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: CS/SB 860

SPONSOR: Education Committee and Senator Horne

SUBJECT: High School Technical Education

DATE: March 6, 2000 REVISED: _____ _____ _____ _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	White	O'Farrell	ED	Favorable/CS
2.			FP	
3.				
4.				
5.				

I. Summary:

This committee substitute creates a high school vocational education program that requires:

- Certification of the technical portions by business and industry;
- A strong academic component with a foreign language and all required academic courses above level 2;
- A core course, experience in the workplace, and a final project conducted with assistance by a guidance counselor and a business partner;
- A passing score on the College Entry Level Placement Test; and
- Articulation with postsecondary education.

By 2005, all vocational programs in high school must meet these requirements as further specified in rules of the State Board of Education. The bill has no effect on high school programs other than vocational or technical programs, nor does it require a high school to have a vocational or technical component. Technical programs that meet the requirements will be funded at 1.5 times the base student allocation for grades 9 - 12. Beginning in 2005, any technical education course that is not part of such a program will be funded at the base student allocation.

A student who completes the program receives an endorsement that assures an employer of the student's experience with workplace skills and academic competence. The certificate also assures admission without qualification into postsecondary education.

The bill also requires additional qualifications for the school personnel who will coordinate with the business partners and assist the students through the program. The program requires certification of each vocational area by the relevant business or industry and also requires students to have clinical experience in the workplace.

During 2001-2002, the program will be implemented in pilot projects in each geographic planning region of the state.

The bill amends sections 228.041, 229.601, 231.1725, 236.081, 239.121, and 239.229 of the Florida Statutes. It repeals s. 233.068, F.S., and creates four undesignated new sections of statute.

II. Present Situation:

In the 1998-1999 school year, Florida high schools reported almost 75,000 full-time-equivalent students for funding in the job preparatory vocational education category, or 11.5 percent of all high school FTE. This is among the highest participation rates in the nation.

At least since 1988, the Department of Education and the Legislature have taken an active role in the attempt to improve the outcomes of high school vocational education and to remove from it the stigma of the "vocational track." Based on studies initiated by the Rand Corporation and the Southern Regional Education Board, the goal of all the reform efforts is the same: Prepare all students for postsecondary education **and** work. The student should have a choice of "two parallel, more equal pathways through high school -- a Tech Prep pathway for career and community college-bound students and a parallel pathway for four-year college and university preparatory students. Both pathways should contain the same basic curriculum of demanding college preparatory level courses and should be flexible enough for students to move from one pathway to another."[1]

All of the reforms have as their main effort the integration of vocational and academic education, with the following common components:

- Revise and develop ***vocational courses*** to teach communication, mathematics, and science.
- Revise and develop ***academic courses*** to teach concepts from the college preparatory curriculum through functional and applied strategies.
- Recognize that high school vocational education alone does not result in self-sufficiency, and develop ***two-plus-two programs*** that guarantee a smooth transition to postsecondary education or include part of a postsecondary education during the high school years.

Florida's major efforts can be divided into four categories, each of which may emphasize one of these components more than others. But each type of school includes all three components. Following is a brief description of the four categories.

Blueprint for Career Education -- "Blueprint Schools"
These schools were originally funded by the 1988 Legislature and were designed around the Southern Regional Education Board's original "Ten Steps to Improve High School Vocational Education Programs." All Florida school districts now operate their vocational education programs around those concepts. However, when the board evaluated several states, it found that Florida's programs still lacked the academic rigor that was associated with success. The board's report recommended stronger efforts to increase academic proficiency among vocational students, especially to get them to take higher-level courses.

[1]Southern Regional Education Board, 1992. *Making High Schools Work*, p.7.

Tech Prep
This program, also called two-plus-two, requires an articulation agreement with postsecondary education institutions. Almost all of Florida's high schools (296 of 298) have at least one tech prep program, and all 28 community colleges and five 4-year universities participate. However, students who complete the secondary portion of a program seldom continue the postsecondary education path as planned. The popular Gold Seal Vocational Scholarship requires completion of the high school component, and many students enroll in these programs as a way to earn a scholarship for a university education. Fewer than 3 percent of Gold Seal Scholars enroll in a technical program in postsecondary education.

Career Academies
These schools, created in 1992 by s. 233.068, F.S., are open-enrollment schools-within-schools that prepare students for a common occupational "cluster" -- a group of related occupations that require varying levels of postsecondary education. The 30 academies originally funded by the Legislature have been increased to 46, with the additional 16 funded by the federal School-to-Work program.

