12 comprehensive reading plans which detail the specific uses of the research-based reading instruction allocation. The plans must provide for intensive reading interventions through integrated curricula that incorporate strategies identified by the Just Read, Florida! Office and are delivered by a teacher who is certified or endorsed in reading.\textsuperscript{12} In the 2020-2021 fiscal year, school districts allocated $36.9 million of the total $130 million appropriated under the research-based reading instruction allocation\textsuperscript{13} for elementary reading intervention teachers, supplemental reading materials and interventions, and summer reading camps.\textsuperscript{14}

Parental Notification and Choice

The parent of any student who exhibits a substantial deficiency in reading must be notified in writing of the deficiency and of all available services and proposed interventions, and be provided with a “read at home plan,” which outlines strategies that parents can use to help their children improve in reading.\textsuperscript{15}

Students enrolled in public school in grades 3 through 5 and score below grade level on the statewide, standardized English Language Arts (ELA) assessment in the prior school year may also be eligible for a reading scholarship account of $500.\textsuperscript{16} A total of 6,763 students received reading scholarship accounts in the 2019-2020 school year.\textsuperscript{17} The state appropriated $7.6 million for reading scholarship accounts for the 2020-2021 school year.\textsuperscript{18}

In the 2020-2021 school year, 112,295 students enrolled in public schools in kindergarten through grade 5 were identified as having substantial deficiencies in reading.\textsuperscript{19}

Book Distribution Programs

An Act to amend the national reading program in 1975\textsuperscript{20} authorized the federal government to contract with a third-party entity to subcontract with local agencies to establish, operate, and provide an equal share of the cost of reading motivational programs which include the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[11] Just Read, Florida! is an office within the Department of Education (DOE) established to help students read at their highest potential. Section 1001.215, F.S.
\item[12] Section 1011.62(9)(d)1., F.S.
\item[13] Supra, note 8.
\item[14] Email, Florida Department of Education (Mar. 11, 2021).
\item[15] Section 1008.25(5)(c), F.S.
\item[16] Section 1002.411, F.S.
\item[17] Email, Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability, School Choice Landscape, at 34 (March 5, 2021).
\item[18] Specific Appropriation 112, s. 2, ch. 2020-111, L.O.F.
\item[19] Email, Florida Department of Education (Mar. 11, 2021).
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
distribution of books to schoolchildren. The inexpensive book distribution program was last financed with $25 million in 2010. The Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 repealed the inexpensive book distribution program.

In 2020, the Tennessee Governor’s Early Literacy Foundation (GELF) and the Tennessee Department of Education, in collaboration with Scholastic, the global children’s publishing, education and media company, announced the launch of a new K-3 Book Delivery program to deliver 580,000 books to 58,000 kindergarten through third grade students and teachers across the state. The GELF has operated a book distribution program in collaboration with Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library to distribute books to children from birth to the age of five since 2004. The Tennessee Legislature appropriated $4,525,000 for the Governor’s Books from Birth Fund for the 2019 fiscal year, and the Books from Birth program mailed 3.4 million books.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

SB 1372 creates s. 1003.485, F.S., to establish the New Worlds Reading Initiative to improve literacy skills and instill a love of reading by providing high-quality free books to students in kindergarten through grade 5 who are reading below grade level expectations.

Under the initiative, a high-quality, hardcopy book is delivered on a monthly basis to eligible students enrolled in a participating school district or a charter school that chooses to participate when its sponsor chooses not to participate. The bill defines a participating school district or charter school as a “participating entity.” Parents of students who participate in the program are provided resources to help improve their student’s reading skills and instill a love of reading.

State-Level Administrator

Implementation of the initiative is split between participating entities, in partnership with local nonprofit organizations, and a state administrator, who may either be the Department of Education (DOE) or a contracted, third-party entity. The bill requires the state-level administrator to:

- Develop a process for participating entities to apply to participate in the program. A participating entity is required to identify:
At least one partnership with a nonprofit organization to raise public awareness of the initiative, perform fundraising, and conduct or facilitate family literacy engagement activities.

Local funding sources to pay for 50 percent of the total costs associated with participation.

- Develop, in consultation with the Just Read, Florida! Office, a selection of high-quality books, encompassing diverse subjects and genres, appropriate for each grade level to be mailed to students enrolled in the initiative.
- Facilitate book distribution directly or through an agreement with a book distribution company.
- Develop and provide marketing materials to help school districts and their local partners raise funding and awareness of the initiative, including through the use of partnerships between public libraries and participating entities to implement family engagement events such as family library nights, library card drives, summer access, and other activities.
- Maintain a clearinghouse for information on national, state, and local nonprofit organizations that support efforts to provide books to children.
- Develop training materials, including video training modules resources, to assist families as they engage in reading and improve literacy skills.
- Periodically distribute to participating families helpful tips and hyperlinks to video modules via text message and e-mail.

The bill requires that if the DOE contracts with a third-party entity to act as administrator, the entity must be capable of coordinating statewide marketing, dissemination of books, and development of video training modules, as well as completing all other duties of the administrator.

**Annual Report**

Beginning September 30, 2022, and annually thereafter, the administrator must submit a report to the Senate President, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the Commissioner of Education documenting the number of students enrolled in the initiative in each participating entity, the academic performance of enrolled students based on available data provided by participating entities, and the amount of funds raised by any local nonprofit organization identified by the participating entity in the application.

**Student Participation**

A student in kindergarten through grade 5 who is enrolled in a participating entity is eligible under the bill to receive books through the initiative if the student has a substantial reading deficiency or scored below a level 3 on the prior year’s statewide, standardized English Language Arts (ELA) assessment. The bill requires the participating entity to notify the parents of eligible students that the student is eligible to receive books at no cost through the New Worlds Reading Initiative and provide the parent the opportunity to enroll his or her child using an application form developed by the administrator.

After a student enrolls in the initiative, the bill requires the participating entity to coordinate with the administrator to initiate monthly book delivery during the school year, which must begin no
later than October 31 and last through at least June 30. The bill authorizes book delivery to continue through the summer months using local funds. Students remain in the initiative until they are promoted to sixth grade or their parent opts out, whichever is earlier.

The bill requires that enrolled students have the opportunity, at the beginning of each school year, to identify preferred genres and topics in order to maximize their interest in reading.

Participating entities and partnering nonprofit organizations are required by the bill to raise awareness of the initiative, including information on eligibility and video training modules, through:

- The student handbook.
- The read-at-home plan provided to the parents of students identified with a substantial reading deficiency. The bill also amends s. 1008.25, F.S., to require that the parents of students with a substantial reading deficiency be provided information about the student’s eligibility for the New Worlds Reading Initiative, and information on parent training modules and other reading engagement resources available through the initiative.
- Curriculum or parent nights or separate initiative awareness events at each elementary school.
- Events held jointly with the local public library. The bill specifies that library events should coincide with similar family engagement initiatives such as library card drives.

The bill requires books to be delivered at no cost to families. Funding for the delivery of books must be shared equally by the administrator and the applicable local funding source identified by the participating entity in the application on a pro rata basis for each enrolled student. The bill permits the administrator to solicit donations and apply for grants for the purpose of implementing the initiative.

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:

None.
V. Fiscal Impact Statement:
   A. Tax/Fee Issues:
      None.
   B. Private Sector Impact:
      None.
   C. Government Sector Impact:
      The cost of book distribution required by this bill will require the appropriation of state funds.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:
    None.

VII. Related Issues:
    None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:
    This bill substantially amends section 1008.25 of the Florida Statutes.
    This bill creates section 1003.485 of the Florida Statutes.

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.
Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Section 1003.485, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

1003.485 The New Worlds Reading Initiative.—
(1) The New Worlds Reading Initiative is established under the Department of Education to improve literacy skills and instill a love of reading by providing high-quality free books to students in kindergarten through grade 5 who are reading below grade level.

(2) DEFINITIONS.— As used in this section the term:
(a) "Administrator" means the Department of Education or a third-party entity contracted to administer the initiative.
(b) "Initiative" means the New Worlds Reading Initiative.
(c) "Participating entity" means a school district participating in the initiative or a charter school located in a nonparticipating school district which is participating in the initiative, as specified in subsection (4).

(3) The administrator shall:

1. Establish a selection of books.
3. Assist with local implementation of the initiative.
4. Maintain a clearinghouse of specified information.
5. Develop and disseminate certain training materials.
6. Establish reporting requirements.
7. Authorize school districts and certain nonprofits to perform certain actions to raise awareness of the initiative.
8. Require that books be delivered at no cost to families.
9. Provide requirements for funding.
10. Authorize the department to contract with a third-party entity.
11. Provide requirements for such third-party entity.
12. Amend s. 1008.25, F.S.
13. Require that a certain notification include information about the initiative.
14. Provide an effective date.
(a) Develop an application process for participating entities that identifies:

1. At least one partnership with a nonprofit organization to raise public awareness of the initiative, perform fundraising, and conduct or facilitate family literacy engagement activities.
2. Local funding sources to meet the requirements of subsection (7).

(b) Develop, in consultation with the Just Read, Florida! Office under s. 1001.215, a selection of high-quality books encompassing diverse subjects and genres for each grade level to be mailed to students enrolled in the initiative.

(c) Facilitate the distribution of books as provided in paragraph (5)(c) either directly or through an agreement with a book distribution company.

(d) Assist local implementation of the initiative by:

1. Providing assistance to local communities to raise awareness of the initiative, including through the use of partnerships between public libraries and participating entities to implement events such as family library nights, library card drives, summer access and activities, and other activities designed to increase family engagement and instill a love of reading in students.
2. Developing and providing marketing materials to participating entities and partnering nonprofit organizations to assist with public awareness campaigns.

(e) Maintain a clearinghouse for information on national, state, and local nonprofit organizations that support efforts to provide books to children.

(f) Develop training materials for parents of students enrolled in the initiative, including brief video training modules, which engage families in reading and assist with improving student literacy skills. The administrator shall periodically send, via text message and e-mail, tips for facilitating reading at home and hyperlinks to the video training modules.

(g) Beginning September 30, 2022, and annually thereafter, report to the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the Commissioner of Education the number of students enrolled in the initiative in each participating entity, the academic performance of enrolled students based on data provided by participating entities as permitted under s. 1002.22, and the amount of funds raised by any local nonprofit organization identified by the participating entity in the application.

(4) A school district or a charter school located in a nonparticipating school district may participate in the initiative by completing the application process under paragraph (3)(a). A participating school district must allow a student at any public school, including a charter school, in the district to enroll in the program.

(5)(a) A student in kindergarten through grade 5 who is enrolled in a participating entity is eligible to receive books through the initiative if the student has a substantial reading deficiency identified under s. 1008.25(5)(a) or scored below a level 3 on the preceding year’s statewide, standardized English Language Arts assessment under s. 1008.22.

(b) The participating entity shall notify the parent of a
(7) Books must be provided under this section at no cost to the student who meets the criteria under paragraph (a) that the student is eligible to receive books at no cost through the New Worlds Reading Initiative and provide the parent the opportunity to enroll his or her child using an application form developed by the administrator.

(c) Once an eligible student is enrolled in the initiative, the participating entity shall coordinate with the administrator to initiate book delivery on a monthly basis during the school year, which must begin no later than October 31 and continue through at least June 30. The participating entity may use local funds to continue the initiative through the summer months.

(d) At the beginning of each school year, students must be provided options for specific book topics or genres in order to maximize student interest in reading.

(e) A student's enrollment in the initiative continues until promotion to grade 6 or until the student's parent opts out of the initiative.

(6) Participating entities and partnering nonprofit organizations shall raise awareness of the initiative, including information on eligibility and video training modules under paragraph (3)(f), through, at least, the following:

(a) The student handbook and the read-at-home plan under s. 1008.25(5)(c).

(b) A parent or curriculum night or separate initiative awareness event at each elementary school.

(c) Partnering with the county library to host awareness events, which should coincide with other initiatives such as library card drives and other family engagement programming.

(7) Books must be provided under this section at no cost to the student who meets the criteria under paragraph (a) that the student is eligible to receive books at no cost through the New Worlds Reading Initiative and provide the parent the opportunity to enroll his or her child using an application form developed by the administrator.

Section 2. Paragraph (c) of subsection (5) of section 1008.25, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1. That his or her child has been identified as having a substantial deficiency in reading, including a description and explanation, in terms understandable to the parent, of the exact nature of the student’s difficulty in learning and lack of achievement in reading.

