

**STORAGE NAME:** h4397.ei

**DATE:** April 7, 1998

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMMITTEE ON  
EDUCATION INNOVATION  
BILL RESEARCH & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT**

**BILL #:** HB 4397

**RELATING TO:** General Requirements for High School Graduation; Credit for Students Who Act As Tutors

**SPONSOR(S):** Committee on Education Innovation and Representative Melvin

**COMPANION BILL(S):**

**ORIGINATING COMMITTEE(S)/COMMITTEE(S) OF REFERENCE:**

- (1) EDUCATION INNOVATION YEAS 8 NAYS 0
  - (2)
  - (3)
  - (4)
  - (5)
- 

**I. SUMMARY:**

HB 4397 allows qualified high school juniors and seniors to earn one-half to three-fourths credit toward high school graduation for serving as tutors to other students. The provision has the practical effect of making more tutors available for schools and districts to use. These student tutors could be used as part of the academic improvement plan required in s. 232.245, F.S., for students who are not up to grade level. Additionally, the student tutor program could help a school which has a shortage of adult volunteer tutors.

Principals will designate the qualified students to serve as tutors for other students in specific academic areas. The student tutors will be supervised and evaluated by qualified instructional personnel. Evaluations will take place at the end of each semester and will include measures for the academic progress or improvement of the student receiving the tutoring. If a student tutor is found to have unsatisfactory performance, the supervisor may preclude the student tutor's participation until the deficiencies are corrected or the supervisor may allow the tutor to correct the deficiencies while continuing in the program.

The student tutor, the school, and the student being tutored will enter into a written agreement, which will specify the time, place and manner of tutoring. Each student serving as a tutor will be awarded one-half credit toward graduation for each semester served. If the student is deemed worthy, they may receive one-fourth additional credit for each semester. If a student serves for the entire time they are eligible (their junior and senior years), a maximum total of 3 credits could be earned during the two year period.

II. SUBSTANTIVE RESEARCH:

A. PRESENT SITUATION:

High school graduation requirements are outlined in s. 232.246, F.S. To graduate, a student must successfully complete 24 academic credits that meet the specified curriculum, earn a passing score on all portions of the High School Competency Test, earn a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 1.5 (or a 2.0\*), on a 4.0 scale, for required courses, and meet any other requirements established by the school board.

\*The 2.0 GPA is effective for students who entered the 9<sup>th</sup> grade in or after the 1997-98 school year.

<b>Required Subject</b>	<b>Number of Credits</b>
English	4
Math	3
Science	3
Social Studies	
American History	1
World History	1
Economics	.5
American Government	.5
Physical Education	.5
Practical Arts Vocational or Exploratory	.5 or 1
Performing Fine Arts	.5 or 1
Life Management Skills	.5
Total Required Credits	15
Total Elective Credits	9
<b>TOTAL CREDITS</b>	<b>24</b>

Credit for high school graduation may be earned for volunteer activities and nonacademic activities which have been approved by the State Board of Education. Subsection (3) of s. 232.246, F.S., allows the school board to award one-half elective credit for 75 hours of nonpaid voluntary community or school service work.

Districts must adopt policies designed to assist students in meeting the graduation requirements, pursuant to s. 232.246(5)(e)1., F.S. The policies may include volunteer

and/or peer tutors. There are a variety of tutoring options which districts and schools are choosing to help students. These include using volunteers in the classroom, partnering with businesses to find mentors for students, and using students in the school or classroom to help classmates, schoolmates, or students in lower grades. In recent year, the need for tutors has increased due to the increased performance standards in the state.

### **Increased Performance Standards**

Since "Blueprint 2000" in 1991 the Florida Legislature has substantially revised Florida's system of school improvement and education accountability. Based on eight education goals, the legislative intent has been to increase standards, flexibility, local control and accountability. (ss. 229.591 and 229.592, F.S.) Consistent with Blueprint 2000's goals of increased standards, flexibility, and accountability, section 229.564, F.S., requires the Commissioner of Education to develop and the State Board of Education to approve student performance standards in the areas of reading, writing, mathematics, science, history, government, geography, economics, and computer literacy.

The Department of Education began developing the "Sunshine State Standards" in 1994 and the State Board of Education approved the standards in May 1996. These increased standards are currently being implemented in every school and school district.

