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OSFA-STATE HS: #26-27:01

MEMORANDUM

TO: Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program Contacts
Public and Private High School Counselors

FROM: Shawn Haskin
Director, State Scholarship and Grant Programs

DATE: August 25, 2026

SUBJECT: Bright Futures Scholarship Information for 2026-27 High School Seniors

Please share information in this memorandum with the appropriate personnel. The following pages contain reminders related to the state *Florida Financial Aid Application*, the Bright Futures evaluation process, and the items mentioned below.

- Volunteer Service and Paid Work Hours Requirement
- Bright Futures Student Handbook
- "Clean Slate"
- 2026-27 Early Evaluation Processing
- Qualifying Test Scores
- Mid-Year Evaluations
- *Florida Financial Aid Application* (FFAA)
- Coursework Requirements
- Bright Futures Course Table (BFCT)
- Security
- Webinar Information

Volunteer Service and Paid Work Hours Requirement

Students may satisfy the service hour requirement for a specific Bright Futures program by completing the statutory required number of volunteer service hours, 100 paid work hours, or a combination of both. The combination of volunteer service hours and paid work hours must equal a minimum of 100 total hours to fulfill the service hour requirement. Please ensure that all completed hours are included on student transcripts.

Students must complete a program of volunteer service, paid work, or a combination of both as approved by the district school board or the administrators of a nonpublic school. Each district school board and the administrators of a nonpublic school must establish approved activities and the process for the documentation of volunteer service or paid work hours including the deadline by which they must be completed. The student may identify a social or civic issue or a professional area that interests them and develop a plan for their personal involvement in addressing the issue or learning about the area. The student must, through papers or other presentations, evaluate and reflect upon their volunteer service or paid work experience. Volunteer service or paid 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 or paid 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 volunteer service or paid work.

Bright Futures Student Handbook

At the beginning of each fall term, the Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA) updates the Bright Futures Student Handbook. Please be sure to review the handbook each year prior to the beginning of the school year so you are aware of any changes. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the requirements to qualify for an award. Chapter 2 provides information to students about their award at a postsecondary institution, including the award amounts. Chapter 3 provides information on how to maintain scholarship eligibility.

"Clean Slate"

The "Clean Slate" process for public schools consists of the following:

- Prior to receiving 2026-27 and 2027-28 transcripts, OSFA will delete all junior and senior transcripts from our database on August 28, 2026.
- The district/school will be required to submit new transcripts for all enrolled juniors and seniors after **September 1, 2026**.

Benefits of the "Clean Slate" approach include:

- The list of seniors will only include enrolled students that reported during the current year;
- Transcripts submitted for seniors will have current demographic information; and
- First transcript submissions for seniors will not have a Bright Futures matching issue (e.g., B01, B02 and B09) as there will not be any prior year records to match against.

2026-27 Early Evaluation Processing

Submit Early Evaluation transcripts within 30 days of the end of the first semester. For each senior, include the following information: 7th semester grades, courses in progress for the 8th semester, and volunteer service and paid work hours earned during high school through January 31, 2027. OSFA will obtain official ACT®, CLT®, and SAT® test scores for tests taken through January 31, 2027. Please review each transcript for accuracy. OSFA will communicate with our Bright Futures district and school contacts when award notifications begin to post to students' online accounts in spring 2027.

NOTE: The FASTER address value for Early Evaluation 2027 senior transcripts is 2771.

Qualifying Test Scores

Students will be evaluated based on official test scores received from the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) Test Repository. Please remind students, at the time of each test registration, to send scores from single test sittings (not a superscore) to a Florida public university or Florida public state college. To assist with the repository confirmation, students must ensure all demographic information, and their current address is accurate on each ACT®, CLT®, or SAT® test registration. This demographic information must match the demographic information found on the student's high school transcript. Test scores from exams taken no later than August 31 (no later than January 31 for mid-year graduates) of the student's graduation year will be accepted.

Test scores for the 2026-27 graduates who are seeking funding in the 2027-28 award year include:

- Florida Academic Scholars (FAS) – minimum ACT® composite score of 29, minimum CLT® overall score of 95, or minimum SAT® combined score of 1330.
- Florida Medallion Scholars (FMS) – minimum ACT® composite score of 24, minimum CLT® overall score of 82, or minimum SAT® combined score of 1190.

The ACT® Science section is optional for Bright Futures when calculating the ACT® composite score.

- Students that have never taken the Science section will have three sections (English, Math, Reading) added together and divided by three.
- Students that have ACT scores with Science reported will have two averages calculated (with and without Science), which will consist of:
    - Four sections (English, Math, Reading, Science) added together and divided by four, and
    - Three sections (English, Math, Reading) added together and divided by three.

