

1 A bill to be entitled
 2 An act relating to education; amending s. 445.009,
 3 F.S.; clarifying the services for which the one-stop
 4 delivery system is intended to provide access to
 5 include additional specified services; amending s.
 6 1003.21, F.S., requiring a student's certified school
 7 counselor or other school personnel to inform the
 8 student of opportunities in specified programs,
 9 including, but not limited to, adult education, high
 10 school equivalency examination preparation, and the
 11 Graduation Alternative to Traditional Education
 12 Program; requiring district school boards to notify
 13 all candidates for the high school equivalency diploma
 14 of adult secondary and postsecondary education
 15 options; amending s. 1003.435, F.S.; requiring
 16 district school boards to notify all candidates for
 17 the high school equivalency diploma of adult secondary
 18 and postsecondary education options; creating s.
 19 1004.933, F.S.; defining the terms "career education
 20 program" and "institution"; establishing the
 21 Graduation Alternative to Traditional Education (GATE)
 22 Program; providing the purpose of the program;
 23 requiring institutions to waive payments for
 24 registration, tuition, laboratory, and examination
 25 fees for students enrolled in the program after all

26 other federal aid is applied; providing eligibility
 27 requirements; prohibiting an institution from imposing
 28 additional eligibility requirements; requiring the
 29 State Board of Education to adopt rules; creating s.
 30 1009.711, F.S.; creating the GATE Scholarship
 31 Program; requiring the Department of Education to
 32 administer the program; requiring the program to
 33 reimburse eligible institutions for student costs;
 34 requiring participating institutions to report to the
 35 department all students enrolled in the program;
 36 providing that reimbursements are contingent on
 37 legislative appropriations and may be prorated in the
 38 event that total reimbursements owed exceed available
 39 funds; requiring the state board to adopt rules;
 40 amending s. 1011.80, F.S.; revising the number of
 41 courses certain students may be reported for relating
 42 to funding purposes; providing that such courses do
 43 not have to be core curricula courses; deleting a
 44 requirement for the department to develop a list of
 45 courses to be designated as core curricula courses;
 46 creating s. 1011.804, F.S.; creating the GATE Program
 47 Student Success Incentive Fund; defining the term
 48 "institution"; providing that, subject to the
 49 appropriation of funds by the Legislature, each
 50 participating institution must receive an allocation

51 based on the performance of students in its GATE
 52 program according to specified metrics; providing an
 53 effective date.

54
 55 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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 57 Section 1. Paragraph (g) of subsection (1) of section
 58 445.009, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

59 445.009 One-stop delivery system.—

60 (1) The one-stop delivery system is the state's primary
 61 customer-service strategy for offering every Floridian access,
 62 through service sites or telephone or computer networks, to the
 63 following services:

64 (g) Adult education, ~~and~~ basic skills training, integrated
 65 education and training, and the Graduation Alternative to
 66 Traditional Education Program under s. 1004.933.

67 Section 2. Paragraph (c) of subsection (1) of section
 68 1003.21, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

69 1003.21 School attendance.—

70 (1)

71 (c) A student who attains the age of 16 years during the
 72 school year is not subject to compulsory school attendance
 73 beyond the date upon which he or she attains that age if the
 74 student files a formal declaration of intent to terminate school
 75 enrollment with the district school board. Public school

76 | students who have attained the age of 16 years and who have not
 77 | graduated are subject to compulsory school attendance until the
 78 | formal declaration of intent is filed with the district school
 79 | board. The declaration must acknowledge that terminating school
 80 | enrollment is likely to reduce the student's earning potential
 81 | and must be signed by the student and the student's parent. The
 82 | school district shall notify the student's parent of receipt of
 83 | the student's declaration of intent to terminate school
 84 | enrollment. The student's certified school counselor or other
 85 | school personnel shall conduct an exit interview with the
 86 | student to determine the reasons for the student's decision to
 87 | terminate school enrollment and actions that could be taken to
 88 | keep the student in school. The student's certified school
 89 | counselor or other school personnel shall inform the student of
 90 | opportunities to continue his or her education in a different
 91 | environment, including, but not limited to, adult education, ~~and~~
 92 | high school equivalency examination preparation, and the
 93 | Graduation Alternative to Traditional Education Program under s.
 94 | 1004.933. Additionally, the student shall complete a survey in a
 95 | format prescribed by the Department of Education to provide data
 96 | on student reasons for terminating enrollment and actions taken
 97 | by schools to keep students enrolled.

98 | Section 3. Subsection (3) of section 1003.435, Florida
 99 | Statutes, is amended to read:

100 | 1003.435 High school equivalency diploma program.—

101 (3) Each district school board shall:
 102 (a) Offer and administer the high school equivalency
 103 diploma examinations and the subject area examinations to all
 104 candidates pursuant to rules of the State Board of Education.