2. A description of the current services that are provided to the child.

3. A description of the proposed intensive interventions to act as administrator, the entity must be capable of coordinating statewide marketing, dissemination of books, and development of video training modules, as well as completing all other duties of the administrator.

Funding will be on a pro rata basis for each enrolled student, taking into consideration total student enrollment in the initiative and available funding. The administrator may solicit donations and apply for grants to supplement funds for the purpose of implementing this section.

(8) If the department contracts with a third-party entity to act as administrator, the entity must be capable of coordinating statewide marketing, dissemination of books, and development of video training modules, as well as completing all other duties of the administrator.

The participating entity shall coordinate with the administrator, the entity must be capable of coordinating statewide marketing, dissemination of books, and development of video training modules, as well as completing all other duties of the administrator.

The administrator shall pay 50 percent of the costs, with the remaining funds coming from the local funding source identified by the participating entity in the application.
Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2021.
I. Summary:

SB 1898 includes requirements to identify student deficiencies in literacy and intervene as early as prekindergarten, support students in transitioning to kindergarten, and monitor student progress. The bill establishes a coordinated screening and progress monitoring system for students enrolled in the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program and students enrolled in public schools in kindergarten through grade 8. The bill also requires:

- The Department of Education (DOE) to review the competencies for the reading endorsement and provide a new pathway for teachers to achieve the reading endorsement.
- The DOE to develop a handbook to provide to parents of students with a reading deficiency to support parental engagement in student learning.
- The Just Read, Florida! Office (JRFO) to identify instructional materials that implement evidence-based reading practices and streamlines the process by which school districts may adopt identified and approved instructional materials.
- The JRFO to work with the Office of Early Learning in the development of the emergent literacy training courses and specifies that the courses must be consistent with evidence-based reading instructional and intervention programs.
- Establishes the Reading Achievement Initiative for Scholastic Excellence (RAISE) Program to provide literacy supports statewide through at least 20 regional literacy support teams.
- Establishes a tutoring program that affords high school juniors and seniors the opportunity to satisfy community service requirements and earn a designation as a New Worlds Scholar by providing 500 verified tutoring hours to students with a substantial deficiency in reading in kindergarten through grade 3.
- Voluntary Prekindergarten Program (VPK) instructors to take a required emergent literacy training course every five years.
- VPK providers to be rated based on student performance during the VPK school year.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2021.
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:

Educator Certification Requirements

Florida law specifies certification requirements to assure that educational personnel in public schools possess appropriate skills in reading, writing, and mathematics; adequate pedagogical knowledge; and relevant subject matter competence so as to demonstrate an acceptable level of professional performance.\(^1\)

In order to seek educator certification, a person must meet general eligibility requirements, which include receipt of a bachelor’s or higher degree from an approved postsecondary institution.\(^2\) Individuals must also demonstrate mastery of general knowledge, if the person serves as a classroom teacher; mastery of subject area knowledge; and mastery of professional preparation.\(^3\)

Education Preparation Programs

Present Situation

In Florida, teacher preparation programs are accountable for producing individuals with the competencies and skills necessary to achieve state education goals.\(^4\) State approved teacher preparation program uniform core curricula must include scientifically researched and evidence-based reading instructional strategies that improve reading performance for all students, including explicit, systematic, and sequential approaches to teaching phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and text comprehension and multisensory intervention strategies.\(^5\) Teacher preparation program completers are eligible for a Florida Professional Educator's Certification upon program completion.\(^6\)

Each teacher preparation program must be approved by the Department of Education (DOE) based on criteria specified in law.\(^7\) In order to be admitted into an approved teacher preparation program, a student must, at a minimum:\(^8\)

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1 Section 1012.54, F.S.
2 Section 1012.56(2)(c), F.S., and Rule 6A-4.003, F.A.C.
3 Section 1012.56(2)(g)-(i), F.S.
4 Section 1004.04(1)(b), F.S.
5 Section 1004.04(2)(b)3., F.S.
7 Section 1004.04(3)(a), F.S.
8 Section 1004.04(3), F.S.
• Have a grade point average of at least 2.5 on a 4.0 scale for the general education component of undergraduate studies or have completed the requirements for a baccalaureate degree with a minimum grade point average of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale from an approved college or university.\(^9\)

• Demonstrate mastery of general knowledge sufficient for entry into the program, including the ability to read, write, and perform in mathematics, by passing the General Knowledge Test of the Florida Teacher Certification Examination or, for a graduate level program, obtain a baccalaureate degree from an approved institution.\(^10\)

Each teacher preparation program may waive these admissions requirements for up to ten percent of the students admitted. Programs must implement strategies to ensure that students admitted under a waiver receive assistance to demonstrate competencies to successfully meet requirements for certification, and must annually report to the DOE the status of each candidate admitted under such a waiver.\(^11\)

**Effect of Proposed Changes**

The bill modifies s. 1004.04, F.S., to allow students in public postsecondary teacher preparation programs to meet grade point average and General Knowledge Test requirements as a condition to completing the program instead of as a condition of admission to the program. Accordingly, the bill removes the authority for teacher preparation programs to waive admission requirements. These modifications may enable more people to enter teacher preparation programs and become certified teachers.

**Teacher Professional Development**

**Present Situation**

To renew a professional certificate, an applicant must earn a minimum of 6 college credits or 120 inservice points or a combination thereof.\(^12\) Florida provides subject area specialization requirements for college credits or inservice points.\(^13\) An applicant for renewal of a professional certificate in any area of certification identified by SBE rule\(^14\) that includes reading instruction or intervention for any students in kindergarten through grade 6 must earn a minimum of two college credits or forty inservice points in the use of explicit, systematic, and sequential approaches to reading instruction, developing phonemic awareness, and implementing

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9 An approved institution is one that is accredited by a specified regional accrediting association or an accrediting agency approved by the United States Department of Education. A qualifying non-accredited institution is one that is identified as having a quality program resulting in a bachelor’s degree or higher by criteria specified in SBE rule. Rule 6A-4.003, F.A.C.

10 Rule 6A-4.003, F.A.C.

11 Section 1004.04(3), F.S.

12 Section 1012.585(3)(a), F.S.

13 Section 1012.585(3), F.S.

14 Rule 6A-4.0051, F.A.C., requires specialized training in reading instruction for certificate covering Elementary Education (K-6), Prekindergarten/Primary Education (age 3 through grade 3), Elementary Education (grades 1-6), Primary Education (grades K-3), English (grades 1-6), Middle Grades English (grades 5-9), Middle Grades Integrated Curriculum (grades 5-9), English (6-12), Reading (K-12), Reading (Endorsement), and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) (grades K-12).
multisensory intervention strategies.\textsuperscript{15} Such training must be provided by teacher preparation programs or school district professional development systems approved by the DOE.\textsuperscript{16}

\textbf{School District Professional Development}

Each school district is required to establish a professional development system that provides training to reading coaches, classroom teachers, and school administrators in effective methods of identifying characteristics of conditions such as dyslexia and other causes of diminished phonological processing skills; incorporating instructional techniques into the general education setting which are proven to improve reading performance for all students; and using predictive and other data to make instructional decisions based on individual student needs.\textsuperscript{17} The training must help teachers integrate phonemic awareness; phonics, word study, and spelling; reading fluency; vocabulary, including academic vocabulary; and text comprehension strategies into an explicit, systematic, and sequential approach to reading instruction, including multisensory intervention strategies.\textsuperscript{18}

Each district must provide all elementary grades instructional personnel access to training sufficient to meet the requirements for a certificate in an area of certification that includes reading instruction or intervention for students in kindergarten through grade 6.\textsuperscript{19}

\textbf{William Cecil Golden Professional Development Program for School Leaders}

The William Cecil Golden Professional Development Program for School Leaders provides high standards and sustained support for principals as instructional leaders.\textsuperscript{20} The program consists of a collaborative network of state and national professional leadership organizations to respond to instructional leadership needs throughout the state. The goals of the network leadership program include:\textsuperscript{21}

- Providing resources to support and enhance the principal’s role as the instructional leader.
- Maintaining a clearinghouse and disseminating data-supported information related to enhanced student achievement, based on educational research and best practices.
- Building the capacity to increase the quality of programs for preservice education for aspiring principals and inservice professional development for principals and principal leadership teams.
- Supporting best teaching and research-based instructional practices through dissemination and modeling at the preservice and inservice levels for both teachers and principals.

\textbf{Just Read, Florida! Office}

\textsuperscript{15} Section 1012.585(3)(f), F.S.
\textsuperscript{16} Section 1012.585(3)(f), F.S.; Rule 6A-4.0051(7)(a), F.A.C.
\textsuperscript{17} Section 1012.98(4)(b)11., F.S.
\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Id}.
\textsuperscript{19} \textit{Id}.
\textsuperscript{20} Section 1012.986(1), F.S.
\textsuperscript{21} \textit{Id}.
The Just Read, Florida! Office (JRFO) within the DOE is generally directed to perform duties that relate to improving student literacy, and, accordingly, developing training for educational personnel to support student literacy.\(^22\)

The JRFO, in collaboration with the Lastinger Center for Learning at the University of Florida (Lastinger Center), is required to develop training for K-12 teachers, reading coaches, and school principals on effective content-area-specific reading strategies; the integration of content-rich curriculum from other core subject areas into reading instruction; and evidence-based reading strategies to improve student reading performance.\(^23\) For secondary teachers, emphasis must be on technical text.\(^24\) These strategies must be developed for all content areas in the K-12 curriculum.\(^25\)

**Effect of Proposed Changes**

The bill modifies s. 1012.98, F.S., to require the DOE to identify professional development opportunities that require a teacher to demonstrate proficiency in a specific classroom practice, with priority given to implementing evidence-based reading instructional and intervention strategies identified by the JRFO. The bill amends s. 1012.585, F.S., to provide that a teacher may earn inservice points only once during each 5-year validity period for any mandatory training topic that is not linked to student learning or professional growth.

The bill modifies s. 1012.986, F.S., to add to the goals of the William Cecil Golden Professional Development Program the support, through training on observation and evaluation practices aligned to the science of reading, the professional growth of instructional personnel who provide reading instruction and interventions.

The bill modifies s. 1001.215, F.S., to require the JRFO to provide evidence-based reading instruction training to school administrators. To fulfill this requirement, the JRFO must work with the Lastinger Center to modify the training that has been developed for K-12 teachers, reading coaches, and school principals. The bill also replaces the requirement to integrate social studies into the reading instruction curriculum with the requirement to integrate civic literacy into the reading instruction curriculum.

The additional opportunities for training in reading instruction for teachers may support teachers delivering reading instruction or interventions to students enrolled in public schools in kindergarten through grade 12.

\(^{22}\) Section 1001.215, F.S.

\(^{23}\) Section 1001.215(3), F.S.

\(^{24}\) Id.

\(^{25}\) Id.
Reading Certification and Endorsement

Present Situation
Teachers are able to earn a subject area certification or endorsement in reading.26 A teacher is required to be certified or endorsed in reading to:27
- Teach summer reading camps.
- Provide instruction to a third grade student retained for failing the English Language Arts (ELA) assessment.
- Provide reading interventions to students with a substantial deficiency in reading, beginning July 1, 2021.
- Qualify as a literacy coach.

A teacher may earn a certification in reading by completing:28
- A master’s or higher degree with a graduate major in reading.
- A bachelor's or higher degree with thirty semester hours in reading.

A certified teacher may earn an endorsement to a valid Florida certificate by completing the appropriate subject area testing requirements, the requirements of an approved school district program, or the in-service components for an endorsement.29 There are four pathways to earn a reading endorsement:30
- Completing 15 semester hours in college-level reading coursework rooted in scientifically based reading research with a focus on both preventions and remediation of reading difficulties.
- Completing the required competencies through a school district’s approved reading endorsement add-on program.
- Obtaining a certificate from an approved internationally known organization with a reputation for setting reading standards.31
- Passing the K-12 Reading Certification Subject Area Exam administered by the DOE.

Effect of Proposed Changes
The bill modifies s. 1004.04, F.S., to require, beginning with the 2022-2023 school year, that school district personnel be certified or endorsed in reading if they supervise teacher preparation students during internships in kindergarten through grade 3 or during enrollment in a reading certificate program.

The bill also modifies s. 1012.586, F.S., to require the DOE to review the competencies for the reading endorsement for alignment with evidence-based instructional and intervention practices rooted in the science of reading and consistent with training developed by the Lastinger Center.

