

## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

**BILL #:** CS/CS/HB 747 Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program

**SPONSOR(S):** Education Committee, Higher Education and Workforce Subcommittee, Rooney, Jr.

**TIED BILLS:** **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:** SB 960

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR or BUDGET/POLICY CHIEF
1) Higher Education & Workforce Subcommittee	10 Y, 0 N, As CS	Banner	Sherry
2) Education Committee	18 Y, 0 N, As CS	Banner	Mizereck

### SUMMARY ANALYSIS

The bill modifies student requirements for eligibility for the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program, including Florida Academic Scholars (FAS), Florida Medallion Scholars (FMS), and the Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholars (FGSVS) awards.

The bill modifies community service requirements by:

- Clarifying that community service must be done on a volunteer basis and prohibits any student from receiving remuneration or academic credit, except for credit earned through service-learning courses;
- Expanding volunteer service areas to include a civic issue or a professional area of interest;
- Providing that volunteer work may include direct involvement in a specific volunteer or community service project with a business or nonprofit community service organization; and
- Establishing accountability requirements for student volunteer work that includes documentation in writing by the student, the student's parent, and a representative of the organization for which the student volunteered.

The number of community service hours required for each Bright Futures award remains unchanged, however the definition of what constitutes community service is expanded.

The bill also modifies the initial eligibility period for students who are unable to accept an award due to full-time religious or service obligations for at least 18 months, eliminates references to outdated eligibility requirements for the FAS and FMS awards, and removes the differentiated requirement for home education students whose parents cannot document a college-preparatory curriculum.

The fiscal impact of the bill is insignificant.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2015.

## FULL ANALYSIS

### I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

#### A. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

##### Present Situation

The Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program (Bright Futures) is a lottery-funded, merit-based scholarship program for Florida high school graduates who meet specified academic requirements and enroll in a degree program, certificate program or applied technology program at an eligible public or private postsecondary institution in Florida after graduating from high school.<sup>1</sup> The Department of Education (DOE) administers the program in accordance with rules and procedures adopted by the State Board of Education (SBE).<sup>2</sup>

The Bright Futures Scholarship Program consists of three types of awards:<sup>3</sup>

- Florida Academic Scholarship (FAS),
- Florida Medallion Scholarship (FMS), and
- Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholarship (FGSVS).

Current law outlines general eligibility requirements for Bright Futures recipients<sup>4</sup> and specific academic and community service requirements for each type of award.<sup>5</sup> The community service work performed by the student must be approved by the district school board, administrators of a nonpublic school, or DOE for home education program students.<sup>6</sup>

During the 2010 Legislative Session, modifications to increase the academic eligibility requirements (grade point average and SAT or ACT scores) were adopted and phased in over several academic years. The last phase of the modifications went into effect beginning with high school students graduating in 2013-14 and after. These modifications also included a differentiated set of academic requirements for students in home education programs whose parent could not document a college-preparatory curriculum.<sup>7</sup>

Beginning with the 2011-12 academic year, students must perform community service work, identify a social problem of interest, develop a plan for personal involvement in addressing the problem, and reflect on their experiences through papers or presentations.

The community service work requirement is the same for all three types of awards, however, the required number of volunteer hours differs. To be eligible to receive the FAS award, a student must perform at least 100 hours of community service work.<sup>8</sup> FMS students must perform a minimum of 75 hours of community service work<sup>9</sup> and FGSV students must perform a minimum of 30 hours of community service work.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Sections 1009.53(1), F.S. and 1009.531(2)(a-c), F.S., specify that a student graduating from high school prior to the 2010-11 academic year is eligible to accept an initial award for 3 years following high school graduation and accept a renewal award for 7 years following high school graduation. Students graduating in the 2010-11 and 2011-12 academic years are eligible to accept an initial award for 3 years following high school graduation and accept a renewal award for 5 years following high school graduation. Beginning with the 2012-13 academic year, graduates may accept an initial award for 2 years following high school graduation and accept renewal awards for 5 years following high school graduation.

<sup>2</sup> Section 1009.53(3), F.S.

