

CHAPTER 97-379

Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 10-A

An act relating to the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program; amending ss. 240.40202, 240.40205, 240.40206, 240.40207, and 240.40208, F.S.; revising academic eligibility requirements for receipt of an award; requiring the Department of Education to assign additional weights to grades for certain courses; revising provisions relating to transition to the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program; providing for award calculations for enrollment at nonpublic postsecondary education institutions; providing for a transfer from the Working Capital Fund under certain circumstances; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Subsection (3) of section 240.40202, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

240.40202 Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program; student eligibility requirements for initial awards.—

(3) For purposes of calculating the grade point average to be used in determining initial eligibility for a Florida Bright Futures scholarship, the department shall assign additional weights to grades earned in the following courses:

(a) Courses identified in the course code directory as Advanced Placement, pre-International Baccalaureate, or International Baccalaureate.

(b) Courses designated as academic dual enrollment courses in the state-wide course numbering system.

The department may assign additional weights to courses, other than those described in paragraphs (a) and (b), that are identified by the Articulation Coordinating Committee as containing rigorous academic curriculum and performance standards. The additional weight assigned to a course pursuant to this subsection shall not exceed 0.5 per course. The weighted system shall be developed and distributed to all high schools in the state prior to January 1, 1998. The department may determine a student's eligibility status during the senior year before graduation and may inform the student of the award at that time.

Section 2. Subsection (1) of section 240.40205, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

240.40205 Florida Academic Scholars award.—

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

(a) Has achieved a 3.5 weighted ~~unweighted~~ grade point average as calculated pursuant to s. 240.40202 ~~on a 4.0 scale~~, or its equivalent, in high school courses that are adopted by the Board of Regents and recommended by the State Board of Community Colleges as college-preparatory academic courses; and

(b) Has attained at least the score identified by rules of the Department of Education 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 American College Testing Program; or

(c) Has attended a home education program according to s. 232.02(4) during grades 11 and 12 or has completed the International Baccalaureate curriculum but failed to earn the International Baccalaureate Diploma, and has attained at least the score identified by rules of the Department of Education 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 American College Testing Program; or

(d) Has been awarded an International Baccalaureate Diploma from the International Baccalaureate Office; or

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

Effective with the 1998-1999 school year, a student must complete a program of community service work, as approved by the district school board or the administrators of a nonpublic school, which shall include a minimum of 75 hours of service work and require the student to identify a social problem that interests him or her, develop a plan for his or her personal involvement in addressing the problem, and, through papers or other presentations, evaluate and reflect upon his or her experience.

Section 3. Subsection (1) of section 240.40206, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

240.40206 Florida Merit Scholars award.—

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

(a) Has achieved a weighted ~~an unweighted~~ grade point average of 3.0 as calculated pursuant to s. 240.40202 ~~on a 4.0 scale~~, or the equivalent, in high school courses that are adopted by the Board of Regents and recommended by the State Board of Community Colleges as college-preparatory academic courses; and

(b) Has attained at least the score identified by rules of the Department of Education 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 American College Testing Program; or

(c) Has attended a home education program according to s. 232.02(4) during grades 11 and 12 or has completed the International Baccalaureate curriculum but failed to earn the International Baccalaureate Diploma, and has attained at least the score identified by rules of the Department of Education 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 American College Testing Program.

Section 4. Paragraph (c) of subsection (1) of section 240.40207, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

240.40207 Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholars award.—The Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholars award is created within the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program to recognize and reward academic achievement and vocational preparation by high school students who wish to continue their education.

(1) A student is eligible for a Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholars award if the student meets the general eligibility requirements for the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program and the student:

(c) Earns a minimum cumulative weighted ~~unweighted~~ grade point average of 3.0, as calculated pursuant to s. 240.40202, on a 4.0 scale on all subjects required for a standard high school diploma, excluding elective courses.

Section 5. Subsections (1) and (2) of section 240.40208, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

240.40208 Eligibility for the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program; transition.—

(1) A student who graduates from high school in 1997 or earlier and who is eligible for the Florida Undergraduate Scholar's Program pursuant to s. 240.402 is eligible for the Florida Academic Scholars award as provided in this act. A student who graduates from high school in 1998 or 1999 is eligible for the Florida Academic Scholars award if the student meets the criteria in s. 240.40205. However, in lieu of satisfying the requirements set forth in s. 240.40205(1)(a) and (b), a student may meet the following criteria:

(a) Complete a program of at least 24 credits in advanced-level studies as prescribed by the State Board of Education, including as a minimum:

1. Four years of progressively advanced instruction in language arts, including courses in English composition and literature.

2. Four years of progressively advanced instruction in science, including laboratory courses in biology, chemistry, and physics where laboratory facilities are available.

3. Four years of progressively advanced instruction in mathematics, including courses in algebra, geometry, and calculus or trigonometry.

4. Two years of sequential foreign language.

5. One year of instruction in art and music or in either art or music.

6. Three years of instruction in social studies, including courses in American history and government, world history, and comparative political and economic systems.

7. One year of instruction in health and physical education to include assessment, improvement, and maintenance of personal fitness.

(b) Obtain at least the equivalent of an unweighted grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale for all courses taken for which high school credit may be granted.

(c) Achieve a score of 1180 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 American College Testing Program or an equivalent program.

(d) Complete a program of community service work, as approved by the district school board or the administrators of a nonpublic school, which shall include a minimum of 75 hours of service work and require the student to identify a social problem that interests him or her, develop a plan for his or her personal involvement in addressing the problem, and, through papers or other presentations, evaluate and reflect upon his or her experience.

Students who graduate from high school after 1999 must meet the eligibility criteria pursuant to s. 240.40205.

(2) A student who graduates from high school in 1997 or earlier and who is eligible for the Florida Vocational Gold Seal Endorsement Scholarship award pursuant to s. 240.4021 is eligible for the Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholars award as provided in this act. A student who graduates from high school in 1998 or 1999 is eligible for the Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholars award if the student meets the criteria in s. 240.40207. However, in lieu of satisfying the grade point average requirement set forth in s. 240.40207(1)(c), a student may earn a minimum cumulative unweighted grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale on all subjects required for a standard high school diploma. Students who graduate from high school after 1999 must meet the eligibility criteria pursuant to s. 240.40207.

Section 6. Notwithstanding sections 240.40201, 240.40205, 240.40206, and 240.40207, Florida Statutes, a student who receives any award under the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program, who is enrolled in a nonpublic postsecondary education institution, and who is assessed tuition and fees that are the same as those of a full-time student at that institution, shall receive a fixed award calculated by using the average matriculation

and fee calculation for full-time attendance at a public postsecondary education institution at the comparable level. If the student is enrolled part-time and is assessed tuition and fees at a reduced level, the award shall be either one-half of the maximum award or three-fourths of the maximum award, depending on the level of fees assessed.

Section 7. Notwithstanding any provisions of law to the contrary, in the event that funds in Specific Appropriation 0A of chapter 97-152, Laws of Florida, are insufficient to meet the requirements of the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program for fiscal year 1997-98, funds may be transferred from the Working Capital Fund into the Educational Enhancement Trust Fund in an amount sufficient to meet the requirements of the program. The Commissioner of Education is authorized to initiate a request for such a transfer under the provisions of chapter 216, Florida Statutes. Any transfer or proposed transfer under this act shall be subject to the notice, review, and objection procedures provided in section 216.177(2), Florida Statutes.

Section 8. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.

Approved by the Governor November 21, 1997.

Filed in Office Secretary of State November 21, 1997.