

April 17, 2015

MEMORANDUM

TO: District School Superintendents

FROM: Joy Frank
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RE: Legislative Update

General Information

As you have read, budget negotiations are at a standstill. An extended or special legislative session is expected.

Scheduled committee meetings are just about finished except for Appropriations Committees. Below are actions on bills related to education.

Senate Committees

SB 180 re to School Safety by Evers. The bill authorized the carrying of concealed weapons on K-12 campuses under certain conditions. The bill was temporarily postponed in the Senate PreK-12 Education Committee. There are no other committee meetings. Therefore, the issue should not resurface again this session.

SB 1480 re to Student Extracurricular Activities by Stargel. A “strike everything” amendment was adopted in the Senate PreK-12 Education Committee. The bill makes substantial changes to FHSAA and athletic programs in public schools. Below is a section by section summary.

Section 1. Amends s. 1006.20, F.S., re to Athletics in K-12 schools. (1) Governing Nonprofit Association. Refers to the FHSAA as the governing nonprofit association for purposes of membership in the National Federation of State High School Associations. Following completion of each operational audit (see section 4), the Commissioner of Education must review FHSAA’s performance in governing interscholastic athletics, including the guiding principles for student eligibility for extracurricular activities. If, at any time, the FHSAA fails to meet the statutory provisions, the commissioner, with SBE approval, must designate another nonprofit association to govern interscholastic athletics and serve as Florida’s voting member association of the National Federation of State High School Associations.

Any special event fees, sanctioning fees, including third-party sanctioning fees, or contest receipts collected annually by FHSAA may not exceed its actual costs to perform the function or duty that is subject to a fee. FHSAA must offer spectators the option of purchasing a single-day pass or multiple-day pass that is at a cost below that which one would pay on a per-even basis for the same number of contests.

FHSAA must allow a school the option of joining the association as a full-time member or on a per sport basis and may not prohibit or discourage any school from simultaneously maintain membership in FHSAA and another athletic association. The commissioner may identify other associations that govern interscholastic athletic competition in compliance with this section.

(2) Student Eligibility Requirements; Recruiting Policies; Eligibility Dispute Resolution. Removes references to adoption of bylaws but maintains requirements. Repeals most of the language relating to transfers and deadlines and just states that a student who transfers during the school year is eligible in the school to which he or she transfers. Recruiting students for athletic purposes is prohibited.

A student may be declared ineligible based on a recruiting violation only if the student or parent has committed an act in violation of eligibility requirements or the FHSAA has imposed sanctions against the individuals or member school engaging in recruiting and the student or parent has committed a specific violation.

FHSAA may not limit the competition of a student athlete prospectively for a rule violation by his or her school, the school's coach, or the student athlete's adult representatives. FHSAA may not punish a student athlete for an eligibility or recruiting violation perpetrated by a teammate, coach, or administrator. A contest may not be forfeited for an inadvertent eligibility violation unless the coach or school administrator should have known of the violation. Contests may not be forfeited for other eligibility violations or recruiting violations in excess of the number of contests from which the coaches and adult representatives responsible for the violations are prospectively suspended.

The mass distribution of untargeted mailings, electronic mailings, or printed guides or booklets by or on behalf of a member school which include detailed information regarding the member school's interscholastic athletic programs may not be considered violations of FHSAA's policies.

In addition to other requirements, the FHSAA must provide a process for the resolution of student eligibility disputes. An opportunity to resolve issues through an informal conference must be provided. Written notice to the student athlete, parent and member school stating specific findings of fact that support a determination of ineligibility is required. The student athlete must request an informal conference if he or she intends to contest the charges. The informal conference must be held within 10 days after receipt of the student athlete's request.

If the eligibility dispute is not resolved at the informal conference, FHSAA must provide a process for the timely and cost-effective resolution of the dispute using a neutral third party, including the use of retired or former judges, mediation, or arbitration. The neutral third party must be selected by the parent of the student athlete from a list maintained by the FHSAA. A final determination regarding the eligibility dispute must be issued no later than 30 days after the informal conference.