26 Rule 6A-6.053, F.A.C.
27 Id.
28 Rule 6A-4.0291, F.A.C.
29 Section 1012.586(1), F.S.
30 Rule 6A-4.0292, F.A.C.
and the JRFO, and recommend improvements to the SBE, which must address identification of the characteristics of conditions such as dyslexia, implementation of evidence-based classroom instruction and interventions, and effective progress monitoring. Accordingly, each school district is required to resubmit its reading endorsement add-on program to the DOE for approval by July 1, 2023. The bill provides that, beginning July 1, 2024, instructional personnel may not earn a reading endorsement simply by passing the K-12 reading certification subject area assessment.

The bill requires the DOE to adopt at least one statewide, competency-based pathway, by which instructional personnel may earn a reading endorsement, by the beginning of the 2022-2023 school year. The pathway must be available for a participant to complete in person or remotely. The DOE is required by the bill to place a microcredential on a teacher certificate indicating each competency module the teacher successfully completes.

The additional pathway for teachers to earn a reading endorsement may assist district school boards in meeting state requirements for teachers delivering reading instruction or interventions to students enrolled in public schools in kindergarten through grade 12.

**Student Literacy Supports**

**Present Situation**

**Student Progress Monitoring**

State board rule provides criteria for determining whether a student has a substantial deficiency in reading. A student is identified as having a substantial deficiency in reading if the student:\n
- Scores the lowest level or benchmark on any assessment identified in the school district’s reading plan.
- Scores the lowest achievement level during a progress monitoring assessment identified in the school district’s K-12 comprehensive reading plan (reading plan).
- Demonstrates, through consecutive formative assessments or teacher observation, skills that are below grade-level expectations in one or more areas of phonological awareness; phonics; vocabulary, including oral language skills; reading fluency; and reading comprehension.

Students in kindergarten through grade 3 who are determined to have a substantial deficiency in reading based on any of these criteria must be given intensive reading interventions immediately following the identification of the deficiency. Students who do not achieve a Level 3 or above on the statewide, standardized ELA assessment must be evaluated to determine the nature of the student’s difficulty, the areas of academic need, and strategies for providing academic supports to improve the student’s performance. District school boards are required to prioritize remedial and supplemental instruction resources first to students in kindergarten through grade 3 who have a substantial reading deficiency and then to students who fail to meet performance levels required for promotion under the district’s student progression plan.

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33 Section 1008.25(5)(a), F.S.
34 Section 1008.25(4)(a), F.S.
35 Section 1008.25(3), F.S.
School districts have a variety of intervention and progress monitoring options available to help students improve their academic performance. The law requires districts to develop and implement a multi-tiered system of supports, which utilizes a problem-solving process to identify and support student needs based upon available data, including attendance, behavior and discipline, statewide assessment, and progress monitoring data.\(^\text{36}\) Retention is mandatory for 3rd grade students who score at Level 1 on the statewide, standardized ELA assessment.\(^\text{37}\) Any student retained in 3rd grade because of his or her statewide, standardized ELA assessment score must receive intensive interventions and be taught by a “highly-effective” teacher with a reading endorsement or certification.\(^\text{38}\) This intervention process must include parent involvement, student observation, review of data, vision and hearing screening to rule out sensory deficits, and evidence-based interventions implemented in the general education environment.\(^\text{39}\)

**Research-Based Reading Instruction Allocation**

The state allocates funding to school districts for research-based reading instruction to students in kindergarten through grade 12.\(^\text{40}\) Funds must be used to provide a system of comprehensive reading instruction to students enrolled in kindergarten through grade 12, including:\(^\text{41}\)

- An additional hour of intensive reading instruction beyond the normal school day for students in the 300 lowest-performing elementary schools.
- Reading intervention teachers and reading coaches.
- Professional development for teachers to earn a certification or an endorsement in reading.
- Summer reading camps for students in kindergarten through grade 5 who exhibit certain reading deficiencies, depending on grade level.\(^\text{42}\)
- Supplemental instructional materials that are grounded in scientifically based reading research as identified by the JRFO.
- Intensive interventions for students in kindergarten through grade 12 who have been identified as having a reading deficiency or who are reading below grade level as determined by the statewide, standardized ELA assessment.

District school boards must develop reading plans which detail the specific uses of the research-based reading instruction allocation.\(^\text{43}\) The plans must be annually submitted to the DOE for approval and provide for intensive reading interventions through integrated curricula that incorporate strategies identified by the JRFO and are delivered by a teacher who is certified or endorsed in reading.\(^\text{44}\) The DOE monitors and tracks the implementation of each district plan and

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\(^{36}\) See Rules 6A-6.0331(1) and 6A-1.099811(2)(r), F.A.C.

\(^{37}\) Section 1008.25(5)(b), F.S. A student may be promoted if he or she meets a “good cause” exception as provided in s. 1008.25(6)(b), F.S.

\(^{38}\) See ss. 1008.25(5)(b) and (7) and 1012.34(2)(e), F.S.

\(^{39}\) Rule 6A-6.0331(1), F.A.C.

\(^{40}\) Section 1011.62(9), F.S. The state appropriated $130 million to school districts for the research-based reading instruction allocation for the 2020-2021 fiscal year. Specific Appropriations 8 and 92, s. 2, ch. 2020-111, L.O.F.

\(^{41}\) Section 1011.62(9)(c), F.S.

\(^{42}\) All students in kindergarten through grade 2 who demonstrate a reading deficiency as determined by district and state assessments, and students in grades 3 through 5 who score at Level 1 on the statewide, standardized English Language Arts assessment. Section 1011.62(9)(c)5., F.S.

\(^{43}\) Section 1011.62(9)(d)1., F.S.

\(^{44}\) Id.
collects specific data on expenditures and reading improvement results. By February 1 of each year, the DOE reports its findings to the Legislature.

Parental Notification and Supports

The parent of any student who exhibits a substantial deficiency in reading must be notified in writing of the deficiency and of all available services and proposed interventions, and be provided with a “read at home plan,” which outlines strategies that parents can use to help their children improve in reading.

Students enrolled in public school in grades 3 through 5 and score below grade level on the statewide, standardized ELA assessment in the prior school year may also be eligible for a reading scholarship account of $500. A total of 6,763 students received reading scholarship accounts in the 2019-2020 school year. The state appropriated $7.6 million for reading scholarship accounts for the 2020-2021 school year.

In the 2020-2021 school year, 112,295 students enrolled in public schools in kindergarten through grade 5 were identified as having substantial deficiencies in reading.

Federally-funded Department of Education Literacy Initiatives

As part of its plan for federal funding provided under the CARES Act, the DOE has launched a statewide system of regional reading supports. The program allocates $5 million from the CARES Act funds for the establishment of 20 regions in the state, each with a designated regional reading consultant that will lead a regional literacy support team. The reading consultants and their teams will be trained to monitor district-level, school-level and classroom-level data in order to identify and provide needed professional development and interventions. The first year of the program will support implementation of reading plans in the early grades while overall the program focus will be on building capacity of the teams with an emphasis on updated standards, evidence-based practices, and data-based decision making.

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45 Section 1011.62(9)(d)1., F.S.
46 Id.
47 Section 1008.25(5)(c), F.S.
48 Email, Florida Department of Education (Mar. 11, 2021).
51 Id. at 105. Each regional literacy director retains employment with the district with a salary of $80,000 plus benefits funded by the DOE.
52 Id.
53 Federal law defines the term “evidence-based” as an activity, strategy, or intervention that demonstrates a statistically significant effect on improving student outcomes or other relevant outcomes based on: strong evidence from at least 1 well-designed and well-implemented experimental study; moderate evidence from at least 1 well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental study; or promising evidence from at least 1 well-designed and well-implemented correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias; or demonstrates a rationale based on high-quality research findings or positive evaluation that such activity, strategy, or intervention is likely to improve student outcomes or other relevant outcomes, and includes ongoing efforts to examine the effects of such activity, strategy, or intervention. 20 U.S.C. s. 7801(21)(a)(i).
Implementation has been set to begin in 2021, during the second half of the 2020-2021 school year.

The DOE allocated $20 million from the CARES Act funds for progress monitoring and data informed supports.\(^{55}\) From October 1, 2020, through February 19, 2021, the DOE made available to all public schools on a voluntary basis a new progress monitoring tool developed by Cambium Assessment, Inc., to serve as a connective support between the foundational skills that students seek to acquire and their progress through early education years and drive informed teaching practices and curriculum decisions.\(^{56}\) The progress monitoring tool was available for multiple administrations and was aligned to the state standards for grades 3 through 10 ELA Reading and grades 3 through 8 Mathematics.\(^{57}\)

The DOE also used funds from the CARES Act to develop several other programs related to improving student literacy. Specifically, the DOE allocated: \(^{58}\)

- $5 million to upskill highly effective reading coaches.
- $20 million, in addition to $4 million of the funds reserved under the CARES Act to the Governor, for strengthening K-3 reading instructional materials.
- $5 million for deploying professional development for teachers to attain a reading endorsement; training on how to use progress monitoring data to inform instruction; improving existing reading endorsement options; and improved resources for teachers and families.

In addition, the DOE secured a Comprehensive Literacy State Development Grant (CLSD) of $21 million.\(^{59}\) A CLSD is a discretionary federal grant to create a comprehensive literacy program to advance literacy skills, including pre-literacy skills, reading, and writing, for children from birth through grade 12, with an emphasis on disadvantaged children, including children living in poverty, English learners, and children with disabilities.\(^{60}\)

**Effect of Proposed Changes**

**Coordinated Screening and Progress Monitoring**

The bill modifies s. 1008.25, F.S., to require the DOE, in collaboration with the OEL, to procure and require, and provide training and support for implementing, a statewide, standardized coordinated screening and progress monitoring (CSPM) for VPK program providers and for public schools serving kindergarten through grade 8 students, whom the bill requires to


\(^{57}\) Id.


\(^{60}\) 20 U.S.C. s. 6642.
participate in the CSPM. The bill outlines requirements for the CSPM. Specifically, the CSPM must:

- Measure student progress in early literacy, ELA, and mathematics standards.
- Measure student performance in oral language, development, phonemic and phonological awareness, knowledge of print and letters, decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.
- Be a valid, reliable and developmentally appropriate computer-adaptive direct instrument that provides screening and diagnostic capabilities for monitoring student progress; identifies students with a substantial deficiency in reading, including students with characteristics of dyslexia; and informs instruction.
- Provide data sufficient for VPK program accountability.
- Provide data and resources to enhance differentiated instruction.
- Provide information to the DOE to aid in the development of educational programs, policies, and supports for providers, districts, and schools.
- Beginning with the 2022-2023 school year, be administered at least three times within a program year or school year, as applicable, with the first administration occurring no later than the first 30 instructional days after the start of the program year or school year.

Results of the CSPM, including the number of students who demonstrate characteristics of dyslexia, must:

- Be reported to the DOE and maintained in the DOE’s Educational Data Warehouse.
- Be timely provided to a student’s teachers and parents.
- Inform parents annually of their child’s educational progress based on the CSPM.

Evidence-based Reading Instruction Allocation

The bill modifies s. 1011.62, F.S., to rename the “research-based reading instruction allocation” as the “evidence-based reading instruction allocation” to conform the reading instruction allocation with the other evidence-based initiatives. The bill aligns the definition of evidence-based with federal law, to provide that evidence-based means demonstrating a statistically significant effect on improving student outcomes or other relevant outcomes.

The bill also modifies the requirements and the authorized uses by school districts of the allocation. Specifically, the bill:

- Provides that funds may be used for supports to assist students identified with a substantial deficiency in early literacy transition from the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program (VPK) to kindergarten.
- Replaces the requirement to integrate social studies with the requirement for the coordinated integration of civic literacy in the curriculum for the extra hour of reading instruction for the 300 lowest performing elementary schools.
- Provides that a school district’s reading plan will no longer be deemed approved if it is not approved by June 1 or if 100 percent of the funds are spent.
- Makes mandatory the withholding of funds by the DOE upon a determination that reading instruction allocation funds are not being used to implement the approved plan.
• Requires school district reading plans to include a root-cause analysis of student performance data and reflection tool developed by the DOE to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions implemented in the prior year.

The bill requires the annual report of the DOE to the Legislature on the evidence-based reading instruction allocation to also be submitted to the SBE and include recommendations for improving implementation of evidence-based reading and intervention strategies in classrooms.

