

FAU

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS
Florida Atlantic University

2017
LEGISLATIVE
SESSION
FINAL REPORT



FROM THE OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

It is our pleasure to present the 2017 Legislative Session Final Report.

The Office of Government Relations produces this yearly report in an effort to provide our stakeholders with a comprehensive review of the Florida Legislature's actions during the 2017 Regular and Special Legislative Sessions and their subsequent impacts on FAU and the higher education community.

This year was marked by a growing discord between the Governor, House and Senate, which brought the Legislative Session to a tumultuous conclusion. Prolonged budget negotiations forced an extension of the Regular Session. In addition, a post-Session compromise reached by Governor Rick Scott, Speaker Richard Corcoran and President Joe Negron forced members to return to Tallahassee for a three-day Special Session centered around education and economic development funding.

Earlier this year, the Legislature passed and Governor Scott signed the fiscal year 2017-2018 General Appropriations Act (GAA – SB 2500) into law. The GAA totaled \$82.4 billion and contained several large scale budget and policy priorities, including over \$180 million in tax cuts, funding for everglades restoration and water storage, and support for K-12 education.

State legislators allocated approximately \$4.99 billion (general revenue, trust funds and tuition) to the State University System, which is a \$262 million increase over the previous year's funding. The higher education budget contained significant increases in funding for Bright Futures and need-based financial aid programs as well as additional funding for institutions to hire faculty and enhance the excellence of their medical, law and business graduate programs.

The Legislature also continued to invest in the Board of Governor's Performance Funding Model. This year, Florida Atlantic University ranked 7th among the 11 state universities that compete for performance-based funding. FAU's standing among its peer institutions qualifies it to receive \$19.4 million in new performance funds for the fiscal year 2017-18.

Over the course of several legislative sessions, Florida Atlantic University has developed a consistent, University-wide presence in Tallahassee. On Valentine's Day 2017, the University celebrated another successful FAU Day at the Capitol. FAU Day saw a delegation of more than 40 students, faculty, staff and alumni travel to Tallahassee to engage lawmakers, share the University's successes and increase awareness and understanding of our legislative priorities.

The Office of Government Relations is committed to further developing the connections between our elected officials and the wonderfully talented individuals within the University. We greatly appreciate your assistance and support over the past year and we look forward to building on our success in the years to come.

Go Owls!

The Office of Government Relations

The logo for Florida Atlantic University (FAU), featuring the letters 'FAU' in a stylized, serif font with a small trademark symbol.

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS
Florida Atlantic University

2017

CONTENTS

page 1

MESSAGE FROM THE OFFICE OF
GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

page 2 – 3

2017 LEGISLATIVE SESSION
EXECUTIVE BUDGET SUMMARY

page 4 – 14

2017 LEGISLATIVE SESSION
SUMMARY OF LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

2017 LEGISLATIVE SESSION EXECUTIVE BUDGET SUMMARY

★ GENERAL BUDGET

The fiscal year (FY) 2017-18 General Appropriations Act (GAA) totaled \$82.4 billion and contained several large-scale budget priorities, including more than \$180 million in tax breaks. The GAA allocated approximately \$4.99 billion (general revenue, trust fund and tuition) to the State University System's (SUS) budget totals, which represents an overall increase of \$262 million over the FY 2016-2017 budget. This year, the Governor vetoed nearly \$409 million in member projects and the entire k-12 public education section of the budget. The vetoes were issued in conjunction with the announcement of an agreement that was reached by Governor Rick Scott, House Speaker Richard Corcoran and Senate President Joe Negron, which required the Legislature to return to Tallahassee for a brief Special Session and the reevaluation of certain funding priorities.

★ TUITION

This year's budget did not include a tuition increase for SUS institutions, however, one of Senator Negron's legislative priorities, SB 374 Relating to Postsecondary Education, requires state universities to develop a blocked tuition policy for its undergraduate students. Although SB 374 was vetoed by the Governor due to its policies surrounding the State College System, it is likely that a similar piece of legislation involving block tuition will reappear during the 2018 Legislative Session.

