

By Senator Meek

36-1301A-99

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A bill to be entitled
An act relating to public school technical academy pilot projects; establishing public school technical academy pilot projects; providing for incentive grants; providing student eligibility requirements; providing graduation requirements; requiring the development and adoption of rules; amending s. 229.57, F.S.; requiring students eligible for enrollment in a public school technical academy to be provided an opportunity to take the high school competency test, upon request; requiring an appropriation; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Public school technical academy pilot projects.--

(1) ESTABLISHMENT.--From funding provided in the General Appropriations Act, the Department of Education shall award incentive grants to public school districts to establish and operate technical academy pilot projects. Public school technical academies will offer 2-year technology-based programs including, but not limited to, performing arts programs, fine arts programs, computer and applied technology programs, and vocational job-preparatory programs, in which an eligible student may enroll during grades 11 and 12. Programs offered by technical academies should operate in cooperation with existing certificate career education programs, when applicable.

1 (2) STUDENT ELIGIBILITY.--To be eligible to enroll in
2 a public school technical academy a student must be entering
3 the eleventh grade and must have:

4 (a) Passed all sections of the high school competency
5 test; and

6 (b) Completed the tenth grade with a cumulative grade
7 point average of 3.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale, or its
8 equivalent, in courses required for graduation.

9 (3) GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS.--

10 (a) While enrolled in a public school technical
11 academy, a student shall be exempt from the requirements of
12 232.246(1) regarding courses required for graduation.

13 (b) Upon successful completion of a course of study at
14 a public school technical academy, a student will be awarded a
15 differentiated diploma indicating graduation from a public
16 school technical academy in a form prescribed by the State
17 Board of Education.

18 (4) RULES.--The state board shall adopt rules as
19 necessary to implement this section, including rules developed
20 by the Department of Education establishing graduation
21 requirements for public school technical academies that are as
22 rigorous as or more rigorous than graduation requirements for
23 receipt of a standard high school diploma.

24 (5) FUNDING.--There is hereby appropriated from the
25 General Revenue Fund to the Department of Education the sum of
26 \$5 million for incentive grants for the establishment and
27 operation of public school technical academy pilot projects.

28 Section 2. Paragraph (c) of subsection (3) of section
29 229.57, Florida Statutes, 1998 Supplement, is amended to read:

30 229.57 Student assessment program.--
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1 (3) STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM.--The commissioner is
2 directed to design and implement a statewide program of
3 educational assessment that provides information for the
4 improvement of the operation and management of the public
5 schools. The program must be designed, as far as possible, so
6 as not to conflict with ongoing district assessment programs
7 and so as to use information obtained from district programs.
8 Pursuant to the statewide assessment program, the commissioner
9 shall:

10 (c) Develop and implement a student achievement
11 testing program as part of the statewide assessment program,
12 to be administered at designated times at the elementary,
13 middle, and high school levels to measure reading, writing,
14 and mathematics. The testing program must be designed so
15 that:

16 1. The tests measure student skills and competencies
17 adopted by the state board as specified in paragraph (a). The
18 tests must measure and report student proficiency levels in
19 reading, writing, and mathematics. Other content areas may be
20 included as directed by the commissioner. The commissioner
21 shall provide for the tests to be developed or obtained, as
22 appropriate, through contracts and project agreements with
23 private vendors, public vendors, public agencies,
24 postsecondary institutions, or school districts. The
25 commissioner shall obtain input with respect to the design and
26 implementation of the testing program from state educators and
27 the public.

28 2. The tests are criterion-referenced and include, to
29 the extent determined by the commissioner, items that require
30 the student to produce information or perform tasks in such a
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1 way that the skills and competencies he or she uses can be
2 measured.

3 3. Each testing program, whether at the elementary,
4 middle, or high school level, includes a test of writing in
5 which students are required to produce writings which are then
6 scored by appropriate methods.

7 4. A score is designated for each subject area tested,
8 below which score a student's performance is deemed
9 inadequate. The school districts shall provide appropriate
10 remedial instruction to students who score below these levels.

11 5. All 11th grade students take a high school
12 competency test developed by the state board to test minimum
13 student performance skills and competencies in reading,
14 writing, and mathematics. The test must be based on the skills
15 and competencies adopted by the state board pursuant to
16 paragraph (a). Upon recommendation of the commissioner, the
17 state board shall designate a passing score for each part of
18 the high school competency test. In establishing passing
19 scores, the state board shall consider any possible negative
20 impact of the test on minority students. The commissioner may
21 establish criteria whereby a student who successfully
22 demonstrates proficiency in either reading or mathematics or
23 both may be exempted from taking the corresponding section of
24 the high school competency test or the college placement test.
25 Each student determined to be potentially eligible for
26 enrollment in a public school technical academy shall be
27 provided an opportunity to take the high school competency
28 test at the end of his or her tenth grade year before
29 enrollment in the eleventh grade, upon request. A student must
30 earn a passing score or have been exempted from each part of
31 the high school competency test in order to qualify for a

1 regular high school diploma. The school districts shall
2 provide appropriate remedial instruction to students who do
3 not pass part of the competency test.

4 6. Participation in the testing program is mandatory
5 for all students, except as otherwise prescribed by the
6 commissioner. The commissioner shall recommend rules to the
7 state board for the provision of test adaptations and
8 modifications of procedures as necessary for students in
9 exceptional education programs and for students who have
10 limited English proficiency.

11 7. A student seeking an adult high school diploma must
12 meet the same testing requirements that a regular high school
13 student must meet.

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15 The commissioner may design and implement student testing
16 programs for any grade level and subject area, based on
17 procedures designated by the commissioner to monitor
18 educational achievement in the state.

19 (d) Obtain or develop a career planning assessment to
20 be administered to students, at their option, in grades 7 and
21 10 to assist them in preparing for further education or
22 entering the workforce. The statewide student assessment
23 program must include career planning assessment.

24 (e) Conduct ongoing research to develop improved
25 methods of assessing student performance, including, without
26 limitation, the use of technology to administer tests, the use
27 of electronic transfer of data, the development of
28 work-product assessments, and the development of process
29 assessments.

30 (f) Conduct ongoing research and analysis of student
31 achievement data, including, without limitation, monitoring

1 trends in student achievement, identifying school programs
2 that are successful, and analyzing correlates of school
3 achievement.

4 (g) Provide technical assistance to school districts
5 in the implementation of state and district testing programs
6 and the use of the data produced pursuant to such programs.

7 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 1999.

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HOUSE SUMMARY

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12 Establishes public school technical academy pilot
13 projects. Provides for incentive grants. Provides student
14 eligibility requirements. Provides graduation
15 requirements. Requires the development and adoption of
16 rules. Requires students eligible for enrollment in a
17 public school technical academy to be provided an
18 opportunity to take the high school competency test, upon
19 request. Requires a \$5 million appropriation from the
20 General Revenue Fund to the Department of Education.

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