Additionally, in 1997 when the Legislature passed CS/SB 458 (Chapter 97-2, LOF) the student performance standards were increased in the following ways:

- Cumulative grade point average required for purposes of a district's comprehensive program for pupil progression (pursuant to s. 232.245(3), F.S.), for participation in interscholastic extracurricular activities (pursuant to s. 232.425(3)(a), F.S.), and for graduation (pursuant to s. 232.246(5)(c), F.S.) is increased from 1.5 to 2.0.
- Algebra I, a series of equivalent courses, or a higher level course are required for graduation (s. 232.246(1)(b), F.S.).
- Restrictions are placed on enrollment in Level 1 high school courses for credit toward graduation (s. 232.246(7)(d), F.S.).
- High school grading system is revised (s. 232.2463, F.S.).

The Legislature intends that each student's progression from one grade to another be determined, in part, upon proficiency in reading, writing, and mathematics; and that school district policies facilitate such proficiency, pursuant to s. 232.245, F.S. To progress from one grade to the next grade, students must meet specific levels of performance and be up to grade level on reading, writing, and mathematics. For each student that does not meet specific levels of performance, an academic improvement plan must be developed to assist the student in meeting proficiency. The plan must include one or more of the following activities: summer school, extended-day services, parent tutor programs, contracted academic services, exceptional education services, or suspension of curriculum other than reading, writing, and mathematics.

### **Florida School Volunteer Program**

The Florida School Volunteer Program was formalized to recruit, train, and recognize school adult volunteers. Initially, it was an incentive program to provide the district with a staff person to coordinate volunteers with funding of approximately \$420,000 from the state. Funding was set up as a formula grant and every district got a portion of the funding. In more recent years, this type of funding was decreased, and currently, there is no funding at state level for a facilitating person at the district. Currently, districts are responsible for their own volunteers. The Department of Education does have a state coordinating office with 67 district contacts. Ninety-five percent of the 2800 schools in Florida have a school coordinator. However, when the funding decreased for school volunteers, the network of adult volunteers also decreased.

### **Youth Volunteer Program**

Last year, according to the Department of Education, Florida had 75,406 documented youth volunteers. Youth volunteers are considered those under 21 years old, including all grades and college students. Most of the districts with a volunteer youth program have excellent training program. The state has award programs for schools which send youth volunteers to other schools, the Silver School Award, and for schools receiving youth volunteers, the Golden School Award. Additionally, there is Five Star School Award for business partnerships and youth community service. All awards for volunteer programs emphasize heavy training and recognition components.

Due to the above described decrease in funding for adult volunteer programs and the increased performance standards required to move from one grade to the next and to graduate from high school, more tutors could be used in schools and districts.

#### **B. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:**

Qualified high school juniors and seniors will be able to serve as tutors to other students; more tutors will be available for schools and districts to use. These student tutors could be used as part of the academic improvement plan required in s. 232.245, F.S., for students who are not up to grade level. Additionally, the student tutor program could help a school which has a shortage of adult volunteer tutors.

Principals will designate the qualified students to serve as tutors for other students in specific academic areas. The student tutors will be supervised and evaluated by qualified instructional personnel. Evaluations will take place at the end of each semester and will include measures for the academic progress or improvement of the student receiving the tutoring. If a student tutor is found to have unsatisfactory performance, the supervisor may preclude the student tutor's participation until the deficiencies are corrected or the supervisor may allow the tutor to correct the deficiencies while continuing in the program.

The student tutor, the school, and the student being tutored will enter into a written agreement, which will specify the time, place and manner of tutoring. Each student serving as a tutor will be awarded one-half credit toward graduation for each semester served. If the student is deemed worthy, they may receive one-fourth additional credit for each semester. If a student serves for the entire time they are eligible (their junior and senior years), a maximum total of 3 credits could be earned during the two year period.

C. APPLICATION OF PRINCIPLES:

1. Less Government:

a. Does the bill create, increase or reduce, either directly or indirectly:

(1) any authority to make rules or adjudicate disputes?

N/A

(2) any new responsibilities, obligations or work for other governmental or private organizations or individuals?