Any proceedings concerning student athlete eligibility must be held in the county in which the student athlete resides and may be conducted by telephone, videoconference, or other electronic means. A student athlete may not be declared ineligible until a final decision is issued by the neutral third party unless the determination of ineligibility is based on academic/GPA requirements, exhausting 4 years of eligibility, or not passing a medical evaluation (s. 1006.15(4)(b)1.a., e., or f.). It is the responsibility of the member school to assess the facts underlying the eligibility dispute and any potential penalties that may result from a determination of ineligibility in deciding whether to allow the student athlete to continue to participate before a final eligibility determination.

FHSAA must adopt guidelines, provide resources, and develop a training course to promote sports ethics in interscholastic athletics and require each member school to:

- Establish policies that promote sports ethics in its interscholastic athletic programs.
- Educate, on a continuing basis, student athletes, athletic coaches, and administrators regarding these policies.
- Annually administer the sports ethics training course to student athletes, athletic coaches, and administrators.
- Annually certify compliance with these provisions by a deadline established by the FHSAA.

(3) Governing Structure of FHSAA. The FHSAA must operate as a representative democracy in which the sovereign authority is within its member school and the parents of student participating in interscholastic athletics within those schools.

The governing board will consist of 16 members composed proportionately of representatives from tradition public schools, public schools of choice, private schools, home education cooperatives, and parents of student athletes who are enrolled in such schools or programs. The governing board must also be constituted in a manner that provides for equitable representation among the various regions of the state where the association's member schools are located. Any additional policymaking body established by the FHSAA must provide for proportionate representation of schools, programs, parents, and regions of the state. FHSAA must annually require each member of the governing board or other policymaking body to attend nonprofit governance training.

Language relating to the representative assembly and public liaison advisory committee is deleted.

Section 2. Amends s. 1006.15 re to Student standards for eligibility to participate in extracurricular activities; regulation. School board and nonprofit association policies governing student eligibility for extracurricular activities must be guided by several principles including:

- Extracurricular activities promote teamwork and collaboration, expose students to individuals from diverse backgrounds, and enhance parental engagement in the school.
- Policies governing student eligibility for extracurricular activities should not impede parental school 630 choice.
- A student's school attendance zone or choice of educational program should not be a barrier to participation in extracurricular activities that are not offered by the student's school or program.

The bill defines several new terms including:

- "Home education cooperative" means a parent-directed group of individual home education students which provides opportunities for interscholastic competition to those students.
- "Impermissible benefit" means a benefit or promise of benefit that is based in any way on athletic interest, potential, or performance, that is a benefit not generally available to the school's students or their family members, and that induces a student athlete to participate in the athletic programs of a member school. The term does not include transportation arrangements.
- "Nonprofit association" means the nonprofit association that governs interscholastic athletic competition in this state.

- “Public school student” means a student who is attending a traditional public school, charter school, magnet school, alternative school, developmental research laboratory school, other public school of choice, or public virtual school.
- “Recruiting” means an effort by a school employee or athletic department staff member to pressure, urge, or entice a student to attend that school for the purpose of participating in interscholastic athletics.
- “Unaffiliated private school” means a private school that has an enrollment of 125 or fewer students in grades 6 through 12 and that is not a member of the nonprofit association.

Subsection (4) modifies eligibility requirements. The student must maintain a 2.0 GPA or above on a 4.0 scale, or its equivalent, in the previous semester. Language re to cumulative GPA in specified courses is repealed. The student may also execute and fulfill an academic performance contract as is currently allowed, but the requirement that it must be in courses for acceleration or for a standard high school diploma is repealed. The student must have a cumulative GPA or above during his or her junior or senior year but the requirement that it be tied to acceleration or standards high school graduation requirements is repealed. The student must maintain satisfactory conduct as prepared by the school board’s or private school’s code of student conduct. A home education students must meet the requirement of a home education program including the requirements relating to annual educational evaluations.

A student may be declared ineligible only if:

- The student fails to achieve compliance with academic requirements listed above.
- The student or parent falsifies an enrollment or eligibility document;
- The student or parent accepts an impermissible benefit;
- The student commits a flagrant act of unsportsmanlike conduct toward a contest official, opponent, or other person attending an athletic contest or violates substance abuse policies established by the nonprofit association;
- The student has exhausted 4 years of athletic eligibility, graduated from high school, or attained the maximum age established by the nonprofit association, whichever occurs first;
- The student does not pass a medical evaluation, except as otherwise provided; or
- The student forfeits his or her amateur status, as defined by the nonprofit association.

