

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

BILL #: PCS for CS/HB 1285 Education
SPONSOR(S): Education & Employment Committee
TIED BILLS: None. **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:** CS/SB 996

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR or BUDGET/POLICY CHIEF
Orig. Comm.: Education & Employment Committee		Blalock	Hassell

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

The bill makes a number of changes to Florida's K-12 public schools, specifically the bill:

- requires virtual instruction providers and virtual charter schools to provide a list of students to be administered statewide assessments and progress monitoring to the school district, and specifies that unless an alternative testing site is mutually agreed upon, all assessments and progress monitoring must be taken at the school to which the student would be assigned according to district school board attendance policies;
- requires district school boards to make reasonable efforts to enter into dual enrollment articulation agreements with a Florida College System (FCS) institution which offers online dual enrollment courses;
- requires each school district and charter school to offer students in grades 11 and 12 the opportunity to take the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery and consult with a military recruiter if the student chooses;
- expands Florida's support of military families by creating the Purple Star School District Program which recognizes school districts with at least 75 percent of schools designated as Purple Star Campuses;
- authorizes the Commissioner of Education to appoint and remove an executive director for the Education Practices Commission;
- revises district dropout prevention and academic intervention programs by requiring teachers assigned to such schools to be certified, revising the parental notification prior to student enrollment in the program, and requiring students in the program to have individualized student goals and progress monitoring;
- revises the deadlines for submission of turnaround plans and requirements under a turnaround option available to low performing schools, specifying the responsibilities of a school district and charter school who are implementing a turnaround plan for a public school which is reopening as a charter school, prohibiting a district from charging rental or leasing fees for the existing facility or withholding an administrative fee, and requiring the SBE to develop a standard charter school turnaround contract, facility lease, and mutual management agreement;
- requires that any changes made by the SBE to components in the school grades model or the school grading scale must go into effect, at the earliest, in the following school year;
- repeals the authority for school districts and charter schools to allow, for good cause, a student to participate in the same sport at another school during the same school year;
- allows a classical charter school to provide an enrollment preference to students who transfer from another classical school;
- exempts an owner or lessee of a property used to house a charter school from having to make an annual ad valorem tax exemption application, and provides penalties under certain circumstances related to the exemption.

At the postsecondary level, the bill:

- requires that for each adoption cycle, publishers and manufacturers must make sample copies of all state-adopted instructional materials available electronically for use by Florida's Educator Preparation Institutes;
- prohibits a public postsecondary institution from implicitly or explicitly prohibiting applicants or currently enrolled students from being employed, either full time or part time, as a condition of admission to or enrollment in any of the institution's schools, colleges, or programs;
- provides a single-document method for a student to prove residency for tuition purposes;
- transitions and extends the effective period for the amount paid by the Florida Prepaid College Board to state universities on behalf of qualified beneficiaries of advance payment contracts within the Florida Prepaid Program;
- authorizes an Associate in Arts (AA) specialized transfer degree for FCS institution students who need supplemental lower-level coursework above the 60 credit hours of the traditional AA degree in preparation for transfer to a baccalaureate degree program; and
- repeals the FCS Institution Employment Equity Accountability Program.

The bill does not appear to have a fiscal impact.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2024.

This document does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill sponsor or House of Representatives.

STORAGE NAME: pcs1285.EEC

DATE: 2/5/2024

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

Virtual Instruction Programs

Present Situation

A virtual instruction program provides an interactive, technology-based learning environment in which students are separated from their teachers by time or space, or both.¹ Each school district must provide at least one option for part-time and full-time virtual instruction for students residing within the school district, and provide timely written notification to parents of at least one open enrollment period for full-time students.²

A school district virtual instruction program must consist of the following:

- Full-time and part-time virtual instruction for students enrolled in kindergarten through grade 12.
- Full-time or part-time virtual instruction for students enrolled in dropout prevention and academic intervention programs, Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) education programs, core-curricula courses to meet class size requirements, or Florida College System (FCS) institutions.³

Each school district must provide information to parents and students about students' right to participate in a virtual instruction program and in courses offered by the Florida Virtual School (FLVS).⁴

All students, including home education and private school students, are eligible to participate in district virtual instruction programs.⁵ In order to provide students residing within the school district with the opportunity to participate in virtual instruction programs, a school district may:

- contract with the FLVS⁶ or establish a franchise of the FLVS;
- contract with a provider approved by the Department of Education (DOE) for the provision of a full-time or part-time school district virtual instruction program;
- enter into an agreement with another school district to allow its students to participate in a virtual instruction program provided by the other school district;
- establish school district operated part-time or full-time kindergarten through grade 12 virtual instruction programs; and
- enter into an agreement with a virtual charter school authorized by the school district.⁷

Contracts with the FLVS or other providers may include multidistrict contractual arrangements that may be executed by a regional consortium service organization⁸ on behalf of its member school districts.⁹ Additionally, a virtual charter school may enter into an agreement with a school district to allow participation of the virtual charter school's students in the school district's virtual instruction program.¹⁰

¹ Section 1002.45(1)(a)3., F.S.

² Section 1002.45(1)(b), F.S.

³ Section 1002.45(1)(b)1., F.S.

⁴ Sections 1002.37(1) and (9)(a) and 1002.45(9), F.S.

⁵ Section 1002.455, F.S.

⁶ The Florida Virtual School is established for the development and delivery of online and distance learning education full-time and part-time to students enrolled in kindergarten through grade 12. The Commissioner of Education is required to monitor the school's performance and report the school's performance to the State Board of Education (SBE) and the Legislature. Section 1002.37(1)(a) and (9)(a), F.S., s. 1002.45(9), F.S.

⁷ Section 1002.45(1)(c)1.-5., F.S.

⁸ See s. 1001.451, F.S. School districts with 20,000 or fewer unweighted full-time equivalent students, lab schools, and the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind may enter into cooperative agreements to form a regional consortium service organization.

⁹ Section 1002.45(1)(c), F.S. (flush left provision at the end of the subsection).

¹⁰ Section 1002.45(1)(d)3., F.S.

Participating students must comply with the compulsory school attendance requirements as verified by the district. Students must also participate in the state assessment program and the coordinated screening and progress monitoring system.¹¹

Statewide assessments and progress monitoring may be administered within the school district in which the student resides, or as specified in a contract between the school district and a qualified contractor, if applicable.¹² If requested by the approved virtual instruction program provider¹³ or virtual charter school,¹⁴ the district of residence must provide the student with access to the district's testing facilities.¹⁵

Effect of Proposed Changes

The bill requires virtual instruction providers and virtual charter schools to provide a list of students to be administered statewide assessments and progress monitoring to the school district, including the students' names, Florida Education Identifiers, grade levels, assessments and progress monitoring to be administered, and contact information.

The bill specifies that unless an alternative testing site is mutually agreed upon by the virtual provider and the school district, or specified in a contract between the school district and a qualified contractor, all assessments and progress monitoring must be taken at the school to which the student would be assigned according to district school board attendance policies. The school district must provide the student with access to the school's or district's testing facilities and provide the student with the date and time of the administration of each assessment and progress monitoring.

Dual Enrollment

Present Situation

Overview

The dual enrollment program is an acceleration mechanism that allows an eligible secondary student or home education student to enroll and earn credit in a postsecondary course that is creditable toward both a high school diploma and an associate or baccalaureate degree or career certificate.¹⁶ An eligible secondary student is a student who is enrolled in grades 6 through 12 in a Florida public school or eligible private school that provides a secondary curriculum.¹⁷ Upon successful completion of a dual enrollment course, the student simultaneously receives high school and college, university, or career certificate credit. Students may also participate in dual enrollment for courses that will lead to an industry certification. Eligible students are permitted to enroll in dual enrollment courses conducted during and after school hours and during the summer term. Dual enrollment students are exempt from the payment of registration, tuition, and laboratory fees.¹⁸

Articulation Agreements Between Public Postsecondary Institutions and School Districts

As used in the Florida K-20 Education Code, "articulation" is the systematic coordination that provides the means by which students proceed toward their educational objectives in as rapid and student-friendly manner as their circumstances permit, from grade level to grade level, from elementary to middle to high school, to and through postsecondary education, and when transferring from one

¹¹ Section 1002.45(5), F.S.

¹² Sections 1002.45(5)(b) and 1008.24(3), F.S.

¹³ Section 1002.45(2), F.S.

¹⁴ Section 1002.45(1)(d), F.S.

¹⁵ Section 1002.45(5)(b), F.S.

¹⁶ Section 1007.271(1), F.S.

¹⁷ Section 1007.271(2), F.S.

¹⁸ *Id.*

educational institution or program to another.¹⁹ “Service area” refers to the county or counties served by each Florida College System (FCS) institution.²⁰

Each public postsecondary institution and school district in its service area must jointly develop and implement a comprehensive dual enrollment articulation agreement.²¹ The dual enrollment articulation agreement must be submitted annually to the DOE on or before August 1 and must include, but is not limited to, the following components:

- The available dual enrollment courses and programs.²²
- A description of the processes by which students and parents are informed about and exercise options to participate in dual enrollment, including registration.²³
- The type of high school credit earned for completion of a dual enrollment course.²⁴
- A listing of any additional student eligibility criteria.²⁵
- Each institution's responsibilities for student screening and performance monitoring, transmission of grades, program costs including instructional materials, and student transportation.²⁶

District school boards may not refuse to enter into a dual enrollment articulation agreement with a local FCS institution that has the capacity to offer dual enrollment courses.²⁷

Effect of Proposed Changes

The bill requires district school boards to make reasonable efforts to enter into dual enrollment articulation agreements with a FCS institution which offers online dual enrollment courses.

The Purple Star Campus Program

Present Situation

The Purple Star Campus program was established by the Florida legislature in 2021²⁸ and further defined in State Board of Education (SBE) rule as the Purple Star School of Distinction Designation.²⁹ The purpose of the Purple Star School of Distinction Designation is to recognize schools that support the unique needs of military families, help military-connected students navigate critical challenges, and provide resources for military-connected students when transitioning to a new school environment.³⁰ As of November 2023, 197 Florida schools have earned the Purple Star School of Distinction Designation.³¹

For the purpose of this program, a “military student” means a student who is:

¹⁹ Section 1000.21(1), F.S.

²⁰ Section 1000.21(5)(a)-(bb), F.S.

²¹ Section 1007.271(21), F.S.; *see also* Florida Department of Education (DOE), *Public School Dual Enrollment Articulation Agreements*, <https://www.fldoe.org/policy/articulation/public-school-dual-enrollment.shtml> (last visited Jan. 26, 2024).

²² Section 1007.271(21)(c), F.S.

²³ Section 1007.271(21)(b), (d), and (i), F.S. Career centers, FCS institutions, and state universities must also delineate courses and programs for dually enrolled home education students. Courses and programs may be added, revised, or deleted at any time. Section 1007.271(13)(b)1., F.S.

