



Florida Legislative Updates and History for State Scholarship and Grant Programs

Office of Student Financial Assistance

July 2023

2023 Florida Legislative Session

During the 2023 Florida Legislative Session, modifications were made to the laws and policies used to administer State Scholarship and Grant Programs via the bills specified below.

Senate Bill 2500: General Appropriations Act, [Chapter 2023-239, Laws of Florida \(L.O.F.\)](#)

On June 15, 2023, Governor Ron DeSantis was presented with, and approved with line-item vetoes, the Framework for Freedom Budget, which includes the fiscal year 2023-24 General Appropriations Act.

House Bill 1537: Education, [Chapter 2023-39, L.O.F.](#)

The bill modifies the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program initial eligibility requirements that affect high school graduating students seeking to qualify for an award used to offset the cost of a postsecondary education.

Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program

Effective July 1, 2023, the bill:

- ⇒ Allows students graduating in the 2022-23 academic year and thereafter to satisfy the service hour requirement for a specific BF program by completing the statutory required number of volunteer service hours, 100 paid work hours, or a combination of both.
- ⇒ Authorizes 2023-24 high school graduating students to earn a concordant score on the Classic Learning Test (CLT) to meet the minimum test score requirement.
- ⇒ Revises the list of courses that receive additional weights for the purpose of calculating students' grade point averages (GPA) for BF purposes.

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2023 Florida Legislative Session

Senate Bill 1272: Educational Grants, [Chapter 2023-93, L.O.F.](#)

This bill creates a postsecondary educational grant under the William L. Boyd, IV, Effective Access to Student Education (EASE) Grant Program and requires the Florida Department of Education (department) to issue a grant to any full-time degree-seeking undergraduate student registered at an independent nonprofit university who was formerly eligible for the Access to Better Learning and Education (ABLE) Grant Program.

Effective Access to Student Education (EASE)

- ⇒ Permits EASE grants to be provide to students who are enrolled at a postsecondary institution that is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission, has been located in Florida for more than 20 years, and offers specified nursing programs at its Florida campus.
- ⇒ Requires postsecondary institutions wanting to participate to provide a one-time notice to the department on or before September 1, 2023.
- ⇒ Requires institutions made eligible for the EASE grant program to comply with reporting requirements, in addition to, submitting an EASE Grant Program Accountability Report to the Florida Department of Education.

House Bill 339: Education of Dependents of Deceased or Disabled Servicemembers, Prisoners of War, and Persons Missing in Action, [Chapter 2023-279, L.O.F.](#)

The bill modifies a qualification requirements for certain educational benefits provided to a dependent child or spouse of a disabled or deceased servicemember through the Children and Spouses of Deceased or Disabled Veterans scholarship program that is used to offset the cost of a postsecondary education.

Children and Spouses of Deceased or Disabled Veterans (CSDDV)

- ⇒ Removes the requirement of a 1-year residency of veterans and substitutes other factors, which include Florida being listed as the servicemember's official home of record in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) database immediately preceding the death or disability of the servicemember, or that the child or spouse qualifies as a resident for tuition purposes.

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2023 Florida Legislative Session

Senate Bill 240: Education, [Chapter 2023-81, L.O.F.](#)

The bill converts the existing Open Door Grant Program to a financial aid program for students of a state college or technical center to incentivize current and future workers to enroll in career and technical education that leads to a credential, certificate, or degree. Additionally, the Florida Work Experience Program (FWEP) is expanded to allow charter technical career centers to participate in the scholarship program.

Open Door Grant Program

- ⇒ Requires ODGP award recipients to be enrolled in an integrated education and training program or a workforce education program.
- ⇒ Grants eligible students to receive an award equal to the amount needed to cover 100 percent of tuition and fees, exam or assessment costs, books, and related materials for eligible programs after all other federal and state financial aid is applied, in addition to up to \$1,500 to cover other educational expenses related to the institutional cost of attendance.
- ⇒ Requires eligible postsecondary institutions to submit an annual report on program completion and credential attainment by students participating in the grant program.

Florida Work Experience Program

- ⇒ Authorizes charter technical career centers to participate in the FWEP scholarship program.

