

Committee on Education

CS/HB 7071 — Workforce Education

by Education Committee; Higher Education and Career Readiness Subcommittee; and Reps. Mariano, Massullo, and others (CS/CS/CS/SB 770 by Appropriations Committee; Innovation, Industry, and Technology Committee; Education Committee; and Senators Hutson and Perry)

The bill promotes career education and readiness opportunities for students in public schools and provides responsibilities for district school boards, the Department of Education (DOE), and the Commissioner of Education (commissioner) regarding career education opportunities; provides flexibilities and supports to public schools regarding teacher recruitment and training; strengthens transition pathways to college and career opportunities; establishes alignment between education and workforce needs, and provides related supports; and specifies provisions related to the consolidation of accreditation of the University of South Florida branch campuses.

The bill specifies the following career and technical education opportunities for students in public schools:

- Establishes the Career and Technical Education (CTE) graduation pathway as an alternative pathway option for students to earn a standard high school diploma; and requires students to earn a 2.0 grade point average, successfully complete at least 18 credits in specified subject areas, and fulfill the statewide, standardized assessment requirements to receive a standard high school diploma.
- Modifies the 24-credit pathway for earning a standard high school diploma by revising computer science credit substitution for mathematics or science credits; and eliminates the financial literacy credit requirement, as part of economics under the specified social studies credits. However, the bill specifies that all school districts must offer a financial literacy course consisting of at least 0.5 credit as an elective, beginning with the 2019-2020 school year.
- Revises the requirements for a student to earn a “Scholar” designation by permitting the one credit in Algebra II to be substituted with one credit in another equally rigorous course.
- Restores middle grades career education and planning course requirements which were eliminated in 2017, with some modifications.
- Encourages district school boards to adopt policies and procedures regarding declaring a “College and Career Decision Day” to recognize high school seniors for their postsecondary education plans and to encourage them to pursue college and career pathways.

The bill provides the following flexibilities and supports to public schools regarding teacher recruitment and training:

- Authorizes district school boards to issue an adjunct teaching certificate for a full-time teaching position, but specifies that such certificates are valid for a period of three years and are not renewable. The bill also specifies reporting requirements for school districts.

- Revises the types of training for which a school district may apply to the DOE for funding to include professional development for classroom teachers to provide instruction in computer science courses and content.

The bill strengthens transition pathways to college and career opportunities in the following ways:

- Requires that the statewide articulation agreement between the State Board of Education and the Board of Governors of the State University System of Florida (BOG) provide for a reverse transfer agreement for Florida College System (FCS) associate in arts (AA) degree-seeking students who transfer to a state university after earning more than 30 credit hours from an FCS institution but before earning an AA degree; and specifies related requirements for the state universities.
- Requires each career center and FCS institution with overlapping service areas to annually submit to the DOE by May 1, a regional career pathways agreement for each certificate program offered by the career center that is aligned with an associate degree offered by the FCS institution in the service area. Each career pathways agreement must guarantee college credit toward an aligned associate degree program for students who graduate from a career center with a career or technical certificate and meet specified requirements in accordance with the terms of the agreement.
- Revises the deadline from November 30 to April 30 for the annual reporting of postsecondary feedback information by the commissioner to specified entities.

The bill establishes alignment between education and workforce needs, and provides related supports as follows:

- Establishes the “Strengthening Alignment between Industry and Learning (SAIL) to 60” Initiative to increase to 60 percent the percentage of working-age adults who hold a high-value postsecondary certificate, degree, or training experience by the year 2030.
- Establishes the “Last Mile Scholarship Program,” subject to legislative appropriation, to annually award the cost of in-state tuition and required fees for Florida resident students who are in good standing at FCS institutions and state universities and who are within 12 or fewer credit hours of completing their first associate or baccalaureate degree.
- Requires the DOE to provide assistance to specified entities when notifying students, parents, and members of the community about apprenticeship and preapprenticeship opportunities.
- Creates the “Florida Pathways to Career Opportunities Grant Program,” subject to legislative appropriation, to provide competitive grants to specified entities to expand existing apprenticeship and preapprenticeship programs and establish new programs.
- Reconstitutes the Higher Education Coordinating Council as the Florida Talent Development Council for the purpose of developing a coordinated, data-driven, statewide approach to meeting Florida’s need for a 21st century workforce, which utilizes the Florida’s talent supply system. The bill also moves the administrative support for the council from the DOE to the Department of Economic Opportunity, revises the council’s membership, and specifies reporting requirements.

The bill specifies the following provisions related to the consolidation of accreditation of the University of South Florida (USF) branch campuses:

- Requires that the BOG use its 2019 Accountability Plan in determining a state university's preeminence designations and in distributing awards from the 2019-2020 fiscal year appropriation.
- Requires the USF, St. Petersburg and USF, Manatee/Sarasota to maintain branch campus status after each campus's accreditation is consolidated into a single accreditation, as monitored by the BOG.
- Provides the definition of a branch campus, which is identical to the definition by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.
- Prohibits the BOG, if specified requirements are met, from using the consolidated performance data from the USF branch campuses in determining USF's status as a preeminent state research university until July 1, 2022.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2019, except for the "Scholar" designation provision which is effective upon the bill becoming law.

Vote: Senate 40-0; House 113-0