



Week Two was not for the faint of heart on the AFC advocacy team. With several bills that would potentially change the way we do business including baccalaureate degrees, technical colleges, textbooks, residency for tuition purposes, charter schools, and nursing education, the AFC team is spread wide and far and covering a lot of ground. Kudos go out to Presidents Jim Henningsen (CCF) and John Grosskopf (NFCC), our COP Chairs for Policy and Advocacy and the Council respectively, who have spent many days in Tallahassee speaking to legislators and staffers so we can work with them on shaping these initiatives. They are doing a great job keeping options open and talks ongoing.

House Releases Allocations With Boost For Education

A broad budget outline released by the House late Thursday would provide more funding for schools than Gov. Rick Scott's proposal while also reducing taxes and stashing away \$1.2 billion in reserves. The allocations provide House budget-writing committees with a guideline for spending in their areas. Those panels will work next week to produce a spending plan by Friday. "Due to improved economic conditions and the continued fiscal constraint of the Legislature, our state is well on the road to financial recovery," House Speaker Will Weatherford, R-Wesley Chapel, wrote in a memo accompanying the allocations. "It remains vitally important to maintain the disciplined fiscal principles that led us to where we are today, but also recognize that the state can now afford to return revenues to the taxpayer in addition to funding state priorities."

The memo says that the boost for public school funding is "in excess of a 3 percent increase in per student funding" but doesn't specify the exact amount. Anything more than 3 percent would be higher than Scott's plan, which calls for a 2.96 percent increase. Overall, lawmakers would spend almost \$10.8 billion of general revenue on public education, including almost \$3.6 billion on higher education for colleges and universities.

SB 1114 regarding the Florida Retirement System

The Fraternal Order of Police, a law-enforcement union, held a press conference this past week and came out against the FRS bill. Even after the revamped bill exempted "special risk" workers, the FOP felt the proposal was unacceptable. This news along with another state Senator announcing his opposition to the legislation increases the chances the bill may fail again in 2014.

Senator Greg Evers, R-Baker, made the press with this one-liner about the bill, "When it passes, it'll be snowing in Miami". Many thought the exemption would clear the way but so far the opposition has dug in and the effort appears to have stalled. The bill cleared the Community Affairs Committee by one vote last month after state Sen. Jack Latvala of Clearwater, another one of the Republicans who voted against last year's overhaul, opposed it. Evers spoke at a press event with the Fraternal Order of Police, a law-enforcement union that is opposed to this year's measure. James Preston, the president of the organization's Florida State Lodge, said even exempting "special risk" workers didn't make the proposal any more palatable to the organization.

He said those employees make up a small slice of people paying into the Florida Retirement System. "If we're carved out and all those other members are no longer putting into the system, eventually, that system is going to collapse, it's going to destabilize because no fresh money's coming in," Preston said. "And it will eventually affect us. We know if we're carved out this year, they're coming back after us a year from now or two years from now."

This will be a critical week for the legislation and if any deals are going to be made we should begin to hear about them. The team at AFC is fully engaged and ready to respond to any new direction the issue goes.

SB 864 by Hays and HB 921 by M. Gaetz, regarding local school board textbook choices

"This bill gives the citizens of the community very, very active role in the selection and oversight in the material that their children are being taught with," Hays said during a Tuesday Senate Education Committee meeting, where 864 passed with a vote of 8-1. Sen. Dwight Bullard, D-Cutler Bay, cast the only opposing vote.

On Wednesday, the House K-12 Subcommittee voted 8-5 in favor on party line. During the Senate panel, representatives from school districts said the bill reduces the level of accountability the state has sought in the past and moves the system away from standardization. The risk is that each county "...could have different curriculum as we in Florida strive to have statewide accountability and statewide tests," said Wayne Blanton, executive director for the Florida School Boards Association. The bill could also place smaller districts at odds with publishers who may not be able to offer reasonable prices.

Senate sponsor Alan Hays' measure had won support of Senate President Don Gaetz, R-Niceville. "This legislation eliminates any suggestion of federal intrusion and affirms local control of a local responsibility," Gaetz wrote in a press release. Rep. Matt Gaetz said during the House committee that despite law giving districts the option to choose textbooks they still chose the state-approved list and when parents raised concern over content, the state Department of Education was blamed.

Members of both the House and Senate panels feared the cost was too great for smaller districts. "I'm convinced that where you're going is a laudable goal," said Sen. Bill Montford, D-Tallahassee, who voted in favor of Hays bill. "I'm just not sure the school districts can absorb this much on their plates right now."

SB 1148 by Galvano regarding University tuition and College baccalaureate degrees

Among other things, this bill would strip the Florida Board of Education's ability to approve four-year degree programs at state colleges. The measure though could complicate the future of the original bill which was written to reduce the power of state universities to increase tuition without lawmakers' approval.