Reading Achievement Initiative for Scholastic Excellence Program

The bill creates s. 1008.365, F.S., to establish within the DOE the Reading Achievement Initiative for Scholastic Excellence Program (RAISE Program) to provide instructional supports to school districts and their staff in implementing evidence-based reading instruction and interventions in order to improve student reading achievement. Under the RAISE Program, and similar to current federally-funded initiatives of the DOE, the DOE must establish at least 20 literacy support regions and regional support teams, each at the direction of a regional literacy support director appointed by the commissioner, to assist school districts in improving low reading scores. Each regional literacy support director must be an employee of a school district and manage a regional support team. Directors and teams are required by the bill to consist of personnel who have completed the competency-based reading endorsement pathway and meet other specified requirements related to reading instruction and progress monitoring.

The bill requires the DOE to provide progress monitoring data to the regional literacy support teams to assist with providing to designated schools supports, which must include:

• Professional development aligned with evidence based strategies for reading instruction.
• Evaluating a school’s improvement plan for alignment with the school district’s reading plan.
• Assistance with implementing:
  o Data-informed instructional decision making.
  o The selection and consistent, coordinated use of high-quality instructional materials.
  o Reading instruction in other core subject area curricula, with an emphasis on civic literacy.
  o A multiterrited system of supports in order to provide students effective interventions and identify students who may require an evaluation for special educational services, including identifying characteristics of conditions that affect phonological processing, such as dyslexia.

The bill authorizes the DOE to establish criteria to identify a school that must receive supports from a regional support team. The bill also modifies s. 1001.42, F.S., to require each school district to include in its school improvement plan schools identified for supports under the RAISE Program, but specifies that regardless of a school’s grade, a school must receive supports if at least 50 percent of the school’s students who take the statewide, standardized ELA assessment score below a Level 3 for any grade level, or, for students in kindergarten through grade 3, if results from the CSM demonstrate that at least 50 percent of the students are not on track to pass the statewide, standardized grade 3 ELA assessment. If the regional support team determines that the school district’s reading plan does not address the school’s need to improve student outcomes, the regional literacy support director, the district school superintendent, or his
or her designee, and the director of the JRFO are required by the bill to convene a meeting to rectify the deficiencies of the reading plan.

A school identified for supports is not required by the bill to implement a turnaround option or take other corrective action under the state’s school improvement program. The bill authorizes a school to stop receiving supports and implementing a school improvement plan when the school’s data reflects that it no longer meets the requirements to receive supports and implement a school improvement plan. The school may nevertheless continue to receive supports based on the availability of resources.

**RAISE Program Tutors**

The RAISE Program also requires the DOE to establish a tutoring program and develop training in effective reading tutoring practices and content, based on evidence-based practices, and aligned to the state ELA standards, to prepare eligible high school students to tutor students with a substantial deficiency in reading in kindergarten through grade 3. The bill requires the SBE to adopt rules to administer the program.

The bill requires school districts that wish to participate to recruit, train, and deploy eligible high school students. Tutoring must occur during the school day on school district property in the presence and under the supervision of instructional personnel who are school district employees. A student is required by the bill to obtain written permission from his or her parent before receiving tutoring services.

The bill prescribes eligibility requirements for tutors. Specifically, a tutor must:

- Be a rising junior or senior.
- Have a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or higher.
- Have no history of out-of-school suspensions or expulsions.
- Be on track to complete all course requirements for graduation.
- Have written recommendations from at least two of his or her present or former high school teachers of record or extracurricular activity sponsors.

The bill authorizes a district school board to adopt a service-learning course that includes a tutoring program and authorizes students to:

- Earn up to 3 elective credits for high school graduation based on the verified number of hours the student spends tutoring.

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61 The hours that high school students devote to course-based service-learning activities may be counted toward meeting community service requirements for high school graduation and community service requirements for participation in the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program. School districts are encouraged to include service learning as part of any course or activity required for high school graduation and to include and accept service-learning activities and hours in requirements for academic awards, especially those awards that currently include community service as a criterion or selection factor. Section 1003.497(3)(b), F.S.
• Count hours devoted to tutoring toward meeting community service requirements for high school graduation and participation in the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program.
• Earn a New Worlds Scholar award from the DOE by providing at least 500 verified hours of tutoring.

The option for a high school student to tutor a K-3 student may support both students in their academic development.

Parental Notification and Supports

The bill requires a school to apprise in writing, at least monthly, the parent of a student who has a substantial deficiency in reading of the student’s progress in response to intensive reading interventions and supports. The written appraisal must inform the parent of any additional interventions or supports to be provided to the student if the initial supports do not lead to improvement.

To further encourage parental participation in a student’s reading progress, the bill requires the DOE to develop a handbook that schools must provide to the parent of a student who is identified as having a substantial reading deficiency. The handbook must be made available in an electronic format that is accessible online and must include:

• An overview of the types and frequency of assessments used to identify reading deficiencies and the requirements for interventions and supports that districts must provide to students who do not make adequate academic progress.
• An overview of the process for initiating and conducting evaluations for exceptional education eligibility. The overview must include an explanation that a diagnosis of a medical condition alone is not sufficient to establish exceptional education eligibility but may be used to document how that condition relates to the student’s eligibility determination and may be disclosed in an eligible student’s individual education plan when necessary to inform school personnel responsible for implementing the plan.
• Characteristics of conditions associated with learning disorders, including dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, and developmental aphasia.
• A list of resources that support informed parent involvement in decision making processes for students who have difficulty in learning.

The handbook may support parental awareness and involvement in the progress of a student’s education.

62 A student is not specifically required to complete a minimum number of community service hours to earn a standard high school diploma, but school districts are encouraged to include service learning as part of a course or activity required for high school graduation. See ss. 1003.4282 and 1003.497(3)(b), F.S.
63 Scholarship awards for students under the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program have varying minimum service hour requirements, based on the amount of the award. For eligibility requirements, see Florida Department of Education. Office of Student Financial Assistance, 2020-2021 Bright Futures Student Handbook, Chapter 1: Initial Eligibility Requirements, available at https://www.floridastudentfinancialaidsg.org/PDF/BFHandbookChapter1.pdf (last visited Mar. 13, 2021).
Instructional Material Review Process

Present Situation

The DOE is authorized to allocate and distribute to each district an amount as prescribed annually by the Legislature for instructional materials for students in grades K-12. Each district school superintendent is required to certify to the commissioner that the district school board has approved a comprehensive staff development plan that supports fidelity of implementation of instructional materials programs, including verification that training was provided; that the materials are being implemented as designed; and, beginning July 1, 2021, for core reading materials and reading intervention materials used in kindergarten through grade 5, that the materials have been identified by JRFO in collaboration with the Florida Center for Reading Research as scientifically researched and evidence-based reading instructional and intervention programs that incorporate explicit, systematic, and sequential approaches to teaching phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and text comprehension and incorporate decodable or phonetic text instructional strategies.

The term of adoption of any instructional materials must be a five-year period beginning on April 1 following the adoption, except that the commissioner may approve terms of adoption of less than five years for materials in content areas which require more frequent revision.

Prior to the purchase of any instructional material, whether from the state-adopted list or through a district-established instructional materials review process, the district school board must:

- Establish a process to allow student editions of recommended instructional materials to be accessed and viewed online by the public at least 20 calendar days before the required school board hearing and public meeting. This process must include reasonable safeguards against the unauthorized use, reproduction, and distribution of instructional materials considered for adoption.
- Conduct an open, noticed school board hearing to receive public comment on the recommended instructional materials.
- Conduct an open, noticed public meeting to approve an annual instructional materials plan to identify any instructional materials that will be purchased. This public meeting must be held on a different date than the school board hearing.
- Provide notice for the school board hearing and the public meeting that specifically states the instructional materials being reviewed and how the instructional materials can be accessed for public review.

Effect of Proposed Changes

The bill modifies s. 1001.215, F.S., to require the JRFO, as part of the adoption cycle for ELA instructional materials, to:

- Assist in evaluating elementary grades instructional materials submitted for adoption consideration.

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64 Section 1011.67(1), F.S. The state appropriated $236.6 million to school districts for instructional materials for the 2020-2021 fiscal year. Specific Appropriations 8 and 92, s. 2, ch. 2020-111, L.O.F.
65 Sections 1011.67(2) and 1001.215(8), F.S.
66 Section 1006.36(1), F.S.
67 Sections 1006.40(4)(b) and 1006.283(2)(b)8., 9., and 11., F.S.
• Identify those materials that are closely aligned to the content and evidence-based strategies for reading instructional and intervention programs that have been identified in collaboration with the Florida Center for Reading Research.
• Incorporate professional development to implement such strategies.

The bill modifies s. 1011.67, F.S., to authorize instructional materials identified by JRFO to be purchased by a school district without undergoing the comprehensive process for adopting instructional materials at the local level.

The Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program

Present Situation

The Florida Constitution requires the State to provide every four-year old child a high quality pre-kindergarten learning opportunity in the form of an early childhood development and education program which must be voluntary, high quality, free, and delivered according to professionally accepted standards.\(^{68}\) In 2004, the State established a free VPK program offered to eligible four-year-old children.\(^{69}\) Parents may choose either a school-year or summer program offered by either a public or private school.\(^{70}\)

VPK Administration

Early Learning Coalitions (ELCs) and district school boards administer the VPK program at the county or regional level. Each ELC is the single point of entry for VPK program registration and enrollment in the coalition’s county or multi-county service area.\(^{71}\) A local ELC must coordinate with the local school district in the ELC’s service area to develop procedures for enrolling children in public school VPK programs.\(^{72}\)

The Office of Early Learning (OEL) adopts procedures governing the administration of the VPK program for ELCs and school districts, including procedures for: \(^{73}\)
• Child enrollment.
• Attendance reporting.
• Eligibility of VPK program providers.
• Regulating the compliance of VPK program providers.
• Reimbursing VPK program providers for the costs of the VPK program.

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68 Art. IX, s. 1(b), Fla. Const. An early childhood development and education program means an organized program designed to address and enhance each child’s ability to make age appropriate progress in an appropriate range of settings in the development of language and cognitive capabilities and emotional, social, regulatory and moral capacities through education in basic skills and such other skills as the Legislature may determine to be appropriate.
69 Section 1, ch. 2004-484, L.O.F.; part V, ch. 1002, F.S.; see also Art. IX, s. 1(b)-(c), Fla. Const.
70 Section 1002.53(3), F.S.
72 Section 1002.53(4), F.S.
73 Section 1002.75(2), F.S.
VPK Instructor Requirements

A VPK provider offering a school-year VPK program must have, for each class, at least one instructor with the following credentials:74

- A Child Development Associate (CDA) issued by the National Credentialing Program of the Council for Professional Recognition.
- A credential approved by the Department of Children and Families as being equivalent to or greater than the CDA.
- Five clock hours of training in emergent literacy and successful completion of a student performance standards training course.

In lieu of the minimum credentials listed above, a private VPK program instructor may hold:75

- An associate’s or higher degree in child development;
- An associate’s or higher degree in an unrelated field, at least six credit hours in early childhood education or child development, and at least 480 hours of teaching or providing child care services for children any age from birth through eight years of age;
- A bachelor’s or higher degree in early childhood education, prekindergarten or primary education, preschool education, or family and consumer science;
- A bachelor’s or higher degree in elementary education, if the instructor has been certified to teach children any age from birth through grade 6, regardless of whether the educator certificate is current; or
- An educational credential approved by the OEL as being equivalent to or greater than any of these educational credentials.

VPK Instructor Training

The OEL sets minimum standards for emergent literacy training courses for VPK instructors.76 Each course must be at least five clock hours long and provide strategies and techniques regarding the age-appropriate progress of prekindergarten students in developing emergent literacy skills, including:77

- Oral communication;
- Knowledge of print and letters;
- Phonemic and phonological awareness; and
- Vocabulary and comprehension.

Each emergent literacy training course must also provide strategies for helping students with disabilities and other special needs maximize their benefit from the VPK program.78 In addition, the OEL must adopt minimum standards for training courses on the VPK performance standards

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74 Sections 1002.55(3)(c)1.a. and 2., 1002.59, and 1002.63(4), F.S. An active Birth Through Five Child Care Credential awarded as a Florida Child Care Professional Credential, Florida Department of Education Child Care Apprenticeship Certificate, or Early Childhood Professional Certificate satisfies the staff credential requirement. Florida Department of Children and Families, Child Care Facility Handbook (2019), incorporated by reference in Rule 65C-22.001(7), F.A.C.
75 Section 1002.55(4), F.S.
76 Section 1002.59(1), F.S.
77 Id.
78 Id.
for students. Each course on performance standards must be at least three clock hours, provide instruction in strategies and techniques to address age-appropriate progress of each child in attaining the standards, and be available online.

