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MEMORANDUM

TO: District School Superintendents
District Technical Center Directors
Florida College System Institution Presidents
State University System Institution Presidents

FROM: Dr. Paul O. Burns, Chancellor, Public Schools
Dr. Kevin O'Farrell, Chancellor, Career and Adult Education
Kathryn Hebda, Chancellor, Florida Colleges
Raymond Rodrigues, Chancellor, State University System

DATE: April 25, 2023

SUBJECT: Ensuring Compliance with Transcript Transfers Using the FASTER System

The Florida Department of Education (FDOE) and the Office of the Board of Governors for the State University System of Florida have recently been made aware of an increase in the use of third-party vendors to transmit transcripts, in lieu of using the Florida Automated System for Transferring Educational Records (FASTER). This practice has caused delays in processing for receiving institutions and students' related matriculation or enrollment and increases the chance of error in students' records.

Please be reminded that State Board of Education (SBOE) rules and Board of Governors regulations, respectively, require that all public universities, Florida College System institutions, and school districts utilize FASTER for the transmission of records within Florida's public secondary and postsecondary education systems. Agencies that transmit records through third-party vendors within the public education system are out of compliance with Florida Administrative Code and Board of Governors regulation.

Specifically, Rule 6A-10.024, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), *Articulation Between and Among Universities, Florida Colleges, and School Districts*, requires the FDOE 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 [Articulation Coordinating Committee].” In accordance with this rule, the Articulation Coordinating Committee (ACC) established a standard format for the electronic exchange of student transcripts and educational records, as referenced in the following policy statement adopted at their February 28, 2018, meeting.

“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.”

This policy is also codified in Board of Governors Regulation 8.007, Articulation, which states, “(8) Each SUS [State University System] institution shall maintain the electronic exchange of student transcripts between other SUS institutions, FCS institutions, and the Department of Education and utilize the Florida Automated System for Transferring Educational Records (FASTER) or another system that converts educational records into a compatible format.”

The use of third-party vendors to provide images or PDF versions of student transcripts, in lieu of using FASTER to transmit electronic student records, requires additional effort to load student information into the receiving school’s student information system, in addition to the introduction of errors and processing delays for students discussed previously.

Students benefit from record transfer using the FASTER system in two ways: (1) the data are transmitted between institutions in a consistent format that may be easily loaded into student information systems without manual data entry that may speed up the processes for admissions, placement, and registration; and (2) in most cases, educational records may be transferred at no cost to the student.

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As an additional note, system usage data indicates some institutions are only using the Standardization of Postsecondary Education Electronic Data Exchange/Exchange of Permanent Records Electronically for Students and Schools (SPEEDE/ExPRESS) system. SPEEDE/ExPRESS does include a FASTER conversion component to transmit student records. Institutions using SPEEDE/ExPRESS can meet the ACC policy regarding FASTER when the fields related to Florida-specific requirements, such as general education core, civic literacy, reverse transfer, and digital badges, are used. Though these fields are labeled “optional” in SPEEDE/ExPRESS, using them as required fields is an acceptable way to meet the ACC’s policy and, more importantly, to ensure that complete student transcripts are transmitted.

By June 2, 2023, we ask your organizations to complete a survey to indicate current FASTER usage and, if necessary, your organization’s plans and an estimated timeline to be fully compliant with FASTER usage requirements. The survey is available at:

<https://www.research.net/r/fastercompliance>.

We appreciate your assistance in ensuring a cost-effective and consistent approach to transmitting student records through FASTER on behalf of students and in accordance with the ACC policy, Florida Administrative Code, and Board of Governors Regulation. For more information on FASTER, visit <http://www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org/FASTER/>.

For any questions about this policy, please contact Abbey Ivey, Assistant Vice Chancellor of Articulation Policy, at abbey.ivey@fldoe.org. Questions about the FASTER system can be directed to Trinity Henderson, Manager, Course Code Directory, at trinity.henderson@fldoe.org.

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