<sup>3</sup> Section 1009.53(2), F.S.

<sup>4</sup> Section 1009.531, F.S.

<sup>5</sup> Section 1009.534(1), 1009.535(1), and 1009.536(1)(e), F.S.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

<sup>7</sup> Chapter 2010-155, L.O.F.

<sup>8</sup> Section 1009.534(1), F.S.

<sup>9</sup> Section 1009.535(1), F.S.

<sup>10</sup> Section 1009.536(1)(e), F.S.

Current law authorizes the DOE to encourage school districts to initiate, adopt, expand, and institutionalize service-learning programs, activities and policies in kindergarten through grade 12. Service learning is student-centered, research-based teaching and learning strategies and activities directly tied to academic curricula and standards that engage students in meaningful service activities in their schools and communities.<sup>11</sup>

Additionally, the DOE authorized to develop and adopt elective service-learning courses for inclusion in middle and high school course directories and service hours earned by students may be counted toward meeting community service requirements for high school graduation and participation in the Bright Futures Scholarship Program.<sup>12</sup>

### Effect of Proposed Changes

The bill modifies student requirements for eligibility for the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program, including Florida Academic Scholars (FAS), Florida Medallion Scholars (FMS), and the Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholars (FGSVS) awards.

The bill modifies community service requirements by:

- Clarifying that community service must be done on a volunteer basis and prohibits any student from receiving remuneration or academic credit, except for credit earned through service-learning courses;
- Expanding volunteer service areas to include a civic issue or a professional area of interest;
- Providing that volunteer work may include direct involvement in a specific volunteer or community service project with a business or nonprofit community service organization; and
- Establishing accountability requirements for student volunteer work that includes documentation in writing by the student, the student's parent, and a representative of the organization for which the student volunteered.

The number of community service hours required for each Bright Futures award remains unchanged, however the definition of what constitutes community service is expanded.

The bill also modifies eligibility requirements by:

- Extending the 2 year initial eligibility and the 5 year renewal period for students who are unable to accept an award due to full-time religious or service obligations for at least 18 months,
- Eliminating references to outdated academic eligibility requirements for the FAS and FMS awards, and
- Removing the differentiated requirement for home education students whose parents cannot document a college-preparatory curriculum.

## B. SECTION DIRECTORY:

**Section 1.** Amends s. 1009.531, F.S., revising student eligibility requirements for specified students, eliminating references to outdated eligibility requirements, and removing differentiated requirements for specified home school students.

**Section 2.** Amends s. 1009.534, F.S., revising student community service requirements for eligibility for the Florida Academic Scholars award.

**Section 3.** Amends s. 1009.535, F.S., revising student community service requirements for eligibility for the Florida Medallion Scholars award.

**Section 4.** Amends s. 1009.536, F.S., revising student community service requirements for eligibility for the Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholars award.

---

<sup>11</sup> Section 1003.497, F.S.

<sup>12</sup> *Id.*

**Section 5.** Provides an effective date of July 1, 2015.

## **II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT**

### **A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:**

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

The fiscal impact of this bill is insignificant.

### **B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:**

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

### **C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:**

None.

### **D. FISCAL COMMENTS:**

None.

## **III. COMMENTS**

### **A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:**

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

Not applicable.

2. Other:

Not applicable.

### **B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:**

None.

### **C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:**

None.

## **IV. AMENDMENTS/ COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES**

On March 18, 2015, the Higher Education and Workforce Subcommittee adopted an amendment that extends the 2 year initial eligibility and the 5 year renewal period for students who are unable to accept an award due to a full-time religious or service obligation for at least 18 months, eliminates references to outdated eligibility requirements, and removes the differentiated requirement for home education students whose parent cannot document a college-preparatory curriculum.

On March 26, 2015, the Education Committee adopted several amendments that clarify that students may receive academic credit for volunteer service performed as part of a service-learning course pursuant to s. 1003.497, F.S. The amendments also clarify that volunteer service may include direct involvement in a specific volunteer or community service project with a business or nonprofit organization.

This analysis is drafted to the committee substitute as approved by the Education Committee.