²⁴ Section 1007.271(21)(f), F.S.

²⁵ Section 1007.271(21)(e), F.S. Career centers, FCS institutions, and state universities must also identify eligibility criteria for home education student participation, not to exceed those required of other dually enrolled students. Section 1007.271(13)(b)2., F.S. Exceptions to the required grade point average may be granted on an individual student basis. Section 1007.271(21)(h), F.S.

²⁶ Section 1007.271(21)(l), (m), (n), and (o), F.S.

²⁷ Section 1007.271(4), F.S.

²⁸ Section 1, ch. 2021-65, L.O.F., codified at s. 1003.051, F.S.

²⁹ Rule 6A-1.0999, F.A.C.

³⁰ Florida Department of Education (DOE), *Purple Star School of Distinction Designation*, <https://www.fldoe.org/schools/family-community/activities-programs/parental-involvement/purple-star.shtml> (last visited Jan. 21, 2024).

³¹ DOE, *Governor Ron DeSantis Announces 73 New Purple Star Schools to Provide Additional Resources for Military Families*, <https://www.fldoe.org/newsroom/latest-news/icymi-governor-ron-desantis-announces-73-new-purple-star-schools-to-provide-additional-resources-for-military-families.shtml> (last visited Jan. 21, 2024).

- enrolled in a school district, charter school, or any school or educational institution participating in an educational choice scholarship program;³² and
- a dependent of a current member of the United States military serving on active duty in, or a former member of, the Army, Navy, Air Force, Space Force, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard; a reserve component of any branch of the United States military; or the Florida National Guard.³³

At a minimum, the program requires a participating school to:

- Designate a staff member as a military liaison.
- Maintain a web page on the school's website which includes resources for military students and their families.
- Maintain a student-led transition program that assists military students in transitioning into the school.
- Offer professional development training opportunities for staff members on issues relating to military students.
- Reserve at least 5 percent of controlled open enrollment seats for military students.³⁴

Once awarded, schools maintain their designation as a Purple Star School of Distinction for three school years.³⁵

Effect of Proposed Changes

The bill requires the DOE to create the Purple Star School District Program. At a minimum, the program must require a participating district to have at least 75% of schools in the district designated as Purple Star Campuses and maintain a web page on the district website with resources for military students and their families and links to each Purple Star Campus's web page with resources. The bill authorizes the DOE to establish additional program criteria to identify school districts that demonstrate a commitment to or provide critical coordination of services for military students and their families, including, but not limited to, establishing a council consisting of a representative from each Purple Star Campus in the district and one district-level representative to ensure the alignment of military student-focused policies and procedures within the district.

The bill authorizes the SBE to adopt rules to administer the program.

Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery & Military Recruiters

Present Situation

Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery

The Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) is a multiple-choice test, administered by the United States Military Entrance Processing Command, used to determine qualification for enlistment in the United States Armed Forces.³⁶

The ASVAB is a timed multi-aptitude test, administered at over 14,000 schools and Military Entrance Processing Stations nationwide and developed and maintained by the Department of Defense. It measures a young adult's strengths and potential for success in military training.³⁷

³² Chapter 1002, F.S.

³³ Section 1003.051(1), F.S.

³⁴ Section 1003.051(2)(a), F.S.

³⁵ Rule 6A-1.0999, F.A.C.

³⁶ Official ASVAB, *ASVAB Fact Sheet* (2023), available at https://www.officialasvab.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/ASVAB-Fact_Sheet.pdf.

³⁷ Military.com, *The ASVAB Test*, <https://www.military.com/join-armed-forces/asvab> (last visited Jan. 21, 2024).

The ASVAB consists of 10 subtests and scores are used to determine the best jobs for those entering a branch of the military. Scores from four of the math and verbal domain subtests are used to determine an Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT) score, which determines eligibility for enlistment.³⁸

Each branch of the military has different standards. The minimum scores each branch of the military requires depends on whether a potential recruit has a high school diploma or a high school equivalency diploma (GED). Those students with a GED need a higher AFQT score than students with a high school diploma. An AFQT score of 60 indicates that the examinee scored as well as or better than 60 percent of the nationally representative sample. For high school graduates earning a diploma, the requirements by military branch are as follows:³⁹

- Air Force recruits are required to have a minimum AFQT score of 31.
- Army recruits are required to have a minimum AFQT score of 31.
- Coast Guard recruits are required to have a minimum AFQT score of 36.
- Marine recruits are required to have a minimum AFQT score of 31.
- National Guard recruits are required to have a minimum AFQT score of 31.
- Navy recruits are required to have a minimum AFQT score of 31.

AFQT scores are divided into five categories:⁴⁰

- Category I - 93-99.
- Category II - 65-92.
- Category IIIa - 50-64.
- Category IIIb - 31-49.
- Category IVa - 21-30.
- Category IVb - 16-20.
- Category IVc - 10-15.
- Category V - 1-9.

Beginning with the 2022-2023 school year, the school grading formula for high schools was modified to include the percentage of students who earned an AFQT score that falls within Category II or higher on the ASVAB and earned a minimum of two credits in Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) courses from the same branch of the United States Armed Forces.⁴¹

Military Recruiters and Access to Public School Campuses

Under current law, a school district must grant military recruiters of the United States Armed Forces and United States Department of Homeland Security the same access to secondary school students, and to school facilities and grounds, which the district grants to postsecondary educational institutions or prospective employers of students.⁴²

A school district must also grant military recruiters access to the names, addresses, and telephone listings of secondary school students as required by federal statute,⁴³ except the district must comply with a student's or parent's request under federal⁴⁴ or state⁴⁵ statute not to release the student's information without prior written parental consent.⁴⁶

Effect of Proposed Changes

³⁸ US Military Careers, *How the ASVAB Score is Computed*, <https://www.liveabout.com/how-the-asvab-afqt-score-is-computed-3354094> (last visited Jan 21, 2024).

³⁹ Official ASVAB, *Enlistment Eligibility*, <https://www.officialasvab.com/applicants/enlistment-eligibility> (last visited Jan. 21, 2024).

⁴⁰ *Id.*

⁴¹ Section 2, ch. 2020-75, L.O.F.; s. 1008.34(3)(b)2., F.S.

⁴² Section 1003.451(3)(a), F.S.

⁴³ 20 U.S.C. § 7908(a)(1).

⁴⁴ 20 U.S.C. § 7908(a)(2).

⁴⁵ Section 1002.22, F.S.

⁴⁶ Section 1003.451(3)(b), F.S.

The bill requires each school district and charter school to offer students in grades 11 and 12 the opportunity to take the ASVAB and consult with a military recruiter if the student chooses. The ASVAB must be scheduled during normal school hours.

Dropout Prevention and Academic Intervention

Present Situation

Overview

Each district school board may establish dropout prevention and academic intervention programs at the elementary, middle, or high school level.⁴⁷ These programs must use instructional teaching methods appropriate to the specific needs of each student participating in the program.⁴⁸ Any school that establishes a dropout prevention and academic intervention program must reflect the program in its school improvement plan.⁴⁹

Dropout prevention and academic intervention programs may differ from traditional programs and schools in scheduling, administrative structure, philosophy, curriculum, or setting and must employ alternative teaching methodologies, curricula, learning activities, and diagnostic and assessment procedures in order to meet the needs, interests, abilities, and talents of eligible students.⁵⁰

Eligibility for participation in a dropout prevention and academic intervention program is limited to students in grades 1 through 12. School districts must report eligible students in the appropriate basic cost factor in the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP). The strategies and supports provided to eligible students are funded through the General Appropriations Act and may include, but are not limited to, those services identified on the student's academic intervention plan.⁵¹

Students are eligible for dropout prevention and academic programs if they are academically unsuccessful, exhibit a pattern of excessive absenteeism or have been identified as a habitual truant, have a history of disruptive behavior in school or have committed an offense that warrants out-of-school suspension or expulsion from school, or have been identified by a school's early warning system.⁵² Student participation in a dropout prevention and academic intervention program is voluntary. District school boards may, however, assign students to a program for disruptive students. A student must not be identified as eligible for dropout prevention and academic intervention program services based solely on being from a single-parent family.⁵³

District school boards that receive state funding for dropout prevention and academic intervention must submit an annual report to the DOE documenting the extent of the district's success in using dropout prevention and academic intervention programs to improve the district's graduation rate, dropout rate, attendance rate, and retention/promotion rate.⁵⁴ In addition, school boards that provide a dropout prevention and academic intervention program must maintain records for each participating student documenting the student's eligibility, the length of the student's participation, the type of program to which the student was assigned or type of academic intervention services provided, and an evaluation of the student's academic and behavioral performance while in the program.⁵⁵

District school boards must establish course standards for dropout prevention and academic intervention programs⁵⁶ and procedures to ensure that teachers assigned to these programs possess

⁴⁷ Section 1003.53(2)(a), F.S.

⁴⁸ *Id.*

⁴⁹ Section 1003.53(2)(b), F.S.

⁵⁰ Section 1003.53(1)(a), F.S.

⁵¹ Section 1003.53(1)(b), F.S.

⁵² Section 1003.53(1)(c), F.S.

⁵³ Section 1003.53(1)(a), F.S.

⁵⁴ Section 1003.53(3), F.S.

⁵⁵ Section 1003.53(5), F.S.

⁵⁶ Rule 6A-6.0521, F.A.C.

the affective, pedagogical, and content-related skills necessary to meet the needs of students placed in the program.⁵⁷

Prior to a student's placement in a dropout prevention and academic intervention program, the school principal must provide written notice by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the student's parent.⁵⁸ The student's parent must return acknowledgement of the written notice within three days of receipt. The notice must inform the parent that he or she is entitled to an administrative review of any action by school personnel relating to the student's placement.⁵⁹

Effect of Proposed Changes

The bill authorizes district school boards to assign students to a disciplinary program for disruptive students or an alternative school setting or other program in accordance with the state's policy of zero tolerance for crime and victimization.⁶⁰ The bill requires that, notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, no student can be identified as eligible to receive services through the dropout prevention and academic intervention program solely based on having a disability. The bill requires that before placement in a dropout prevention and academic intervention program or the provision of an academic service, the school principal, or his or her designee, must provide written notice of placement or services to the student's parent; must make a reasonable effort to notify the student's parent by telephone or e-mail, or both; and must document this effort.

The bill provides that dropout prevention and academic intervention programs established by each district school board must utilize student services that lead to improved student behavior as appropriate to the specific needs of the student. The bill requires that each student enrolled in a dropout prevention and academic intervention program has an academic intervention plan developed to address eligibility for placement in the program and to provide individualized student goals and progress monitoring procedures. A student's academic intervention plan must be consistent with the student's individual education plan (IEP).