★ PERFORMANCE FUNDING

The cornerstone of the higher education budget is a performance funding pool that is allocated to qualifying institutions pursuant to the Board of Governor's performance funding model recommendations. The Legislature signaled its support for Florida's higher education system by allocating \$520 million in university performance funding in the 2017-18 budget. To advance the state's national reputation for higher education, the budget also includes \$52 million for preeminent and emerging preeminent universities. This year, Florida Atlantic University ranked 7th among the 11 state universities that compete for performance-based funding. FAU's standing among its peer institutions qualifies it to receive \$19.4 million in new performance funds for the fiscal year 2017-18.

★ CAPITAL FUNDS

The SUS budget approved by the Legislature contains \$160.7 million for State University System facilities projects, \$45 million for capital improvement trust fund projects and \$45.6 million for maintenance and repairs at state universities. The state's developmental research (lab) schools also received \$5,754,897 in millage equivalence funding that will be distributed to the six university lab schools, including FAU's Boca Raton and St. Lucie campuses.

Florida Atlantic University received the following capital funds:

- \$9.85 million in non-recurring funding (PECO) for the Jupiter Research Building
- \$3.5 million in nonrecurring funding (PECO) for a cooling tower replacement on the Boca Raton campus

★ SPECIAL SESSION

This year, Governor Scott ordered legislators back to Tallahassee for a three-day Special Session to increase funding for Florida's public schools and to address some of the Governor's top business development priorities. Lawmakers were able to reach an agreement that restored \$60 million of the \$114 million vetoed from higher education projects, added \$215 million into K-12 education, and passed an economic development bill that restored \$75 million to Visit Florida and creates a new economic development grant fund of \$85 million within Enterprise Florida. At the last minute, Governor Scott expanded the Call of the Special Session, which allowed the legislature to pass newly revised levels of higher education funding (as opposed to overriding vetoes), and in a surprise move, add \$50 million toward Herbert Hoover dike repairs.

FAU had two projects included in the Special Session funding bill that were initially vetoed by Governor Scott.

- FAU Tech Runway will receive \$1,016,115 nonrecurring (original allocation was \$1,200,000 Non-Recurring – Vetoed by the Governor)

- FAU Max Planck Scientific Fellowship (pass-through project) will receive \$889,101 recurring (original allocation was \$1,050,000 Recurring – Vetoed by the Governor)

★ **ADDITIONAL FAU SPECIFIC BUDGET PROVISIONS**

- FAU Secondary Robotics Team Support received \$150,000 in nonrecurring funding in addition to the \$100,000 in recurring funding that was already in the budget (this is a pass-through program that will provide support to robotics teams throughout southeast Florida).
- FAU’s Boca Raton-based Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD) received \$1,056,776 in recurring operational funding.
- FAU Honors College Enrollment Expansion received \$1,000,000 in nonrecurring funding (**Vetoed by the Governor**)
- FAU Drug Discovery and Translation Research Partnership with Scripps Florida received \$2,031,780 in nonrecurring funding (**Vetoed by the Governor**)

- Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institutes's Indian River Lagoon Observatory Program received \$350,000 in recurring funding to maintain its water quality monitoring network.

★ **FAU’s SPECIFIC PROVISIO LANGUAGE**

Pursuant to section 1013.74 and section 1013.78, Florida Statutes, the following facilities may be constructed or acquired from non-appropriated sources, which upon completion will require general revenue funds for operation of Education and General space within the building.

- Florida Atlantic University - Schmidt Family Complex - Academic Support Center - Will provide classrooms, computer labs, and study rooms, 17,875 gsf.
- Florida Atlantic University - College of Medicine Simulation Center & Clinical Skills Lab - Offices and teaching labs, used for simulation training and testing, 14,764 gsf.



2017 LEGISLATIVE SESSION SUMMARY OF LEGISLATIVE ISSUES



★ **ACADEMIC ISSUES**

COMPUTER CODING

Currently, public schools are required to provide students in grades K-12 with opportunities for learning computer science, including computer coding and computer programming. HB 265 states that high schools must create opportunities for students to take computer coding courses. The bill further states that two credits in coding courses, coupled with the earning of a related industry certification, satisfies the two credit sequential foreign language instruction requirement. In addition, the measure requires Florida College System institutions and state universities to recognize the computer coding course credits as foreign language credits. The bill also requires the student and the student's parent to sign a statement acknowledging and accepting that taking a computer coding course as a foreign language may not meet the foreign language requirements of out-of-state colleges and universities.