High Schools That Work
These schools are the "second generation" of the Blueprint Schools, designed around the findings of the Rand Corporation and the Southern Regional Education Board. The program must agree to an evaluation based on testing by the National Education Assessment Program (NAEP). Their main focus is integration of academic and career education, a 4-year career plan, and continuation in postsecondary education. Currently 41 high schools are designated High Schools That Work; they serve over 93,000 students.

Outcome Information
According to data from the Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP), not many high school students who complete vocational programs are going directly into work related to their program -- only 22 percent are found in training-related placements. Rather, they are continuing their education. Of graduates who completed a vocational program, 57 percent are found in postsecondary education and 36 percent are found both employed and continuing their education. This is a higher rate than for non-vocational high school students, a category that mixes college-preparatory students and so-called "general track" students. Apparently the general track is the least productive. Only 49 percent of non-vocational graduates were found in postsecondary education, and only 29 percent were found both working and continuing their education (see table).

1996-1997 Florida Public High School Graduates*

	Total #	Continuing Education	Found in Employment	Found in Both Employment + Continuing Ed
Non-vocational Completers	71,204	49 percent	56 percent	29 percent
Vocational Completers	18,646	57 percent	62 percent	36 percent

*Source: Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program

These data provide evidence that Florida's decade-long effort may be paying off. Additional information, however, indicates a need to continue the reform effort. Data provided by the Florida

Chamber of Commerce show that the members of the business community are not satisfied with the quality of Florida's workforce. Workforce development is the top issue facing these businesses, and many executives say high school graduates do not possess the basic skills needed to function at work. When surveyed about specific employees who have completed vocational programs, employers are generally satisfied with their technical skills but less satisfied with their academic skills.

Millennium Project Task Force
In the 1998 General Appropriations Act, Specific Appropriation 143 provided funding for a task force to design a comprehensive vocational program that would guarantee academic competency and workforce readiness of all vocational high school graduates. The Commissioner of Education appointed the task force, called the Millennium Project. Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 860 is designed to implement the task force recommendations.

1999-2000 Pilot Projects
The 1999 Legislature appropriated $2 million for implementation of 10 technical programs in comprehensive high schools as the task force recommended. Evaluation of their progress is underway, but one difference from the recommended model is that they do not require 2 years of a foreign language to earn the certificate. Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 860 requires either a demonstration of conversational ability or classroom preparation in conversation in a foreign language. The pilot projects are in the following high schools:

District	High School	District	High School
Hardee	Hardee Senior High School	Marion	Forest High School
Hernando	Hernando High School	Miami-Dade	Wm. Turner Technical High School
Indian River	Sebastian River High School	Palm Beach	Lake Worth High School
Lake	Umatilla High School	St. Johns	First Coast Technical High School
Leon	FSU Demonstration Research School	Wakulla	Wakulla County High School

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

This committee substitute creates a high school vocational education program that requires:
- Certification of the technical portions by business and industry;
- A strong academic component with a foreign language and all required academic courses above level 2;
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- A passing score on the College Entry Level Placement Test; and
- Articulation with postsecondary education.

By 2005, all vocational programs in high school must meet these requirements as further specified in rules of the State Board of Education. The bill has no effect on high school programs other than vocational or technical programs, nor does it require a high school to have a vocational or

technical component. Technical programs that meet the requirements will be funded at 1.5 times the base student allocation for grades 9 - 12. Beginning in 2005, any technical education course that is not part of such a program will be funded at the base student allocation.

A student who completes the program receives an endorsement that assures an employer of the student's experience with workplace skills and academic competence. The certificate also assures admission without qualification into postsecondary education.

The bill also requires additional qualifications for the school personnel who will coordinate with the business partners and assist the students through the program. The program requires certification of each vocational area by the relevant business or industry and also requires students to have clinical experience in the workplace.

During 2001-2002, the program will be implemented in pilot projects in each geographic planning region of the state.

The following section-by-section analysis briefly discusses the requirements.

Section 1: Legislative Intent (Creates new section)
The intent language lists three components of high school programs: individual educational goals to guide selection of program type, parental involvement, and transition to postsecondary education.

Section 2: Industry certification of technical programs in high schools (Creates new section)

Effective July 1, 2005, each technical program must be industry-certified and will generate 1.5 times the base student allocation for grades 9-12 in the Florida Education Finance Program. The Department of Education will adopt rules for obtaining business partners and requirements for business and industry involvement in curriculum oversight and equipment procurement.

