

Committee on Education

CS/CS/SB 1720 — Education

by Appropriations Committee; Education Committee; and Senator Galvano

The bill requires Florida College System institutions to implement developmental education, creates an Office of K-20 Articulation in the Department of Education, revises postsecondary general education requirements, gives the Board of Governors stronger oversight authority over state universities, and revises a number of statutes to improve accountability in K-12 and postsecondary education.

Developmental Education in Florida College System Institutions

The bill restructures remedial college preparatory instruction as developmental education and requires Florida College System institutions to provide developmental education that is more tailored to the specific communication and computation skills a student needs to develop to be successful in performing college-level work. The bill does not repeal non-credit courses but requires colleges to offer developmental education options a student may pursue while also enrolled in college-credit courses. Students whose test scores indicate the need for developmental education must be advised of options and may enroll in the developmental education options of their choice.

The bill specifies that two groups of students must not be required to take the common placement test or to enroll in developmental education:

- Students who entered 9th grade in a Florida public school in 2003-2004 or thereafter and who earned a standard Florida high school diploma; or
- Students who are serving as active duty members of the United States Armed Services.

Students who are not required to be tested or to enroll in developmental education may request assessment and may enroll in developmental education if they wish.

The bill requires:

- By October 31, 2013, the State Board of Education to establish by rule the test scores a student must achieve on the common placement test in order to perform college level-work;
- By December 31, 2013, the State Board of Education to approve a series of meta-majors and academic pathways and identify the gateway courses to the meta-majors;
- By March 1, 2014, Florida College System institutions to submit developmental education plans to the Chancellor of the Florida College System for implementation beginning no later than fall 2014; and
- Each Florida College System institution and the Florida College System Chancellor to submit annual accountability reports to the state beginning in 2015.

Revision of General Education Requirements

The bill reinstates the general education credit hour requirement to 36 semester hours from the proposed 30 hours; extends implementation of the revised core course requirements for one year, from 2014-15 to 2015-16; and allows for the inclusion of an additional core course option.

Office of K-20 Articulation

The bill creates a new Office of K-20 Articulation in the Department of Education to support the work of the Higher Education Coordinating Council and the Articulation Coordinating Committee. The bill also revises duties of the Articulation Coordinating Committee and revises membership and duties of the Higher Education Coordinating Council.

Postsecondary Education Accountability

The bill:

- Gives the Board of Governors stronger oversight authority over state universities in regard to laws, rules, and regulations.
- For education accountability purposes, establishes dates by which licensed private postsecondary institutions must report data to the Commission for Independent Education and nonprofit independent colleges and universities must report data to the Department of Education.
- Transfers oversight of the Moffitt Cancer Center and Research Institute's lease from the Board of Governors to the University of South Florida.
- Provides rule making authority regarding penalties for not reporting child abuse at postsecondary institutions.

Access to Postsecondary Education

The bill:

- Raises the cap on the number of fee exemptions a Florida College System institution may grant from 40 to 54 full-time-equivalent students or one percent of the institution's total full-time equivalent enrollment, whichever is greater;
- Repeals the Free Application for Federal Student Aid requirement for Bright Futures Scholarships and for Florida Resident Access Grant and Access to Better Learning and Education tuition assistance grants; and
- Authorizes a Florida College System institution to establish a differential out-of-state fee for non-resident distance learners.

K-12 Accountability

The bill:

- Specifies minimum sample size and minimum percentage of students tested in order for schools to receive a school grade or school improvement rating, and defines "colocated schools" for purposes of school accountability.

- Requires specified content to be included on student report cards that are distributed to parents.
- Directs the Department of Education to develop criteria for issuing and revoking master school identification (MSID) numbers.
- Requires the Division of Law Revision and Information to prepare a reviser's bill for 2014 to change the term GED test to high school equivalency examination, throughout the statutes, thereby increasing a student's options for attaining a high school equivalency diploma.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2013.

Vote: Senate 36-3; House 117-0