There are now 172 bachelor's degrees offered by Florida colleges. The bill sponsor told the Senate Education Appropriations Subcommittee that lawmakers need to take control of the program to make sure that the colleges aren't competing with the state's 12 universities, which are overseen by the Florida Board of Governors. "What we are recognizing by this amendment is that it would be appropriate for the Legislature to step back to make sure that we are not running two concurrent, competing systems," he said.

No degrees that are currently offered by the colleges would be affected by the change. Also, the state's so-called 2+2 program, which guarantees students who spend two years at state colleges will be admitted to state universities, would continue. Concerns about "mission creep" by two-year colleges have been around for years, but college presidents have their own worries about the plan and say there are already procedures in place that mandate coordination with the university system and assure no duplication. "Our bachelor-degree graduates are specifically in workforce programs not trying to compete with the

universities,” said Jim Henningsen, president of the College of Central Florida. “Some of those degrees that do compete are ones where our universities have said, that’s OK.”

This amendment amends Florida Statute to:

- Disallow any NEW bachelor’s degrees to be offered by a Florida College as of March 31, 2014.
- Delete language allowing colleges to change the college name.
- Amend the mission of the colleges to say that upper level instruction and awarding of baccalaureate degrees is a secondary role.
- Delete all language related to the process for requesting approval to offer a new program.
- State that, unless established by the General Appropriations Act, all upper level courses will be offered at the same tuition rate as lower division courses.

The underlying bill, which passed 11-1 after the baccalaureate amendment was added, decreases the size of tuition increases that universities can institute — with the approval of the Florida Board of Governors — from 15 percent to 6 percent. Gov. Rick Scott has indicated he wants to completely repeal the so-called “differential” tuition law, approved in 2009. But Weatherford, R-Wesley Chapel, said Tuesday he believed the differential law should remain, just at a lower level.

The bill could be heard in the full Senate Appropriations committee this week. There is no House companion bill at this time.

CS HB 7057 by Higher Education and Workforce Subcommittee and SB 1202 by Montford regarding School District Technical Colleges

As reported last week, this bill would authorize school district technical centers to become Technical Colleges, offering College Credit Certificates (CCC) and Associate in Applied Science (AAS) Degrees. The bill allows any Technical Center to offer any CCC. The local School Board can change the center’s name to “college” once that occurs. If the institution decides to offer an AAS it would have to seek approval from the State Board of Education. The bill does not require accreditation to offer the CCC, only for the AAS. Since the courses in a CCC will transfer to both colleges and universities, according to the Common Course Numbering (CCN) system, the Center/College would need to meet the CCN faculty criteria. The bill limits the general education offerings of a technical college to those required for an AAS.

The bill may be heard later this week in the House Education Committee.

HB 851 by Nunez and SB 1400 by Latvala regarding Residency for Children of Alien Parents

These bills are the primary vehicles for establishing a law to grant residency for tuition purposes. These bills amend the current law to

- Provide that a United States citizen who is a dependent child may not be denied classification as a resident for tuition purposes based solely upon the immigration status of his or her parent.
- Provide that postsecondary institutions may satisfy the verification requirement of documents by accepting an affidavit that requires the person claiming residence to submit specific information.
- Clarify that once any institution of higher education in the state classifies a student as a resident for tuition purposes or verifies that a student meets specific criteria established in law, an institution of higher education would not be required to re-evaluate the classification status of a student so long as there is no inconsistent information suggesting an erroneous classification and there is no break in the student’s enrollment of 12 months or longer.
- Clarify that a student who resides in Florida may be classified as a resident for tuition purposes if he or she marries a person who qualifies as a resident for tuition purposes. It also allows a student who has been classified as a nonresident to reclassify as a resident upon subsequently marrying a person who already qualifies as a resident for tuition purposes.
- Provide that a dependent child living with an adult relative who is a Florida resident and who is not the child’s parent, the bill reduces the amount of time the child must live with the relative in

order to use the relative's documentation to establish residency for tuition purposes from five years to three years.

The bill also clarifies that students who are eligible for specific tuition exemptions or waivers are classified as residents for tuition purposes. The bill exempts the following types of students from the payment of out-of-state fees:

1. Veterans of the United States Armed Forces, including reserve components, who physically reside in Florida while enrolled in a Florida postsecondary institution; and
2. Students, who attend a Florida high school for 3 consecutive years and enroll in a postsecondary institution within 24 months after graduation, provided they submit their high school transcript as documentary evidence of attendance and graduation.

SB 1284 by Ring regarding Charter Schools

This bill creates the Florida Charter School Association with a State Board representing Charter school interests. The new entity would assume some of the responsibilities for oversight of Charter Schools currently provided by the State Board of Education. Any charter school in the State is eligible for membership, but it is not mandatory. The bill established the Florida Charter School Association for the following purposes:

1. Protect the interests of students, parents, board members, taxpayers, educators, and other claimants and the general public.
2. Provide a mechanism for administering charter school operations and for administering payment of claims due to a charter school failure, and mitigate the impact of failing charters.
3. Assist in the detection and prevention of a potentially dangerous condition in a charter school and promptly apply appropriate corrective measures.
4. Implement improved methods for rehabilitating charter schools, including methods involving the cooperation and management expertise of the charter school industry.
5. Establish a system to equitably apportion an unavoidable loss as a result of a charter school failure.
6. Administer the reassignment of students and teachers in the event of a charter school failure.
7. Maximize recovery of assets for the benefit of the students, parents, board members, taxpayers, educators, creditors, and other claimants and the general public.