House Bill 1: School Choice, [Chapter 2023-16, L.O.F.](#)

Dual Enrollment Scholarship Program

- ⇒ This bill authorizes eligible postsecondary institutions to be reimbursed for tuition and related instructional materials costs for dual enrollment courses taken during the fall, spring, or summer terms by eligible students, which now includes secondary students enrolled within a personalized education program.

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2023 Florida Legislative Session

House Bill 1035: K-12 Teachers, [Chapter 2023-38 L.O.F.](#)

The bill creates the **Dual Enrollment Educator Scholarship Program**, pursuant to section 1009.31, Florida Statutes, to assist teachers of grades 9-12 in public schools in obtaining the graduate degree and credentials necessary to provide dual enrollment coursework directly to students on the campuses of such schools. The program will provide award recipients the full cost of tuition and fees required to complete the graduate program, including a book stipend each semester.

The program requires applicants to:

- ⇒ Be a certified teacher in grades 9-12 in a public school in Florida and be accepted into, or currently enrolled in, an approved graduate program in a subject within his or her area of certification;
- ⇒ Agree to complete the graduate degree program and additional required credentials within three academic years of the initial award and remain in his or her district, or an eligible district identified by FDOE, as a certified classroom teacher for at least three school years after completion of his or her degree teaching at least one general education core course per semester; and
- ⇒ Repay the amount of the scholarship to the Florida Department of Education (department) on a schedule determined by the department for recipients who do not adhere to the established requirements.

You may access the 2023 Florida Legislative bills via [Online Sunshine](#).

2022 Florida Legislative Session

During the 2022 Florida Legislative Session, modifications were made to the laws and policies used to administer State Scholarship and Grant Programs via the bills specified below.

House Bill 5001: General Appropriations Act, [Chapter 2022-156, L.O.F.](#)

On June 2, 2022, Governor Ron DeSantis signed and approved with line-item vetoes, the Freedom First Budget, which includes the fiscal year 2022-23 General Appropriations Act.

House Bill 3: Law Enforcement Officer, Benefits, Recruitment, and Training, [Chapter 2022-23, L.O.F.](#)

The bill provides law enforcement agencies with additional tools to strengthen the recruitment and retention of qualified officers by providing financial incentives, enhanced training, educational opportunities, school choice options and recognition that honors their service to the state of Florida.

Florida Law Enforcement Academy Scholarship Program

- ⇒ This scholarship program was created to provide financial assistance, which covers tuition, specific fees, and up to \$1,000 of eligible expenses, to trainees enrolled in an approved law enforcement officer basic recruit training program.

Florida Law Enforcement Reimbursement Program

- ⇒ A reimbursement program was created to pay for up to \$1,000 of equivalency training costs for certified law enforcement officers who relocate to Florida or members of the special operations forces who become full-time law enforcement officers in Florida.
- ⇒ not limited to, refund deadlines, annual application submission details for participation in state aid, maintaining accurate records, verifying student eligibility, and requiring the reporting of a student's program of study.

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2022 Florida Legislative Session

House Bill 461: Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program Student Service Requirements, [Chapter 2022-223, L.O.F.](#)

Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program

Beginning with high school students graduating in the 2022-23 academic year and thereafter, students may complete 100 hours of paid work to satisfy the volunteer service hour requirement for any award in the Florida Bright Futures (BF) Scholarship Program.

- ⇒ Specifies a student may meet the volunteer service requirement specified for each award in the BF Program through 100 hours of paid work. The bill does not adjust the number of volunteer service hours for each award, but rather expands a student's options of meeting the service requirement through volunteer service or paid work.
- ⇒ Requires students meeting a BF award requirement through paid work to obtain approval from their district school board or private school administrator.
- ⇒ Authorizes, rather than requires, students to identify a specified interest or develop a plan for their service requirements under the BF program.
- ⇒ Requires, rather than authorizes, students to evaluate and reflect upon his or her experience through papers or other presentations.

Senate Bill 2524: Education, [Chapter 2022-154, L.O.F.](#)

Dual Enrollment Scholarship Program

- ⇒ Modifies the timeline for reporting dual enrollment students and for reimbursements to specify that a postsecondary institution must report students within 30 days after the end of regular registration, and reimbursements to institutions must be distributed from the DOE no later than 30 days after the end of the term.

