

Articulation Coordinating Committee Policy Regarding the Transfer of Educational Records in Florida

Background

Rule 6A-10.024, FAC “Articulation Between and Among Universities, Florida Colleges, and School Districts” states in section (12): “The Department and all public universities, Florida College System institutions, and school districts shall maintain the electronic exchange of student transcripts and associated educational records, including acquisition of and access to test scores of students in the standard format established by the ACC.”

The electronic mechanism for exchange of transcripts, called the Florida Automated System for Transferring Educational Records (FASTER), has been in place since the 1988-89 academic year. Initially, usage was limited as districts, community/state colleges and universities modified their local student records systems to interface with FASTER. Only 28,000 transcripts were exchanged during that first year. Now, over 1 million electronic transcripts are exchanged annually.

At about the same time that Florida's FASTER system was going into production, Florida joined with other states to begin developing a national student record transfer system which has come to be known as SPEEDE/ExPRESS.

FASTER and SPEEDE/ExPRESS work in coordination to provide transcript services for all Florida students processing student records as efficiently and securely as possible at minimal or zero cost to state institutions. As a transfer mechanism, FASTER also provides a print capability for schools, but does not provide pdfs or data directly to students.

Current Status

At this time, FASTER is the transfer mechanism for immunization records between districts. The FASTER team and the Department of Health have discussed utilizing FASTER as the transfer mechanism for immunization records between the State Health Online Tracking System (SHOTS) and the districts (Section 1003.22(4), Florida Statutes).

The Florida Department of Education and all public universities, community/state colleges, and school districts are required to maintain the electronic exchange of student transcripts and associated educational records, including test scores of students in the standard format established by the Articulation Coordinating Committee (ACC). FASTER and SPEEDE/ExPRESS participating institutions include:

- 12 Public Universities and (of 12)
- 28 Florida college system (of 28)
- 67 School Districts (of 67 regular)

Issues

- FASTER transmissions:
 - FASTER is the required facility for the submission of Bright Futures and Talented Twenty transcripts, therefore all secondary schools have the capability to send transcripts using FASTER.
 - District to district – most, but not all, districts use FASTER to send transcripts to other districts.
 - District to postsecondary and postsecondary to postsecondary – most districts and postsecondary institutions use FASTER to send transcripts, however many schools are using private transcript companies instead of FASTER to send transcripts.
- Cost: In the past few years, FASTER staff noticed an increased usage of private transcript companies. The majority of these companies charge students to provide electronic images of printed Florida high school or college/university transcripts to other districts and postsecondary institutions within the state although this same service is offered to students free of charge through FASTER and SPEEDE/EXPRESS.
- Administrative Costs: The high schools and postsecondary institutions not using FASTER to send data create additional costs to the receiving institution associated with manually entering the transcript data into their database.
 - For example, one Florida university received 7,000 PDF transcripts rather than FASTER transcripts from colleges and secondary schools that cannot be processed by the university's automation. For that university, almost 19% of the non-FASTER transcripts had to be manually processed, while 37,000 FASTER transcripts could be directly entered into their data systems. In addition to creating additional costs, manually entering the transcript data slows the admissions process for students.
- Accuracy: The electronic image (PDF) transcripts are not subjected to data validation prior to being forwarded to the high schools and postsecondary institutions. There is also the potential for transcription errors when the data is manually entered into the receiving institutions' data systems.

ACC Policy

It is the policy of the Articulation Coordinating Committee that all student transcripts exchanged between Florida public schools, state colleges, and state universities, and the Florida Department of Education be accomplished via FASTER using the FASTER formats and the FASTER transmission system. This policy is not intended to prohibit or restrict school districts or state colleges and universities from using other methods to provided hard-copy versions or PDF versions of student transcripts for students to use when applying for employment or as needed for postsecondary institutions that do not participate in FASTER.

Adopted by the ACC at their meeting on Wednesday, February 28, 2018.