Note: The higher average of these two composite scores will be used for Bright Futures evaluation purposes.

- Composite scores ending in 0.50 or higher will be rounded up to the next whole number.
- Composite scores utilize the highest score achieved within each of the individual subject areas.

Note: Students can request single sitting **ACT® or CLT®** test scores be sent directly to OSFA by selecting **"Bright Futures"** while on the ACT® or CLT® website.

Mid-Year Evaluations

Mid-Year graduates are those students who:

- Graduate mid-way through the 2026-27 year (September 1, 2026, through January 31, 2027);
- File the *Florida Financial Aid Application* no later than December 31, 2026; and
- Plan to enroll and receive funding at a postsecondary institution in Spring 2027.

Submit transcripts for Mid-Year graduates in fall 2026 to ensure Early Evaluations may be processed.

NOTE: The FASTER address value for 2026-27 Mid-Year graduate transcripts is 2771.

Florida Financial Aid Application (FFAA)

The *2027-28 Florida Financial Aid Application* (FFAA) is required to be submitted for students who wish to be evaluated for a scholarship. The student must submit a completed FFAA during the last year in high school, beginning October 1, 2026, and no later than August 31, 2027. Students who do not complete an application will forfeit their eligibility for a Bright Futures scholarship.

Best Practices:

- All current high school seniors should apply for Bright Futures as soon as possible even if all scholarship requirements have not been achieved yet.
- Encourage all high school seniors to file the FFAA even if they are currently planning to attend an out-of-state postsecondary institution or who may qualify for other state scholarship and grant programs.

Coursework Requirements

Program requirements for Florida Academic Scholars (FAS) and Florida Medallion Scholars (FMS) align with the State University System (SUS) admissions requirements as outlined in Florida Board of Governors Regulation 6.002, Admission of Undergraduate First-Time-in-College, Degree-Seeking Freshmen. The official final evaluation for a Gold Seal Vocational (GSV) scholarship is based upon a student satisfying all GSV requirements with completed transcript fields: DIPLOMA TYPE Standard and valid GRADUATION DATE. The Gold Seal CAPE (GSC) scholarship requires a minimum of five postsecondary credit hours through CAPE industry certifications that articulate for college credit.

Bright Futures Course Table (BFCT)

Use the BFCT in conjunction with the resources provided for counselors on the BFCT home screen at https://sso.osfaffelp.org/BFIEHS/Course/ComprehensiveCourse. Users will find links on the BFCT to resources that provide comprehensive information concerning coursework approved in the state and how courses are used for various purposes, including high school graduation. Recent additions to the BFCT include a comprehensive list of all approved qualifying CAPE Industry Certifications. Counselors should use those resources to advise students. Please review information provided in the Florida Counseling for Future Education Handbook under the appendix "High School Special Case Course Equivalencies." The Bright Futures office will refer any counselor question concerning a course to our BFCT partners, the Office of Articulation, Workforce, or the Board of Governors.

Security

We encourage Bright Futures district and school contacts to use their User ID and Password to review the Communications and Training tab on the Online Transcript Entry and Evaluation System (OTEES) website, and to encourage school personnel to review as well. Contact your school or district Security Designee with any security issues for yourself or other school personnel. You may also email OSFASecurity@fldoe.org with questions. Please do not provide complete Social Security numbers on student or counselor documents emailed to our office.

Webinar Information

OSFA will host an informational training session for school personnel to better understand the topics outlined in this memorandum and address general questions related to the Bright Futures Scholarship Program. Each session will be limited to the first 250 registered attendees. OSFA will host additional sessions, as needed.

Available Session Dates (choose one):

- Tuesday, September 15, 2026 – 10:00AM to 11:00AM (EST)
- Thursday, September 17, 2026 – 10:00AM to 11:00AM (EST)

To request attendance during one of the available sessions listed below, please send an email to Pedro.Hernandez@fldoe.org with the following information:

- Session Date,
- Attendee's First and Last Name,
- Email Address,
- Phone Number,
- School District,
- High School Name (leave this field blank if you represent the district office), and
- School Type (Public, Private, Home Education).

For assistance, call OSFA Customer Service at 888-827-2004 and request to speak to a program specialist.

SH/tj

cc: Lou Anne Standley, Assistant Deputy Commissioner, Division of Finance and Operations
Timberly Johnson, Bright Futures Scholarship Program Supervisor, OSFA, Division of Finance and Operations
Nikki Allison, Educational Policy Analyst, OSFA, Division of Finance and Operations
Pedro Hernandez, Educational Policy Analyst, Outreach Services, OSFA, Division of Finance and Operations