Finally, the bill requires that teachers assigned to dropout prevention and academic intervention programs are certified as required under the law and by rules of the SBE.⁶¹

School Improvement and Accountability

Present Situation

School Turnaround Plans

Florida's system of improving low-performing schools is referred to as "school improvement" (SI).⁶² Under SI, the lowest-performing schools receive more comprehensive, state-provided intervention and support than schools that are closer to meeting student achievement goals.⁶³ Intervention and support is required for traditional public schools earning a letter grade of "D" or "F" or producing a graduation rate of sixty-seven (67) percent or less.⁶⁴

Intensive intervention and support strategies must be applied through turnaround plans⁶⁵ to schools earning two consecutive grades of "D" or a grade of "F".⁶⁶ In the first full school year after a school

⁵⁷ Section 1003.53(4), F.S.

⁵⁸ Section 1003.53(5), F.S.

⁵⁹ *Id.*

⁶⁰ Section 1006.13, F.S.

⁶¹ Section 1012.55(1), F.S.

⁶² Section 1008.33(2) and (4), F.S.; rule 6A-1.099811, F.A.C.

⁶³ *See id.* School improvement requirements were originally established under the 2002 reauthorization of ESEA, otherwise known as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001. Pub. L. No. 107-110, 115 Stat. 1425 (Jan. 8, 2002).

⁶⁴ Section 1008.33(3)(b), F.S.; *see also* rule 6A-1.099811(2)(aa), F.A.C.

⁶⁵ Rule 6A-1.099811(2)(bb), F.A.C.

⁶⁶ Section 1008.33(4)(a), F.S.

initially earns a grade of “D,” the school district must immediately implement intervention and support strategies.⁶⁷ For a school that initially earns a grade of “F” or a second consecutive grade of “D,” the school district must either continue implementing or immediately begin implementing intervention and support strategies⁶⁸ and provide the department with the memorandum of understanding by September 1 and a district-managed turnaround plan by October 1 for approval by the SBE.⁶⁹ The plan must be designed to improve a school’s grade to a “C” or better within two school years.⁷⁰

The district-managed turnaround plan may include a proposal for the district to implement an extended school day, a summer program, a combination of an extended school day and a summer program, or any other authorized option for SBE approval. A school district is not required to wait until a school earns a second consecutive grade of “D” to submit a turnaround plan for approval by the state board.

Upon SBE approval, the school district must implement the plan for the remainder of the school year and continue the plan for one full school year. The SBE may allow a school an additional year of implementation before the school must implement a turnaround option⁷¹ if it determines that the school is likely to improve to a grade of “C” or higher after the first full school year of implementation.⁷²

If the school’s grade does not improve to a “C” or higher after the additional year (its fourth consecutive grade below a “C”), or after the first full year of implementation if an additional year is not granted, the school must select from the following turnaround options:⁷³

- Reassign students to another school and monitor the progress of each student.
- Close the school and reopen as one or more charter schools with a governing board that has a demonstrated record of effectiveness.
- Contract with an external operator that has a demonstrated record of effectiveness to operate the school.

Selection of an external operator may include one, or a combination of the following:⁷⁴

- A district-managed charter school or a high-performing charter school network in which all instructional personnel are not employees of the school district, but are employees of an independent governing board composed of members who did not participate in the review or approval of the charter.
- A contractual agreement that allows for a charter school network or any of its affiliated subsidiaries to provide individualized consultancy services tailored to address the identified needs of one or more schools under this section.

To exit the SI program, a school must meet one of the following requirements:⁷⁵

- If the school’s SI status is determined by its school grade, the school must earn a grade of at least a “C”; or
- If the school’s SI status is solely based on its graduation rate, it must achieve a graduation rate higher than 67 percent.

If a school earning two consecutive grades of “D” or a grade of “F” does not improve to a grade of “C” or higher after two school years of implementing the turnaround option selected by the school district, the district must implement another turnaround option. Implementation must begin the school year following the implementation period of the existing turnaround option, unless the SBE determines that

⁶⁷ Rule 6A-1.099811(3)(c), F.A.C.

⁶⁸ *Id.*

⁶⁹ Section 1008.33(4)(a), F.S.

⁷⁰ Rule 6A-1.099811(7)(a) and (13)(b), F.A.C. A Tier 2 SI school is any school that earns a single grade of “F” or consecutive grades of “D” in any school year in which the school received a grade and is in the first cycle of turnaround. Rule 6A-1.099811(3)(b), F.A.C.

⁷¹ Section 1008.33(4)(b), F.S.

⁷² Section 1008.33(4)(a), F.S.

⁷³ Section 1008.33(4)(b), F.S.; rule 6-A 1.099811(7)(b), F.A.C

⁷⁴ Section 1008.33(4)(b)3., F.S.

⁷⁵ Rule 6A-1.099811(16), F.A.C

the school is likely to improve to a grade of “C” or higher if additional time is provided to implement the existing turnaround option.⁷⁶

School Grades

School grades are used to explain a school’s performance in a familiar, easy-to-understand manner for parents and the public.⁷⁷ School grades are also used to determine whether a school must select or implement a turnaround option⁷⁸ or whether a school is eligible for school recognition funds as appropriated by the Legislature.⁷⁹

Elementary, middle and high schools each share a basic model for determining school grades, based on the percentage of total points earned by a school for each component in the model. Middle and high school models include additional components beyond the basic model.⁸⁰ Combination school models include the additional components for the grades served (e.g., a school serving grades K-12 would include the additional components for the middle and high school models).

Each school must receive a school grade based on the school’s performance on the following components:⁸¹

- The percentage of eligible students passing statewide, standardized assessments in English Language Arts (ELA), mathematics, science, and social studies.
- The percentage of eligible students who make learning gains in ELA and mathematics as measured by statewide, standardized assessments.
- The percentage of eligible students in the lowest 25 percent in ELA and mathematics, as identified by prior year performance on statewide, standardized assessments, who make learning gains as measured by statewide, standardized assessments.
- For schools comprised of grade levels that include grade 3, the percentage of eligible students who score an achievement level 3 or higher on the grade 3 statewide, standardized ELA assessment.
- For schools comprised of middle grades 6 through 8 or grades 7 and 8, the percentage of eligible students passing high school level statewide, standardized end-of-course assessments or attaining national industry certifications identified in the Career and Professional Education (CAPE) Industry Certification Funding List pursuant to SBE rule.

For a school comprised of grades 9-12 or 10-12, the school’s grade is also based on the following components:⁸²

- The 4-year high school graduation rate of the school.
- The percentage of students who were eligible to earn college and career credit in a specified acceleration mechanism, who earn a specified industry certification, or who participate in JROTC courses and earn a qualifying score on the ASVAB.

The SBE must periodically review the school grading scale to determine if the scale should be adjusted upward to meet raised expectations and encourage increased student performance. The SBE must notify the public of any adjustments and explain the reasons for the adjustment and the impact it will have on school grades.⁸³

Florida launched a new, statewide coordinated screening and progress monitoring system during the 2022-2023 school year.⁸⁴ This assessment system provides teachers, students and parents with real-time, immediate, and actionable data at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year to drive

⁷⁶ Section 1008.33(4)(d), F.S.

⁷⁷ Section 1008.34, F.S.

⁷⁸ See s. 1008.33(4), F.S.

⁷⁹ See s. 1008.36, F.S.

⁸⁰ See s. 1008.34(3)(b), F.S.; rule 6A-1.09981(4)(a)-(c), F.A.C.

⁸¹ Section 1008.34(3)(b)1.a.-j., F.S.

⁸² Section 1008.34(3)(b)2., F.S.

⁸³ Section 1008.34(3)(c)1., F.S.

⁸⁴ Section 1008.25(9), F.S.

student improvement.⁸⁵ To assist in the transition to school and district grades calculated based on the comprehensive, end-of-year progress monitoring assessment, the 2022-2023 school and district grades served as an informational baseline for schools and districts to work toward improved performance in future years.⁸⁶ No negative consequences could result from these grades, therefore:⁸⁷

- Due to the absence of learning gains data in the 2022-2023 school year, the initial school grading scale for the 2022-2023 informational baseline grades was set so that the percentage of schools earning an “A,” “B,” “C,” “D,” and “F” was statistically equivalent to the 2021-2022 school grades results.
- A school could not be required to select and implement a turnaround option in the 2023-2024 school year based on the school’s 2022-2023 grade. However, a school using turnaround options which improved to a grade of “C” or higher during the 2022-2023 school year was released from implementing the turnaround option or selecting a different turnaround option.
- A school or approved virtual instruction program provider receiving the same or lower school grade for the 2022-2023 school year compared to the 2021-2022 school year was not subject to sanctions or penalties that would otherwise occur as a result of the 2022-2023 school grade or rating. A charter school system or school district designated as high performing could not lose the designation based on the 2022-2023 school grades of any of the schools within the charter school system or school district or based on the 2022-2023 district grade, as applicable.
- For purposes of determining grade 3 retention and high school graduation, student performance on the 2022-2023 comprehensive, end-of-year progress monitoring assessment was linked to 2021-2022 student performance expectations. In addition to the good cause exemptions, a student could be promoted to grade 4 for the 2023-2024 school year if he or she demonstrated an acceptable level of performance through means reasonably calculated by the school district to provide reliable evidence of the student’s performance.

In October 2023, the SBE considered and adopted two amendments to rules,⁸⁸ one setting performance standards, also known as cut scores, based on achievement data from the 2022-2023 school year⁸⁹ and the other adding a statutorily required, stand-alone component measuring the ELA achievement of grade 3 students.⁹⁰

When learning gains data becomes available in the 2023-2024 school year, the SBE will review the school grading scale and determine if the scale should be adjusted.⁹¹ Learning gains and consequences will return for the 2023-2024 calculation of school grades.⁹²

Effect of Proposed Changes

School Turnaround Plans

The bill makes several changes relating to the procedures and prescribed options for a school which is required to implement a district-managed turnaround option or which has completed a cycle of turnaround and has not improved to a grade of “C” or higher.

⁸⁵ DOE, *Approval of Amendment to Rule 6A-1.09422, F.A.C., Statewide, Standardized Assessment Program Requirements (2023)*, available at <https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/20680/urlt/5-3.pdf>.

⁸⁶ Section 1008.34(7), F.S.

⁸⁷ Section 1008.34(7)(a)-(d), F.S.

⁸⁸ SBE, *State Board of Education Agenda - October 18, 2023*, <https://www.fldoe.org/policy/state-board-of-edu/meetings/2023/2023-10-18/> (last visited Feb. 4, 2024).

⁸⁹ DOE, *Approval of Amendment to Rule 6A-1.09422, F.A.C., Statewide, Standardized Assessment Program Requirements (2023)*, available at <https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/20680/urlt/5-3.pdf>

⁹⁰ DOE, *Approval of Amendment to Rule 6A-1.09981, F.A.C., School and District Accountability (2023)*, available at <https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/20680/urlt/6-3.pdf>.

⁹¹ Section 1008.34(7)(a), F.S.

