

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

BILL #: PCS for HB 4013 Blended Learning Courses

SPONSOR(S): Choice & Innovation Subcommittee

TIED BILLS: **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:**

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR or BUDGET/POLICY CHIEF
Orig. Comm.: Choice & Innovation Subcommittee	11 Y, 1 N	Dehmer	Healy

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

Schools districts are authorized to provide blended learning courses that include both traditional classroom instruction and online instruction techniques. However, the law requires that students in a blended learning course must receive the online instruction in a classroom setting at the school. This prohibits a number of blended learning models from being implemented. The bill removes the requirement that online instruction must occur in a classroom setting at a school, expanding the blended learning models available to districts.

The bill does not appear to have a fiscal impact on the state or local governments.

This bill takes effect July 1, 2016.

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

Current Situation

In 2011, the legislature authorized districts to provide direct instruction through a virtual environment or through a blended virtual and physical environment. Blended learning courses consist of both traditional classroom and online instructional techniques. Students in a blended learning course must be full-time students of the school and receive the online instruction in a classroom setting at the school. The funding, performance, and accountability requirements for blended learning courses are the same as traditional courses.¹

Blended learning is defined as a formal education program in which a student learns:

- at least in part through online learning, with some element of student control over time, place, path, and/or pace;
- at least in part in a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home and;
- the modalities within a course or subject that are connected to provide an integrated learning experience.²

The requirement that students must receive the online instruction in the classroom at the school eliminates several blended learning models that could benefit students and school districts, such as:

- **Flipped Classroom** - a course or subject in which students participate in online learning off-site in place of traditional homework and then attend the brick-and-mortar school for face-to-face, teacher-guided practice or projects.
- **Flex model** - a course or subject in which online learning is the backbone of student learning, even if it directs students to offline activities at times. Students move on an individually customized, fluid schedule among learning modalities. The teacher of record is on-site, and students learn mostly on the brick-and-mortar campus, except for any homework assignments. The teacher of record or other adults provide face-to-face support on a flexible and adaptive as-needed basis through activities such as small-group instruction, group projects, and individual tutoring.
- **A La Carte model** - a course that a student takes entirely online to accompany other experiences that the student is having at a brick-and-mortar school or learning center.³

Effect of Proposed Changes

The bill removes the requirement that online instruction in a blended learning course take place in a classroom setting at a school while still requiring the student to be a full-time student of the school.

B. SECTION DIRECTORY:

Section 1. Amends s. 1003.498, F.S. related to school district virtual course offerings.

Section 2. Provides an effective date of July 1, 2016.

¹ Section 1003.498 (1), F.S.

² Blended Learning Definitions, Clayton Christensen Institute, at <http://www.christenseninstitute.org/blended-learning-definitions-and-models/> (last visited December 3, 2015).

³ *Id.*

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

None

2. Expenditures:

None.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

None.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

There is no anticipated fiscal impact associated with this bill.

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

Not applicable. This bill does not appear to affect county or municipal governments.

2. Other:

None.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

None.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

None.

IV. AMENDMENTS/ COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES

Not Applicable.