Qualified instructional personnel will be responsible for supervising and evaluating qualified tutors and principals will be responsible for designating the high school juniors and seniors who are qualified to act as tutors. Additionally, a written agreement will be needed between the student tutor, the school and the student receiving the tutoring.

(3) any entitlement to a government service or benefit?

The student tutors will be entitled to one-half to three-fourths credit toward high school graduation for each semester that he or she satisfactorily performs as a tutor.

b. If an agency or program is eliminated or reduced:

(1) what responsibilities, costs and powers are passed on to another program, agency, level of government, or private entity?

N/A

(2) what is the cost of such responsibility at the new level/agency?

N/A

(3) how is the new agency accountable to the people governed?

N/A

2. Lower Taxes:

- a. Does the bill increase anyone's taxes?

N/A

- b. Does the bill require or authorize an increase in any fees?

N/A

- c. Does the bill reduce total taxes, both rates and revenues?

N/A

- d. Does the bill reduce total fees, both rates and revenues?

N/A

- e. Does the bill authorize any fee or tax increase by any local government?

N/A

3. Personal Responsibility:

- a. Does the bill reduce or eliminate an entitlement to government services or subsidy?

N/A

- b. Do the beneficiaries of the legislation directly pay any portion of the cost of implementation and operation?

N/A

4. Individual Freedom:

- a. Does the bill increase the allowable options of individuals or private organizations/associations to conduct their own affairs?

N/A

- b. Does the bill prohibit, or create new government interference with, any presently lawful activity?

N/A

5. Family Empowerment:

a. If the bill purports to provide services to families or children:

(1) Who evaluates the family's needs?

N/A

(2) Who makes the decisions?

N/A

(3) Are private alternatives permitted?

N/A

(4) Are families required to participate in a program?

N/A

(5) Are families penalized for not participating in a program?

N/A

b. Does the bill directly affect the legal rights and obligations between family members?

N/A

c. If the bill creates or changes a program providing services to families or children, in which of the following does the bill vest control of the program, either through direct participation or appointment authority:

(1) parents and guardians?

N/A

(2) service providers?

N/A

(3) government employees/agencies?

N/A

**D. STATUTE(S) AFFECTED:**

Amends s. 232.246, Florida Statutes.

**E. SECTION-BY-SECTION RESEARCH:**

**Section 1** Adds a new subsection (4) to s. 232.246, F.S., awarding one-half credit per semester towards graduation to students who tutor other students. Provides for evaluation of tutor by supervising instructor. Provides that tutor may receive one-fourth additional credit per semester. Prohibits student tutor with unsatisfactory performance from participation in program unless supervising instructor makes judgment that deficiencies can be corrected while tutor continues participation. Requires that measurable academic progress or improvement on behalf of the students tutored be included as measures of effectiveness used to evaluate student tutors.

**Section 2** Provides an effective date of July 1 of the year in which enacted.

**III. FISCAL RESEARCH & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT:**

**A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE AGENCIES/STATE FUNDS:**

1. Non-recurring Effects:

N/A

2. Recurring Effects:

N/A

3. Long Run Effects Other Than Normal Growth:

N/A

4. Total Revenues and Expenditures:

N/A

**B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AS A WHOLE:**



1. Non-recurring Effects:

N/A

2. Recurring Effects:

N/A

3. Long Run Effects Other Than Normal Growth:

N/A

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

1. Direct Private Sector Costs:

N/A

2. Direct Private Sector Benefits:

N/A

3. Effects on Competition, Private Enterprise and Employment Markets:

N/A

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

N/A

IV. CONSEQUENCES OF ARTICLE VII, SECTION 18 OF THE FLORIDA CONSTITUTION:

A. APPLICABILITY OF THE MANDATES PROVISION:

This bill does not require counties or municipalities to expend funds.

B. REDUCTION OF REVENUE RAISING AUTHORITY:

This bill does not reduce the authority of counties or municipalities to raise revenue.

C. REDUCTION OF STATE TAX SHARED WITH COUNTIES AND MUNICIPALITIES:

This bill does not reduce the percentage of a state tax shared with counties and municipalities.

V. COMMENTS:

N/A

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VI. AMENDMENTS OR COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES:

N/A

VII. SIGNATURES:

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION INNOVATION:

Prepared by:

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