OEL outlines a 5-Tier career pathway with certifications that require different levels of foundational training up to a bachelor’s degree or higher.

Early Learning Florida, developed in partnership between the OEL and the Lastinger Center, is a statewide professional learning system designed to support the development of early childhood professionals’ knowledge and skills in effectively educating and caring for young children. Since 2015, Early Learning Florida has delivered over 400,000 hours of online and blended training to more than 30,000 early childhood practitioners in Florida, at no cost to educators. All Early Learning Florida courses and trainings provide teachers with Continuing Education Units that articulate to national and state credentials.

The OEL has also developed early learning professional development and career pathways. Professional development and teacher resources are available online, including courses developed by the OEL in collaboration with the Lastinger Center, to provide opportunities to earn educator credentials.

VPK Accountability

The DOE developed a statewide kindergarten readiness screening and requires each school district to administer the statewide kindergarten readiness screening within the first 30 days of each school year. The screening must measure a child’s readiness for kindergarten in eight domains: physical development; approaches to learning; social and emotional development; language and literacy; mathematical thinking; scientific inquiry; social studies; and creative expression through the arts.

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79 Section 1002.59(2), F.S.
80 Id.
84 Id.
85 Section 1002.995, F.S., and Rule 6A-4.735, F.A.C.
88 Sections 1002.69(1)-(3) and 1002.73, F.S.
89 See s. 1002.67(1), F.S. See also Florida’s Office of Early Learning, Early Learning and Developmental Standards: 4 Years Old to Kindergarten (2017) at 1, incorporated by reference in rule 6M-8.602, F.A.C.
The OEL annually calculates a kindergarten readiness rate for each VPK provider based on results of the annual screening.⁹⁰ The readiness rates are expressed as the percentage of children whose scores demonstrate readiness for kindergarten.⁹¹ The methodology for calculating the readiness rate must include student learning gains, when available, based on a VPK preassessment and postassessment, known as the “Florida VPK Assessment.”⁹² The OEL must determine learning gains using a value-added measure based on growth demonstrated by the results of the Florida VPK Assessment from at least two successive years of administration.⁹³

At least 60 percent of a VPK provider’s students must meet the “ready for kindergarten” score on the screening in order for the provider to avoid probationary status.⁹⁴ Providers that do not meet the minimum readiness rate are placed on probation.⁹⁵ An ELC or school district must require a VPK provider that falls below the minimum kindergarten readiness rate to:

- Submit for approval and implement an improvement plan;
- Place the provider or school on probation; and
- Take certain corrective actions, including the use of an OEL-approved curriculum or an OEL-approved staff development plan to strengthen instruction in language development and phonological awareness.

Out of 126,238 students who completed the VPK program, 63 percent were “ready for kindergarten” in the fall of 2019.⁹⁷ Of 6,611 rated VPK providers, 2,175 failed to meet the minimum rate.⁹⁸ Of these 2,175 providers, 2,203 remained on probation.⁹⁹

A VPK provider on probation and failing to meet the minimum readiness rate for two consecutive years must be removed from eligibility to provide the VPK program for 5 years; unless the provider receives from the OEL a good cause exemption.¹⁰⁰

The DOE launched a VPK progress monitoring pilot program by permitting, beginning in January 2021 and continuing through the 2021-2022 school year, up to 1900 VPK providers to

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⁹⁰ Rule 6M-8.601(3)(b), F.A.C.
⁹¹ Sections 1002.69(5)-(6), F.S.; To be considered “ready for kindergarten,” a student must achieve a score of 500 or higher on the Star Early Literacy assessment. Rule 6M-8.601, F.A.C.
⁹² Section 1002.69(5), F.S.; Rule 6A-1.09433(1)(b), F.A.C.
⁹³ Section 1002.69(5), F.S.; Rule 6M-8.601(3)(b), F.A.C.
⁹⁴ Id.
⁹⁵ Section 1002.67(4), F.S.
⁹⁶ Section 1002.67(4)(c)1., F.S.
⁹⁷ Email, Florida Department of Education (Dec. 15, 2020).
⁹⁸ Id.
⁹⁹ Email, Office of Early Learning (Mar. 29, 2019).
¹⁰⁰ Section 1002.67(4)(c)3., F.S. A VPK provider must submit a request for a good cause exemption to the OEL for review and approval and include specified data. Section 1002.69(7)(b)-(c), F.S. A VPK provider that receives a good cause exemption must continue to implement its improvement plan and take corrective actions until the provider meets the minimum kindergarten readiness rate. Sections 1002.69(7)(e) and 1002.67(3)(c)2., F.S.
access the assessment used for the statewide kindergarten screening.\textsuperscript{101} The DOE allocated $2.9 million from the CARES Act funds for the program.\textsuperscript{102}

The DOE allocated $18 million of the Child Care Development and Block Grant Fund from the CARES Act to implement summer programs for rising kindergarten students identified with limited language and emergent literacy skills as determined by the VPK assessments and teacher recommendations.\textsuperscript{103}

\textit{Effect of Proposed Changes}

\textbf{VPK Instructor Requirements}

The bill modifies s. 1002.59, to add requirements to the emergent literacy training courses, developed by the OEL, for prekindergarten instructors. The bill requires the JRFO to work with the OEL in the development of the emergent literacy training courses and specifies that the courses must be consistent with the evidence-based reading instructional and intervention programs developed by the JRFO and the Florida Center for Reading Research.

The bill also modifies s. 1002.55, F.S., to revise emergent literacy training to require that the training course be available online and that private prekindergarten instructors complete at least one qualifying emergent literacy training course every 5 years. The additional requirements for VPK instructors may provide instructors with more skills to teach VPK students.

\textbf{VPK Accountability}

The bill modifies s. 1008.25, F.S., to require a VPK student who demonstrates a substantial deficiency in early literacy skills based upon the results of the CSPM to be referred to the school district following completion of the VPK term and prior to the beginning of the next school year. The bill makes the student eligible for intensive reading interventions from the school district, which may be funded from the evidence-based reading instruction allocation. The additional reading interventions may provide additional opportunities for students to improve reading skills.

The CSPM replaces current VPK program progress monitoring and accountability requirements in ss. 1002.67 and 1002.69, F.S. With the implementation of the CSPM beginning with the 2022-2023 school year, the bill:

- Phases out the pre- and post-assessment and the statewide kindergarten readiness screening.
- Requires learning gains and kindergarten readiness rates to be calculated using data from the CSPM.


\textsuperscript{102} Id.

The VPK accountability metrics provided in the bill may measure student performance more contemporaneously with the instruction provided and support the timely provision of information to parents, school districts, and VPK providers.

**Kindergarten Readiness**

To assist all parents with the transition from prekindergarten to kindergarten, the bill modifies s. 1002.83, F.S. to require the OEL to provide guidance for successful kindergarten transitions to ELCs, school districts, charter schools, and parents. The bill requires each ELC to develop a best-practices plan for transitioning students into kindergarten, which must include:

- Opportunities for prekindergarten students and their parents to visit schools in which they may be enrolled in kindergarten.
- Written information for parents on school registration and academic and social expectations for kindergarten.
- Meetings at least annually with school districts and charter schools in the coalition’s service area to identify and address areas for improvement in transitioning prekindergarten students into kindergarten.
- Transferring prekindergarten student information for continuity in progress monitoring and the provision of supports.

The additional supports for transitioning students to kindergarten may help prepare students for kindergarten. ELCs may require coordination from school districts regarding kindergarten enrollment, visits, and student data.

**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:

   None.
V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The coordinated screening and progress monitoring required by the bill for students enrolled in the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program through grade 8 will require the expenditure of state funds. The deployment of regional literacy support directors and teams as provided in the bill will also require the expenditure of state funds.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

Section 15 of the bill includes an incorrect cross-reference to federal law. A provision of the bill that defines “evidence-based” to mean demonstrating a statistically significant effect on improving student outcomes or other relevant outcomes as provided in 20 U.S.C. s. 8101(21)(A)(i). The definition of the term “evidence-based” is included in the United States Code at 20 U.S.C. s. 7801(21)(A)(i).

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill substantially amends the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 1001.215, 1001.42, 1002.33, 1002.55, 1002.59, 1002.67, 1002.69, 1002.83, 1002.995, 1003.621, 1004.04, 1008.25, 1008.345, 1011.62, 1011.67, 1012.585, 1012.586, 1012.98, 1012.986.

This bill creates the following section of the Florida Statutes: 1008.365.

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.
A bill to be entitled
An act relating to student literacy; amending s. 1001.215, F.S.; revising and providing duties for the Just Read, Florida! Office within the Department of Education; amending s. 1001.42, F.S.; revising a district school board's duty to implement a school improvement plan for certain low-performing schools to conform to changes made by the act; amending s. 1002.33, F.S.; conforming a provision to changes made by the act; amending s. 1002.55, F.S.; revising requirements for prekindergarten instructors relating to completing an emergent literacy training course; amending s. 1002.59, F.S.; requiring the Office of Early Learning to adopt minimum standards for such course in collaboration with the Just Read, Florida! Office; requiring such course to be consistent with certain strategies identified by the Just Read, Florida! Office; amending s. 1002.67, F.S.; requiring certain private prekindergarten providers and public schools to use a coordinated screening and progress monitoring system; amending s. 1002.69, F.S.; requiring the Department of Education, in consultation with the Office of Early Learning, to implement a coordinated screening and progress monitoring system for students in the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program through grade 8; requiring such screening and progress monitoring system to be used to assess kindergarten readiness and to determine student learning gains; amending s. 1002.83, F.S.; requiring early learning coalitions to adopt best-practices plans for transitioning prekindergarten students into kindergarten; providing requirements for such plans; requiring the Office of Early Learning to provide certain guidelines to assist early learning coalitions, schools districts, charter schools, and parents; amending ss. 1002.995 and 1003.621, F.S.; conforming provisions to changes made by the act; amending s. 1004.04, F.S.; revising provisions relating to teacher preparation programs; removing provisions authorizing the waiver of certain admission requirements for such programs; requiring certain school district and instructional personnel to have evidence of being certified or endorsed in reading beginning in a specified school year; amending s. 1008.25, F.S.; requiring certain students to participate in a certain coordinated screening and progress monitoring system; requiring schools to communicate with parents at least monthly regarding the progress of certain students; providing requirements for such communication; requiring the department to develop a handbook for schools to provide to parents of certain students; providing requirements for such handbook; requiring the department, in collaboration with the Office of Early Learning, to procure and require the use of a certain coordinated screening and progress monitoring system; providing requirements for such system; requiring private Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program...
providers and public schools to participate in such system beginning in a specified school year; providing the frequency with which such system must be administered during the program year or school year, as applicable; providing that certain prekindergarten students may be eligible for intensive reading interventions; authorizing a school district to pay for such interventions using certain funds; requiring screening and progress monitoring system results to be reported to the department and maintained in a specified department warehouse; requiring such results to be provided to a student’s teacher and parent; requiring the department, in collaboration with the Office of Early Learning, to provide certain training and support; amending s. 1008.345, F.S.; conforming a cross-reference; creating s. 1008.365, F.S.; providing a short title; establishing the Reading Achievement Initiative for Scholastic Excellence Program within the department; providing a purpose; requiring the department to establish a specified number of literacy support regions and regional support teams for a certain purpose; requiring a regional literacy support director to meet certain criteria; providing duties and requirements for such teams; authorizing the department to establish criteria for identifying schools that need supports; requiring such schools to implement a certain plan; requiring the department to provide progress monitoring data to such teams regarding the implementation of supports; providing requirements for such supports; providing that certain schools are not required to implement a turnaround option or take other corrective actions; authorizing a school to discontinue receiving supports and implementing a school improvement plan under certain circumstances; requiring the department to establish a tutoring program and develop certain training to prepare high school students to tutor certain students; providing eligibility criteria for high school students to participate in a tutoring program; requiring school districts that wish to participate in such program to recruit, train, and deploy eligible high school students; providing requirements for such program; requiring the department to designate certain high school students as New Worlds Scholars; requiring the State Board of Education to adopt rules; amending s. 1011.62, F.S.; renaming the research-based reading instruction allocation as the evidence-based reading instruction allocation; requiring such allocation to be used to provide comprehensive reading instruction to certain prekindergarten students; requiring a school district’s K-12 comprehensive reading plan to be developed with input from certain personnel and provide for certain interventions delivered by certain instructional personnel; requiring the department to annually release to certain school districts their allocations of appropriated funds by a specified date; requiring the department to annually report certain findings and recommendations to the State Board of Education.
Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Subsections (1) through (6) and subsection (11) of section 1001.215, Florida Statutes, are amended, and subsection (8) of that section is republished, to read:

Section 1001.215 Just Read, Florida! Office.—There is created in the Department of Education the Just Read, Florida! Office. The office is fully accountable to the Commissioner of Education and shall:

1. Provide training to train reading coaches and school administrators on the evidence-based strategies identified pursuant to subsection (8) for purposes of implementation, modeling, and classroom observations to support professional growth and inform performance evaluations of instructional personnel.