A student may not be declared ineligible based upon a violation of the FHSAA’s recruitment policy or otherwise because the student participated on a nonschool team or nonschool team affiliated with the school in which the student ultimately enrolls; or the student participated in nonschool athletic activities sponsored by a member school of the nonprofit association if, after participating, the student registers for, enrolls in, or applies to attend the sponsoring school. As used in this subparagraph, the terms “nonschool team” and “nonschool athletic activities” include, but are not limited to, club teams, travel teams, grade school teams, recreational league teams, personal instruction sessions, summer camp teams, and summer camp nonschool athletic programs.

A student who transfers from a home education program to a public or private school before or during the first semester of the school year is academically eligible to participate in extracurricular activities during the first semester if the student has a successful evaluation from the previous school year.

A public school or private school student who transfers into a home education program after being declared ineligible for participation in extracurricular activities is ineligible to participate in such activities

as a home education student until the student has successfully completed one semester in a home education program.

A public school student who transfers to a private school or another public school, or a private school student who transfers to a public school or another private school, after being declared ineligible to participate in extracurricular activities is ineligible to participate in such activities until the student has successfully completed one semester at the school to which he or she transfers and meets the academic requirements.

A public school student, a student attending an unaffiliated private school, or a home education student is eligible to participate in an extracurricular activity that is not offered by the student's school or home education program. Participation may occur at any public school in the district in which the student resides or a public school in another district which the student could choose to attend pursuant to an interdistrict controlled open enrollment policy. A home education student may also develop an agreement to participate at a private school in interscholastic or extracurricular activities of that school. In order to participate, a student must meet specific conditions including:

The student must register with the school his or her intent to participate in extracurricular activities as a representative of the school before the beginning date of the nonathletic activity or season for the athletic activity in which he or she wishes to participate. A student must be able to participate in curricular activities if that is a requirement for extracurricular activity.

A student who is enrolled in an unaffiliated private school, a home education program, a full-time public virtual school, or any public school that does not offer any interscholastic athletic programs may only participate in interscholastic athletics at the public school in which the student is first registered.

The student's parent is responsible for transporting the student to and from the school at which the student participates. The school the student attends, the school at which the student participates in the extracurricular activity, the district school board, and the nonprofit association are exempt from civil liability arising from any injury to the 816 student which occurs during such transportation.

The student standards for participation in extracurricular activities must be applied beginning with the first semester of 9th grade. Requirement must apply on an equal basis to all students and the school board may not make participation in extracurricular activities less accessible to a transfer student or student enrolled in a public school of choice, an unaffiliated private school, or a home education program. A school board or private school may not establish policies regarding transfer student eligibility for extracurricular activities more stringent than the policies established by the nonprofit association.

Section 3. Amends s. 1006.16 re to Insuring school students engaged in extracurricular activities against injury. Language is added to require insurance provided by the school board for participants in extracurricular activities to cover home education and unaffiliated private school students under the same terms and conditions that apply to students enrolled in the district public school.

Section 4. Amends s. 1006.29 re to Audit of records of nonprofit associations handling interscholastic activities. In addition to an annual financial audit, the bill requires the Auditor General to conduct an operational audit of the accounts and records of each nonprofit association, at least every 3 years.

Section 5. Amends s. 1002.20 re to K-12 student and parent rights. Amends subsection (18) re to participation in extracurricular activities. All public school students, including those enrolled in public schools of choice and virtual education, all home education students, and certain private school students may participate in any extracurricular activity not offered by a student's school or home education program at any public school in the school district in which the student resides or a public school in another school district which the student could choose to attend pursuant to an interdistrict controlled open enrollment policy.

Section 6. Amends s. 1002.33 re to charter schools. Amends subsection (11) re to participation in extracurricular activities. A charter school student is eligible to participate in an extracurricular activity at another public school. Language limiting eligibility to the school that the student would otherwise be assigned to attend is repealed.