105 (b) Notify each candidate of adult secondary and
 106 postsecondary education options available in or near the
 107 district, including the Graduation Alternative to Traditional
 108 Education Program under s. 1004.933. The candidate must also be
 109 informed of the eligibility requirements and any minimum
 110 academic requirements for each available option.

111 Section 4. Section 1004.933, Florida Statutes, is created
 112 to read:

113 1004.933 Graduation Alternative to Traditional Education
 114 (GATE) Program.—

115 (1) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section, the term:

116 (a) "Career education program" means an applied technology
 117 diploma program as defined in s. 1004.02(7) or a career
 118 certificate program as defined in s. 1004.02(20).

119 (b) "Institution" means a school district career center
 120 established under s. 1001.44, a charter technical career center
 121 established under s. 1002.34, or a Florida College System
 122 institution identified in s. 1000.21.

123 (2) ESTABLISHMENT; PURPOSE.—The Graduation Alternative to
 124 Traditional Education (GATE) Program is created within the
 125 Department of Education for the following purposes:

126 (a) Assisting students who may have challenges in
 127 completing the requirements for a standard high school diploma
 128 in a traditional setting.

129 (b) Creating an alternative education pathway that
 130 supports this state's commitment to educational accessibility
 131 for all students by providing additional opportunities for
 132 students 16 to 21 years of age who have discontinued enrollment
 133 in traditional high school programs.

134 (c) Increasing the number of students who successfully
 135 earn a high school credential in this state.

136 (d) Increasing the number of students in career education
 137 programs.

138 (3) PAYMENT WAIVER; ELIGIBILITY.—

139 (a) Notwithstanding s.445.009(8)(d) and subject to
 140 appropriation, an institution shall waive 100 percent of the
 141 registration, tuition, laboratory, and examination fees after
 142 all other federal aid is applied for a student participating in
 143 the GATE Program, including Workforce Innovation and Opportunity
 144 Act funds. Instructional materials assigned for use under the
 145 GATE program must be made available to GATE Program students
 146 free of charge. An institution may not require payment by
 147 students of instructional material costs eligible for
 148 reimbursement under s. 1009.711.

149 (b) To be eligible for participation in the GATE Program,
 150 a student may not have earned a standard high school diploma

151 pursuant to s. 1003.4282 or a high school equivalency diploma
 152 pursuant to s. 1003.435 before enrolling in the GATE Program and
 153 must:

154 1. Be a resident of this state as defined under s.
 155 1009.21;

156 2. Be 16 to 21 years of age at the time of initial
 157 enrollment;

158 4. Select the adult secondary education program and career
 159 education program of his or her choice at the time of admission
 160 to the GATE Program, provided the program is included on the
 161 Master Credential List under s. 445.004(4). The student may not
 162 change the requested pathway after enrollment;

163 5. Maintain a 2.0 GPA for career and technical education
 164 coursework; and

165 6. Notwithstanding s. 1003.435(4), complete the programs
 166 under subparagraph 2. within 3 years after initial enrollment
 167 unless the institution determines that an extension is warranted
 168 due to extenuating circumstances.

169 (c) Subject to the availability of funds, a student that
 170 meets the requirements of paragraph (b) and is enrolled in the
 171 GATE program is eligible to receive the stipend specified in s.
 172 1009.895(3).

173 (d) An institution may not impose additional criteria to
 174 determine a student's eligibility to receive a waiver under this
 175 section.

176 (4) STUDENT SUPPORT.-In addition to administering the GATE
 177 Program, the Department of Education shall perform the following
 178 duties:

179 (a) Develop and implement a statewide recruitment campaign
 180 in conjunction with eligible institutions, local workforce
 181 development boards, and other local, regional, or state
 182 initiatives that interact with the target population.

183 (b) Connect prospective students directly to eligible
 184 institutions.

185 (c) Provide access to online career planning tools.

186 (5) REPORTING.-Beginning October 1, 2025, and each October
 187 1 thereafter, the Department of Education shall submit a report
 188 to the Governor, President of the Senate and the Speaker of the
 189 House on the number and value of registration, tuition,
 190 laboratory, and examination fees and instructional materials
 191 costs waived and reimbursed, by institution; the number of
 192 students who have obtained a standard high school diploma or
 193 high school equivalency diploma while participating in the GATE
 194 Program; the number of students completing an applied technology
 195 diploma or career certificate while participating in the GATE
 196 Program; and the number of students who have earned an industry
 197 certificate on the CAPE Industry Certification Funding List
 198 while participating in the program. The reporting period shall
 199 cover the previous academic year.

200 (6) RULES.-The State Board of Education shall adopt rules

201 to implement this section.

202 Section 5. Section 1009.711, Florida Statutes, is created
203 to read:

204 1009.711 GATE Scholarship Program.—

205 (1) The GATE Scholarship Program is created to financially
206 support institutions participating in the GATE Program
207 established pursuant to s. 1004.933.

