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TO: District Superintendents

FROM: Jim Horne
Secretary of Education

DATE: November 15, 2002

RE: FACTS High School Academic Evaluations/
Section 1009.531 (4), F.S., Implementation Alternative

I am pleased to announce that beginning in January 2003, all high school students and their parents will be able to receive a personalized High School Academic Evaluation on how the student stands in relation to Bright Futures eligibility requirements and the State University System course admissions requirements. In addition, the evaluations are intended to help the Districts meet the requirements of Section 1009.531(4), F.S., passed this last legislative session. The evaluations will be accessible through the Internet on **FACTS.org**, Florida's official statewide student advising system.

FACTS.org was originally developed to provide traditional and distance learning postsecondary students with access to their transcripts, degree audits, and transfer information through a statewide on-line student advising center. With the emphasis on K-20 education services, **FACTS.org** has been expanded beyond its original mission to include services to K-12 students and their parents. Information about postsecondary opportunities has also been expanded to include independent colleges and universities as well as public institutions, truly making **FACTS.org** a K-20 one-stop web center.

The **High School Academic Evaluation** function is currently being tested. When put into production, it will allow high school students to create a LOGIN ID and PASSWORD, and using transcripts provided by their high school, receive an evaluation of their progress towards meeting the Bright Futures Scholarship program eligibility requirements and the State University System course requirements for admission. The **High School Academic Evaluation** will be ready for students to use beginning **January 2003**.

CHARLIE CRIST
COMMISSIONER
FLORIDA DEPARTMENT
OF EDUCATION

In addition to providing K-12 students and their parents with web access to different evaluations, this **function also meets most of the requirements called for in** Section 1009.531(4), F.S. The only requirement not covered by the evaluation is the requirement that students' report cards include a disclosure *that the grade point average calculated for the purposes of the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program may differ from the grade point average on the report card.*

Currently, school districts are required to electronically submit transcripts for high school seniors who have applied for the Bright Futures Scholarship and for all students in the top twenty percent of their graduating class as part of the Talented 20 program to the Department of Education. **Using this same procedure, we are requesting that you please submit transcripts for all your students --Freshmen, Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors – via the FASTER electronic transcript system. We are requesting the transcripts be sent no later than December 16, 2002,** so information from your District will be available when the system is unveiled to the students and their parents in January. **The transcript submissions will occur three times during the academic year; after Fall and Spring schedules are finalized and at the end of the school year after final grades have been posted. For the December 16th transmission, we would like you to send the final Fall transcripts with the courses in progress listed.** Attached to this memorandum are instructions and timelines for the submission of student transcripts.

We have found that students, parents and high school counselors throughout the State are enthusiastic about the wealth of information provided on **FACTS.org**, and are eagerly awaiting the High School Academic Evaluations. As education moves into the electronic age, students expect to receive services comparable to the types of services they already receive from private commerce via the web. FACTS.org is intended to meet students' expectations as well as improve access to educational services. It has been built with students and parents in mind and we are confident that FACTS.org will become a valuable tool in your District as you look for ways to serve students better and more efficiently.

If you require additional information, please contact Connie Graunke at (850) 201-7363 or email her at connie.graunke@fldoe.org

We look forward to continuing to serve you and the students of the State of Florida.

JH/cgh

Attachment

c: High School Principals
District MIS Directors
District Guidance Supervisors
District Bright Futures Representatives

Instructions for Submitting Transcripts in Support of the FACTS HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMIC EVALUATION TOOL

The Bright Futures Scholarship System was chosen as the repository for the data that will support the FACTS High School Academic Evaluation Tool because it already has the capability to store transcripts for both high school seniors and underclassmen. Last year, in fact, school districts submitted transcripts for about 60,000 juniors, 40,000 sophomores, and 20,000 freshmen to Bright Futures. **In submitting data for the new FACTS High School Academic Evaluation tool, school districts will follow the same procedures from last year with which you are already familiar.**

1.0 This Year's Bright Futures Processing

This year, conduct your Bright Futures processing in the same way as last year. All FASTER transmissions will still be sent to 'district' 95 (Addressed Institution **0000095**) on the FASTER Header Record). You will still submit seniors' transcripts to Early Evaluation processing in the middle of the students' senior year, and to Summer Evaluation after these students have graduated. As with last year, transcripts must be submitted to the Practice System until the student completes their Florida Financial Aid Application with the State Student Financial Aid Database. None of these procedures change.