Section 7. Effective date of July 1, 2015.

SB 154 re to Hazardous Walking Conditions by Hays. The bill requires that district school boards inspect and identify hazardous conditions along routes that students must take while walking to or from school and requires that the relevant governmental entities correct any hazardous walking conditions within a reasonable period of time. The bill also revises the conditions for identifying walkways parallel to a road as hazardous, creates criteria for identifying conditions at uncontrolled crossing sites as hazardous, revises the process for inspecting, identifying, and correcting hazardous walking conditions, authorizes a district school board to initiate a proceeding to obtain a declaratory judgment if, after inspection, the governmental representatives are unable to reach a consensus on whether a hazardous walking condition exists, and provides that the designation of a road as a hazardous walking condition is inadmissible as evidence in a civil action for damages against a governmental entity. The bill was reported favorably by the Appropriations Committee.

SB 574 re to Electronic Auction Services by Montford. This bill authorizes district school boards to adopt rules regarding procurement practices, including the use of online procurement and electronic auction services. The term "electronic auction services" is defined. The bill also authorizes district school boards and district schools to use electronic auction services and other efficient procurement tools for specified purchases. The bill was reported favorable by the Appropriations Committee.

SB 874 re to Dual Enrollment Program by Stargel. The bill modifies public and private dual enrollment articulation agreements to expand benefits for home education program and private school students and establishes August 1 as the annual deadline for submitting such agreements to the Florida Department of Education. Specifically, the bill:

- Removes the responsibility of a home education program student to provide for his or her own instructional materials and requires that instructional materials be provided free of charge to all dual enrollment students.
- Specifies dual enrollment articulation agreement provisions and requirements for agreements with private school students, similar to current law for home education program students.
- Adds technology fees to the existing fees that public and private school students and home education program students are exempt from paying for dual enrollment courses.

The bill was reported favorably by the Appropriations Committee.

SB 942 re to Rapid Response Education and Training Program by Gaetz. SB 942 establishes the Rapid Response Education and Training Program within the Complete Florida Plus Program at the University of

West Florida to recruit and retain employees through industry-specific education and training. Also, the bill requires that the Complete Florida Plus Program work directly with Enterprise Florida, Inc., in project-specific industry recruitment and retention efforts to offer credible education and training commitments to businesses.

Specifically, the bill requires that the Rapid Response Education and Training Program:

- Award matching grants to public and private education and training providers.
- Submit to the Legislature periodic reports generated by an independent forensic accounting or auditing entity.
- Keep administrative costs to a minimum through the use of existing organizational structures.
- Work with businesses to recruit individuals for education and training.
- Terminate an education and training program by giving 30-days' notice.
- Survey businesses regarding the effectiveness of the education and training programs.

Additionally, the bill requires that the Division of Career and Adult Education within the Department of Education analyze and assess the effectiveness of the education and training programs offered through the Rapid Response Education and Training Program in meeting labor market and occupational trends and gaps.

The bill passed the Senate Appropriations Committee favorably and is now on the Senate Calendar.

SB 972 re to Value Adjustment Boards by Flores. The bill makes several changes to value adjustment board (VAB) proceedings. The bill:

- Requires a petition to the VAB to be signed by the taxpayer, or be accompanied by the taxpayer's written authorization for representation, which is only valid for one tax year.
- Limits the persons who can represent taxpayers before the VAB to certain professionals, a corporate representative of the taxpayer, or an uncompensated individual with a power of attorney from the taxpayer.
- Requires the property appraiser to notify the petitioner when the property record card is available online.
- Authorizes a petitioner to reschedule a hearing twice, for good cause only.
- Changes the rate of interest for overpayments and underpayments from 12 percent to the prime rate.
- Allows district school boards and district county commissions to audit VAB expenses.
- Requires all VAB petitions to be resolved by the June 1 following the assessment year.

The bill was reported favorably by the Appropriations Committee.