208 (2) The Department of Education shall administer the GATE
209 Program in accordance with rules adopted by the State Board of
210 Education pursuant to subsection (6).

211 (3) The program shall reimburse eligible institutions for
212 registration, tuition, laboratory, and examination fees and
213 related instructional materials costs for students enrolled in
214 the GATE Program. School district career centers and Florida
215 College System institutions must be reimbursed at the in-state
216 resident tuition rate established in s. 1009.22 (3) (c).

217 (4) Each participating institution shall report to the
218 department all students enrolled in the GATE Program during the
219 fall, spring, or summer terms within 30 days after the end of
220 regular registration. For each eligible student, the institution
221 shall report the total reimbursable expenses by category, which
222 the department must consider in determining an institution's
223 award under this section. The department shall reimburse each
224 participating institution no later than 30 days after the
225 institution has reported enrollment for that term.

226 (5) Reimbursements from the GATE Scholarship Program are
 227 contingent upon an annual appropriation in the General
 228 Appropriations Act. If the statewide reimbursement amount is
 229 greater than the appropriation, the institutional reimbursement
 230 amounts specified in subsection (3) must be prorated among the
 231 institutions that have timely reported eligible students to the
 232 department.

233 (6) The State Board of Education shall adopt rules to
 234 implement this section.

235 Section 6. Subsection (10) of section 1011.80, Florida
 236 Statutes, is amended to read:

237 1011.80 Funds for operation of workforce education
 238 programs.—

239 (10) A high school student dually enrolled under s.
 240 1007.271 in a workforce education program operated by a Florida
 241 College System institution or school district career center
 242 generates the amount calculated for workforce education funding,
 243 including any payment of performance funding, and the
 244 proportional share of full-time equivalent enrollment generated
 245 through the Florida Education Finance Program for the student's
 246 enrollment in a high school. If a high school student is dually
 247 enrolled in a Florida College System institution program,
 248 including a program conducted at a high school, the Florida
 249 College System institution earns the funds generated for
 250 workforce education funding, and the school district earns the

251 proportional share of full-time equivalent funding from the
 252 Florida Education Finance Program. If a student is dually
 253 enrolled in a career center operated by the same district as the
 254 district in which the student attends high school, that district
 255 earns the funds generated for workforce education funding and
 256 also earns the proportional share of full-time equivalent
 257 funding from the Florida Education Finance Program. If a student
 258 is dually enrolled in a workforce education program provided by
 259 a career center operated by a different school district, the
 260 funds must be divided between the two school districts
 261 proportionally from the two funding sources. A student may not
 262 be reported for funding in a dual enrollment workforce education
 263 program unless the student has completed the basic skills
 264 assessment pursuant to s. 1004.91. A student who is coenrolled
 265 in a K-12 education program and an adult education program may
 266 be reported for purposes of funding in an adult education
 267 program. If a student is coenrolled in ~~core curricula~~ courses
 268 for credit recovery or dropout prevention purposes and does not
 269 have a pattern of excessive absenteeism or habitual truancy or a
 270 history of disruptive behavior in school, the student may be
 271 reported for funding for up to four ~~two~~ courses per year. Such a
 272 student is exempt from the payment of the block tuition for
 273 adult general education programs provided in s. 1009.22(3)(c).
 274 ~~The Department of Education shall develop a list of courses to~~
 275 ~~be designated as core curricula courses for the purposes of~~

276 ~~enrollment.~~

277 Section 7. Section 1011.804, Florida Statutes, is created
278 to read:

279 1011.804 GATE Program Student Success Incentive Fund.—

280 (1) A GATE Program Student Success Incentive Fund is
281 created to reward school districts and institutions for the
282 documented success of students participating in the GATE Program
283 established under s. 1004.933.

284 (2) As used in this section, the term "institution" means
285 a school district career center established under s. 1001.44, a
286 charter technical career center established under s. 1002.34, or
287 a Florida College System institution identified in s. 1000.21
288 which offers the GATE Program pursuant to s. 1004.933.

289 (3) Subject to legislative appropriation, each
290 participating institution must receive an allocation based on
291 the performance of students in its GATE Program according to the
292 following metrics:

293 (a) The number of students obtaining a standard high
294 school diploma or high school equivalency diploma while
295 participating in the program; and

296 (b) The number of postsecondary industry certifications or
297 other program completion credentials included on the Master
298 Credential List under s. 445.004(4) earned by students
299 participating in the program. Eligible industry certifications
300 must be identified on the CAPE Industry Certification Funding

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301 List approved by the State Board of Education under s. 1008.44.
302 (c) In order for a school district or an institution to
303 receive an allocation for a student under this section, the
304 student must meet or exceed the metrics for both paragraphs (a)
305 and (b).

306 Section 8. This act shall take effect July 1, 2024.