2. Create multiple designs of effective reading instruction, with accompanying credentials and microcredentials, to enable all teachers to integrate reading instruction into their content areas and indicate mastery of specific, evidence-based strategies.

3. Work with the Lastinger Center for Learning at the University of Florida to develop training for K-12 teachers, reading coaches, and school administrators principals on effective content-area-specific reading strategies; the coordinated integration of content-rich curriculum from other core subject areas into reading instruction, with an emphasis on civic literacy; and evidence-based reading strategies identified pursuant to subsection (8) to improve student reading performance. For secondary teachers, emphasis shall be on technical text. These strategies must be developed for all
content areas in the K-12 curriculum.

(4) Develop and provide access to sequenced, content-rich curriculum programming, instructional practices, and resources that help elementary schools use state-adopted instructional materials to increase students’ background knowledge and literacy skills, including student attainment of the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards for social studies, science, and the arts. The office shall, as part of the adoption cycle for English Language Arts instructional materials, assist in evaluating elementary grades instructional materials submitted for adoption consideration, identify those materials that are closely aligned to the content and evidence-based strategies identified pursuant to subsection (8), and incorporate professional development to implement such strategies.

(5) Provide parents with information and evidence-based strategies for assisting their children in reading, including reading in content areas.

(6) Provide technical assistance to school districts in the development and implementation of district plans for use of the evidence-based, research-based reading instruction allocation provided in s. 1011.62(9) and annually review and approve such plans.

(8) Work with the Florida Center for Reading Research to identify scientifically researched and evidence-based reading instructional and intervention programs that incorporate explicit, systematic, and sequential approaches to teaching phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and text comprehension and incorporate decodable or phonetic text instructional strategies. Reading intervention includes

evidence-based strategies frequently used to remediate reading deficiencies and includes, but is not limited to, individual instruction, multisensory approaches, tutoring, mentoring, or the use of technology that targets specific reading skills and abilities.

(11) Work with teacher preparation programs approved pursuant to ss. 1004.04 and 1004.85 to integrate effective, research-based and evidence-based reading instructional and intervention strategies, including explicit, systematic, and sequential reading strategies, multisensory intervention strategies, and reading in content area instructional strategies into teacher preparation programs.

Section 2. Paragraph (a) of subsection (18) of section 1001.42, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1001.42 Powers and duties of district school board.—The district school board, acting as a board, shall exercise all powers and perform all duties listed below:

(18) IMPLEMENT SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY.— Maintain a system of school improvement and education accountability as provided by statute and State Board of Education rule. This system of school improvement and education accountability shall be consistent with, and implemented through, the district’s continuing system of planning and budgeting required by this section and ss. 1008.385, 1010.01, and 1011.01. This system of school improvement and education accountability shall comply with the provisions of ss. 1008.33, 1008.34, 1008.345, and 1008.385 and include the following:

(a) School improvement plans.—The district school board shall annually approve and require implementation of a new,
Paragraph (c) of subsection (3) and subsection (17) of section 1002.33, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1002.33 Charter schools.—

(17) FUNDING.—Students enrolled in a charter school, regardless of the sponsorship, shall be funded as if they are in a basic program or a special program, the same as students enrolled in other public schools in the school district. Funding for a charter lab school shall be as provided in s. 1002.32.

(b) The basis for the agreement for funding students enrolled in a charter school shall be the sum of the school district’s operating funds from the Florida Education Finance Program as provided in s. 1011.62 and the General Appropriations Act, including gross state and local funds, discretionary lottery funds, and funds from the school district’s current operating discretionary millage levy; divided by total funded weighted full-time equivalent students in the school district; multiplied by the weighted full-time equivalent students for the charter school. Charter schools whose students or programs meet the eligibility criteria in law are entitled to their proportionate share of categorical program funds included in the total funds available in the Florida Education Finance Program by the Legislature, including transportation, the evidence-based research-based reading allocation, and the Florida digital classrooms allocation. Total funding for each charter school shall be recalculated during the year to reflect the revised calculations under the Florida Education Finance Program by the state and the actual weighted full-time equivalent students reported by the charter school during the full-time equivalent student survey periods designated by the Commissioner of Education. For charter schools operated by a not-for-profit or municipal entity, any unrestricted current and capital assets identified in the charter school’s annual financial audit may be used for other charter schools operated by the not-for-profit or municipal entity within the school district. Unrestricted current assets shall be used in accordance with s. 1011.62, and any unrestricted capital assets shall be used in accordance with s. 1013.62(2).

Section 4. Paragraph (c) of subsection (3) and subsection (a) of subsection (7) of section 1002.33, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

1002.33 Charter schools.—

(b) The basis for the agreement for funding students enrolled in a charter school shall be as provided in s. 1002.32.

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CODING: Words underlined are additions; words stricken are deletions; words italicized are additions.
(4) of section 1002.55, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

1002.55 School-year prekindergarten program delivered by private prekindergarten providers.—

(3) To be eligible to deliver the prekindergarten program, a private prekindergarten provider must meet each of the following requirements:

(c) The private prekindergarten provider must have, for each prekindergarten class of 11 children or fewer, at least one prekindergarten instructor who meets each of the following requirements:

1. The prekindergarten instructor must hold, at a minimum, one of the following credentials:
   a. A child development associate credential issued by the National Credentialing Program of the Council for Professional Recognition; or
   b. A credential approved by the Department of Children and Families as being equivalent to or greater than the credential described in sub-subparagraph a.

The Department of Children and Families may adopt rules under ss. 120.536(1) and 120.54 which provide criteria and procedures for approving equivalent credentials under sub-subparagraph b.

2. The prekindergarten instructor must successfully complete an emergent literacy training course and a student performance standards training course approved by the office as meeting or exceeding the minimum standards adopted under s. 1002.59. The emergent literacy training course must be completed at least once every 5 years after the prekindergarten instructor initially completes the course. The requirement for completion of the standards training course shall take effect July 1, 2014, and the course shall be made available online.

(4) A prekindergarten instructor, in lieu of the minimum credentials required under paragraph (3)(c), may hold one of the following educational credentials:

(a) A bachelor’s or higher degree in early childhood education, prekindergarten or primary education, preschool education, or family and consumer science;

(b) A bachelor’s or higher degree in elementary education, if the prekindergarten instructor has been certified to teach children any age from birth through 5th grade, regardless of whether the instructor’s educator certificate is current, and if the instructor is not ineligible to teach in a public school because his or her educator certificate is suspended or revoked;

(c) An associate’s or higher degree in child development;

(d) An associate’s or higher degree in an unrelated field, at least 6 credit hours in early childhood education or child development, and at least 480 hours of experience in teaching or providing child care services for children any age from birth through 8 years of age; or

(e) An educational credential approved by the department as being equivalent to or greater than an educational credential described in this subsection. The department may adopt criteria and procedures for approving equivalent educational credentials under this paragraph.

Section 5. Subsection (1) of section 1002.59, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1002.59 Emergent literacy and performance standards training courses.—
(1) The office, in collaboration with the Just Read, Florida Office, shall adopt minimum standards for one or more training courses in emergent literacy for prekindergarten instructors. Each course must comprise 5 clock hours and provide instruction in strategies and techniques to address the age-appropriate progress of prekindergarten students in developing emergent literacy skills, including oral communication, knowledge of print and letters, phonemic and phonological awareness, and vocabulary and comprehension development, consistent with the evidence-based content and strategies identified pursuant to s. 1001.215(8). Each course must also provide resources containing strategies that allow students with disabilities and other special needs to derive maximum benefit from the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program. Successful completion of an emergent literacy training course approved under this section satisfies requirements for approved training in early literacy and language development under ss. 402.305(2)(e)5., 402.313(6), and 402.3131(5).

Section 6. Paragraph (a) of subsection (3) of section 1002.67, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1002.67 Performance standards; curricula and accountability.—

(3)(a) Contingent upon legislative appropriation, each private prekindergarten provider and public school in the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program must implement an evidence-based pre- and post-assessment that has been approved by rule of the State Board of Education. However, beginning with the 2022-2023 school year, such providers and public schools shall use a coordinated screening and progress monitoring system for the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program. Successful completion of a coordinated screening and progress monitoring system for the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program through grade 8 pursuant to s. 1008.25(8), which must be used to assess kindergarten readiness consistent with this subsection. The department shall require that each school district administer the statewide kindergarten screening to each kindergarten student in the school district within the first 30 school days of each school year. Nonpublic schools may administer the statewide kindergarten screening to each kindergarten student in a nonpublic school who was enrolled in the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program.

(5) The office shall adopt procedures to annually calculate each private prekindergarten provider’s and public school’s kindergarten readiness rate, which must be expressed as the percentage of the provider’s or school’s students who are assessed as ready for kindergarten. The methodology for
Calculating each provider’s kindergarten readiness rate must include student learning gains when available and the percentage of students who meet all state readiness measures. The rates must not include students who are not administered the statewide kindergarten screening. The office shall determine learning gains using a value-added measure based on growth demonstrated by the results of the preassessment and postassessment from at least 2 successive years of administration of the preassessment and postassessment. However, beginning with the 2022-2023 school year, a coordinated screening and progress monitoring system implemented pursuant to s. 1008.25(8) must be used to determine such learning gains consistent with this subsection.

Section 8. Present subsection (14) of section 1002.83, Florida Statutes, is redesignated as subsection (15), and a new subsection (14) is added to that section, to read:

1002.83 Early learning coalitions.—
(14) Each early learning coalition shall adopt a best-practices plan for transitioning prekindergarten students into kindergarten. The plan must provide for:

(a) Opportunities for prekindergarten students and their parents to visit schools in which they may be enrolled in kindergarten.

(b) Written information for parents on school registration and academic and social expectations for kindergarten.

(c) Meetings at least annually with school districts and charter schools in the coalition’s service area to identify and address areas for improvement in transitioning prekindergarten students into kindergarten.

(d) Transferring prekindergarten student information for transference to kindergarten. The plan must provide for:

(i) Accurate recordkeeping and student data management.

(ii) Coordination with the statewide kindergarten readiness system.

(iii) Training for kindergarten teachers and administrators.

(iv) Implementation of instructional and support services appropriate for the transition to kindergarten.

The office shall provide guidelines for successful kindergarten transitions to early learning coalitions, school districts, charter schools, and parents to assist with the implementation of this subsection.

Section 9. Subsection (2) of section 1002.995, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1002.995 Early learning professional development standards and career pathways.—
(2) To the greatest extent possible, the credentials and certifications established pursuant to this section shall align with the training for K-12 teachers, reading coaches, and school administrators principal in s. 1001.215(3).

Section 10. Paragraph (g) of subsection (2) of section 1003.621, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1003.621 Academically high-performing school districts.—It is the intent of the Legislature to recognize and reward school districts that demonstrate the ability to consistently maintain or improve their high-performing status. The purpose of this section is to provide high-performing school districts with flexibility in meeting the specific requirements in statute and rules of the State Board of Education.

(2) COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTES AND RULES.—Each academically high-performing school district shall comply with all of the provisions in chapters 1000-1013, and rules of the State Board of Education which implement these provisions, pertaining to the following:

(g) Those statutes pertaining to planning and budgeting,
including chapter 1011, except s. 1011.62(9)(d), relating to the
requirement for a comprehensive reading plan. A district that is
exempt from submitting this plan shall be deemed approved to
receive the evidence-based research-based reading instruction
allocation.