HB 265 failed to gain adequate support and died in House messages.

DISTANCE EDUCATION

The Postsecondary Distance Education, HB 859, establishes the Postsecondary Reciprocal Distance Education Coordinating Council within the Florida Department of Education. The bill was amended to allow the Institutional Assessment Trust Fund to collect all fees from all institutions related to participating in the SARA (State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement). The measure also provides a fee schedule from each Florida SARA institution. The fees are based on a graduated scale of institutional enrollment. All fees collected shall be submitted through the Department of Economic Opportunity.

The effective date of HB 859 is July 1, 2017.

The Governor approved HB 859 on June 9, 2017 (Chapter No. 2017-87).

BEST AND BRIGHTEST

The Best and Brightest Teachers and Principals bill, HB 7069, revises charter school provisions and expands the authority of high performing charter schools and systems. The bill will make it easier for privately

managed charter schools to further expand in Florida and to receive additional taxpayer funding to boost their operations and facilities. It also includes a wide range of other provisions including daily school recess for most elementary school students and requiring public postsecondary students to demonstrate civic literacy. HB 7069 also allocates \$30 million to expand the Gardiner Scholarship, a voucher program named after former Senate President Andy Gardiner that helps students with disabilities pay for alternative education options. The program provides tuition, therapy and other services to roughly 8,000 disabled students and has grown so quickly that organizers say they need more money to fill the need. The bill also revises teacher certification provisions, specifies reading intervention programs, and revises the assessment administration and reporting process. Include a line about the civic literacy.

The effective date of HB 7069 is July 1, 2017.

The Governor approved HB 7069 on June 16, 2017 (Chapter No. 2017-116).

➔ **Click here to learn more about the Best and Brightest Teachers and Principals bill.**

REGULATION OF NURSING

The Regulation of Nursing bill HB 543, makes changes to nursing education program regulation. The bill authorizes the Board of Nursing (BON) to grant a one-year extension to a nursing education program that is on probation for failure to meet the graduate passage rate, if the program shows progress. The BON retains authority to terminate a program after the two-year probation period. A program on probation must notify its students and applicants of that status and its implications in writing. The bill removes a requirement that a nursing student who does not take the licensure examination within six months of graduation must successfully complete a

licensure examination preparatory course. The bill prohibits a program that was terminated or closed from reapplying for approval for a period of three years. It authorizes the BON to adopt rules related to nursing education programs, and to perform an on-site evaluation of a nursing education program applicant. Finally, it eliminates annual reports by the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability on the status of nursing education programs, but requires the Florida Center for Nursing to issue a similar annual reports and include a section on assessment progress and accreditation status for certain nursing programs. The bill also makes various changes to a number of other programs at DOH.

The effective date of HB 543 is July 1, 2017.

The Governor approved HB 543 on June 26, 2017 (Chapter No. 2017-134).

★ TUITION & SCHOLARSHIP ISSUES POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION (HIGHER ED CONFORMING BILL)

The postsecondary education bill contains several policy changes that were intended to make a significant impact on the Florida State University System. SB 374, modifies the performance funding graduation rate metric from 6-year to 4-year and modifies the access rate metric to require benchmarks that reward institutions with access rates at or above 50%. The bill expands the Florida Bright Futures Academic Scholars award to cover 100 percent of tuition and specified fees plus \$300 per fall and spring semester for textbooks and college-related expenses. The legislation revises the state-to-private match requirements for contributions to the First Generation Matching Grant Program from 1:1 to 2:1 and also requires each state university board of trustees to adopt an undergraduate block tuition policy. The bill further establishes the World Class Faculty and Scholar Program to fund and support the efforts of state universities to recruit and retain exemplary faculty and research scholars. It also establishes the State University Professional and Graduate Degree Excellence Program to fund and support the efforts of state universities to enhance the quality and excellence of professional schools and graduate degree programs in medicine, law, and business.

SB 374 was vetoed by the Governor but is expected to reappear in the 2018 Legislative Session.

