

# 2019 Florida Legislative Session Recap:

Florida's Attainment Goal and Strengthened Career Pathways



MAY 2019

## Introduction

The 2019 Legislative session ended May 4 following a one-day extension to finalize the 2019-2020 budget. In total, legislators filed more than 3,500 bills and passed 195 this session. Building Florida's talent pipeline through access to high-quality credentials and degrees beyond high school was a top priority for policymakers.

This session recap provides an overview of the notable legislation that stands to increase Florida's talent pool and impact postsecondary students. As of this recap's release on May 28, all legislation and budget allocations described below are awaiting Governor Ron DeSantis's signature.

## Highlights of Postsecondary Legislation

### HB 7071: Workforce Education

This year, the Legislature unanimously passed House Bill 7071, a bill that includes a number of Governor DeSantis's priorities to expand pathways to career and college and chart the course for Florida to become #1 in the nation in workforce education. The legislation was championed by Representatives Amber Mariano (R - Hudson), Ralph Massulo Jr. (R - Lecanto), and Mel Ponder (R - Destin) and Senators Travis Hutson (R - St. Augustine) and Keith Perry (R - Gainesville). Specific provisions of the bill include:

#### *SAIL to 60 attainment goal and strategic plan*

Recognizing that increasing Florida's talent pipeline is vital for continued growth and economic prosperity, HB 7071 creates the SAIL to 60 Initiative to increase the percentage of working age Floridians with degrees, certificates, education and training beyond high school to 60 percent by 2030. SAIL stands for "Strengthening Alignment between Industry and Learning". This **attainment goal** serves as a critical unifier or "north star" to guide talent development strategies designed to strengthen the state's economy and build pathways to prosperity for more Floridians in the years ahead.

In order to achieve this goal, the business-led and education supported Talent Development Council will develop a strategic plan by the end of the year to outline strategies to achieve the 60% goal.

### *Reverse transfer*

Reverse transfer is a process to award an associate's degree to students who earn at least 30 credit hours at a Florida College System institution and complete their associate degree requirements after transferring to a State University System institution. This process will ensure students receive the credential they have earned for achieving this milestone and potentially benefit Floridians who have earned significant college credits but not a bachelor's degree.

### *Last Mile College Completion Program*

This program is created to encourage adults who have stopped out of college to return and complete their degrees. Students in good standing at Florida College System institutions and state universities and who are within 12 credit hours of completing their first associate or baccalaureate degree can return to school and be reimbursed for the cost of the remaining courses.

### *CTE pathway for high school students*

To expand career and technical education pathways for high school students, HB 7071 creates a CTE high school diploma option. Students who choose this graduation pathway are required to complete two credits of career and technical education and two credits of work-based learning traditional elective requirements.

### *CTE audit and articulation*

The Department of Education will conduct an annual review of career and technical education courses to ensure they are high-quality and align with regional workforce needs. School districts will also be required to develop articulation agreements with both their school district's career and technical education centers and Florida College System institutions to create pathways to further education and career opportunities for students completing certifications.

### *Florida Pathways to Career Opportunities Grant*

Recognizing apprenticeships as a pathway to middle- and high-wage jobs, HB 7071 creates the Florida Pathways to Career Opportunities Grant. This program includes competitive matching grant dollars to school districts and other providers that sponsor apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs in specific high-demand skills.

### *Financial Literacy*

Honoring the late Senator Dorothy Hukill, who long advocated for financial literacy courses in high school, all high school students will soon have the option to take a half-credit financial literacy elective.

### *Support of FCAN initiatives*

HB 7071 encourages the Board of Education and the Board of Governors to support [Florida College Access Network's statewide initiatives](#) to recognize and support students on a pathway to higher education, such as FAFSA completion and College Decision Day, as well as FCAN-supported public/private partnerships (such as [local college access networks](#))—

comprised of community leaders who work together to create regional solutions to build and strengthen local talent development.

## **SB 190: Higher Education**

The higher education package, Senate Bill 190, championed by Senator Kelli Stargel (R - Lakeland) and Representative Ray Rodrigues (R - Ft. Myers), contains several provisions amending university administration and capital projects. A few changes that will directly impact Florida postsecondary students include:

### *Bright Futures*

Starting with the 2021 high school graduating class, the SAT/ACT eligibility requirements for Bright Futures will be updated to account for the College Board's test redesign in 2016 from a 2400-point scale to a 1600-point scale. The Florida Academic Scholars (FAS) award, which covers 100% of tuition and fees, is set at the 89<sup>th</sup> percentile of SAT test takers. Using the redesigned test scores, FAS test eligibility will increase from composite SAT score of 1290 to approximately 1330 (concordant ACT score of 29). The Florida Medallion Scholars (FMS) award, which covers 75% of tuition and fees, is set at the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile—eligibility scores would increase from 1170 to approximately a 1200 composite SAT score (concordant ACT score of 25)

The bill also allows students to apply for Bright Futures up to five years after high school graduation and removes the 45 credit-hour annual limit for Bright Futures, which may help students complete a degree faster. Additionally, the bill extends the annual deadline to complete the Florida Financial Aid Application for students who graduate from high school mid-year, from August 31 to December 31.