⁹² DOE, *Approval of Amendment to Rule 6A-1.09422, F.A.C., Statewide, Standardized Assessment Program Requirements (2023)*, available at <https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/20680/urlt/5-3.pdf>.

For a school which has earned a school grade of “F” or a second consecutive school grade of “D” and is required to implement a district-managed turnaround option, for the 2024-2025 school year, the submission deadlines for the memorandum of understanding and district-managed turnaround plan the school district must submit to the DOE remain the same, September 1 and October 1, respectively. Beginning with the 2025-2026 school year, both submission deadlines are moved to August 1. The bill requires that a district-managed turnaround plan must only include measurable academic benchmarks that put the school on a path to earning and maintaining a grade of “C” or higher.

For a school that has not improved to a grade of “C” or higher under a district-managed turnaround plan and has selected the turnaround option of closing and reopening as a charter school, the bill provides the following requirements for the school district and the charter school operator upon reopening as a charter school:

- The school district must continue to operate the school for the following school year and must execute a charter school turnaround contract by October 1 that will allow the charter school an opportunity to conduct an evaluation of the educational program and personnel currently assigned to the school during the year in preparation for assuming full operational control of the school and facility by July 1. The school district may not reduce or remove resources from the school during this time.
- The charter school operator must provide enrollment preference to students currently attending or who would have otherwise attended or been zoned for the school. The school district must consult and negotiate with the charter school every three years to determine whether realignment of the attendance zone is appropriate to ensure that students residing closest to the school are provided with an enrollment preference.
- The charter school operator must serve the existing grade levels served by the school at its current enrollment or higher, but may, at its discretion, serve additional grade levels.
- The school district may not charge rental or leasing fees for the existing facility or for the property normally inventoried to the school. The school and the school district must agree to reasonable maintenance provisions in order to maintain the facility in a manner similar to all other school facilities in the school district.
- The school district may not withhold an administrative fee for the provision of services identified in statute.⁹³

The bill provides that ceasing implementation of a turnaround option because a school improves to a grade of “C” or higher, does not apply to a school district that has already executed a charter school turnaround contract.

Finally, the bill requires the SBE to adopt rules to implement these provisions and to develop a standard charter school turnaround contract, a standard facility lease, and a mutual management agreement.

School Grades

The bill requires that beginning in the 2024-2025 school year, any changes made by the SBE to components in the school grades model or the school grading scale must go into effect, at the earliest, in the following school year.

Charter Schools

Present Situation

All charter schools in Florida are tuition-free public schools within the state’s public education system.⁹⁴ One of the guiding principles of charter schools is to “meet high standards of student achievement while providing parents flexibility to choose among diverse educational opportunities

⁹³ Section 1002.33(20)(a), F.S.

⁹⁴ Section 1002.33(1), F.S. Florida’s first charter school law was enacted in 1996. Chapter 96-186, L.O.F., *initially codified at s. 228.056, F.S., re-designated in 2002 as s. 1002.33, F.S.*

within the state's public school system."⁹⁵ Charter schools operate under a performance contract with a sponsor.⁹⁶ This performance contract is known as a "charter."⁹⁷

Application and Charter

An application for a new charter school may be made by an individual, teachers, parents, a group of individuals, a municipality or a legal entity organized under Florida law.⁹⁸ The school must be organized as, or be operated by a municipality, a public entity authorized under the law, or a nonprofit organization.⁹⁹ While a charter school must be a public or nonprofit entity, it may be managed by a for-profit education management organization.¹⁰⁰

After a charter school application is approved, the initial startup shall commence at a time determined by the applicant.¹⁰¹ The terms of the charter must be negotiated by the applicant and sponsor using the standard charter contract within 30 days after approval of the application.¹⁰² The initial term of a charter is 5 years, excluding 2 planning years.¹⁰³ In addition to other requirements, the charter must include:¹⁰⁴

- the types of students to be served, including ages and grade levels;
- the curriculum focus and instructional methods to be used;¹⁰⁵
- baseline standards of student academic achievement, outcomes to be achieved and methods of measurement to be used;¹⁰⁶
- the method for determining the strengths and needs of students and whether they are meeting educational goals¹⁰⁷ and for secondary charter schools,¹⁰⁸ the method to determine a student has satisfied the requirements for high school graduation;

In Florida, some charter schools are implementing a curriculum known as classical education which is centered on "the pursuit of wisdom and virtue by means of a rich and ordered course of study grounded in the liberal arts tradition."¹⁰⁹ There are currently 18 classical charter schools in Florida operating in 9 school districts.¹¹⁰

Enrollment Eligibility

⁹⁵ Section 1002.33(2)(a)1., F.S.

⁹⁶ Section 1002.33(1), (7), and (9)(a), F.S.

⁹⁷ Section 1002.33(7) and (9)(c), F.S.

⁹⁸ Section 1002.33(3)(a), F.S. *see also* Rule 6A-6.0786, F.A.C. and DOE, Charter Schools, *Model Application Forms*, <https://www.fldoe.org/schools/school-choice/charter-schools/charter-school-reference/> (last visited Jan. 26, 2024).

⁹⁹ Section 1002.33(12)(i), F.S.

¹⁰⁰ *Id.*

¹⁰¹ Section 1002.33(6)(b), F.S.

¹⁰² Section 1002.33(7) and (7)(b), F.S. The standard charter contract must incorporate the approved application and any addenda approved with the application.

¹⁰³ Section 1002.33(7)(a)(12), F.S.

¹⁰⁴ Section 1002.33(7)(a)1.-19., F.S.

¹⁰⁵ The charter must ensure that reading is a primary focus of the curriculum and that resources are provided to identify and provide specialized instruction to students who are reading below grade level. Additionally, to provide students with access to diverse instructional delivery models, charter schools may implement blended learning courses. Section 1002.33(7)(a)2.a.-b., F.S. Any changes to curriculum which are consistent with state standards are deemed approved under the charter unless the sponsor and the DOE determine in writing that the curriculum is inconsistent with state standards. Section 1002.33(7)(d), F.S.

¹⁰⁶ The district schoolboard is required to provide academic student performance data for students coming from the district school system to the charter, as well as rates of academic progress of comparable student populations in the district. Section 1002.33(7)(a)3. (flush-left provision at the end of the sub-subparagraph).

¹⁰⁷ Students in a charter school must, at a minimum, participate in Florida's statewide assessments. Section 1002.33(7)(a)4., F.S.

¹⁰⁸ In this context, the term "secondary education" is synonymous with "middle or high school" (grades 6 through 12). Generally, elementary schools serve students in kindergarten through grade 5, middle schools serve students in grades 6 through 8, and high schools serve students in grades 9 through 12. *See s.* 1003.01(2), F.S. (definition of "school").

¹⁰⁹ Thomas B. Fordham Institute, *Classical education is growing. Here's how to keep it that way.*,

<https://fordhaminstitute.org/national/commentary/classical-education-growing-heres-how-keep-it-way> (last visited Feb. 2, 2024).

¹¹⁰ Email, DOE, Legislative Affairs (Feb. 2, 2024), on file with the Education & Employment Committee.

Charter schools are open to all students residing within a school district and students who are covered by an inter-district enrollment agreement.¹¹¹ A parent whose child is not subject to a current expulsion or suspension order may seek enrollment in, and transport his or her child to, any public school in the state, including a charter school, which has not reached capacity.¹¹² The charter school governing board shall determine capacity based upon its contract¹¹³ and capacity determinations for the school, by grade level, must be updated every 12 weeks and be identified on the school website.¹¹⁴ Prospective students must apply for enrollment in a charter school and if the number of applications exceeds the school's capacity, a random lottery must be used to determine which students are enrolled.¹¹⁵ A charter school may give enrollment preference to:

- siblings of a student enrolled in the charter school;
- children of a member of the charter school governing board;
- children of charter school employees;
- children of an employee of the business partner of a charter school-in-the-workplace or a resident of the municipality where such charter school is located;
- children of a resident or employee of a municipality that operates a charter school-in-a-municipality or allows a charter school to use a school facility or portion of land provided by the municipality for the operation of the charter school;
- students who successfully completed a Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program (VPK) during the previous year provided by the charter school, the charter school's governing board, or a VPK provider that has a written agreement with the governing board;
- children of active-duty U.S. Armed Forces personnel;
- students who attended or are assigned to failing schools; and
- children of a safe-school officer at the school.¹¹⁶

Governing Board

Each charter school must have a governing board. The board is responsible for:

- negotiating the school's charter agreement with its sponsor;
- exercising continuing oversight over the school's operations;
- adopting and maintaining an annual operating budget;
- ensuring that annual audits are conducted;
- submitting monthly financial statements to the sponsor and implementing corrective actions to remedy financial instability;
- submitting the school's annual progress report to the sponsor; and
- adopting policies which establish standards of ethical conduct for educational support employees, instructional personnel, and school administrators.¹¹⁷

Restriction on Employment of Relatives

In a charter school operated by a private entity,¹¹⁸ charter school personnel may not appoint, employ, promote, or advance, or advocate for appointment, employment, promotion, or advancement, in or to a position in the charter school in which the personnel are serving or over which the personnel exercises jurisdiction or control any individual who is a relative. An individual may not be appointed, employed,

¹¹¹ Section 1002.33(10)(a), F.S. A charter school receiving federal Charter School Program grant funds must use a lottery if more students apply for admission to the charter school than can be admitted, unless students are enrolling in the immediate prior grade level of an "affiliated charter school." However, a charter school may use a weighted lottery under certain prescribed circumstances. *see* 20 U.S.C. s. 7221b(c)(3) and s. 7221i(2)(H). *see also* U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary & Secondary Education, *Dear Colleague Letter- ESSA flexibilities for CSP Grantees* (Nov. 15, 2017), available at <https://oese.ed.gov/files/2019/11/CSP-DCL-1.pdf>.

¹¹² Section 1002.31(2)(a), F.S.

¹¹³ Section 1002.31(2)(b), F.S.

¹¹⁴ *Id.*

¹¹⁵ Section 1002.33(10)(b), F.S.

¹¹⁶ Section 1002.33(10)(d)1.-8., F.S.

¹¹⁷ Section 1002.33(7), (9)(g)-(k), and (12)(g)3. F.S.