➡ [Click here to learn more about Postsecondary education.](#)

STUDENT LOAN DEBT

In the U.S., student loan debt totals approximately \$1.3 trillion and is growing annually. SB 396, requires public and private post-secondary education institutions to provide detailed information regarding student loans to students on an annual basis. The institutions will provide up-to-date information to each student receiving student loans. The knowledge provided will allow students to better prepare their finances and goals post-graduation. The information provided by the public or private institution must be presented either in a printed or electronic format.

The effective date of SB 396 is July 1, 2017.

The Governor approved SB 396 on June 14, 2017 (Chapter No. 2017-92).

➡ [Click here to learn more about Student Loan Debt.](#)

EXCESS CREDIT HOUR SURCHARGE

Currently, students who take at least 10 percent more credit hours than required are faced with a 100 percent tuition surcharge. The Excess Credit Hour Surcharges bill, HB 153, would create a surcharge exemption for first-time-in-college students who complete the requirements of their baccalaureate degree program within 4 years. The legislation deals with excess credit surcharges by increasing the number of credit hours students may enroll in before being billed with a 100 percent surcharge of the normal tuition rate. This bill also would increase the baseline credit hour threshold to 120 percent, instead of 110 percent, allowing for more leeway with the surcharge fees. In addition, credit hours earned in upper-division-level courses that must be repeated to meet the requirements for a baccalaureate degree in a science, technology, engineering, or mathematics discipline would not be calculated as hours required to earn a baccalaureate degree.

HB 153 failed to gain adequate support and died in the House Education Committee. It is likely the bill will reappear in the 2018 Legislative Session.

★ CAMPUS SAFETY GUNS ON CAMPUS

As of May 5, 2017, there are 16 states that ban carrying a concealed weapon on a college campus: California, Florida, Illinois, Louisiana, Massachusetts,

Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, South Carolina and Wyoming. In 23 states the decision to ban or allow concealed carry weapons on campuses is made by the individual college or university. Currently, Florida Statutes prohibit those with a valid concealed weapons or concealed firearms license from carrying a concealed weapon or firearm into any college or university facility unless the licensee is a registered student, employee, or faculty member of such college or university; the weapon is a stun gun or nonlethal electric weapon or device designed solely for defensive purposes; and the weapon does not fire a dart or projectile. HB 6005 repeals the section of the statute that bans this practice, and as a result allows valid concealed carry licensees to bring a weapon or firearm into any building on a university or college campus.

HB 6005 failed to gain adequate support and died in the Criminal Justice Subcommittee. It is likely the bill will reappear in the 2018 Legislative Session.

AUTISM AWARENESS TRAINING

Autism Awareness Training for Law Enforcement Officers, HB 39, requires FDLE (Florida Department of Law Enforcement) to establish a continuing education training (CET) component relating to Autism Spectrum Disorders. The training must include, but is not limited to, instruction on the recognition of the symptoms and characteristics of an individual on the autism disorder spectrum and appropriate responses to such individuals.

The effective date of HB 39 is October 1, 2017.

The Governor approved HB 39 on June 2, 2017 (Chapter No. 2017-43).

★ **ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES**

STATE ADMINISTERED RETIREMENT SYSTEM

The Florida Retirement System (FRS) is a multiple employer, contributory plan that provides retirement income benefits to 622,089 active members, 363,034 retired members and beneficiaries, and 38,058 members of the Deferred Retirement Option Program. It is the primary retirement plan for employees of the state and county government agencies, district school boards, state colleges, and universities. The State Administered Retirement System bill, SB 7022, makes several changes to the FRS. It changes the default membership option to the FRS Investment Plan for members initially enrolled in the FRS on or after Jan. 1, 2018, excluding Special Risk Class members who would still default into the FRS Pension Plan.

The effective date of SB 7022 is July 1, 2017.

The Governor approved SB 7022 on June 15, 2017 (Chapter No. 2017-88).