Section 11. Paragraph (b) of subsection (3) and paragraph
(b) of subsection (5) of section 1004.04, Florida Statutes, are
amended to read:

1004.04 Public accountability and state approval for
teacher preparation programs.—

(3) INITIAL STATE PROGRAM APPROVAL.—

(b) Each teacher preparation program approved by the
Department of Education, as provided for by this section, shall
require students, at a minimum, to meet, at a minimum, the
following as prerequisites for admission into the program:
1. Have a grade point average of at least 2.5 on a 4.0
scale for the general education component of undergraduate
studies or have completed the requirements for a baccalaureate
degree with a minimum grade point average of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale
from any college or university accredited by a regional
accrediting association as defined by State Board of Education
rule or any college or university otherwise approved pursuant to
State Board of Education rule.
2. Demonstrate mastery of general knowledge sufficient for
demonstration in the program, including the ability to read, write,
and perform in mathematics, by passing the General Knowledge
Test of the Florida Teacher Certification Examination or, for a
graduate level program, obtain a baccalaureate degree from an
institution that is accredited or approved pursuant to the rules

Each teacher preparation program may waive these admissions
requirements for up to 10 percent of the students admitted.
Programs shall implement strategies to ensure that students
admitted under a waiver receive assistance to demonstrate
competencies to successfully meet requirements for certification
and shall annually report to the Department of Education the
status of each candidate admitted under such a waiver.

(5) PRESERVICE FIELD EXPERIENCE.—All postsecondary
instructors, school district personnel and instructional
personnel, and school sites preparing instructional personnel
through preservice field experience courses and internships
shall meet special requirements. District school boards may pay
student teachers during their internships.

(b)1. All school district personnel and instructional
personnel who supervise or direct teacher preparation students
during field experience courses or internships taking place in
this state in which candidates demonstrate an impact on student
learning growth must have:

a. Evidence of "clinical educator" training;
b. A valid professional certificate issued pursuant to s.
1012.56; and
c. At least 3 years of teaching experience in
prekindergarten through grade 12; and must have
d. Earned an effective or highly effective rating on the
prior year’s performance evaluation under s. 1012.34 or be a
peer evaluator under the district’s evaluation system approved
under s. 1012.34; and
Section 12. Present subsections (8) and (9) of section 1008.25, Florida Statutes, are redesignated as subsections (9) and (10), respectively, and paragraph (d) of subsection (5) and a new subsection (8) are added to that section, and paragraph (a) of subsection (4), paragraph (c) of subsection (5), paragraph (a) of subsection (7), and present subsection (8) are amended, to read:

1008.25 Public school student progression; student support; screening and progress monitoring; reporting requirements.—

(4) ASSESSMENT AND SUPPORT.—

(a) Each student must participate in the statewide, standardized assessment program required under s. 1008.22 and the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program through grade 8.

(b) Each student who does not achieve a Level 3 or above on the statewide, standardized English Language Arts assessment, the statewide, standardized Mathematics assessment, or the Algebra I EOC assessment must be evaluated to determine the nature of the student’s difficulty, the areas of academic need, and strategies for providing academic supports to improve the student’s performance.

(c) The parent of any student who exhibits a substantial deficiency in reading, as described in paragraph (a), must be notified in writing of the following:

1. That his or her child has been identified as having a substantial deficiency in reading, including a description and explanation, in terms understandable to the parent, of the exact nature of the student’s difficulty in learning and lack of achievement in reading.
2. A description of the current services that are provided to the child.

3. A description of the proposed intensive interventions and supports that will be provided to the child that are designed to remediate the identified area of reading deficiency.

4. That if the child’s reading deficiency is not remediated by the end of grade 3, the child must be retained unless he or she is exempt from mandatory retention for good cause.

5. Strategies, including multisensory strategies, through a read-at-home plan the parent can use in helping his or her child succeed in reading.

6. That the statewide, standardized English Language Arts assessment is not the sole determiner of promotion and that additional evaluations, portfolio reviews, and assessments are available to the child to assist parents and the school district in knowing when a child is reading at or above grade level and ready for grade promotion.

7. The district’s specific criteria and policies for a portfolio as provided in subparagraph (6)(b)4. and the evidence required for a student to demonstrate mastery of Florida’s academic standards for English Language Arts. A parent of a student in grade 3 who is identified anytime during the year as being at risk of retention may request that the school immediately begin collecting evidence for a portfolio.

8. The district’s specific criteria and policies for midyear promotion. Midyear promotion means promotion of a retained student at any time during the year of retention once the student has demonstrated ability to read at grade level.
4. A list of resources that support informed parent involvement in decisionmaking processes for students who have difficulty in learning.

(7) SUCCESSFUL PROGRESSION FOR RETAINED THIRD GRADE STUDENTS.—

(a) Students retained under paragraph (5)(b) must be provided intensive interventions in reading to ameliorate the student’s specific reading deficiency and prepare the student for promotion to the next grade. These interventions must include:

1. Evidence-based, explicit, systematic, and multisensory reading instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension and other strategies prescribed by the school district.

2. Participation in the school district’s summer reading camp, which must incorporate the instructional and intervention strategies under subparagraph 1.

3. A minimum of 90 minutes of daily, uninterrupted reading instruction incorporating the instructional and intervention strategies under subparagraph 1. This instruction may include:
   a. Coordinated integration of content-rich texts in science and civic literacy social studies within the 90-minute block.
   b. Small group instruction.
   c. Reduced teacher-student ratios.
   d. More frequent progress monitoring.
   e. Tutoring or mentoring.
   f. Transition classes containing 3rd and 4th grade students.

CODING: Words **stricken** are deletions; words *underlined* are additions.
6. Provide information to the department to aid in the development of educational programs, policies, and supports for providers, districts, and schools.

(b) Beginning with the 2022-2023 school year, public Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program providers and public schools must participate in the screening and progress monitoring system. The screening and progress monitoring system must be administered at least three times within a program year or school year, as applicable, with the first administration occurring no later than the first 30 instructional days after the start of the program year or school year pursuant to state board rule.

(c) A Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program student who exhibits a substantial deficiency in early literacy skills based upon results under this subsection must be referred to the school district in which he or she resides and may be eligible to receive intensive reading interventions after program completion and before participating in kindergarten. Such interventions may be paid for using funds from the school district’s evidence-based reading instruction allocation in accordance with s. 1011.62(9).

(d) Screening and progress monitoring system results shall be reported to the department pursuant to state board rule and maintained in the department’s K-20 data warehouse. Results must be provided to a student’s teacher and parent in a timely manner as required in paragraph (2)(a).

(e) The department, in collaboration with the Office of Early Learning, shall provide training and support for effective implementation of the screening and progress monitoring system.

(9) ANNUAL REPORT.—

(a) In addition to the requirements in paragraph (5)(b), each district school board must annually report to the parent of each student the progress of the student toward achieving state and district expectations for proficiency in English Language Arts, science, social studies, and mathematics. The district school board must report to the parent the student’s results on each statewide, standardized assessment and the screening and progress monitoring system under subsection (8). The evaluation of each student’s progress must be based upon the student’s classroom work, observations, tests, district and state assessments, response to intensive interventions provided under paragraph (5)(a), and other relevant information. Progress reporting must be provided to the parent in writing in a format adopted by the district school board.

(b) Each district school board must annually publish on the district website and in the local newspaper the following information on the prior school year:

1. The provisions of this section relating to public school student progress and the district school board’s policies and procedures on student retention and promotion.

2. By grade, the number and percentage of all students in grades 3 through 10 performing at Levels 1 and 2 on the statewide, standardized English Language Arts assessment.

3. By grade, the number and percentage of all students retained in kindergarten through grade 10.

4. Information on the total number of students who were promoted for good cause, by each category of good cause as specified in paragraph (6)(b).
Section 13. Paragraph (a) of subsection (5) of section 1008.345, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

(5) The commissioner shall annually report to the State Board of Education and the Legislature and recommend changes in state policy necessary to foster school improvement and education accountability. The report shall include:

(a) For each school district:

1. The percentage of students, by school and grade level, demonstrating learning growth in English Language Arts and mathematics.

2. The percentage of students, by school and grade level, in both the highest and lowest quartiles demonstrating learning growth in English Language Arts and mathematics.

3. The information contained in the school district’s annual report pursuant to s. 1008.25(9) — 1008.25(9).

School reports shall be distributed pursuant to this subsection and s. 1001.42(18)(c) and according to rules adopted by the State Board of Education.

Section 14. Section 1008.365, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

1008.365 Reading Achievement Initiative for Scholastic Excellence Act.—

(i) This section may be cited as the “Reading Achievement Initiative for Scholastic Excellence Act.”

(2) The Reading Achievement Initiative for Scholastic Excellence (RAISE) Program is established within the Department of Education to provide instructional supports to school districts, school administrators, and instructional personnel in implementing evidence-based reading instruction and interventions in order to improve student reading achievement.

(3) The department shall establish at least 20 literacy support regions and regional support teams, at the direction of a regional literacy support director appointed by the Commissioner of Education, to assist schools with improving low reading scores as provided in this section.

(a) A regional literacy support director must be an employee of a school district, successfully demonstrate competence on the evidence-based strategies identified pursuant to s. 1001.215(8) through a statewide, competency-based reading endorsement pathway under s. 1012.586(2), and have the experience and credentials necessary, as determined by the department, to:

1. Effectively monitor student reading growth and achievement data;

2. Oversee districtwide and schoolwide professional development and planning to establish evidence-based practices among school administrators and instructional personnel;

3. Evaluate implementation of evidence-based practices; and

4. Manage a regional support team.

(b) A regional support team shall report to its regional literacy support director and must consist of individuals who:

1. Successfully demonstrate competence on the evidence-based...
based strategies identified pursuant to s. 1001.215(8) through a statewide, competency-based reading endorsement pathway under s. 1012.586(2);

2. Have substantial experience in teaching and monitoring student progress data in reading; and

3. Have received training necessary to assist with the delivery of professional development and site-based supports, including modeling evidence-based practices and providing feedback to instructional personnel.

(4) The department may establish criteria to identify schools that must receive supports from a regional support team. However, regardless of its school grade designated pursuant to s. 1008.34, a school must be identified for supports if 50 percent of its students who take the statewide, standardized English Language Arts assessment score below a Level 3 for any grade level, or, for students in kindergarten through grade 3, if progress monitoring data collected pursuant to s. 1008.25(8) shows that 50 percent or more of the students are not on track to pass the statewide, standardized grade 3 English Language Arts assessment. A school identified for supports under this section must implement a school improvement plan pursuant to s. 1001.42(18).

(5) The department shall provide progress monitoring data to regional support teams regarding the implementation of supports. Such supports must include:

(a) Professional development, aligned to evidence-based strategies identified pursuant to s. 1001.215(8), for appropriate instructional personnel and school administrators identified by the regional support team.
(7) Once a school’s data shows that it no longer meets the criteria under subsection (4), the school may discontinue receiving supports and implementing a school improvement plan. Such supports may continue subject to available resources.

(8) As part of the RAISE Program, the department shall establish a tutoring program and develop training in effective reading tutoring practices and content, based on evidence-based practices and aligned to the English Language Arts standards under s. 1003.41, which prepares eligible high school students to tutor students in kindergarten through grade 3 in schools identified under this section, instilling in those students a love of reading and improving their literacy skills.

(a) To be eligible to participate in the tutoring program, a high school student must be a rising junior or senior who has a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or higher, has no history of out-of-school suspensions or expulsions, is on track to complete all core course requirements to graduate, and has written recommendations from at least two of his or her present or former high school teachers of record or extracurricular activity sponsors.

(b) School districts that wish to participate in the tutoring program must recruit, train, and deploy eligible high school students using the materials developed under this section. Tutoring must occur during the school day on school district property in the presence and under the supervision of instructional personnel who are school district employees. A parent must give written permission for his or her child to receive tutoring through the program.

(c) Tutoring may be part of a service-learning course adopted pursuant to s. 1003.497. Students may earn up to 3 elective credits for high school graduation based on the verified number of hours the student spends tutoring under the program. The hours of volunteer service must be documented in writing, and the document must be signed by the student, the student’s parent or guardian, and an administrator or designee of the school in which the tutoring occurred. The hours that a high school student devotes to tutoring may be counted toward meeting community service requirements for high school graduation and community service requirements for participation in the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program as provided in s. 1003.497(3)(b). The department shall designate a high school student who provides at least 500 verified hours of tutoring under the program as a New Worlds Scholar and award the student with a pin indicating such designation.

(9) The State Board of Education shall adopt rules to administer this section.