2.0 Additional Transmissions In Support of FACTS

You are being asked to conduct an additional transmission of senior transcripts, and several transmissions of the transcripts of your underclassmen. The goal of the FACTS High School Academic Evaluation Tool is to provide students with real-time evaluations of their progress towards scholarship qualification and university system course admission requirements. To achieve this goal, FACTS must have access to your students' latest transcript information. Thus, you are asked to submit transcripts for your students:

1. **At the beginning of the school year as soon as student schedules are finalized in conjunction with the Schedule II Survey** (so the transcripts will include the new classes on the students' schedules as courses-in-progress),
2. **At the beginning of the second semester, once semester 1 grades have been posted and semester 2 schedules are finalized** in conjunction with the Bright Futures Early Qualification Submission (submit semester 2 courses as courses-in-progress), and
3. **At the end of the school year once semester 2 grades have been posted in conjunction with the Graduation Evaluation sent for Bright Futures** (if scheduling information for the next school year is available at this time, you may send them as courses-in-progress).

For schools operating under the trimester or quarter systems, send transcripts at the beginning of the school year and at the end of each term.

For your seniors, transmissions 2 and 3 above are the normal transmissions you would send at the end of their seventh (Early Evaluation) and eighth semesters (Graduation Evaluation). The above transmissions are supplemental to your ordinary Bright Futures submissions of transcripts for your seniors, so **you would not need to send one transmission for Bright Futures purposes and a separate transmission for FACTS: a single transmission will satisfy both needs.**

Submit your transcripts according to the existing FASTER addressing scheme for Bright Futures Transcripts. The **Addressed District** field on the FASTER Header Record will continue to be 'district' **0000095**. The values for **Addressed School** will be as follows:

Freshmen:	0670
Sophomores:	0570
Juniors:	0470
Seniors:	0370 (only for beginning-of-year submission)

Send your transcripts in exactly the same way you would submit any other Bright Futures transcript. The Bright Futures System will respond to these transcript submissions in the normal way. Every time you make a new submission, the system will evaluate the new or updated transcripts and put out Cumulative and Most Recent Evaluation Reports for you to download under the existing dataset naming convention:

Cumulative Reports:	OBF.IE.P30047.Yyyyy.S7.Ann
Most Recent Evaluations:	OBF.IE.P30048.Yyyyy.S7.Ann

Where 'nn' is your district number, and 'yyyy' is 2006 for freshmen, 2005 for sophomores, 2004 for juniors, and 2003 for seniors. Your guidance counselors will be able to use the Bright Futures web system to review these transcript submissions as they have in past years.

Again, the transmissions you will make in support of the FACTS High School Academic Evaluation Tool are supplemental to the Bright Futures transmissions you would normally make. If you are already submitting transcripts of freshmen, sophomores, and juniors to Bright Futures, you will not have to do anything you have not already done before, except make a transmission in Fall.

This Year's FACTS Transmission Schedule

Since the beginning of the 2002-2003 school year has already come and gone, you will not be able to make the Fall FACTS transmission at the time you would normally make it. Instead, you are asked to make this transmission (transcripts of all high school

students, freshmen through seniors) as soon as you can, but no later than **December 16, 2002**. This will enable the FACTS High School Academic Evaluation Tool to come on-line, fully loaded, in January of 2003.

Semester schools will make their second transmission at the beginning of the second semester (once semester 1 grades have been posted and semester 2 course schedules are final). Their third transmission will come at the end of the second semester once grades have been posted. If the students' provisional fall schedules are available at this time, send these fall courses as courses-in-progress.

Trimester schools will make their second transmission at the beginning of the third trimester (once trimester 2 grades have been posted and trimester 3 course schedules are final). Their third transmission will come at the end of the year, as with semester schools.

Quarter schools will make their second transmission at the beginning of quarter 3 (once quarter 2 grades have been posted and quarter 3 course schedules are final). Similarly, their third transmission will come at the beginning of quarter 4, followed by a fourth transmission at the end of the school year (as with semester and trimester schools).

If you have any technical questions concerning FACTS transmissions to Bright Futures, please contact Pete Tanzy at (850)487-8658, SUNCOM/277-8658, Pete.Tanzy@fldoe.org.