¹¹⁸ Section 1002.33(24)(a), F.S.

promoted, or advanced in or to a position in a charter school if such appointment, employment, promotion, or advancement has been advocated by charter school personnel who serve in or exercise jurisdiction or control over the charter school and who is a relative of the individual or if such appointment, employment, promotion, or advancement is made by the governing board of which a relative of the individual is a member.¹¹⁹

“Charter school personnel” is defined as a charter school owner, president, chairperson of the governing board of directors, superintendent, governing board member, principal, assistant principal, or any other person employed by the charter school who has equivalent decision-making authority and in whom is vested the authority, or to whom the authority has been delegated, to appoint, employ, promote, or advance individuals or to recommend individuals for appointment, employment, promotion, or advancement in connection with employment in a charter school, including the authority as a member of a governing body of a charter school to vote on the appointment, employment, promotion, or advancement of individuals.¹²⁰

“Relative” means father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, first cousin, nephew, niece, husband, wife, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, stepfather, stepmother, stepson, stepdaughter, stepbrother, stepsister, half brother, or half sister.¹²¹

Annual Application Required for Tax Exemption

The Florida Constitution reserves to local governments the authority to levy ad valorem taxes on real and tangible personal property.¹²² Ad valorem taxes¹²³ are levied annually by counties, cities, school districts, and some special districts based on the value of real and tangible personal property as of January 1 of each year.¹²⁴

Each person or organization who meets the criteria for an ad valorem tax exemption may claim the exemption if the claimant held legal title to the real or personal property subject to the exemption on January 1.¹²⁵ The application for exemption must be filed with the property appraiser on or before March 1 and failure to make an application constitutes a waiver of the exemption for that year. The application must list and describe the property for which the exemption is being claimed and certify the ownership and use of the property. The claimant must reapply for the exemption on an annual basis, unless the property appraiser (subject to approval by a vote of the governing body of the county) has waived the annual application requirement for property after an initial application is made and the exemption granted.¹²⁶

Educational institutions within the state and their property used by them or by any other exempt entity or educational institution exclusively for education purposes are exempt from taxation.¹²⁷ Property used for educational purposes by a charter school is generally exempt from property tax; however, the specific exemption involved is different depending on whether the charter school owns or leases the property.¹²⁸ If the property is owned by the charter school, the charter school applies for the exemption.¹²⁹ If the property is leased by the charter school, the landlord applies for the exemption.¹³⁰

¹¹⁹ Section 1002.33(24)(b), F.S.

¹²⁰ Section 1002.33(24)(a)1., F.S.

¹²¹ Section 1002.33(24)(a)2., F.S.

¹²² Art. VII, ss. 1(a), 9(a), Fla. Const.

¹²³ An ad valorem tax means a tax based upon the assessed value of property. The term “property tax” may be used interchangeably with the term “ad valorem tax. S. 192.001(1), F.S.

¹²⁴ Section 192.001(12), F.S., defines “real property” as land, buildings, fixtures, and all other improvements to land. The terms “land,” “real estate,” “realty,” and “real property” may be used interchangeably. S. 192.001(11)(d), F.S., defines “tangible personal property” as all goods, chattels, and other articles of value (but does not include the vehicular items enumerated in Art. VII, s. 1(b) of the Florida Constitution and elsewhere defined) capable of manual possession and whose chief value is intrinsic to the article itself.

¹²⁵ Section 196.011(1)(a), F.S.

¹²⁶ Section 196.011(5) and (9)(a), F.S.

¹²⁷ Section 196.198, F.S.

¹²⁸ Compare ss. 196.198, F.S., and 196.1983, F.S.

¹²⁹ Section 196.198, F.S.

¹³⁰ Section 106.1983, F.S.

When a charter school purchases the property that it previously leased, the charter school must apply for a new exemption.

Under current law, the following organizations are exempt from having to make an annual application for a property tax exemption:

- houses of public worship, the lots on which they are located, personal property located therein or thereon, parsonages, burial grounds and tombs owned by houses of public worship, individually owned burial rights not held for speculation, or other such property not rented or hired out for other than religious or educational purposes at any time;
- household goods and personal effects of permanent residents of this state; and
- property of the state or any county, any municipality, any school district, or community college district thereof.¹³¹

A charter school is not exempt from having to make an annual ad valorem tax exemption application.

Effect of Proposed Changes

Enrollment Eligibility

The bill authorizes a charter school to give enrollment preference to students who transfer from a Florida classical school to a charter classical school in the state. The bill defines a classical school as a traditional public school or charter school which implements a classical education school model that emphasizes the development of students in the principles of moral character and civic virtue through a well-rounded education in the liberal arts and sciences that is based on the classical trivium stages of grammar, logic, and rhetoric.

Restriction on Employment of Relatives

The bill removes “charter school owner” from the definition of “charter school personnel.” This is an outdated term as charter schools do not have owners, but instead have governing boards.

Annual Application Required for Tax Exemption

The bill exempts an owner or lessee of a property used to house a charter school from having to make an annual ad valorem tax exemption application. The bill provides that the owner or lessee of such property is required to notify the property appraiser promptly whenever the use of the property or the status or condition of the owner or lessee changes so as to change the exempt status of the property.

The bill provides penalties if any owner or lessee fails to notify the property appraiser and the property appraiser determines that for any year within the prior 10 years the owner or lessee was not entitled to receive such exemption. If this occurs, the owner or lessee of the property is subject to the taxes exempted as a result of such failure plus 15 percent interest per annum and a penalty of 50 percent of the taxes exempted.

The property appraiser making such determination must record in the public records of the county a notice of tax lien against any property owned by that person or entity in the county, and such property must be identified in the notice of tax lien. Such property is subject to the payment of all taxes and penalties. Such lien when filed shall attach to any property, identified in the notice of tax lien, owned by the person or entity who illegally or improperly received the exemption. If such person or entity no longer owns property in that county but owns property in some other county or counties in the state, the property appraiser will record a notice of tax lien in such other county or counties, identifying the property owned by such person or entity in such county or counties, and it will become a lien against that property.

Student Eligibility for Extracurricular Activities and Athletics

Present Situation

Background

Florida law outlines numerous standards and requirements relating to student extracurricular activities and athletics.¹³² Current law provides that “eligible to participate,” for purposes of extracurricular activities and athletics, includes a student participating in tryouts, off-season conditioning, summer workouts, preseason conditioning, in-season practice, or contests.¹³³ Additionally, a student must satisfy the following requirements to be deemed eligible to participate:¹³⁴

- Maintain a grade point average of 2.0 or above on a 4.0 scale, or its equivalent, in the previous semester or a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 or above on a 4.0 scale, or its equivalent, in the courses required for a standard high school diploma.
- Execute and fulfill the requirements of an academic performance contract between the student, the district school board, the appropriate governing association, and the student’s parents, if the student’s cumulative grade point average falls below 2.0, or its equivalent, on a 4.0 scale in the courses required for a standard high school diploma.¹³⁵
- Have a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 or above on a 4.0 scale, or its equivalent, in the courses required for a standard high school diploma during their junior or senior year.
- Maintain satisfactory conduct, including adherence to appropriate dress and other codes of student conduct.¹³⁶

Any student who is exempt from attending a full school day based on rules adopted by the district school board must maintain the grade point average required of full school day students and pass each class for which he or she is enrolled.¹³⁷

Any entity that governs interscholastic extracurricular activities of public schools is prohibited from discriminating against any eligible student based on their education choice of public, private, or home education.¹³⁸ No public school may join an organization that regulates interscholastic activities and discriminates against otherwise eligible students in public, private, or home education.¹³⁹

A school district or charter school may not delay eligibility or otherwise prevent a student participating in controlled open enrollment or a choice program from being immediately eligible to participate in interscholastic and intrascholastic extracurricular activities.¹⁴⁰ However, a student may not participate in a sport if the student participated in that same sport at another school during that school year, unless the student meets one of the following criteria:¹⁴¹

- A dependent child of active duty military personnel whose move resulted from military orders.
- A child who was relocated due to a foster care placement in a different school zone.
- A child who moved as a result of a court-ordered change in custody due to separation or divorce, or the serious illness or death of a custodial parent.
- Authorized to participate for good cause in district or charter school policy.

Transfer Student’s Participation in Extracurricular Activities

¹³² See ch. 1006, pt. 1, s. D, F.S.

¹³³ Section 1006.15(3)(a), F.S.

¹³⁴ *Id.*

¹³⁵ Any such academic performance contract must, at a minimum, require that the student attend summer school between grades 9 and 10 or grades 10 and 11, as appropriate. Section 1006.15(3)(a)2., F.S.

¹³⁶ Continued participation in extracurricular activities by a student convicted of felony or a delinquent act that would be a felony if committed by an adult, regardless of whether adjudication is withheld, shall be governed by published school district policies. Section 1006.15(3)(a)4., F.S.

¹³⁷ Section 1006.15(3)(b), F.S. Examples of such programs include double session schools or programs, experimental schools, or schools operating under emergency conditions.

¹³⁸ Section 1006.15(5), F.S.

¹³⁹ Section 1006.15(6), F.S.

¹⁴⁰ Sections 1002.31(6)(a) and 1006.15(3)(i)1., F.S.

¹⁴¹ Sections 1002.31(6)(b) and 1006.15(3)(i)2., F.S.

A student who transfers to a school during the school year may seek to immediately join an existing team if the roster for the specific interscholastic or intrascholastic extracurricular activity has not reached its maximum size and if the coach or sponsor for the activity determines that the student has the requisite skill and ability to participate. The Florida High School Athletic Association and school district or charter school may not declare such a student ineligible because the student did not have the opportunity to comply with established qualifying requirements.¹⁴²

A transfer student may not participate in a sport if he or she participated in that same sport at another school during that school year, except when the student is:¹⁴³

- A dependent child of active duty military personnel whose move resulted from military orders.
- A child who was relocated due to a foster care placement in a different school zone.
- A child who moved as a result of a court-ordered change in custody due to separation or divorce, or the serious illness or death of a custodial parent.
- Authorized to participate for good cause in district or charter school policy.

Effect of Proposed Changes

The bill removes the authorization for a school district or charter school's policy on good cause to be used to allow a student participating in controlled open enrollment or a choice program or transferring to another school during the school year to participate in a sport if he or she participated in the same sport at another school during that same school year.

K-12 Instructional Materials

Present Situation

Duties of Publishers & Manufacturers Regarding K-12 Instructional Materials

Whether operating pursuant to the state's instructional materials program or a district instructional materials program, publishers and manufacturers of instructional materials must, among other things:

- submit electronic sample copies of the instructional material;
- submit evidence that the provided materials address the required state standards and are accessible through the district's digital classrooms plan and a variety of electronic, digital, and mobile devices;
- furnish instructional materials at a price not to exceed the lowest price offered in other states;
- automatically reduce the price of instructional materials or provide materials free of charge if provided to other states at a reduced rate or free of charge;
- keep the materials revised, free from all errors, and up-to-date; and
- disclose the authors of the instructional materials.¹⁴⁴

In addition, publishers and manufacturers of instructional materials are prohibited from offering any emolument, money, or other valuable thing or any inducement, to any district school board official or state instructional materials reviewer to directly or indirectly introduce, recommend, vote for, or otherwise influence the adoption or purchase of any instructional materials. Violating this prohibition is a second degree misdemeanor and will result in a ban from practicing business in the state for one calendar year.¹⁴⁵

Educator Preparation Institutes

¹⁴² Section 1006.15(9)(a), F.S.

¹⁴³ Section 1006.15(9)(b), F.S.

