



DAILY BRIEF

From April 22, 2013

Education

Governor Rick Scott signed into law President Don Gaetz's (R-Destin) career education legislation and number one education priority, SB 1076, *Relating to K-20 Education*, by Senator John Legg (R-Lutz). The bill revises current career education programs and target funding in an effort to better prepare and align Florida students to join the workforce. Specifically, the bill would encourage students' development of technology knowledge in prekindergarten through grade 12, thus effectively increasing opportunities in which students earn industry certifications in high school and beyond.

Further, it designates three areas for university performance funding: computer and information technology (IT), high demand programs as identified by the Board of Governors (BOG) using a gap analysis; and cloud virtualization or related large data management. The bill specifically requires:

- The State Board of Education to designate multiple pathways for demonstrating the skills required for high school graduation, including earning industry certifications for high school credit;
- Adult education students to complete a planning exercise called Action Steps to Career Readiness;
- Financial literacy to be included in high school graduation requirements, as part of required credit in economics, and requires an emphasis on entrepreneurship in the career education and planning course in middle school;
- Creation of new designations for students to earn high school course and credit accomplishments that indicate their eligibility for scholar and gold designations;
- Steps for transition to the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards and related assessments;
- Development of a Postsecondary Industry Certification Funding List for industry certifications that may be funded for school district workforce programs, Florida College System institutions, and state universities;
- Development of a Florida Cyber Security Recognition and a Florida Digital Arts Recognition for elementary school students with awarding of a Florida Cyber Security designation for the school for each year in which 75 percent of the students earn the recognitions; and
- Development of a Florida Digital Tools Certificate for middle school students with bonus.

Now that it has been signed by the Governor, it will go into law July 1, 2013.

AIF's President and CEO, Tom Feeney spoke during the press conference commending those involved for passing the legislation. Feeney said "Florida's talent pipeline begins in the classroom. As new industries emerge and others, such as manufacturing, welcome a resurgence, we must prepare our students for a job market that increasingly requires highly skilled and trained employees."

AIF supports any legislation geared toward preparing Florida's students for a successful transition into the workforce.

Health Care

The Governor also signed HB 239, *Relating to Practice of Optometry*, by Representative Matt Caldwell (R-Lehigh Acres). The bill allows certified optometrists who complete additional coursework and pass an examination to provide a broader range of services including administering and prescribing oral pharmaceutical agents. For the last several years, optometrists have sought to increase their scope of practice, noting they can provide additional services for patients at a lower cost.

With the Governor's signature, the bill will go into law effective July 1, 2013.

AIF supports expanding the scope of practice for health care professionals in order to increase access to services and lower the cost of care.