Effective Access to Student Education

- ⇒ Requires each institution eligible to receive funds under the Effective Access to Student Education (EASE) Grant Program to post prominently on its website, by October 1 of each year, its performance on the metrics specified in law.

You may access the 2022 Florida Legislative bills via [Online Sunshine](#).

2021 Florida Legislative Session

The 2021 Florida Legislative Session modified and created policies with respect to State Scholarship and Grant Programs via the bills provided below.

Senate Bill 2500: General Appropriations Act, [Chapter 2021-36, Laws of Florida \(L.O.F.\)](#)

The bill creates and modifies the following scholarship programs:

Bright Futures Scholarship Program

- ⇒ Beginning with the fall 2021 semester, Bright Futures Florida Academic Scholars recipients will no longer receive an additional stipend for textbooks and college-related expenses.

Randolph Bracy Ocoee Scholarship Program

- ⇒ Created to provide student financial assistance to 50 eligible students for up to \$6,100 annually for tuition and registration fees
- ⇒ Eligible students include applicants who are either:
 - ⇒ A direct descendant of victims of the Ocoee Election Day Riots of November 1920, or
 - ⇒ A current African-American resident of Ocoee, Florida.

House Bill 1261: Higher Education, [Chapter 2021-232, L.O.F.](#)

Benacquisto Scholarship Program

- ⇒ This bill modifies the initial eligibility qualifications within s. 1009.893, Florida Statutes. The 2021-22 academic year is the last year for an out-of-state student to initially enroll in a baccalaureate degree program and be eligible to receive an initial award.

Postsecondary Institutional Duties

- ⇒ Section 1009.46, Florida Statutes was created to establish duties related to postsecondary institutions who receive state financial aid and tuition assistance programs including, but not limited to, refund deadlines, annual application submission details for participation in state aid, maintaining accurate records, verifying student eligibility, and requiring the reporting of a student's program of study.

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2021 Florida Legislative Session

Senate Bill 366: Education Opportunities Leading to Employment, [Chapter 2021-162 L.O.F.](#)

Florida Student Assistance Grant Program (FSAG)

- ⇒ FSAG-Postsecondary has added eligibility for aviation maintenance schools certified by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and licensed by the Commission for Independent Education (CIE).
- ⇒ Awards up to 110% of the clock hours required to complete the enrolled program.
- ⇒ Eligibility for renewal evaluated after the completion of 900 clock hours along with the requirements set within s. 1009.40(1)(b), Florida Statutes.

Access to Better Learning and Education Grant Program

- ⇒ The ABLE program was repealed and will not be funded for the 2021-22 academic year.

Senate Bill 52: Postsecondary Education, [Chapter 2021-160, L.O.F.](#)

Dual Enrollment Scholarship Program

- ⇒ Created to support eligible postsecondary institutions who provide dual enrollment opportunities to eligible secondary students.
- ⇒ Reimburses eligible postsecondary institutions for tuition and related instructional materials costs for specific dual enrollment courses to:
 - ⇒ private and home-educated secondary students beginning with the 2021 fall term, and
 - ⇒ public school, private school, and home-educated secondary students beginning with the 2022 summer term.

2021 Florida Legislative Session

House Bill 5601: Higher Education, [Chapter 2021-46, L.O.F.](#)

William L. Boyd, IV, Effective Access to Student Education Grant Program (EASE)

- ⇒ Eligibility requires enrollment in a program leading to a baccalaureate degree.
- ⇒ Satisfactory academic progress to be defined by the State Board of Education.
- ⇒ Eligibility limited to 110% of the enrolled program length.
- ⇒ Participating EASE institutions required to report to OSFA by September 1 the following metrics:
 - ⇒ Access rate based on Pell percentage
 - ⇒ Affordability rate based on loans and all aid
 - ⇒ Graduation rate
 - ⇒ Retention rate
 - ⇒ Postgraduate employment or continuing education rate
- ⇒ The Department is required to report on metrics to the legislature by October 1.
- ⇒ The Department is required to recommend minimum performance standards for continued program eligibility.

