

UPDATE ABOUT FLORIDA BRIGHT FUTURES SCHOLARSHIPS

Specific language in SB 374 proposed permanent changes in Bright Futures Scholarships. Among the most significant of the changes was a proposal to revert to the historical policy of providing Academic Scholars with full funding for all tuition and state and local fees, and an added provision for pay up to \$300 per semester to pay for books. (As an aside, that might be enough to RENT, but not buy the books of a typical full load.)

In addition, the bill provided that Bright Futures Scholarships would pay for summer enrollment. (Again, as an aside, since it is required that students earn credit in at least one summer session it seems unreasonable that Bright Futures would not pay for that requirement.)

SB 374 was vetoed, but a portion of the language was included in the portions of SB 2500, the General Appropriations Act, that were not vetoed. That language is pasted below.

Specific Appropriations 4 SPECIAL CATEGORIES
GRANTS AND AIDS - FLORIDA'S BRIGHT FUTURES
SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

FROM EDUCATIONAL ENHANCEMENT TRUST FUND 397,282,030

From the funds in Specific Appropriation 4, \$39,465,544, along with any unexpended funds from the fall and spring term award disbursements, is provided for 2018 summer term awards for Academic Scholars only at 100 percent of tuition and applicable fees, as specified in CS/CS/SB 374 or similar legislation.

From the funds in Specific Appropriation 4, the Bright Futures award per credit hour or credit hour equivalent for the 2017-2018 academic year shall be as follows: Academic Scholars shall receive an award equal to 100 percent of tuition and applicable fees, and an additional \$300 each fall and spring semester for textbooks and college-related expenses, as specified in CS/CS/SB 374 or similar legislation.

Medallion Scholars

4-Year Institutions.....\$ 77

2-Year Institutions.....\$ 63

Upper-Division Programs at Florida Colleges.... \$ 53

Career/Technical Centers.....\$ 39

Gold Seal Vocational Scholars and CAPE Vocational Scholars

Career Certificate Program.....\$ 39

Applied Technology Diploma Program.....\$ 39

Technical Degree Education Program.....\$ 48

Gold Seal CAPE Vocational Scholars

Bachelor of Science Program with Statewide Articulation Agreement.....\$ 48

Florida College System Bachelor of Applied Science Program.....\$ 48

The additional stipend for Top Scholars shall be \$44 per credit hour.

The GAA language makes reference to language in SB 374, but the releases associated with the approval of SB 2500 and the veto of 374 indicated that the Bright Futures language is preserved, and necessary funding is provided. See the statement from Senate President Negron below.

STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT NEGRON REGARDING VETO OF SB 374

Tallahassee — Florida Senate President Joe Negron (R-Stuart) today released the following statement regarding Governor Scott’s veto of Senate Bill 374, the Excellence in Higher Education Act.

“This Session the Senate increased funding to students and universities by almost \$800 million and passed SB 374, which contains many policies proposed and supported by Governor Scott, including summer Bright Futures.

“Since most of these policies, including the restoration of the Academic Scholar level of Bright Futures to 100 percent of tuition, plus \$300 a semester for books, were funded in the budget, the Governor believes the expansion will be in place for one year.

June 29, 2017
Inc.

HBEC Group

“As I have traveled the state talking to families, I have learned what an important role Bright Futures plays as students plan their financial investment in a college or university education. Students and families deserve certainty when making these important decisions, and today’s veto makes advance planning much more difficult.

“I fundamentally disagree that SB 374 makes positive changes to our universities at the expense of Florida’s community colleges. Like Governor Scott, many members of the Senate attended our state’s community colleges and we recognize the vital role they play in our public education system. For that very reason, we crafted SB 374 to further elevate Florida’s nationally-ranked community colleges through a renewed focus on their core mission – on-time completion of vital associate degrees and workforce credentials that prepare students for jobs in communities across our state.

“Our higher education system is our primary economic engine to drive vibrant, sustainable economic development and growth in high-paying jobs. I will continue my commitment to Florida’s students and our colleges and universities next Session.”

As a reminder, the statutory requirements for the Academic Scholars Award are pasted below. It is still unclear if the provision for funding summer school is active, but since that does not apply until the summer of 2018, the 2018 session, which ends in early March 2018, is available to pass necessary language, and the funding will be in place to pay tuition for Summer 2018, which begins in May 2018.

1009.534 Florida Academic Scholars award.—

(1) A student is eligible for a Florida Academic Scholars award if he or she meets the general eligibility requirements for the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program and:

(a) Has achieved a 3.5 weighted grade point average as calculated pursuant to s. 1009.531, or its equivalent, in high school courses that are designated by the State Board of Education as college-preparatory academic courses and has attained at least the score required under s. 1009.531(6)(a) on the combined verbal and quantitative parts of the Scholastic Aptitude Test, the Scholastic Assessment Test, or the recentered Scholastic Assessment Test of the College Entrance Examination, or an equivalent score on the ACT Assessment Program;

(b) Has attended a home education program according to s. 1002.41 during grades 11 and 12, has completed the International Baccalaureate curriculum but failed to earn the International Baccalaureate Diploma, or has completed the Advanced International Certificate of Education curriculum but failed to earn the Advanced International Certificate of Education Diploma, and has attained at least the score required under s. 1009.531(6)(a) on the combined verbal and quantitative parts of the Scholastic Aptitude Test, the Scholastic Assessment Test, or the recentered Scholastic Assessment Test of the College Entrance Examination, or an equivalent score on the ACT Assessment Program;

(c) Has been awarded an International Baccalaureate Diploma from the International Baccalaureate Office or an Advanced International Certificate of Education Diploma from the University of Cambridge International Examinations Office;

(d) Has been recognized by the merit or achievement programs of the National Merit Scholarship Corporation as a scholar or finalist; or

(e) Has been recognized by the National Hispanic Recognition Program as a scholar recipient.

The student must complete a program of volunteer service work, as approved by the district school board, the administrators of a nonpublic school, or the Department of Education for home education program students, which must include a minimum of 75 hours of service work for high school students graduating in the 2010-2011 academic year and 100 hours of service work for high school students graduating in the 2011-2012 academic year and thereafter. The student must identify a social or civic issue or a professional area that interests him or her, develop a plan for his or her personal involvement in addressing the issue or learning about the area, and, through papers or other presentations, evaluate and reflect upon his or her experience. Except for credit earned through service-learning courses adopted pursuant to s. 1003.497, the student may not receive remuneration or academic credit for the volunteer service work performed. Such work may include, but is not limited to, a business or governmental internship, work for a nonprofit community service organization, or activities on behalf of a candidate for public office. The hours of

volunteer service 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 volunteer service work.

(2) A Florida Academic Scholar who is enrolled in a certificate, diploma, associate, or baccalaureate degree program at a public or nonpublic postsecondary education institution is eligible for an award equal to the amount specified in the General Appropriations Act to assist with the payment of educational expenses.

(3) To be eligible for a renewal award as a Florida Academic Scholar, a student must maintain the equivalent of a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale with an opportunity for restoration one time as provided in this chapter.

(4) In each school district, the Florida Academic Scholar with the highest academic ranking shall receive an additional award equal to the amount specified in the General Appropriations Act for college-related expenses. This award must be funded from the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program.