### *2+2 Targeted pathways*

Florida boasts one of the **[strongest 2+2 articulation systems in the nation](#)**. Students who complete their associate of arts degree at a Florida College System institution are guaranteed admission into one of the twelve state universities. To improve the transfer experience and minimize excess credits, SB 190 requires colleges and universities to partner and develop guaranteed admission pathways from the associate of arts (AA) into a student's university and bachelor's degree program of choice at a specific university. Many colleges and universities already have such 2+2 targeted pathways, such as [Fuse](#).

### *Excess Hours*

Excess hours is a term used by Florida universities for the surcharge that a student pays once they take a certain number of credits past the threshold needed to earn a degree. At that point, the state no longer provides a subsidy of in-state rates and students are required to pay a surcharge equal to 100 percent of the tuition rate. Beginning with the summer 2019 term, the threshold for access hours will increase to 120 percent of credits – meaning students will be charged this fee after 144 credits rather than the previous 132 for a 120 credit hour program. As the one legislator who championed this provision noted, this change will allow students more flexibility to pursue or change their major to degrees in high-demand fields without the burden of additional fees.

## HB 629: Lottery Games

This bill, sponsored by Representative Will Robinson Jr. (R - Bradenton), amends requirements on the advertisement or promotion of lottery games. HB 629 requires the Department of Lottery to include “WARNING: GAMBLING MAY BE ADDICTIVE” or “PLAY RESPONSIBLY” on all advertisements or promotions of lottery games, including radio, television or internet, print newspapers, magazines billboards.

Lottery sales transfer to the Education Enhancement Trust Fund (EETF), which funds education programs and the Bright Futures Scholarship. The Revenue Estimating Conference estimated the bill it will result in a reduction in lottery sales and transfer of funds to the EETF—an approximate \$160 million net loss over the next three years.

## Budget Allocations

Both the Florida College System and State University System received additional funding compared to last year. Even with a \$35 million base budget cut, the state universities received about \$3.1 billion in state funds for operations—an increase of \$69 million, or about 1.4%. The Florida colleges received about \$1.3 billion in operational funds, an additional \$27 million compared to last year’s allocation.

### Highlights

**Industry Certifications (\$20.5 million):** With the increased emphasis on expanding career and technical education, an additional \$6.5 million was allocated to school districts and colleges to receive \$1,000 for each student who earns an industry certification in a high-demand field.

**State University System Performance Funding (\$560 million):** State university performance funding was held level this year at \$560 million, which is approximately 10 percent of the state university system’s overall budget. Additionally, the Board of Governors is tasked with making recommendations for four distinct funding categories (preeminence, emerging preeminence, regional and mission specific) by December 31, 2019.

**Florida College System Student Success Incentive Funds (\$30 million):** This year, the legislature funded Florida College System “Student Success Initiatives.” Previously, colleges received performance funding based upon completion, retention, job placement, and earnings. This year, \$20 million was provided to support college efforts to improve the success of students with associate of arts degrees who transfer to baccalaureate degree programs. An additional \$10 million further incentivizes job placement in high paying jobs.

**Bright Futures (\$595 million):** The state’s largest merit-based scholarship received \$595 million to provide approximately 106,000 student scholarships.

**Florida Student Assistance Grant (FSAG) (\$269 million):** This program provides need-based grant aid to degree-seeking, resident, undergraduate students who demonstrate substantial financial need and are enrolled in participating public and private postsecondary

institutions. FSAG is the state's largest need-based aid program. This appropriation is the same as the amount allocated in last year's budget.

**Effective Access to Student Education (EASE) Program (\$114 million):** This program provides tuition assistance to Florida undergraduate students who attend eligible private, non-profit colleges or universities. This appropriation represents a 17% cut (\$23 million) from last year's budget.

**Apprenticeships (\$10 million):** The Florida Pathways to Career Opportunities Grant Program provides grant dollars to high schools, career centers, charter technical centers, and Florida College System institutions to sponsor apprenticeship or pre- apprenticeship programs tied to regional workforce demand.

**Workforce Diploma Program (\$1.25 million):** This statewide program is created to assist adults aged 22 years of age and older to obtain a high school diploma and develop employability and career technical skills.






Florida College Access Network (FCAN) is Florida's first collaborative network committed to ensuring all Floridians have the opportunity to achieve an education beyond high school and prosper in Florida's dynamic economy. Our mission is to create and sustain a statewide network that catalyzes and supports communities to increase college and career preparation, access, and completion for all Florida students.

As a nonpartisan organization, FCAN strives to expand knowledge of research, data, policies and practices that impact postsecondary access and attainment in Florida. This preview is intended as an educational resource and does not constitute an endorsement or opposition to any specific bill or legislation.

For more research and data from FCAN, visit [www.floridacollegeaccess.org/research-and-data/](http://www.floridacollegeaccess.org/research-and-data/).

FCAN is a statewide organization hosted by the University of South Florida System (USF). The statements and positions presented are those of FCAN and are not made on behalf of the USF Board of Trustees or intended in any way to be representative to USF.

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