¹⁴⁴ Sections 1006.283(2)(b)7. and 1006.38, F.S. With regard to the state's instructional materials program, publishers and manufacturers must maintain a depository in Florida for the in-state distribution of instructional materials to school districts from the depository or contract with a depository in the state. Section 1006.38(11)-(13), F.S.

¹⁴⁵ Section 1006.32(1) and (4), F.S. A second degree misdemeanor is punishable by a term of imprisonment not exceeding 60 days and a fine not exceeding \$500. Sections 775.082(4)(b) and 775.083(1)(e), F.S.

An educator preparation institute may be created by a postsecondary institution or a qualified private provider and approved by the DOE.¹⁴⁶ Postsecondary institutions that are accredited or approved as described in SBE rule may seek approval from the DOE to create educator preparation institutes for any or all of the following purposes:

- Professional learning instruction to assist teachers in improving classroom instruction and in meeting certification or recertification requirements.
- Instruction to assist potential and existing substitute teachers in performing their duties.
- Instruction to assist paraprofessionals in meeting education and training requirements.
- Instruction for baccalaureate degree holders to become certified teachers in order to increase routes to the classroom for professionals who hold a baccalaureate degree and college graduates who were not education majors.
- Instruction and professional learning for part-time and full-time nondegreed teachers of career programs.¹⁴⁷

A private provider with a proven history of delivering high-quality teacher preparation, based on evidence provided from other state recipients of its services and data showing the successful performance of its completers based on student achievement, may seek approval to offer a competency-based certification program specifically designed for noneducation major baccalaureate degree holders to enable program participants to meet the educator certification requirements.¹⁴⁸

An educator preparation institute choosing to offer a competency-based certification program, whether a postsecondary institution or a qualified private provider, must implement a program developed by the institute and approved by the DOE for this purpose. Approved programs must be available for use by other approved educator preparation institutes.¹⁴⁹

Effect of Proposed Changes

The bill requires that for each adoption cycle, publishers and manufacturers of instructional materials, or their representatives, must make sample copies of all instructional materials on the Commissioner of Education's (commissioner) list of state-adopted instructional materials available electronically for use by educator preparation institutes to enable educators to practice teaching with currently adopted instructional materials aligned to the state's academic standards.

Education Practices Commission

Present Situation

The DOE's Office of Professional Practices Services (PPS) investigates misconduct by educators who hold a Florida Educator Certificate or a valid application for a Florida Educator Certificate. The PPS investigates when there are ultimate facts to support the educator has broken the law or violated the Principles of Professional Conduct.¹⁵⁰ These laws and rules outline the standards of conduct expected of certified educators in Florida.¹⁵¹

Penalties against an educator's certificate are not issued by the commissioner or the DOE; penalties are issued by the Education Practices Commission (commission). The commission is a quasi-judicial

¹⁴⁶ Section 1004.85(1), F.S.

¹⁴⁷ Sections 1004.85(2)(a) and 1012.39(1)(c), F.S.

¹⁴⁸ Sections 1004.85(2)(b) and 1012.56, F.S.

¹⁴⁹ Section 1004.85(3), F.S.

¹⁵⁰ Rule 6A-10.081, F.A.C. contains the Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession in Florida.

¹⁵¹ DOE, *Role of Professional Practices Services*, <https://www.fldoe.org/teaching/professional-practices/role-of-professional-practices-service.stml> (lasted visited Jan. 21, 2024).

body of peers, law enforcement, and lay persons set forth in statute¹⁵² that determines what penalty is issued in each case.¹⁵³

Currently, the commission must employ an executive director by a vote of three-fourths of the membership who is exempt from career service and may be dismissed by a majority vote of the membership. The commission is assigned to the DOE for administrative purposes and, in the performance of its powers and duties, must not be subject to control, supervision, or direction by the DOE.¹⁵⁴

The commission has the authority to make expenditures necessary to carry out its duties and responsibilities, including for personal services, general counsel or access to counsel, and rent at the seat of government and elsewhere; for books of reference, periodicals, furniture, equipment, and supplies; and for printing and binding. The expenditures of the commission are subject to the powers and duties of the Department of Financial Services.¹⁵⁵

Effect of Proposed Changes

The bill authorizes the commissioner, at his or her discretion, to appoint and remove an executive director for the commission. The bill requires the commission to be assigned to the DOE for fiscal accountability purposes and provides that the commission may make expenditures on legal services when necessary.

Working Students

Present Situation

Nationally, about 74 percent of part-time undergraduate students and 40 percent of full-time students in the United States were employed in 2020, according to the most recent data from the National Center for Education Statistics.¹⁵⁶ Being employed can help a student pay for classes and other living expenses; it can also be associated, either positively or negatively, with a student's academic performance.¹⁵⁷

Overall, the percentages of undergraduates who worked at least 20 hours per week were higher for part-time students than for full-time students. Specifically, 40 percent of part-time students worked 35 or more hours, compared with 10 percent of full-time students. Additionally, 26 percent of part-time students worked 20 to 34 hours per week, compared with 15 percent of full-time students. In contrast, the percentages of undergraduates who worked less than 20 hours per week were higher for full-time students than for part-time students. Three percent of full-time undergraduates were employed less than 10 hours per week, and 9 percent were employed 10 to 19 hours per week. In comparison, 1 percent of part-time students were employed less than 10 hours per week and 6 percent were employed 10 to 19 hours per week.¹⁵⁸

In Florida, some public postsecondary programs place implicit or explicit restrictions on student employment. For example, the Florida State University College of Law recommends that a full-time student not work more than 20 hours per week in any semester the student is enrolled in more than 12

¹⁵² Section 1012.79, F.S.

¹⁵³ DOE, *Role of Professional Practices Services*, <https://www.fldoe.org/teaching/professional-practices/role-of-professional-practices-service.stml> (last visited Jan. 21, 2024).

¹⁵⁴ Section 1012.79(5)-(6)(a), F.S.

¹⁵⁵ Sections 17.03 and 1012.79(9), F.S.

¹⁵⁶ National Center for Education Statistics, *College Student Employment* (May 2022), [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/ssa/college-student-employment#:~:text=Many%20undergraduate%20students%20ages%2016,time%20students%20\(40%20percent](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/ssa/college-student-employment#:~:text=Many%20undergraduate%20students%20ages%2016,time%20students%20(40%20percent) (last visited Jan 26, 2024).

¹⁵⁷ *Id.*

¹⁵⁸ *Id.*

class hours.¹⁵⁹ At Valencia College, prospective nursing students are advised that if they choose to work while in the program, a maximum of 15 hours of work per week is recommended due to the demands of the program.¹⁶⁰

Foreign Country of Concern

Under Florida statute, a “foreign country of concern” means the People’s Republic of China, the Russian Federation, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, the Republic of Cuba, the Venezuelan regime of Nicolás Maduro, or the Syrian Arab Republic, including any agency of or any other entity under significant control of such foreign country of concern.¹⁶¹

Effect of Proposed Changes

The bill prohibits a public postsecondary institution from implicitly or explicitly prohibiting applicants or currently enrolled students from being employed, either full time or part time, as a condition of admission to or enrollment in any of the institution’s schools, colleges, or programs.

The prohibition on employment does not apply if the applicant or currently enrolled student is employed by an organization or agency that is affiliated or associated with a foreign country of concern.

Residency Status for Tuition Purposes

Present Situation

Current law requires students to be classified as residents or nonresidents for the purpose of assessing tuition in postsecondary educational programs offered by charter technical career centers, career centers operated by school districts, FCS institutions, and state universities. Students pay differing tuition rates based on their status as a resident or nonresident of Florida.¹⁶²

Applicants to a postsecondary institution must meet certain qualifying standards in order to be classified as a resident of Florida for tuition purposes. The applicant, or in the case of a dependent child, his or her parents,¹⁶³ must establish legal residence in Florida and must have maintained legal residence for at least 12 consecutive months immediately prior to the applicant’s enrollment in a postsecondary institution.¹⁶⁴

Each applicant must provide to the institution a statement of length of residence and establish that his or her presence in the state is for the purpose of maintaining a bona fide domicile and not as a temporary residence or residence incident to enrollment.¹⁶⁵

Each institution of higher education must determine that an applicant granted admission as a Florida resident meets the residency requirements at the time of initial enrollment. The residency determination must be documented by the submission of written or electronic verification that includes two or more of the specified documents, with no single piece of evidence considered conclusive.¹⁶⁶

¹⁵⁹ See Florida State University College of Law, *Employment Policy for Full-time Students*, <https://law.fsu.edu/careers/employer-info/employment-policy-full-time-students> (last visited Jan. 26, 2024).

¹⁶⁰ See Valencia College- Nursing Program, *Frequently Asked Questions*, <https://valenciacollege.edu/academics/programs/health-sciences/nursing/frequently-asked-questions.php> (last visited Jan. 26, 2024).

¹⁶¹ Section 288.860(1)(a), F.S.

¹⁶² Sections 1009.22, 1009.23, and 1009.24, F.S. Out-of-state tuition is established by each university board of trustees, subject to the approval of the BOG. Section 1009.24(4)(c), F.S.

¹⁶³ Section 1009.21(1)(f), F.S. The term “parent” is defined to mean “either or both parents of a student, any guardian of a student, or any person in a parental relationship to a student.” The legal residence of a dependent child’s parents is prima facie evidence of the dependent child’s residence. Section 1009.21(4), F.S.

¹⁶⁴ Section 1009.21(2)(a)1., F.S. A legal resident, for purposes of tuition, is a person who has maintained his or her residence in Florida for the preceding year, has purchased a home which is occupied by him or her as his or her residence, or has established a domicile in Florida pursuant to s. 222.17, F.S. Section 1009.21(1)(d), F.S.

¹⁶⁵ Section 1009.21(2)(a)2., F.S.

¹⁶⁶ Section 1009.21(3)(c), F.S.

The documents must include at least one of the following:¹⁶⁷

- A Florida voter's registration card.
- A Florida driver license.
- A State of Florida identification card.
- A Florida vehicle registration.
- Proof of a permanent home in Florida which is occupied as a primary residence by the individual or by the individual's parent if the individual is a dependent child.
- Proof of a homestead exemption in Florida.
- Transcripts from a Florida high school for multiple years if the Florida high school diploma or high school equivalency diploma was earned within the last 12 months.
- Proof of permanent full-time employment in Florida for at least 30 hours per week for a 12-month period.

The documents may include one or more of the following:¹⁶⁸

- A declaration of domicile in Florida.
- A Florida professional or occupational license.
- Florida incorporation.
- A document evidencing family ties in Florida.
- Proof of membership in a Florida-based charitable or professional organization.
- Any other documentation that supports the student's request for resident status, including, but not limited to, utility bills and proof of 12 consecutive months of payments; a lease agreement and proof of 12 consecutive months of payments; or an official state, federal, or court document evidencing legal ties to Florida.