SB 1352 re to Deferred Compensation by Smith. The bill prohibits a county, municipality, political subdivision or constitutional county officer from entering into contracts with investment providers and record keepers for local deferred compensation programs from exceeding a five-year term. The bill prohibits specified persons from participating in the selection of an investment provider or record keeper under certain circumstances. The bill further requires the administrator of a local deferred compensation program to comply with certain fiduciary standards. The bill authorizes a public body or official that establishes a local deferred compensation program to organize an oversight committee. The bill was reported favorably by the Appropriations Subcommittee on General Government and is now in Appropriations.

SB 7006 re to Early Learning by Education PreK-12. The bill increases the health and safety standards and personnel requirements for Voluntary Prekindergarten Programs Education programs and School Readiness programs. The bill was reported favorable by the Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services and will be heard next in Appropriations.

SB 7046 re to Education by Education PreK-12. SB 7046 modifies fiscal policy aspects relating to education with respect to preeminent state research universities; intensive reading instruction; teacher bonus funding; and performance funding for state universities and Florida colleges.

Specifically, the bill:

- Requires a state university seeking designation as a preeminent state research university to enter into and maintain a formal agreement with the National Merit Scholarship Corporation.
- Extends and expands the requirement of providing an additional hour of intensive reading instruction daily to students enrolled in the 300 lowest performing elementary schools.
- Increases maximum available public school teacher bonus funding, including establishing two new tiers of bonuses available to CAPE industry certification teachers.
- Establishes performance funding models for the State University System (SUS) and Florida College System (FCS) institutions.

The bill contains several provisions which have funds appropriated for their purpose in SB 2500, the Senate's Fiscal Year 2015-2016 proposed General Appropriations Bill. A total of \$90 million is appropriated for intensive reading instruction in the 300 lowest performing elementary schools, \$400 million is appropriated for SUS performance funding, and \$60 million is appropriated for FCS performance funding.

The bill passed the Appropriations Committee favorably and is not on the Senate Calendar. The bill contains several provisions that were originally in the Senate budget conforming bill.

SB 7056 re to Administrative Procedures by Governmental Oversight and Accountability. The bill amends ss. 120.54 and 120.74, F.S., and replaces the biennial summary reporting requirement with an annual regulatory plan. It requires each agency to determine whether each new law creating or affecting the agency's authority will require new or amended rules. If so, the agency must initiate rulemaking by a specific time. If not, the agency must state concisely why the law may be implemented without additional rulemaking. The regulatory plan also must state each existing law on which the agency will initiate rulemaking in the current fiscal year. The agency head and general counsel must certify that they have reviewed the plan and that the agency conducts a review of its rulemaking authority. The existing 180-day requirement is revised to coincide with the specific publishing requirements. Most recently the bill was reported favorably in the General Government Committee and is now on the agenda in Appropriations.

SB 7082 re to Death Benefits Under the Florida Retirement System by Governmental Oversight and Accountability. The bill makes two primary changes to the Florida Retirement System:

The bill increases the monthly survivor benefits available to the spouses and children of FRS pension plan members in the Special Risk Class when killed in the line of duty from 50 percent of the member's monthly salary at the time of death to 100 percent of the member's monthly salary at the time of death. These new benefits are funded through additional employer-paid contributions relating to the FRS pension plan.

The bill permits the surviving spouse or children of an investment plan member in the Special Risk Class when killed in the line of duty to opt into the FRS investment plan survivor benefits program in lieu of

receiving normal retirement benefits under the FRS investment plan. By participating in the survivor benefits program, the surviving spouse and children are eligible to receive annuitized benefits much like the survivor benefits (described above) afforded to Special Risk Class members of the FRS pension plan. The investment plan survivor benefits program is funded by additional employer-paid contributions to the survivor benefits account of the FRS Trust Fund.

The bill was reported favorably by the Appropriations Committee.

House Committees

HB 99 re to Juvenile Justice by Clarke-Reed. The bill authorizes a law enforcement officer to issue a warning or inform the juvenile's parent when a juvenile admits to having committed a misdemeanor; gives the officer discretion to issue a civil citation or require participation in a similar diversion program if he or she decides not to issue a warning or notify the juvenile's parents; gives the officer discretion to arrest the juvenile; allows a juvenile to participate in the civil citation program for a total of three separate misdemeanor offenses. The bill was reported favorable by the Judiciary Committee.