Section 3: Requirements for Students (Creates new section)

An industry-certified technical program must enable students to graduate from high school prepared for postsecondary education and employment. These assurances incur the following requirements of students:

1. Completion of a core course of one credit called "Technical Systems and Applications." This course will meet the graduation requirement for practical or performing arts. The course competencies will be adopted in rule by the Department of Education.
2. Attainment of at least one occupational completion point for industry-certified technical programs, or completion of at least three courses in a technology education program.
3. Participation in a work-based learning experience that includes a capstone activity involving a student project planned in consultation with a guidance counselor and a business partner. The Department of Education will specify any additional requirements.
4. An articulation agreement for continuing the program into postsecondary education.
5. Completion of the academic courses required for graduation at level 2 or above (no basic courses).

6. Demonstration of proficiency in a foreign language or completion of two credits in a foreign language.
7. Earning a passing score on the College Entry Level Placement Test.

A student who completes the technical program earns an endorsement upon graduation.

Section 4: Pilot Projects (Creates new section)
The pilot projects initiated in the 2000-2001 school year will be continued and additional schools will be selected each year until 2005. Each of the five planning regions will have at least one pilot high school, and those high schools will assist other schools and the Department of Education. The department will use at least three working committees to assist the pilot projects to meet the requirements.

Section 5. Counselors (Creates new section)
This section addresses the need for guidance counselors to assist implementation of the industry-certified technical programs. It requires guidance counselors in each high school with such a program to complete 6 credit hours or 60 in-service points in career development. The instruction must emphasize labor-market trends and projections and include a practicum on career awareness. The State Board of Education must revise its rules for certification and recertification of guidance counselors so that they may substitute personal work-based experience for the required classroom instruction. The bill encourages colleges of education not to increase the total number of credit hours required for guidance counselors to complete a program, but to infuse the content of required ethics courses into that of other courses.

Sections 6, 7, 8, 9: Career Specialists (Amend ss. 228.041, 229.601, 229.602, 231.1725, F.S.)
Changes the title of *occupational specialist* to *career specialist*, to emphasize the additional responsibilities of personnel holding this position in New Millennium High Schools.

Section 9 also adds to the requirements for initial certification of career specialists. Beginning in 2001-2002, a specialist must have:

- At least 6 years of documented recent work experience outside the school system that included leadership or management responsibilities.
- At least an associate-level college degree or at least 60 transferable credits.
- At least one course in career development, labor-market information, assessment instruments, goal setting, and job-search training.
- Up to three courses in communications, vocational and technical education, public relations and marketing, career development, counseling, or computer technology.

Section 10: **Florida Education Finance Program** (Amends s. 236.081, F.S.)
Provides that a full-time equivalent student in a tech prep pathway course generates funding at 1.5 times the basic cost factor for grades 9-12 and that, effective July 1, 2005, students in any other job preparatory course generate no state funding. Course substitutions are allowed only for courses in industry-certified programs. The endorsement authorized for students' diplomas is added to the list of programs that may receive categorical funding.

Section 11: Career Specialists (Amends s. 239.121, F.S.)
Provides a cross reference to the certification requirements added to s. 231.1725, F.S., and requires the department and each school district to assist career specialists attain the new requirements through professional development.

Section 12: Responsibilities of school boards and superintendents (Amends s. 239.229, F.S.)
Requires each school board and superintendent to direct the smooth transition of high school vocational programs to industry-certified programs.

Section 15: Repeals s. 233.068, F.S.
This section of the Florida Statutes creates the Academies for Career Development. Such academies may be continued within industry-certified technical programs without statutory governance.

Section 16. Provides an effective date
The bill takes effect July 1, 2000.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Economic Impact and Fiscal Note:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

For the first 3 years of the program, the Department of Education estimates the additional funding through the Florida Education Finance Program for vocational students in industry-certified technical programs will be:

Fiscal Year:	2000-2001	2000-2002	2002-2003
Additional Funding for students in industry-certified programs	$2.8 million	$8.7 million	$15.0 million

Using a program weight of 1.673 for students in industry-certified technical programs (1.5 times the current weight of 1.115 for grades 9-12 basic), the Florida Department of Education calculated the following annual cost through the Florida Education Finance Program for funding all high school vocational education through 2006:

Fiscal Year	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006
Total funding for vocational programs	$21.6 million	$28.6 million	$12.3 million

The reason for the drop in cost in fiscal year 2005-2006 is that until then vocational students not in industry-certified technical programs will continue to be funded at the current vocational program weight of 1.211. In 2005-06 and thereafter, no state funding will be generated by students in vocational education courses, so the Department estimate is based on an assumption that they will substitute other courses funded at the grades 9-12 basic weight of 1.115.

Each year the Legislature may appropriate a sum of money to be allocated based on the number of students who successfully complete a tech-prep pathway and earn an endorsement upon graduation.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Amendments:

None.