Effect of Proposed Changes

The bill authorizes proof of a homestead exemption in Florida to serve as a single, conclusive piece of evidence for a student to prove residency for tuition purposes.

Stanley G. Tate Florida Prepaid College Program

Present Situation

Background

The Stanley G. Tate Florida Prepaid College Program (Prepaid Program) was created to assist families to prepay the future cost of college tuition through advance payment contracts (Prepaid Plans).¹⁶⁹ At the time of purchase, Prepaid Plans guarantee the future payment of certain costs associated with attendance at a postsecondary institution.¹⁷⁰ Additionally, the benefits, in some cases, can be utilized at in-state private institutions and at out-of-state public and private colleges and universities that are able to accept Title IV funding (i.e., federal student aid).¹⁷¹

The administration of the prepaid program is overseen by the Florida Prepaid College Board (board).¹⁷² In its role as the administrator of the trust fund, the board is responsible for managing it in a financially sound manner, ensuring stability based on actuarial principles.¹⁷³ Over the past 30 years, the board has managed the largest and most successful prepaid program among similar initiatives enabling more than 561,000 students to attend college using the prepaid plans.¹⁷⁴

¹⁶⁷ Section 1009.21(3)(c)1.a.-h., F.S.

¹⁶⁸ Section 1009.21(3)(c)2.a.-f., F.S.

¹⁶⁹ Section 1009.98(1)-(2), F.S.

¹⁷⁰ *Id.*

¹⁷¹ Section 1009.98(3), F.S.

¹⁷² Section 1009.971(1), F.S.

¹⁷³ Section 1009.971(4)(f), F.S.

¹⁷⁴ Florida Prepaid, *Our History*, <https://www.myfloridaprepaid.com/about-us/our-history/> (last visited Feb. 4, 2024).

The Florida Prepaid Program

Families can choose from several plans allowing them to prepay the cost of college tuition, the tuition differential fee, registration fees, and local fees at a price that is less than the expected future cost.

These plans include:¹⁷⁵

- 4-Year Florida University Plan
- 2 + 2 Florida Plan
- 4-Year Florida College Plan
- 2-Year Florida College Plan
- 1-Year Florida University Plan

Fees Associated with Postsecondary Institutions

The costs associated with attending a postsecondary institution encompass tuition and various fees designed to contribute to the overall operational expenses of the institution.¹⁷⁶ One such fee, known as the tuition differential fee, is charged by 11 of the 12 state universities. The tuition differential fee is intended to promote improvements in the quality of undergraduate education and provide financial aid to undergraduate students who exhibit financial need.¹⁷⁷

By statute, for the 2012-2013 fiscal year, the base rate for the tuition differential fee was established at \$37.03 per credit hour.¹⁷⁸ In subsequent years, the statute requires this base rate to be adjusted based on the amount assessed for the tuition differential in the preceding year. The adjustments are as follows:¹⁷⁹

- If the actuarial reserve¹⁸⁰ is less than 5 percent of the expected liabilities of the trust fund, the board pays the state universities 5.5 percent above the base rate for the tuition differential fee in the preceding fiscal year.
- If the actuarial reserve is between 5 percent and 6 percent of the expected liabilities of the trust fund, the board pays the state universities 6 percent above the base rate for the tuition differential fee in the preceding fiscal year.
- If the actuarial reserve is between 6 percent and 7.5 percent of the expected liabilities of the trust fund, the board pays the state universities 6.5 percent above the base rate for the tuition differential fee in the preceding fiscal year.
- If the actuarial reserve is equal to or greater than 7.5 percent of the expected liabilities of the trust fund, the board pays the state universities 7 percent above the base rate for the tuition differential fee in the preceding fiscal year.

Qualified beneficiaries of Prepaid Plans purchased before July 1, 2007, are exempt from paying any tuition differential fee.¹⁸¹

Effective with the 2009-2010 academic year and thereafter, in addition to the differential fees, other fees are paid by the board to any state university on behalf of a qualified beneficiary of the Prepaid Plan, whose contract was purchased before July 1, 2024. Among these fees are:

¹⁷⁵ Florida Prepaid, *Plans and Pricing*, <https://www.myfloridaprepaid.com/prepaid-plans/plans-and-pricing/> (last visited Feb. 4, 2024); see also Rule 19B-4.001, F.A.C.; Florida Prepaid College Board, Final Master Contract, at s.4.02-4.07 (2021) available at <https://www.flrules.org/gateway/reference.asp?No=Ref-13896>.

¹⁷⁶ Florida Prepaid, *All About Florida College and State University Fees*, <https://www.myfloridaprepaid.com/existing-customers/tuition-and-fees/> (last visited Feb. 4, 2024).

¹⁷⁷ Section 1009.24(16), F.S.; see also Final Master Contract, at s. 1.39 and State University System of Florida, *Tuition and Required Fees* (2023-2024), available at <https://www.flbog.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/2023-2024-SUS-Tuition-and-Fees-Report-PDF-1.pdf>.

¹⁷⁸ Section 1009.98(10)(b), F.S.

¹⁷⁹ Section 1009.98(10)(b)2., F.S.

¹⁸⁰ Section 1009.98(10)(a)1. “Actuarial reserve” means the amount by which the expected value of the assets exceeds the expected value of the liabilities of the trust fund.

¹⁸¹ Section 1009.98(10)(b)5., F.S.

- **Registration Fee:**¹⁸²
 - If the actuarial reserve is less than 5 percent of the expected liabilities of the trust fund, the board will pay the state universities 5.5 percent above the amount assessed for registration fees in the preceding fiscal year.
 - If the actuarial reserve is between 5 percent and 6 percent of the expected liabilities of the trust fund, the board shall pay the state universities 6 percent above the amount assessed for registration fees in the preceding fiscal year.
 - If the actuarial reserve is between 6 percent and 7.5 percent of the expected liabilities of the trust fund, the board shall pay the state universities 6.5 percent above the amount assessed for registration fees in the preceding fiscal year.
 - If the actuarial reserve is equal to or greater than 7.5 percent of the expected liabilities of the trust fund, the board shall pay the state universities 7 percent above the amount assessed for registration fees in the preceding fiscal year, whichever is greater.
- **Local Fees:** The board is required to pay the state universities 5 percent above the amount assessed for local fees in the preceding fiscal year.¹⁸³

Regardless of the specific amount assessed for registration fees, tuition differential, local fees, or dormitory fees, the board's payment to a state university on behalf of a qualified beneficiary, covered by a Prepaid Plan purchased before July 1, 2024, cannot exceed 100 percent of the total fees charged by the state university.¹⁸⁴ The board will pay state universities the actual amount assessed for the registration fees, the tuition differential, local fees and dormitory fees for Prepaid Plans purchased on or before July 1, 2024.¹⁸⁵

Regardless of credit hours used for fee assessment, the board's payment for Prepaid Plans purchased before July 1, 2024, cannot exceed the actual number of credit hours taken by the qualified beneficiary at the state university.¹⁸⁶

Effect of Proposed Changes

The bill transitions the effective period for the amount paid by the Florida Prepaid College Board to state universities on behalf of qualified beneficiaries of advance payment contracts within the Prepaid Florida Program from 2009-2010 to 2022-2023. Additionally, it extends the applicability of the contracts to those purchased before July 1, 2034.

The bill clarifies that the base rate is the amount assessed.

The bill also removes obsolete language in regards to the differential fee amount paid for the 2012-2013 fiscal year.

Florida College System-Transfer Degrees

Present Situation

Overview

Florida's 28 state and community colleges offer a wide range of academic opportunities for students throughout the state. At FCS institutions, students are able to complete degree programs including Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Applied Science, Associate in Arts (AA), Associate in Science (AS), Associate in Applied Science (AAS), and career and technical certificate programs.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸² Section 1009.98(10)(b)1., F.S.

¹⁸³ Section 1009.98(10)(b)3., F.S.

¹⁸⁴ Section 1009.98(10)(c) and (d), F.S.

¹⁸⁵ Section 1009.98(10)(f), F.S.

¹⁸⁶ Section 1009.98(10)(e), F.S.

¹⁸⁷ DOE, Florida College System (FCS), *Academics*, <https://www.fldoe.org/schools/higher-ed/fl-college-system/academics/> (last visited Feb. 4, 2024).

Associate in Arts Degree

The AA degree is designed for students who plan to transfer from a FCS institution to a baccalaureate degree program, either at a FCS or a state university system (SUS) institution.¹⁸⁸ The AA degree requirements consist of 60 total credit hours and include 36 credit hours of general education and 24 credit hours of electives.¹⁸⁹ Students should choose elective courses required for admission to their intended program of study or major at the desired college or university. The Common Prerequisites Manual¹⁹⁰ is a catalog of lower-level courses that are prerequisites for entrance into baccalaureate programs offered by FCS and SUS institutions. Students are encouraged to discuss their intended program of study with an academic advisor at their college to ensure they are meeting all requirements to transfer upon completing their AA degree.¹⁹¹

A baccalaureate degree must be no more than 120 semester hours of college credit, unless prior approval has been granted by the BOG or the SBE, as applicable, and include 36 semester hours of general education coursework.¹⁹²

General Education Core Courses

Students entering a FCS or SUS institution are required to complete at least one identified general education core course in each of the subject areas of communication, mathematics, social sciences, humanities, and natural sciences. All public postsecondary educational institutions are required to accept these courses as meeting general education core course requirements.¹⁹³

General education core course options consist of a maximum of five courses in each identified subject area, but may exceed that limit with the approval of the SBE or the BOG. The general education core courses are established in SBE rule¹⁹⁴ and BOG regulation.¹⁹⁵

Transfer of General Education Courses

Each public postsecondary institution must accept transfer general education core courses taken at another institution. After completing the general education core course requirements, the remaining courses and credits that fulfill the total 36-hour general education requirement for an AA or baccalaureate degree are at the discretion of the FCS or SUS institution.¹⁹⁶

General education programs in Florida, while consistent with the general education core requirements and the total of 36 hours for completion, vary in the selection of institutionally-required courses. Students who transfer with an AA or AS degree or who have completed their block of 36 general education hours do not have to meet the receiving institution's general education program requirements. If a student does not complete the total 36-hour general education curriculum prior to transfer, each course, outside of courses taken as general education courses, will be reviewed individually to determine if it meets the general education requirements of the new institution.¹⁹⁷

Articulation Coordinating Committee

¹⁸⁸ *Id.*

¹⁸⁹ Section 1007.25(9), F.S.

¹⁹⁰ Florida Shines, *Common Prerequisites Manual*, <https://cpm.flvc.org/advance-search> (last visited Jan. 21, 2024).

¹⁹¹ DOE, FCS, *Academics*, <https://www.fldoe.org/schools/higher-ed/fl-college-system/academics/> (last visited Jan. 21, 2024).