HB 163 re to Public Records/Contractors by Beshears. The bill requires each public agency head to designate a custodian of public records (records custodian). The State Affairs Committee adopted a strike-all amendment and reported the bill favorably with a committee substitute. The committee substitute requires an agency head to designate a records custodian and to display the contact information for the custodian on its website, if the agency has a website; requires a request for public records to be made to specified persons in order to be eligible for attorney fees; removes the pre-suit notification requirements; removes the requirement that public record requests for records maintained by a contractor be made to the records custodian; conforms applicable cross-references; and changes the effective date to July 1, 2015.

HB 435 re to Administrative Procedures by Adkins. The Administrative Procedure Act (APA) provides uniform procedures for the exercise of specified administrative authority. The bill amends provisions of the APA to enhance the opportunities for substantially affected parties to challenge rules.

The State Affairs Committee adopted one amendment and reported the bill favorably as a Committee Substitute. The amendment specifies that a petitioner in a hearing on an agency-initiated action involving disputed issues of material fact may pursue a separate, collateral rule challenge.

The bill has passed through all of the Committees of Reference, and is ready to be placed on the Calendar.

HB 933 re to Growth Management by LaRosa. The bill amends numerous areas of the state's growth management laws.

The Economic Affairs Committee passed a strike-all amendment, and reported HB 933 favorably as a Committee Substitute. The amendment, among other things:

- Removes the requirement that any proportionate share payment or mitigation payment required must not exceed 125 percent of the applicable mobility fee or impact fee for local governments that apply concurrency to transportation facilities or public education facilities and also imposes mobility fees or impact fees for transportation or public education.

- Allows for conservation easements to be based on digital orthophotography prepared by a surveyor and mapper licensed
- Removes requirement water management district may issue to an applicant, as set forth in s. 163.3245(13), a permit for the same period of time as the applicant's approved master development order if the master development order was issued before January 1, 2015.

The bill has passed through all of the Committees of Reference, and is ready to be placed on the Calendar.

HB 1063 re to Government Accountability by Metz. The bill amends statutes pertaining to government accountability and auditing.

The State Affairs Committee adopted two amendments and reported the bill favorably with a Committee Substitute. The Committee Substitute:

- Specifies that the lobbyist registration form must be modeled after the printed or online version of the legislative or executive branch lobbyist registration form, and may be returned electronically to the governmental entity.
- Provides that the prohibition against extra compensation does not include specified revenues for state universities, public hospitals, special districts, and Florida College System institutions.
- Limits the applicability of certain penalties related to the prohibition of extra compensation to contracts or employment agreements entered into on or after July 1, 2015, or the renewal or renegotiation of an existing contract or agreement on or after July 1, 2015.
- Provides that it is not a violation of the prohibition against representation before Enterprise Florida, Inc., or specified divisions, subsidiaries, or boards, to participate in the establishment or calculation of payments related to the private match requirements or any individual component of the 4-year marketing plan of his or her principal within two years after termination from service on the board.

The bill has passed through all of the Committees of Reference, and is ready to be placed on the Calendar.

Senate Floor Action

SB 538 re to Disclosure of Sexually Explicit Images by Simmons. The bill creates the new criminal offense of electronic disclosure of sexually explicit images. The bill creates a first degree misdemeanor offense for intentionally and knowingly disclosing sexually explicit images of a person to a social networking service or a website, or by means of any other electronic medium with the intent to harass the person if the person depicted in the sexually explicit image did not consent to the disclosure. For a second or subsequent violation a person commits a third degree felony.

The Rules Committee reported the bill favorably as a Committee Substitute. The Committee Substitute:

- Increases the first violation of this section from a 2nd degree misdemeanor to a 1st degree misdemeanor;
- For a second or subsequent violation it creates a third degree felony;
- Deletes the provision that penalized violations by individuals 18 years or older if the violation involved a sexually explicit image of an individual younger than 16; and
- Provides for civil remedies including injunctive relief, monetary damages to include \$5,000 or actual damages whichever is greater and reasonable attorney fees and costs.

The bill was retained on Special Order Calendar.