CS/SB 1036 by Grimsley and HB 1059 by Pigman regarding Nursing Education programs

This bill would make some fairly significant changes to the delivery of nursing education at all our colleges. The bill re-defines "clinical training" to include simulation and removes the current 25% limit on how much clinical training can be conducted via simulation. Potentially it could be unlimited. The bill also requires the accreditation of all RN programs by July 2019. The bill also increases CEUs to 30 and removes the CEU requirement if the nurse graduates from an accredited program. The bill is scheduled to be heard in the Senate Education committee this week.

HB 961 by Zimmerman and SB 1074 by Montford regarding Dual Enrollment

These bills amend current statutes to allow any FCS and SUS institution to serve any secondary dual enrollment student regardless of whether or not the student resides in the institution's service district. The bills also provide for free instructional materials to private and homeschool students. They also add the technology fee to the list of exempt these for dual enrollment students. HB 961 also strikes language implemented last year that requires school districts to pay college standard tuition and states that dual enrollment costs should be shared to cover institutional and support costs.

EDAS 2 by House Appropriations regarding Dual Enrollment

This proposal covers several Dual Enrollment Issues. It states that no dual enrollment student may complete 24 postsecondary credits before completion of the general education core as described in statute. It also says that no school district can refuse to sign an articulation agreement for dual enrollment if the local Florida College has the capacity. This bill, unlike HB 961, maintains the fee structure established in 2013 legislation for dual enrollment fees paid at the standard tuition rate by the school districts. The bill would require all school districts to enter dual enrollment articulation with local independent universities and colleges (does not include for-profit institutions). It also states that for students taking more than 1.0 FTE of dual enrollment courses, postsecondary institutions will be paid standard fees from the General Appropriations Act.

Remembering Governor Askew (from Florida Today)

Former Gov. Reubin O'donnel Askew, a major figure in modern Florida political history, died Thursday at age 85. Askew, a Democrat, served as governor from 1971 to 1979, after a dozen years representing the Pensacola area in the Legislature.

Former Gov. Jeb Bush

"With the passing of Governor Reubin Askew, Florida has lost one of the great leaders who played a pivotal role in shaping the trajectory of our state during a time of substantial growth and change. He led on contentious issues, fought for equality and did what he believed was in the best interests of Florida families. Governor Askew always put principle before politics, and I was fortunate to know him, seek counsel from him and learn from his years of service. "Governor Askew's service to Florida continued well past his time in elected office as he lectured at universities across the state, instilling in so many young Floridians the same passion for good public policy and ethical governance that he demonstrated throughout his storied career. "Reubin Askew will always be remembered as a great Floridian and a committed, accomplished public servant."

State Senate President Don Gaetz

"The passing of Governor Reubin Askew leaves a lonesome place against the Florida sky. He opened up Florida's government to its people and made our state a model for America. For those of us of a certain age who cut our political teeth in the 60s and 70s, Governor Askew was living proof that good guys can finish first. Integrity was his platform and honor was his policy. I was privileged to get to know him in his final years. One of the most memorable evenings of my life was the opportunity to co-teach his graduate class at Florida State. Being in his presence was like walking with history."

U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson

"Governor Askew was one of the best examples of integrity in the public square. He believed that 'a public office is a public trust'."

State House Speaker Will Weatherford

"In Governor Askew, Florida has lost a leader who embodied what it means to be a true public servant. Governor Askew leaves behind a legacy of public service that has set the standard for all individuals in elected office today. His tenure includes opening up government and creating new reporting standards for elected officials, which still serve Florida well today. I'm grateful to have had the opportunity to get to know this great man."

Florida State University President Eric Barron

"I interacted with him a lot: Talk about a gentlemen. He had an incredible sense of humor and a perspective on Florida in national politics that I couldn't get anywhere else. I think it's one of the reasons why I enjoyed Florida State so much, interacting with him." Askew's signature is on Barron's FSU diploma. "One of the things that he talked about frequently was his stance on doing something that everybody believed would be a death knell for getting re-elected to make the state better. His description

of why doing the right thing was so important really stuck in my mind. He kind of had that attitude of doing what was right, not what was politically expedient.”

Former Gov. Charlie Crist

“Governor Askew opened up government to the people, allowing our state to be progressive on critical issues like civil rights, education and ethics. He was a public servant, a teacher of students, and now a lesson of hope and progress forever sketched into the history of our beautiful state.”

Contributors: Erin McColskey, Jack Hall, Jeff Schembera, Michael Brawer, News Service of Florida and Florida Today.