¹⁹² Section 1007.25(10), F.S. and Board of Governors (BOG) Regulation 6.017

¹⁹³ Section 1007.25, F.S. Beginning with the 2022-2023 academic year, the general education core course requirement is extended to students in an Associate in Applied Science (AAS) and Associate in Science (AS) degree program.

¹⁹⁴ Rule 6A-14.0303, F.A.C.

¹⁹⁵ BOG Regulation 8.005.

¹⁹⁶ *Id.* and r. 6A-14.0303(5), F.A.C.

¹⁹⁷ DOE, *Statewide Postsecondary Articulation Manual* (Jan. 2021), at 15, available at

<https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/5421/urlt/Statewide-Articulation-Manual.pdf>. See also r. 6A-10.024(2)(c), F.A.C.

The commissioner, in consultation with the Chancellor of the SUS, establishes the Articulation Coordinating Committee (ACC), whose primary role is to recommend statewide articulation policies.¹⁹⁸ Specifically, the ACC must monitor articulation between education systems, propose guidelines for articulation agreements, publish lists of general education and common prerequisite courses, establish dual enrollment course equivalencies to high school credit, and annually review the Statewide Articulation Agreement.¹⁹⁹ The Office of K-20 Articulation within the DOE provides administrative support to the ACC.²⁰⁰

Statewide Articulation Agreements

Each state university board of trustees, FCS board of trustees, and district school board must plan and adopt policies and procedures to provide articulated programs so that students can proceed toward their educational objectives as rapidly as their circumstances permit.²⁰¹

Statewide articulation agreements help facilitate the seamless transition of students across and among Florida's educational entities. These agreements are intended to be a minimum guarantee of articulated credit and do not preclude institutions from granting additional credit based on local agreements.²⁰²

Effect of Proposed Changes

The bill creates a new AA specialized transfer degree. The specialized transfer degrees are designed for FCS institution students who need supplemental lower-level coursework above the 60 credit hours of the traditional AA degree in preparation for transfer to a baccalaureate degree program. An AA specialized transfer degree must include 36 semester hours of general education coursework and require 60 semester hours or more of college credit.

The bill requires the SBE to establish criteria for the review and approval of new specialized transfer degrees. The approval process must require:

1. A FCS institution to submit a notice of its intent to propose a new AA specialized degree program to the Division of Florida Colleges. The notice must include the recommended credit hours, the rationale for the specialization, the demand for students entering the field, and the coursework being proposed to be included beyond the 60 semester hours required for the general transfer degree, if applicable. Notices of intent may be submitted by a FCS institution at any time.
2. The Division of Florida Colleges to forward the notice of intent within 10 business days after receipt to all FCS institutions and the Chancellor of the SUS, who must forward the notice to all state universities. State universities and FCS institutions have 60 days after receipt of the notice to submit comments to the proposed AA specialized transfer degree.
3. After the submission of comments, the requesting FCS institution to submit a proposal that, at a minimum, includes:
 - a. Evidence that the coursework for the AA specialized transfer degree includes demonstration of competency in a foreign language²⁰³ and demonstration of civic literacy competency.²⁰⁴
 - b. Demonstration that all required coursework will count toward the AA degree or the baccalaureate degree.
 - c. An analysis of demand and unmet need for students entering the specialized field of study at the baccalaureate level.
 - d. Justification for the program length if it exceeds 60 credit hours, including references

¹⁹⁸ Section 1007.01(3), F.S.

¹⁹⁹ Section 1007.01(3)(a) and (b), F.S.

²⁰⁰ Section 1007.01(3), F.S.; s. 20.15(3)(h), F.S.

²⁰¹ Rule 6A-10.024(1), F.A.C.

²⁰² DOE, *Statewide Postsecondary Articulation Manual* (Jan. 2021), at 20-21, available at

<https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/5421/urlt/Statewide-Articulation-Manual.pdf>. See also r. 6A-10.024(2)(c), F.A.C.

²⁰³ Section 1007.262, F.S.

²⁰⁴ Section 1007.25(5), F.S.

to the Common Prerequisite Manual or other requirements for the baccalaureate degree. This includes documentation of alignment between the exit requirements of a FCS institution and the admissions requirements of a baccalaureate program at a state university to which students would typically transfer.

- e. Articulation agreements for graduates of the AA specialized transfer degree.
- f. Responses to the comments received.

The Division of Florida Colleges must review the proposal and, within 30 days after receipt, provide written notification to the FCS institution of any deficiencies and provide the institution with an opportunity to correct the deficiencies. Within 45 days after receipt of a completed proposal by the Division of Florida Colleges, the commissioner must recommend approval or disapproval of the new specialized transfer degree to the SBE. The SBE must consider the recommendation at its next meeting.

Upon approval of an AA specialized transfer degree by the SBE, a FCS institution may offer the degree and must report data on student and program performance in a manner prescribed by the DOE.

The bill requires the SBE to adopt rules to prescribe format and content requirements and submission procedures for notices of intent, proposals, and compliance reviews for the AA specialized transfer degree.

Florida College System Institution Employment Equity Accountability Program

Present Situation

Each FCS institution must include in its annual equity update a plan for increasing the representation of women and minorities in senior-level administrative positions and in full-time faculty positions, and for increasing the representation of women and minorities who have attained continuing-contract status.²⁰⁵ The plan must include specific measurable goals and objectives, specific strategies and timelines for accomplishing these goals and objectives, and comparable national standards as provided by the DOE.²⁰⁶ FCS institution presidents and the heads of each major administrative division must be evaluated annually on the progress made toward meeting the goals and objectives of the FCS institution's employment accountability plan.²⁰⁷

On or before May 1 of each year, each FCS institution president must submit an annual employment accountability plan to the commissioner and the SBE.²⁰⁸ The SBE must submit an annual equity progress report to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives on or before January 1 of each year.²⁰⁹

No law requires such a report of Florida's public K-12 institutions or SUS institutions and it conflicts with the current requirements of the Florida Educational Equity Act.²¹⁰

Effect of Proposed Changes

The bill repeals the FCS Institution Employment Equity Accountability Program.

B. SECTION DIRECTORY:

Section 1: Amends s. 192.0105, F.S.; conforming cross-references.

²⁰⁵ Section 1012.86(1), F.S.

²⁰⁶ *Id.*

²⁰⁷ Section 1012.86(3), F.S.

²⁰⁸ Section 1012.86(2), F.S.

²⁰⁹ Section 1012.86(4), F.S.

²¹⁰ DOE, *Recommendations to Reduce Regulation in Public Schools* (2023), at 22, available at

https://www.flsenate.gov/Committees/Show/ED/MeetingPacket/5953/10483_MeetingPacket_5953_2.pdf. *see also* s. 1000.05, F.S.

- Section 2:** Amends s. 192.048, F.S.; conforming cross-references.
- Section 3:** Amends s. 196.082, F.S.; conforming cross-references.
- Section 4:** Amends s. 196.011, F.S.; providing that an annual application for exemption on property used to house a charter school is not necessary; requiring the owner or lessee of such property to notify the property appraiser in specified circumstances; providing penalties.
- Section 5:** Amends s. 1002.31, F.S.; conforming provisions to changes made by the act.
- Section 6:** Amends s. 1002.33, F.S.; authorizing charter schools to give enrollment preference to certain transfer students; defining the term “classical school”; revising the definition of the term “charter school personnel”.
- Section 7:** Amends s. 1002.45, F.S.; providing approved virtual instruction program provider, virtual charter school, and school district responsibilities relating to statewide assessments and progress monitoring for certain students.
- Section 8:** Creates s. 1003.052, F.S.; establishing the Purple Star School District Program; providing requirements for such program; authorizing the Department of Education to establish additional program criteria; authorizing the State Board of Education to adopt rules.
- Section 9:** Amends s. 1003.451, F.S.; requiring school districts and charter schools to provide certain students with an opportunity to take the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery Test and consult with a military recruiter; providing requirements for the scheduling of such test.
- Section 10:** Amends s. 1003.53, F.S.; revising requirements for the assignment of students to disciplinary programs and alternative school settings or other programs; revising requirements for dropout prevention and academic intervention programs; requiring such programs to include academic intervention plans for students; providing requirements for such plans; providing that specified provisions apply to all dropout prevention and academic intervention programs; requiring school principals or their designees to make a reasonable effort to notify parents by specified means and to document such effort.
- Section 11:** Creates s. 1004.051, F.S.; prohibiting a public postsecondary institution from implicitly or explicitly prohibiting specified students from being employed; providing nonapplicability.
- Section 12:** Amends s. 1006.15, F.S.; revising the criteria authorizing certain students to participate in specified sports.
- Section 13:** Amends s. 1006.38, F.S.; requiring instructional materials publishers and manufacturers or their representatives to make sample copies of specified instructional materials available electronically for use by certain institutes for a specified purpose.
- Section 14:** Amends s. 1007.25, F.S.; creating associate in arts specialized transfer degrees; providing requirements for such degrees; providing a process for the approval of such degree programs; providing for rulemaking.
- Section 15:** Amends s. 1007.271, F.S.; requiring district school boards to make reasonable efforts to enter into specified agreements with a Florida College System institution for certain online courses.
- Section 16:** Amends s. 1008.33, F.S.; revising the date by which a memorandum of understanding relating to schools in turnaround status must be provided to the department; revising requirements for district-managed turnaround plans; providing requirements for

turnaround schools that close and reopen as charter schools and school districts in which such schools reside; providing that specified provisions do not apply to certain turnaround schools; requiring the state board to adopt rules for a charter school turnaround contract and specified leases and agreements.

- Section 17:** Amends s. 1008.34, F.S.; requiring changes to the school grades model or school grading scale to take effect after a specified period of time.
- Section 18:** Amends s. 1009.21, F.S.; providing that a specified document is a single, conclusive piece of evidence to prove residency for tuition purposes.
- Section 19:** Amends s. 1009.98, F.S.; revising the definition of the term "tuition differential"; revising provisions relating to certain payments by the Florida Prepaid College Board.
- Section 20:** Amends s. 1012.79, F.S.; authorizing the Commissioner of Education to appoint an executive director of the Education Practices Commission; revising the purpose of the commission; authorizing the commission to expend funds for legal services.
- Section 21:** Repeals s. 1012.86, F.S., relating to the Florida College System institution employment equity accountability program.
- Section 22:** Amends s. 1001.64, F.S.; conforming provisions to changes made by the act.
- Section 23:** Amends s. 1001.65, F.S.; conforming provisions to changes made by the act.
- Section 24:** Providing an effective date.

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:

None.

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

None.

2. Other:

None.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

The bill authorizes the State Board of Education (SBE) to adopt rules to administer the Purple Star School District Program. The bill requires the SBE to adopt rules for the Associate in Arts specialized transfer degree and to adopt standardized forms and agreements relating to public school improvement. Existing SBE rules and BOG regulations may also need to be repealed or amended to implement the provisions of the bill.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

None.

IV. AMENDMENTS/COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES

Not applicable.