SB 778 re to Local Government Construction Preferences by Hays. The bill prohibits any local laws that give preference to a local contractor in circumstances involving a competitive solicitation for construction services in which 50 percent or more of the cost will be paid from state-appropriated funds. The bill requires a state agency or subdivision subject to this law to disclose whether payment will be made from state-appropriated funds and the percentage of such funds compared to the total cost, if known. The bill does not prohibit the application of a local preference in a competitive solicitation for construction services in which less than 50 percent of the cost will be paid from state-appropriated funds.

On Second Reading the Senate adopted one amendment, and the bill was placed on Third Reading. The amendment defines the term “state appropriated fund” as all funds appropriated in the General Appropriations Act, excluding federal funds and requires any school district, or other state agency, subject to this section to disclose in a solicitation document whether payment will be made from funds appropriated by the state and, if known, the amount of such funds or the percentage of such funds as compared to the anticipated total cost of the construction services.

SB 802 re to Vocational Rehabilitation by Gaetz. CS/SB 802 requires a performance improvement plan and accountability reporting for the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (division), the designated state administrative unit, for implementing federal vocational rehabilitation (VR) program requirements.

SB 802 passed the Senate and was immediately certified. The bill is now in messages.

SB 954 re to Involuntary Examinations of Minors by Garcia. CS/SB 954 requires notification for involuntary examinations of minors.

The Fiscal Policy Committee reported the bill favorably as a Committee Substitute. The bill was retained on Special Order Calendar.

SB 960 re to Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program by Lee. The bill allows a student who is eligible for a Florida Bright Futures Scholarship award, but unable to accept the award immediately following high school graduation due to a full-time religious or service obligation lasting at least 18 months, to defer the 2-year initial award period and the 5-year renewal period until the student completes the religious or service obligation.

The bill also modifies student community service requirements for Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program awards by clarifying that community service work means volunteer service work, expanding the permissible activities that students can participate in to meet the volunteer service work requirement to include civic or professional areas, and placing parameters on such activities.

The bill also repeals obsolete references to past SAT and ACT score requirements, and the requirement that students in home education programs whose parents cannot document college-preparatory curriculum must earn higher SAT or ACT scores to be eligible for the Florida Medallion Scholarship.

SB 960 was placed on Third Reading, with no amendments.

HB 7019 re to Workforce Services by Economic Development & Tourism Subcommittee. The bill relates to Florida’s workforce development system.

The Senate substituted SB 7002 for HB 7019, and passed the bill. The House filed the Enrolled Text.

House Floor Action

HB 41 re to hazardous Walking Conditions by Metz. The bill relates to identifying, inspecting, and correcting hazardous walking conditions on roads students walk along or cross in order to walk to school.

The House passed HB 41, with three amendments. The amendments:

- Makes technical changes
- Allows school districts to implement a safe driver toll-free telephone hotline for motorists or others who observe improper driving or operation by a school bus driver to report such violations
- Specifies that HB 41 may be cited as “Gabby’s Law for Student Safety”

HB 747 re to Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program by Rooney. 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 House passed HB 747 with no amendments.

HB 587 re to Educational Professional Practices by Spano. The bill revises the membership of the EPC to include membership opportunities for school administrators employed by virtual schools; former charter school governing board members; and former district school superintendents, assistant superintendents, or deputy superintendents. The bill also requires all EPC members to be Florida residents and authorizes the appointment of emeritus members. Additionally, the bill authorizes the commissioner to issue a letter of guidance to a certified educator upon finding that probable cause to prosecute a complaint does not exist. The bill authorizes DCF to disclose child abandonment, abuse, or neglect records to DOE employees who investigate or prosecute misconduct by certified educators.

Beginning with the 2015-16 school year, the bill requires DOE to administer a statewide educator liability program for public school educators. Coverage must be provided to all full-time instructional personnel free of charge. Part-time instructional personnel, administrative personnel, and student teachers participating in clinical field experience may opt to receive liability coverage, at cost.

The House passed HB 587 with one amendment. The amendment creates the Florida Best and Brightest Teacher Scholarship Program. Teachers are eligible for the scholarship if they scored at or above the 80th percentile on either the SAT or the ACT and have been evaluated as a highly effective teacher.