You may access the 2021 Florida Legislative bills via [Online Sunshine](#).

2020 Florida Legislative Session

Senate Bill 72: Higher Education, [Chapter 2020-117](#), L.O.F.

The bill revises a number of policies related to the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program, the Florida Student Assistance Grant Program (FSAG) and the Benacquisto Scholarship Program.

Specifically, the bill modifies the scholarship programs below as follows:

Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program:

- ⇒ Beginning in the fall 2021 semester, Bright Futures Florida Medallion Scholarship (BFFMS) students enrolled in an associate degree program at a Florida College System (FCS) institution will receive 100 percent of tuition and specific fees. Upon completing an associate degree, a student may use his or her award to pursue a baccalaureate degree and receive 75 percent of tuition and specific fees.
- ⇒ Relocates language from Florida Statutes to the General Appropriations Act with respect to the additional stipend for textbooks and college-related expenses for Bright Futures Florida Academic Scholars (BFFAS).

Florida Student Assistance Grant Program:

- ⇒ Relocates language from Florida Statutes to the General Appropriations Act with respect to the Maximum Annual Award Amount. For the 2021-22 academic year, the maximum annual award amount has increased to \$3,260.
- ⇒ Expands the eligible student population to students with one and one-half times the maximum Pell Grant-eligible family contribution to 8566 for the 2021-22 academic year.
- ⇒ Requires institutions to report all students eligible for a disbursement.
- ⇒ Initiates priority funding for FSAG recipients who are within one semester from completing a degree or certificate.
- ⇒ Establishes reconciliation requirements for fall and spring term funding.
- ⇒ Creates FSAG summer funding by means of requirements, deadlines, procedures and priority funding.
- ⇒ Establishes specific audit requirements for each of the four FSAG programs.

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2020 Florida Legislative Session

Benacquisto Scholarship Program:

- ⇒ Restricts initial eligibility for students designated as a “National Achievement Scholar.”
- ⇒ Clarifies eligibility requirements for students seeking initial eligibility.
- ⇒ Specifies students must be enrolled full-time to receive scholarship funding.
- ⇒ Allows eligible students to receive a final term disbursement if they have fewer than 12 credit hours remaining to complete their first baccalaureate degree.
- ⇒ Clarifies that a student’s renewal status will not be affected by subsequent changes in the student or the family’s residency status.
- ⇒ Provides additional scholarship length clarification by specifying students may receive the award for up to five years following high school graduation and may not receive the award for more than 10 semesters.
- ⇒ Adds language related to institutional appeals for students failing to meet the renewal requirements due to a verifiable illness or other documented emergency pursuant to section 1009.40(1)(b)4, Florida Statutes.

You may access the 2020 Florida Legislative bills via [Online Sunshine](#).

2019 Florida Legislative Session

Senate Bill 190: Higher Education, [Chapter 2019-103](#), L.O.F.

The bill revises merit-based financial aid funding available to students to help address the financial needs of students and their families.

Specifically, the bill modifies the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program to:

- ⇒ Remove the requirement that students enroll in a Florida postsecondary education institution within 2 years of graduation from high school.
- ⇒ Eliminate the 45 credit hour annual restriction in the award of a scholarship.
- ⇒ Specify the eligibility of a student, who enrolls in the pilot program at the University of Florida, to receive an award during the fall term.
- ⇒ Extend the annual deadline, from August 31 to December 31, for when a student who graduates from high school midyear must apply for the scholarship.
- ⇒ Revise examination score requirements for award eligibility to align the ACT® and SAT® examination scores with the SAT® national percentile ranks.
- ⇒ Require Bright Futures Gold Seal CAPE award recipients to maintain a cumulative grade point average of 2.75 on a 4.0 scale to renew eligibility.

You may access the 2019 Florida Legislative bills via [Online Sunshine](#).

2018 Florida Legislative Session

Senate Bill 4: Higher Education, [Chapter 2018-4](#), L.O.F.

The bill establishes the “Florida Excellence in Higher Education Act of 2018” which, among other modifications, expands merit-based and need-based financial aid funding available to students to help address the financial needs of students and their families.