Section 15. Paragraphs (b) and (d) of subsection (6) and subsections (9) and (11) of section 1011.62, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

1011.62 Funds for operation of schools.—If the annual allocation from the Florida Education Finance Program to each district for operation of schools is not determined in the annual appropriations act or the substantive bill implementing the annual appropriations act, it shall be determined as follows:

(6) CATEGORICAL FUNDS.—

(b) If a district school board finds and declares in a resolution adopted at a regular meeting of the school board that
the funds received for any of the following categorical
appropriations are urgently needed to maintain school board
specified academic classroom instruction or improve school
safety, the school board may consider and approve an amendment
to the school district operating budget transferring the
identified amount of the categorical funds to the appropriate
account for expenditure:

1. Funds for student transportation.
2. Funds for evidence-based reading instruction if the required additional hour of instruction
beyond the normal school day for each day of the entire school
year has been provided for the students in each low-performing
elementary school in the district pursuant to paragraph (9)(a).
3. Funds for instructional materials if all instructional
material purchases necessary to provide updated materials that
are aligned with applicable state standards and course
descriptions and that meet statutory requirements of content and
learning have been completed for that fiscal year, but no sooner
than March 1. Funds available after March 1 may be used to
purchase hardware for student instruction.
4. Funds for the guaranteed allocation as provided in
subparagraph (1)(e)2.
5. Funds for the supplemental academic instruction
allocation as provided in paragraph (1)(f).
6. Funds for the Florida digital classrooms allocation as
provided in subsection (12).
7. Funds for the federally connected student supplement as
provided in subsection (13).
8. Funds for class size reduction as provided in s.

(d) If a district school board transfers funds from its
evidence-based reading instruction allocation, the board must also submit to the Department of Education an
amendment describing the changes that the district is making to
its reading plan approved pursuant to paragraph (9)(d).

(9) **EVIDENCE-BASED READING INSTRUCTION ALLOCATION.**

(a) The evidence-based reading instruction allocation is created to provide comprehensive reading
instruction to students in kindergarten through grade 12,
including certain students who have completed the Voluntary
Prekindergarten Education Program and who exhibit a substantial
deficiency in early literacy skills under s. 1008.25(8)(c). Each
school district that has one or more of the 300 lowest-
performing elementary schools based on a 3-year average of the
state reading assessment data must use the school’s portion of
the allocation to provide an additional hour per day of
intensive reading instruction for the students in each school.
The additional hour may be provided within the school day.
Students enrolled in these schools who earned a level 4 or level
5 score on the statewide, standardized English Language Arts
assessment for the previous school year may participate in the
additional hour of instruction. Exceptional student education
centers may not be included in the 300 schools. The intensive
reading instruction delivered in this additional hour shall
include: evidence-based reading instruction that has been proven to accelerate progress of students exhibiting a
reading deficiency; differentiated instruction based on
screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring, or student assessment data to meet students’ specific reading needs; explicit and systematic reading strategies to develop phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, with more extensive opportunities for guided practice, error correction, and feedback; and the coordinated integration of civic literacy, social studies, science, and mathematics text reading, text discussion, and writing in response to reading.

(b) Funds for comprehensive, evidence-based research-based reading instruction shall be allocated annually to each school district in the amount provided in the General Appropriations Act. Each eligible school district shall receive the same minimum amount as specified in the General Appropriations Act, and any remaining funds shall be distributed to eligible school districts based on each school district’s proportionate share of K-12 base funding.

(c) Funds allocated under this subsection must be used to provide a system of comprehensive reading instruction to students enrolled in the K-12 programs, which may include the following:

1. An additional hour per day of evidence-based intensive reading instruction to students in the 300 lowest-performing elementary schools by teachers and reading specialists who have demonstrated effectiveness in teaching reading as required in paragraph (a).

2. Kindergarten through grade 5 evidence-based reading intervention teachers to provide intensive reading interventions provided by reading intervention teachers during the school day and in the required extra hour for students identified as having a substantial reading deficiency.

3. Highly qualified reading coaches to specifically support teachers in making instructional decisions based on student data, and improve teacher delivery of effective reading instruction, intervention, and reading in the content areas based on student need.

4. Professional development for school district teachers in scientifically researched and evidence-based reading instruction, including strategies to teach reading in content areas and with an emphasis on technical and informational text, to help school district teachers earn a certification or an endorsement in reading.

5. Summer reading camps, using only teachers or other district personnel who are certified or endorsed in reading consistent with s. 1008.25(7)(b)3., for all students in kindergarten through grade 2 who demonstrate a reading deficiency as determined by district and state assessments, and students in grades 3 through 5 who score at Level 1 on the statewide, standardized English Language Arts assessment.

6. Scientifically researched and evidence-based supplemental instructional materials that are grounded in scientifically based reading research as identified by the Just Read, Florida! Office pursuant to s. 1001.215(8).

7. Evidence-based intensive reading interventions for students in kindergarten through grade 12 who have been identified as having a substantial reading deficiency or who are reading below grade level as determined by the statewide, standardized English Language Arts assessment.

(d)1. Annually, by a date determined by the Department of
Education but before May 1, school districts shall submit a K-12 comprehensive reading plan for the specific use of the evidence-based reading instruction allocation in the format prescribed by the department for review and approval by the Just Read, Florida! Office pursuant to s. 1001.215.

The plan format shall be developed with input from school district personnel, including teachers and principals, and shall provide for intensive reading interventions identified through a root-cause analysis of student performance data and reflection tool developed by the department to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions implemented in the prior year. Intensive reading interventions must be delivered by instructional personnel who are certified or endorsed in reading and must incorporate evidence-based strategies identified by the Just Read, Florida! Office pursuant to s. 1001.215(8).

2. By July 1 of each year, the department shall release to each school district with an approved plan its allocation of appropriated funds. The plan annually submitted by school districts shall be deemed approved unless the department rejects the plan on or before June 1. If a school district and the Just Read, Florida! Office cannot reach agreement on the contents of the plan, the school district may appeal to the State Board of Education for resolution. School districts shall be allowed reasonable flexibility in designing their plans and shall be encouraged to offer reading intervention through innovative methods, including career academies. The plan format shall be developed with input from school district personnel, including teachers and principals, and shall provide for intensive reading interventions through integrated curricula, provided that:

- Intensive reading interventions are delivered by a teacher who is certified or endorsed in reading. Such interventions must incorporate strategies identified by the Just Read, Florida! Office pursuant to s. 1001.215(8). No later than July 1 annually, the department shall release the school district’s allocation of appropriated funds to those districts having approved plans. A school district that spends 100 percent of this allocation on its approved plan shall be deemed to have been in compliance with the plan. The department shall monitor and track the implementation of each district plan, including conducting site visits and collecting specific data on expenditures and reading improvement results. By February 1 of each year, the department shall report its findings to the Legislature and the State Board of Education, including any recommendations for improving implementation of evidence-based reading and intervention strategies in classrooms.

3. Each school district that has a school designated as one of the 300 lowest-performing elementary schools as specified in paragraph (a) shall specifically delineate in the comprehensive reading plan, or in an addendum to the comprehensive reading plan, the implementation design and reading intervention strategies that will be used for the required additional hour of reading instruction. The term “reading intervention” includes evidence-based strategies frequently used to remediate reading deficiencies and also includes individual instruction, tutoring, mentoring, or the use of

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Funds for instructional materials.—
(2) Annually by July 1 and before the release of
student outcomes or other relevant outcomes as provided in 20 U.S.C. s. 8101(21)(A)(i).

(11) VIRTUAL EDUCATION CONTRIBUTION.—The Legislature may
annually provide in the Florida Education Finance Program a
virtual education contribution. The amount of the virtual
education contribution shall be the difference between the
amount per FTE established in the General Appropriations Act for
virtual education and the amount per FTE for each district and
the Florida Virtual School, which may be calculated by taking
the sum of the base FEFP allocation, the discretionary local
effort, the state-funded discretionary contribution, the
discretionary millage compression supplement, the evidence-based
reading instruction allocation, the teacher
salary increase allocation, and the instructional materials
allocation, and then dividing by the total unweighted FTE. This
difference shall be multiplied by the virtual education
unweighted FTE for programs and options identified in s.
1002.455 and the Florida Virtual School and its franchises to
equal the virtual education contribution and shall be included
as a separate allocation in the funding formula.

Section 16. Subsection (2) of section 1011.67, Florida
Statutes, is amended to read:
(2) Annually by July 1 and before the release of

CODING: Words **stricken** are deletions; words _underlined_ are additions.
Education website certificates for the following applications of public school employees:

(a) Addition of a subject coverage or endorsement to a valid Florida certificate on the basis of the completion of the appropriate subject area testing requirements of s. 1012.56(5)(a) or the completion of the requirements of an approved school district program or the inservice components for an endorsement.

(b) To reduce duplication, the department may recommend the consolidation of endorsement areas and requirements to the State Board of Education.

1. By July 1, 2018 and At least once every 5 years thereafter, the department shall conduct a review of existing subject coverage or endorsement requirements in the elementary, reading, and exceptional student educational areas. The review must include reciprocity requirements for out-of-state certificates and requirements for demonstrating competency in the reading instruction professional development topics listed in s. 1012.98(4)(b)11. The review must also consider the award of an endorsement to an individual who holds a certificate issued by an internationally recognized organization that establishes standards for providing evidence-based interventions to struggling readers or who completes a postsecondary program that is accredited by such organization. Any such certificate or program must require an individual who completes the certificate or program to demonstrate competence in reading intervention strategies through clinical experience. At the conclusion of each review, the department shall recommend to the state board changes to the subject coverage or endorsement requirements.

The employing school district shall charge the employee a fee not to exceed the amount charged by the Department of Education for such services. Each district school board shall retain a portion of the fee as defined in the rules of the State Board of Education. The portion sent to the department shall be used for maintenance of the technology system, the web application, and posting and mailing of the certificate.

(b) By the beginning of the 2022-2023 school year, the department shall adopt one or more statewide, competency-based pathways by which instructional personnel may earn a reading endorsement. A pathway adopted by the department must allow a candidate to complete coursework online and demonstrate mastery of each endorsement competency either in person or remotely. The department shall place on each participant’s educator certificate a microcredential for each competency module the candidate successfully completes.

(b) As part of adopting a pathway pursuant to paragraph (a), the department shall review the competencies for the reading endorsement for alignment with evidence-based instructional and intervention practices rooted in the science of reading, consistent with s. 1001.215(3), and recommend...
changes to the State Board of Education. Recommended changes
must address identification of the characteristics of conditions
such as dyslexia, implementation of evidence-based classroom
instruction and interventions, and effective progress
monitoring. By July 1, 2023, each school district reading
derendorsement add-on program must be resubmitted for approval by
the department consistent with this paragraph.

(c) Beginning July 1, 2024, instructional personnel may not
earn a reading endorsement solely by achieving a passing score
on the K-12 reading certification subject area assessment.

Section 19. Subsection (5) of section 1012.98, Florida
Statutes, is amended to read:

1012.98 School Community Professional Development Act.—
(5) Each district school board shall provide funding for
the professional development system as required by s. 1011.62
and the General Appropriations Act, and shall direct
expenditures from other funding sources to continuously
strengthen the system in order to increase student achievement
and support instructional staff in enhancing rigor and relevance
in the classroom. The department shall identify professional
development opportunities that require the teacher to
demonstrate proficiency in a specific classroom practice, with
priority given to implementing evidence-based reading
instructional and intervention strategies identified pursuant to
s. 1001.215(8). A school district may coordinate its
professional development program with that of another district,
with an educational consortium, or with a Florida College System
institution or university, especially in preparing and educating
personnel. Each district school board shall make available
inservice activities to instructional personnel of nonpublic
schools in the district and the state certified teachers who are
not employed by the district school board on a fee basis not to
exceed the cost of the activity per all participants.

Section 20. Paragraph (e) is added to subsection (1) of
section 1012.986, Florida Statutes, to read:
1012.986 William Cecil Golden Professional Development
Program for School Leaders.—
(1) There is established the William Cecil Golden
Professional Development Program for School Leaders to provide
high standards and sustained support for principals as
instructional leaders. The program shall consist of a
collaborative network of state and national professional
leadership organizations to respond to instructional leadership
needs throughout the state. The network shall support the human-
resource development needs of principals, principal leadership
teams, and candidates for principal leadership positions using
the framework of leadership standards adopted by the State Board
of Education, the Southern Regional Education Board, and the
National Staff Development Council. The goal of the network
leadership program is to:

(e) Support, through training on observation and evaluation
practices aligned to the science of reading, the professional
growth of instructional personnel who provide reading
instruction and interventions.

Section 21. This act shall take effect July 1, 2021.