▶▶▶ **Click here to learn more about the Florida Retirement System.**

DIVISION OF STATE GROUP INSURANCE

The Division of State Group Insurance bill, SB 2508, makes numerous changes for the 2020 plan year and each plan year thereafter. The DMS (Department of Management Services) is permitted to contract with a vendor to conduct a dependent eligibility verification audit. The department is required to put all enrollees of the State Group Health Insurance Plan on notice regarding the eligibility requirements for dependents. Through the next open enrollment period for the plan, enrollees can remove dependents who are no longer



eligible for coverage. Beginning in December 2017, a contractor will begin the eligibility audits, requesting and reviewing documents on each dependent to ensure eligibility requirements have been met. The documents submitted for this audit must be retained until June 30, 2019. After that date, the documents are no longer useful and may be destroyed. The bill also updates the current statutory provisions relating to the State Employees Prescription Drug Program.

The effective date of SB 2508 is July 1, 2017.

The Governor approved SB 2508 on June 19, 2017 (Chapter No. 2017-127).

▶▶▶ [Click here to learn more about State Group Insurance.](#)

PUBLIC MEETINGS/MEETINGS BETWEEN BOARD MEMBERS

Currently, the Constitution allows two lawmakers to meet privately and talk about pending policy, but meetings among more than two lawmakers or any meetings between the governor, the Senate President or the House Speaker need to be open to the public and given notice in advance if they're deciding on legislation. HB 843 permits two local government leaders to meet about public business in private. The exemption would have applied to boards or commissions with at least five members, but any two officials who talked privately would still have been barred from making formal decisions, pledging votes or discussing public spending or contracts. It earned a majority of votes in the state House but still lacked the several more needed for it to pass due to a constitutional provision that requires two-thirds' approval for lawmakers to approve any new Sunshine exemptions.

HB 843 successfully made it through all its committee stops but failed to get passed out of the House chamber.

POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION EXECUTIVE SEARCH

Currently, Florida conducts its public higher education executive searches in the sunshine. The Postsecondary Education Executive Search bill, HB 351, makes confidential the names of individuals who apply to be a public college or university president, vice president, provost or dean. Search committees and school trustees would be able to review applicants first in private, but meetings would not be open to the public until the committee defines a final group

of applicants. The names of those finalists, which could be as few as one person, would then have to be released and made public for 21 days before the university or college board casts a final vote to make the hire.

HB 351 failed to gain adequate support in the House and died in the House Education Committee.

PUBLIC RECORDS AND MEETINGS

The Public Records and Meetings bill, HB 501, provides that the following records held by a State University or Florida College System institution are confidential and exempt from public record requirements. This includes records that identify detection, investigation, or response practices for suspected or confirmed information technology security incidents, including suspected or confirmed breaches. The bill exempts from public meeting requirements the portions of a meeting that would reveal data or information that is made confidential. The meeting must be recorded and transcribed, but the recording and transcript of the meeting must remain confidential and exempt from public disclosure. The bill provides that such confidential and exempt information must be provided to specified entities. The bill provides for repeal of the exemption on October 2, 2022, unless reviewed and saved from repeal through reenactment by the Legislature.

The effective date of HB 501 is June 14, 2017.

The Governor approved HB 501 on June 14, 2017 (Chapter No. 2017-109).

PUBLIC RECORDS AND MEETINGS/CAMPUS EMERGENCY RESPONSE

The Public Records and Meetings/Campus Emergency Response bill, HB 1079, creates an exemption from public record and public meeting requirements for information associated with a public postsecondary educational institution's emergency response procedures and practices. "Campus emergency response" is defined as a public postsecondary educational institution's response to or plan for responding to an act of terrorism or other public safety crisis or emergency.

The effective date of HB 1079 is July 1, 2017.

The Governor approved HB 1079 on June 27, 2017 (Chapter No. 2017-184).

POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION (HIGHER ED CONFORMING BILL)

The postsecondary education bill contains several policy changes that were intended to make a significant impact on the Florida State University System. SB 374, modifies the performance funding graduation rate metric from 6-year to 4-year and modifies the access rate metric to require benchmarks that reward institutions with access rates at or above 50%. The bill expands the Florida Bright Futures Academic Scholars award to cover 100 percent of tuition and specified fees plus \$300 per fall and spring semester for textbooks and college-related expenses. The legislation revises the state-to-private match requirements for contributions to the First Generation Matching Grant Program from 1:1 to 2:1 and also requires each state university board of trustees to adopt an undergraduate block tuition policy. The bill further establishes the World Class Faculty and Scholar Program to fund and support the efforts of state universities to recruit and retain exemplary faculty and research scholars. It also establishes the State University Professional and Graduate Degree Excellence Program to fund and support the efforts of state universities to enhance the quality and excellence of professional schools and graduate degree programs in medicine, law, and business.

