

FEBRUARY 16, 2024

Week 6

GATE PROGRAM EXPANDS ACCESS TO CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Similar bills that would create an alternative pathway to the workforce for students who do not complete traditional high school have been moving favorably through both Senate and House committees. The companion bills, [SB 7032](#) and [HB 7051](#), would create the Graduation Alternative to Traditional Education (GATE) Program. This program would provide individuals ages 16 to 21 who have discontinued school enrollment in traditional high school programs the opportunity to earn, at no cost, a standard high school diploma, or equivalent, and a workforce credential. Florida College System Institutions and career centers across the state would waive 100% of tuition, certain fees, and instructional materials costs (after all other federal and state aid is applied) for students participating in the GATE Program. Students participating in the program would also be eligible for a stipend through the Open Door Program.

The bills include the creation of the GATE Scholarship Program. This program will allow for school districts, career centers, and FCS Institutions to be reimbursed for registration, tuition, laboratory fees, examination fees, and related instructional materials costs for students enrolled in the GATE Program.

The GATE Student Success Incentive Fund would also be provided with the implementation of these bills. FCS Institutions would be eligible to receive incentive funding based on the number of students enrolled in the GATE Program who earn a standard high school diploma or equivalent credential and postsecondary industry certifications.

Bill Tracking

HB 767 / SB 62 (Identical bills)	The bill amends Florida Statute 1009.21 ("Determination of resident status for tuition purposes.") to allow individuals who have been incarcerated to use evidence of being incarcerated in Florida to establish in state residency to obtain in-state tuition.	Passed by Education & Employment Committee
HB 149/SB 656 (Similar bills)	The bill amends Florida Statute 287.055 ("Acquisition of professional architectural, engineering, landscape architectural, or surveying and mapping services; definitions; procedures; contingent fees prohibited; penalties.") to allow governmental entities (including state colleges) to enter into contracts with construction management entities and program management entities on a continuing contract so long as the individual projects do not exceed \$7.5M each.	Passed by State Affairs Committee
HB 151/ SB 242 (Similar bills)	The bill amends Florida Statute 121.101 to provide for a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for FRS pension plan members beginning July 1, 2024, which will adjust every July 1 thereafter. The bill also increases member contribution rates, increases the allocations to the investment plan accounts for each membership class, and closes the FRS Preservation of Benefits Plan to new members effective July 1, 2026.	HB passed by the House. SB passed by Senate. Bills are going to conference to reconcile difference in bill language.
SB 460/ HB 917 (Similar bills)	The bill creates the Career and Technical Education Task force. The task force must submit a report of its findings and recommendations to the Governor, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the Commissioner of Education by June 1, 2025.	Now in Fiscal Policy Committee
HB 483	The bill amends Florida Statute 1009.532 ("Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program; student eligibility requirements for renewal awards.") to include scholarship awards for industry certifications, a technical certificate, an applied technology diploma, a career and technical certificate, an apprentice program, or a registered apprenticeship program. The same change is made to Florida Statute 1009.536 ("Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholars and Florida Gold Seal CAPE Scholars awards.") The bill also creates the Artificial Intelligence Task Force, which requires the Department of Education to establish a Task Force, which will then study the application of artificial intelligence to K-12 and higher education.	Now in Education & Employment Committee (No action in the past week)
HB 903/ SB 992 (Identical bills)	The bill amends Florida Statute 1004.04 ("Public accountability and state approval for teacher preparation programs.") and Florida Statute 1004.85 ("Postsecondary educator preparation institutes.") to include in curriculum "strategies and practices on identifying, preventing, preparing, addressing, and responding to mass casualty incidents." The bill amends Florida Statute 1012.56 ("Educator certification requirements.") to require those people seeking certification to have been trained in the same. The bill creates Florida 1012.5841 ("Continuing education and in-service training for identifying, preventing, preparing, addressing, and responding to mass casualty incidents.") to require the State Board of Education to adopt a list that states approved trainings for the same.	Passed by PreK-12 Appropriations Committee (No action in the past week)

SB 1118 / The bill amends Florida Statute 464.019 ("Approval of nursing education programs").
HB 1069 The statute establishes application requirements to offer programs for the
(Similar prelicensure education of professional or practical nurses. The bill requires that the
bills) program director be named in the application. The bill amends the statute to require disclosure of the admission criteria. The admission criteria are required to identify students likely in need of additional preparation and education support during the program, and what the individualized support plan will be. It also requires that the program application affirm that the program has an NCLEX preparation exam as an exit component of the program. The application must also contain a statement of what remediation efforts the program will take for those students would do not receive a passing score on the exit examination. The board may deny an application for a program if the entity offering the program has had an adverse action taken against it by a regulatory body in another state. In subsection (3) which pertains to the annual report that must be filed by the program certifying compliance with subsection (1) – the application criteria – the board of nursing can terminate the program if a program is not in compliance. The program director is also subject to discipline. The bill reduces the number of years of scores that will form the basis of being put on probationary status, and a remediation plan is due from the program director within 6 months of being put on probationary status.

**Passed by
Appropriation
Committee on
Health and
Human
Services. Now
in Rules
Committee**

SB 996 / As it relates to the FCS, the bill amends Florida Statute 1007.25 to allow for the State
HB 1285 Board of Education to set requirements for specialized transfer degrees, and a
(Similar process for applying for a specialized transfer degree that requires more than 60
bills) hours of coursework for purposes of transfer. The bill repeals the Florida College System institution employment equity accountability program found in Florida Statute 1012.86. The bill authorizes proof of a homestead exemption in Florida to serve as a single, conclusive piece of evidence for a student to prove residency for tuition purposes. The bill also authorizes a pilot program for three FCS institutions to charge an amount not to exceed \$290 per credit hour for nonresident tuition and fees for distance learning. FCS institutions may phase in this nonresident tuition rate by degree program. As it relates to the Stanley G. Tate Florida Prepaid College Program, the bill revises the definition of the term "tuition differential." The bill also prohibits FCS and SUS board trustees from having a business affiliation or interest in an entity that does business with the institution.