Specifically the bill:

- Modifies the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program to allow:
 - ⇒ Florida Academic Scholars (FAS) award amount to cover 100 percent of public postsecondary education institution tuition and specified fees, plus \$300 per fall and spring for textbooks and college-related expenses.
 - ⇒ Florida Medallion Scholars (FMS) award amount to cover 75 percent of public postsecondary education institution tuition and specified fees, beginning in the fall 2018 semester.
- Expands the Benacquisto Scholarship Program for qualified students from out-of-state who enroll in a baccalaureate degree program in the 2018-2019 academic year or thereafter; and who meet the specified requirements to qualify for the scholarship. The bill exempts students from the payment of out-of-state fees and specifies that the award amount for the students is equal to the institutional cost of attendance for a Florida resident less the student’s National Merit Scholarship.
- Creates the Florida Farmworker Scholarship Program for farmworkers and the children of farmworkers who meet the specified scholarship eligibility criteria. The bill allows the Department of Education to award up to 50 scholarships annually. The recipient is eligible for an award equal to 100 percent of tuition and specified fees at a public postsecondary education institution in Florida. Undocumented immigrants are not eligible for the award.
- Expands the First Generation Matching Grant Program by revising the state-to-private match requirements from a 1:1 match to a 2:1 match, and codifies the inclusion of Florida College System institutions as eligible program participants.
- Renames the William L. Boyd, IV, Florida Resident Access Grant Program as the William L. Boyd, IV, Effective Access to Student Education Grant Program.

House Bill 5003: Implementing the 2018-19 General Appropriations Act, [Chapter 2018-10](#), L.O.F.

The bill authorizes 2018 fall term awards for University of Florida Innovation Academy students, when summer funding is provided for other Bright Futures recipients, for off-campus or online coursework.

You may access the 2018 Florida Legislative bills via [Online Sunshine](#).

2017 Florida Legislative Session

Florida Bright Futures Scholarship – Florida Academic Scholars (FAS)

- ◆ Changes the FAS award amount to cover 100% of tuition and applicable fees at a public institution or comparable amount at a nonpublic institution.
- ◆ Provides FAS recipients an additional \$300 for textbooks and college-related expenses (fall and spring).
- ◆ Provides 2018 summer funding for FAS award recipients.

Student Loan Debt

- ◆ Requires a postsecondary institution that disburses state financial aid to annually provide each student receiving student loans with the following up-to-date information:
 - ◇ An estimate of the student’s total amount of borrowed student loans.
 - ◇ An estimate of the student’s total potential loan repayment amount.
 - ◇ An estimate of the student’s monthly loan repayment amount.
 - ◇ The percentage of the borrowing limit that the student has reached.
- ◆ Provides that an institution does not incur liability for providing the specified information.

Minority Teacher Education Scholars Program

- ◆ Allows a student to receive funds who is enrolled in one of Florida’s private colleges.
- ◆ Requires the student to be admitted into a teacher education program before having earned more than 18 credit hours of upper-division-level courses in education.
- ◆ Allows a student to use the scholarship to pursue a graduate degree with a major in education, leading to initial certification.

Florida Fund for Minority Teachers, Inc.

- ◆ Removes the following requirements:
 - ◇ New scholarships must be granted to students who are in their junior year.
 - ◇ Renewal scholarships be granted to rising seniors.

2016 Florida Legislative Session

Florida Bright Futures Scholarship

Reinstatement Timeframe for Service Obligations

For 2012-13 high school graduates and thereafter, the student who has a full-time religious/service obligation lasting at least 18 months is eligible for an extended reinstatement/renewal timeframe.

Home-educated Students

The higher test score requirement of 1220 SAT or 27 ACT for the Florida Medallion Scholars award is eliminated.

Bright Futures Service Hours:

Approved service hours may now include business or government internships, work for nonprofit community service organizations, or activity on behalf of candidates for public office.

Except for credit earned through service-learning courses adopted pursuant to s. 1003.497 F.S., the student may not receive remuneration or academic credit for the service work performed.

Bright Futures Gold Seal CAPE Scholars:

The Florida Gold Seal CAPE (Career and Professional Education Act) Scholars award is created. High school students graduating in **2016-17** are eligible for a Florida Gold Seal CAPE* Scholars award if they earn 5 postsecondary credit hours through CAPE industry certifications and complete at least 30 hours of volunteer service work.