Specifically, the bill also modifies the following:

- **Tuition, Fees, Grants, and Scholarships** - Clarifies that the technology fee may not be included in a Bright Futures Scholarship Program award except for the Florida Academic Scholars award.
- **Florida Farmworker Student Scholarship Program** – Creates a program where DOE may award up to 50 scholarships annually to farmworkers, as defined, and the children

of such farmworkers, who meet the scholarship eligibility criteria. Clarifies that undocumented immigrants are not eligible for the scholarship.

- **Florida Prepaid College Program** – Specifies that a Florida prepaid College Program plan purchased prior to July 1, 2024, is only obligated to pay for the credit hours in which a student is enrolled.
- **Courtelis University Facility Enhancement Challenge Grant Program** – Maintains the temporary suspension of state matching funds and clarifies the Legislature may prioritize funding for specified projects.
- **Direct Support Organization (DSO)** -Beginning July 1, 2022, a state university board of trustees may not permit any university direct-support organization to use personal services.
- **Board of Governors Strategic Plan** -Requires the Board's strategic plan to instruct state universities to use data-driven gap analyses to identify internship opportunities in high demand fields.
- **2+2 Targeted Pathways** -Requires each FCCS institution, by the 2018-19 academic year, execute at least one "2+2" targeted pathway articulation agreement with one or more state universities to establish "2+2" targeted pathway programs.

Additionally, the institution, if licensed by the Commission for Independent Education, will lose the license to operate in Florida.

SB 374 was vetoed by the Governor on June 14, 2017.



STUDENT LOAN DEBT

In the U.S., student loan debt totals approximately \$1.3 trillion and is growing annually. SB 396, requires public and private post-secondary education institutions to provide detailed information regarding student loans to students on an annual basis. The institutions will provide up-to-date information to each student receiving student loans. The knowledge provided will allow students to better prepare their finances and goals post-graduation. The information provided by the public or private institution must be presented either in a printed or electronic format.

Beginning with the 2017-2018 academic year, a postsecondary institution that disburses state financial aid shall annually, or once during each academic year, provide each student receiving student loans with the following up-to-date information in print or electronic format. It is important to note that an institution does not incur liability for providing this information to a student.

Specifically, the bill requires an up-to-date estimate of:

- The student's total amount of borrowed student loans.
- The student's total potential loan repayment amount, including principal and interest, for the total amount of borrowed student loans.
- The student's monthly loan repayment amounts for the total amount of borrowed student loans at the time the institution provides the student loan information required.
- The percentage of the borrowing limit that the student has reached at the time the information is provided.

The effective date of SB 396 is July 1, 2017.

The Governor approved SB 396 on June 14, 2017 (Chapter No. 2017-92).



STATE GROUP INSURANCE

The Division of State Group Insurance bill, SB 2508, makes numerous changes to the state health coverage & retirement plans. The bill requires the DMS (Department of Management Services) to contract with a vendor to conduct a dependent eligibility verification audit. The department is required to put all enrollees of the State Group Health Insurance Plan on notice regarding the eligibility requirements for dependents. Through the next open enrollment period for the plan, enrollees can remove dependents who are no longer eligible for coverage. Beginning in December 2017, a contractor will begin the eligibility audits, requesting and reviewing documents on each dependent to ensure eligibility requirements have been met. The documents submitted for this audit must be retained until June 30, 2019. After that date, the documents are no longer useful and may be destroyed. The bill also updates the current statutory provisions relating to the State Employees Prescription Drug Program.

Specifically, the bill:

- Authorizes the DMS, beginning with plan year 2018, to procure new types of health care products and services. For plan year 2018, the DMS must contract with an entity to provide enrollees with an online cost comparison for

health care services and providers and at least one entity that provides comprehensive pricing and inclusive services for surgery and other medical procedures. Enrollees may access these services and share in any savings to the plan. The DMS must report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives on certain criteria, including cost-savings to both enrollees and the state resulting from implementation of the Internet-based platform and the comprehensive services.

