

SENATE STAFF ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based only on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

BILL: SB 1292

SPONSOR: Education Committee

SUBJECT: College Reach Out Program

DATE: March 1, 1999 REVISED: 03/22/99 _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>White</u>	<u>O'Farrell</u>	<u>ED</u>	<u>Fav/1 amendment</u>
2.	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____

I. Summary:

This bill authorizes the College Reach Out Program to continue in operation by repealing a mandatory repeal scheduled for July 1, 1999. It also permits the program's administrators to select a proposal for funding even if some of the participants receive similar services from another program.

This bill amends 240.61 of the Florida Statutes. It repeals section 3 of ch. 94-246 of the Laws of Florida.

II. Present Situation:

The legislation under consideration is the result of a review, mandated by the 1994 Legislature, of the College Reach Out Program.

The reach out program is a state-funded effort to encourage college attendance by students who, in middle school, have statistics that predict low rates of college attendance. Among those statistics are having parents who did not attend college and are economically disadvantaged, and having academic problems.

To conduct the review, staff conducted on-site or telephone interviews with key administrators of the program at the state and local levels, reviewed the annual program evaluations and funding history, and compared funding and program delivery methods of reach-out programs with similar programs funded by the United States government.

The state reach-out program has clearly defined and measurable goals and objectives in s. 240.61, F.S. The mandated review is required to determine the extent to which the program is achieving those goals.

The objective is “to increase the number of low-income educationally disadvantaged students in grades 6-12 who, upon high school graduation, are admitted to and successfully complete postsecondary education.” The four goals are to motivate students to pursue a postsecondary education, to develop basic learning skills, to strengthen understanding of the benefits of postsecondary education, and to provide supplemental instruction.

The activities required to attain these goals include in-school and out-of-school contact with reach-out staff and volunteer mentors, summer programs and field trips, community and parent involvement, and tuition scholarships provided by state or federal programs such as the STARS program. Every student must have the opportunity to attend a summer residential component.

For the past 7 years, the Postsecondary Education Planning Commission has evaluated the program’s success. The annual review contains detailed demographic information about all participants and a measurement of their attainment of the goals compared with a cohort of students selected at random who are not in the program.

The major finding of the Senate staff review is that the program is performing as the law intended and that its improvement has been continuous. Even though the average expenditure per student is only \$318 per year, students in the reach-out program have fewer days absent from school, more academic promotions, and a higher high school graduation rate than does the comparison group. Follow-up of former reach-out students reveals a higher rate of enrollment in postsecondary education and better grades.

These comparative analyses represent success especially because it is not possible to correct for important demographic differences between the reach-out group and the comparison group. The comparison group is selected at random, while reach-out participants must be disadvantaged both academically and economically. Still, the reach-out group did better.

Interviews revealed that the most difficult goal to achieve is the development of students’ basic skills. Reach-out directors say that the resources provided are not enough to intervene directly, but indirect intervention -- through improved motivation and the involvement of parents and other adults -- is probably responsible for the students’ academic improvement.

One suggestion for a change in the statute is to clarify that a program should not be disqualified if some of the students receive similar services from other programs, such as components of the federal TRIO programs, Upward Bound and Talent Search. Some of these programs offer short-term involvement that can complement the reach-out activities but would not make much difference in a student’s outlook without the continuous involvement of reach-out. If the services are properly coordinated instead of duplicated, staff say that the involvement of other programs can increase the ability of the reach-out program to attain its goals.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Senate Bill 1292 would repeal section 3 of chapter 94-246, L.O.F., which requires a July 1, 1999, repeal of the statute authorizing the College Reach Out Program unless the Legislature reenacts it.

The proposed bill also would amend s. 240.61, F.S., to authorize a College Reach Out Program to be selected for funding even if some of the students participate in another program with similar objectives. The reach-out program must assure that the services are complementary rather than duplicative, but the involvement of another program would not disqualify a reach-out program.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

Without a law similar to the one proposed in this bill, students in grades 6-12 would no longer receive services from the College Reach-Out Program. In 1998-1999, almost 8,000 students are in the program.

C. Government Sector Impact:

If the 1994 law is not repealed, the College Reach Out Program will be eliminated and funds probably will not be appropriated for it. The savings would be about \$2.5 million annually. Since 1994, the annual appropriation has been:

1994-1995	\$2.5 million	1997-1998	\$2.4 million
1995-1996	\$2.4 million	1998-1999	\$2.6 million
1996-1997	\$2.4 million		

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Amendments:

#1 by Education:

The amendment deletes section 2 of the bill so as to leave the statute unchanged. The bill's only effect will be to repeal the law that mandates a repeal of s. 240.61, F.S. on July 1, 1999.

This Senate staff analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's sponsor or the Florida Senate.