Students initially eligible in the 2017-18 academic year may receive an award for specific applied technology diplomas, technical degree programs or career certificate programs.

Once CAPE students complete a technical degree program that articulates into a higher degree, expanded funding will be available for an eligible Bachelor of Science degree or Bachelor of Applied Science degree.

Florida Incentive Scholarship

The Florida Incentive Scholarship is renamed the Benacquisto Scholarship.

2015 Florida Legislative Session

Florida Bright Futures Scholarship

Expanded opportunities for volunteer service work made available to students working toward a Bright Futures Scholarship. The school district or private school will approve service work that includes, but is not limited to, a business or government internship, work for a nonprofit community service organization or activity on behalf of a candidate for public office.

The hours of service work 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 service work.

These expanded opportunities are effective until July 1, 2016.

Except for credit earned through service-learning courses adopted pursuant to s. 1003.497 F.S., the student may not receive remuneration or academic credit for the service work performed.

2014 Florida Legislative Session

Rosewood Family Scholarship

Expanded the Rosewood Family Scholarship to award 50 students tuition and fees, not to exceed \$6,100, at a public postsecondary institution.

Florida Incentive Scholarship

Created the Florida Incentive Scholarship to award National Merit® or National Achievement Scholars® who stay in Florida for their postsecondary education.

2013 Florida Legislative Session

- ◆ **Repealed the requirement** for initial and renewal Bright Futures students, Florida Resident Access Grant students, and Access to Better Learning and Education Grant students **to submit the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)* each year** prior to disbursement of their award.
- ◆ Beginning July 1, 2013, students are not required to file the FAFSA to receive funds from these programs.

2012 Florida Legislative Session

- ◆ Eligible Bright Futures students enrolled in the pilot program at the University of Florida may receive an award for no more than two semesters in a fiscal year. Summer funding is available for those students.
- ◆ Students graduating from high school in 2012-13 are **eligible to accept an initial Bright Futures award for two years following high school graduation** and to accept a renewal award for five years following high school graduation.
- ◆ **Initial and renewal Bright Futures students must submit a complete and error-free *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA)** each year prior to disbursement of their award.
- ◆ **Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholars** graduating in 2011-12 may receive an award for 100% of the number of hours required to complete only one of the following programs at a Florida public or eligible Florida private postsecondary institution:
 - ◇ Applied Technology Diploma, up to 60 credit hours or equivalent clock hours.
 - ◇ Technical Degree Education Program, not to exceed 72 credit hours or equivalent clock hours.
 - ◇ Career Certificate Program, not to exceed 72 credit hours or equivalent clock hours.
- ◆ Students who **graduate from high school mid-year** may submit a *Florida Financial Aid Application* **no later than August 31** prior to the student's graduation, be evaluated for Bright Futures, and, if eligible, receive funding in the spring term following the student's high school graduation. These students will be evaluated for renewal of their scholarships at the end of their first full year (fall through spring) of funding.

2011 Florida Legislative Session

- ◆ Students are **required to submit a complete, error free FAFSA** for Bright Futures, Florida Resident Access Grant, and Access to Better Learning and Education Grant initial and renewal eligibility any time prior to disbursement.
- ◆ **Increase in community service requirement** for all three Bright Futures award levels. Bright Futures Florida Academic Scholars (FAS), Florida Medallion Scholars (FMS), and Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholars (GSV). During the 2011-12 academic year, and thereafter, the required community service hours to be completed for the following awards are:
 - ◇ FAS – 100 hours (increased from 75 hours).
 - ◇ FMS – 75 hours (increased from 0 hours).
 - ◇ GSV – 30 hours (increased from 0 hours).
- ◆ The Florida Department of Education is required to approve home education community service hours for Bright Futures initial eligibility.
- ◆ Increase in Bright Futures Florida Medallion Scholars award test scores for high school students graduating in the 2013-14 academic year.
 - ◇ 1020 increased to 1170 for SAT.
 - ◇ 22 increased to 26 for ACT.
 - ◇ 1070 SAT increased to 1220/23 ACT increased to 27 for home educated students.