- Updates the current statutory provisions relating to the State Employees Prescription Drug Program. The current co-payment structure is codified so that it does not revert to the December 31, 2010 co-payment levels each year. The current co-payments of \$7 for generic drugs, \$30 for preferred brand name drugs, and \$50 for non-preferred brand name drugs continue rather than reverting to \$10 for generic drugs, \$25 for preferred brand name drugs, and \$40 for non-preferred brand name drugs.

The effective date of SB 2508 is July 1, 2017.

The Governor approved SB 2508 on June 19, 2017 (Chapter No. 2017-127).



THE ADMINISTERED RETIREMENT SYSTEM

The Florida Retirement System (FRS) is a multiple employer, contributory plan that provides retirement income benefits to 622,089 active members, 363,034 retired members and beneficiaries, and 38,058 members of the Deferred Retirement Option Program. It is the primary retirement plan for employees of the state and county government agencies, district school boards, state colleges, and universities. The State Administered Retirement System bill, SB 7022, makes several changes to the FRS. It changes the default membership option to the FRS Investment Plan for members initially enrolled in the FRS on or after Jan. 1, 2018, excluding Special Risk Class members who would still default into the FRS Pension Plan.

Specifically, the bill:

- Renews membership in the investment plan or one of the optional annuity retirement plans for certain former participants of those plans
- Expands the survivor benefit for investment plan members killed in the line of duty to include all members of the investment plan and made the provisions, including those pertaining to the Special Risk Class, retroactive to 2002
- Closes the Senior Management Service Optional Annuity Program to new members
- Sets the default for members failing to elect participation in either the pension plan or the investment plan into the pension plan for enrollees in positions within the Special Risk Class; and into the investment plan for all other members.
- Provides pay adjustments to state employees and officers for the 2017-2018 fiscal year.

The effective date of SB 7022 is July 1, 2017.

The Governor approved SB 7022 on June 15, 2017 (Chapter No. 2017-88).



BEST AND BRIGHTEST

The Best and Brightest Teachers and Principals bill, HB 7069, revises charter school provisions and expands the authority of high performing charter schools and systems. The bill will make it easier for privately managed charter schools to further expand in Florida and to receive additional taxpayer funding to boost their operations and facilities. It also includes a wide range of other provisions including daily school recess for most elementary school students and requiring public postsecondary students to demonstrate civic literacy.

HB 7069 also allocates \$30 million to expand the Gardiner Scholarship, a voucher program named after former Senate President Andy Gardiner that helps students with disabilities pay for alternative education options. The program provides tuition, therapy and other services to roughly 8,000 disabled students and has grown so quickly that organizers say they need more money to fill the need. The bill also revises teacher certification provisions, specifies reading intervention programs, and revises the assessment administration and reporting process.

Specifically, the bill:

- Extends the Best and Brightest Teacher Scholarship Program through the 2019-2020 school year, revises scholarship award amounts, revises eligibility criteria beginning with the 2020-2021 school year, and provides additional bonus awards for teachers rated highly effective and effective through the 2019-2020 school year

- Establishes the Best and Brightest Principal Scholarship Program to award qualifying principals a scholarship amount and provide certain administrative flexibilities
- Establishes the Schools of Hope program to encourage traditional public schools within the state and charter operators throughout the country with a proven track record of student success in low-income areas to replicate their model and serve students from persistently low-performing schools
- Fosters the development of civic literacy throughout the K-20 education system by authorizing the Governor to designate the month of September as American Founder's Month
- Establishes civic literacy as a priority of the K-20 education system; requiring the Just Read, Florida! Office to develop curricular programming to help build student background knowledge and literacy skills; and requiring public postsecondary students to demonstrate civic literacy
- Streamlines the temporary certificate application process and establishes a mentorship-based certification pathway

The effective date of HB 7069 is July 1, 2017.

The Governor approved HB 7069 on June 16, 2017 (Chapter No. 2017-116).



FAUTM

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS
Florida Atlantic University