**Passed by
Fiscal Policy
Committee.
Placed on
Senate Special
Order Calendar**

SB 1372 The bill amends Florida Statute 1004.04 ("Public accountability and state approval for teacher preparation programs") and 1004.85 ("Postsecondary educator preparation institutes). The bill prohibits teacher preparation program courses from distorting significant historical events or include a curriculum or instruction that teaches identity politics, violates Florida Statute 1000.05, or is based on theories that systemic racism, sexism, oppression, and privilege are inherent in the institutions of the United States and were created to maintain social, political, and economic inequities.

**Now in Rules
Committee**

HB 7007 / The bill renews the public records and public meeting exemption found in Florida
SB 7022 Statute 1004.0962 ("Campus emergency response of a public postsecondary
(Identical educational institution; public records exemption; public meetings exemption.") It
bills) removes certain sections under which plans would be disclosed.

**Passed by House
and Senate**

HB 7025	The bill removes outdated language including the following: (1) the requirement for the SBE to establish the tuition and out-of-state fees for developmental education and for credit instruction that may be counted toward an associate in arts degree, an associate in applied science degree, or an associate in science degree; (2) the requirement for the SBE to identify performance metrics for the FCS and develop a plan that specifies goals and objectives for each FCS institution; and (3) language referring to the Executive Director of the Florida College System and regarding a special baccalaureate approval process for St. Petersburg College that was put in place when bachelor's degrees were first authorized in the FCS.	Placed on House Calendar for a Second Reading (No action in the past week)
HB 7051 / SB 7032 (Similar bills)	This bill creates the Graduation Alternative to Traditional Education (GATE) Program, GATE Scholarship Program, and GATE Student Success Incentive Fund. All three programs are aimed at providing high school students the opportunity to earn postsecondary course credits at no cost to the student while pursuing the completion of a standard high school diploma or equivalent credential. The bill provides eligibility criteria for students to enroll in the GATE Program and defines the career education programs and certificates that can be offered to students enrolled in the GATE Program. The bill exempts students that are enrolled in the GATE program from the payment of tuition and specified fees and the costs of instructional materials. To assist Florida College System institutions, school districts, and charter technical career centers in administering the GATE Program, the GATE Scholarship Program reimburses participating institutions for the tuition and fees and instructional materials for students enrolled in the GATE program. Additionally, the bill provides incentive funding for institutions through the GATE Student Success Incentive Fund. The incentive funding is provided based on the number of students enrolled in the GATE program who earn a high standard high school diploma or equivalent credential and postsecondary industry certifications.	Passed by Education & Employment Committee
HB 7039	As it relates to the FCS, the bill eliminates Florida Statute 1012.86, which requires that the FCS institution president to submit an annual employment accountability plan to the commissioner and the SBE.	Placed on House Calendar for a Second Reading (No action in the past week)
SB 658 / HB 473 (Similar bills)	The bill creates Florida Statute 768.401 ("Limitation on liability for cybersecurity incidents"). It provides that counties, municipalities, political subdivisions (including FCS institutions), and commercial entities that comply with Florida 501.171 and the standards listed in the statute are not liable to those whose data is taken for cybersecurity incidents. Defendants in lawsuits have the burden of demonstrating compliance with the law.	Passed by Rule Committee. Placed in Senate Calendar for Second Reading
SB 1624 / HB 1645 (Similar bills)	As to the Florida College System, the bill amends Florida Statute 286.29 ("Energy guidelines for Climate-friendly public business.") to eliminate subsection 4, which requires the FCS institution, when using the state purchasing plan, to first define the intended purpose as one of many categories and then select a vehicle for the greatest fuel efficiency available for a given use class when fuel economy data are available.	Now in Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment, and General Government

**HB 611/
SB 1018
(Identical
bills)**

Unless exempted by law, state and local governments, including colleges, are required to deposit public funds in a qualified public depository (QPD) pursuant to the Florida Security for Public Deposits Act, Ch. 280, F.S. (Act). The bill makes state-chartered and federally-chartered credit unions eligible to become a qualified public depository (QPD) QPDs and custodian for another QPD's pledged collateral. Specifically, the bill creates s. 280.042, F.S., which provides criteria that a credit union must meet before the CFO can designate a credit union as a QPD. These criteria are designed to protect public deposits.

**Passed by State
Administration &
Technology
Appropriations
Subcommittee**

SB 2516

The bill amends Florida State 110.123 to define enrollee in the state group health insurance to include: "all participating college officers and employees, retired participating college officers and employees, surviving spouses of deceased participating community officers and employees, and terminated participating community employees or individuals with continuation coverage who are enrolled in an insurance plan offered by the state group." The bill creates Florida Statute 110.1229 ("Participation by Florida College System institutions insurance program"). The bill states the district board of trustees of a college may apply by August 1, 2024, for participation in the state group health insurance program and the prescription drug program. The minimum enrollment period for each eligible college is three years, and one year notice of withdrawal from the program is required. A college is barred from reapplying for two years. The college shall adopt the state's eligibility rules. The college shall pay monthly premiums in amounts sufficient to cover claims costs and administrative costs. The enrollment period for colleges determined eligible by the department shall begin before July 31, 2025. The bill contains language for the GATE Program also found in Senate Bill 7032.

**On Senate
Calendar for a
Third Reading**

SB 7016

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

**Passed by Senate.
Placed on House
Special Order
Calendar**

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

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