

SENATE STAFF ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

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

BILL: SB 2004

SPONSOR: Senator Horne

SUBJECT: Career and Technical Education

DATE: April 3, 2001 REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	White	O'Farrell	ED	Favorable
2.	_____	_____	CM	_____
3.	_____	_____	AED	_____
4.	_____	_____	AP	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____

I. Summary:

This bill states the Legislature's intent to phase in changes in high school vocational education programs. The changes will be statewide and will require:

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

By 2006, all vocational programs in high school must meet these requirements as further specified in rules of the State Board of Education.¹ 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 2006, 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

¹ Exceptions: Exploratory, orientation, and practical arts courses.

certification of each vocational area by the relevant business or industry and also requires students to have clinical experience in the workplace.

The bill amends sections 228.041, 229.601, 229.602, 236.081, 239.121, and 239.229 of the Florida Statutes. It creates four undesignated new sections of law.

II. Present Situation:

In the 1999-2000 school year, Florida high schools reported almost 62,000 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."²

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

- C Revise and develop *vocational courses* to teach communication, mathematics, and science.
- C 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

²Southern Regional Education Board, *Making High Schools Work*, 1992,p.7.

report recommended stronger efforts to increase academic proficiency among vocational students, especially to get them to take higher-level courses.

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), vocational students are not likely to use their training to work in an occupation 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).

	Total #	Continuing Education	Employed	Employed & 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.

1998 Legislative 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. Senate Bill 2004 is designed to implement the task force recommendations.

Pilot Projects

The 1999 and 2000 Legislatures appropriated \$2 million each year for implementation of 10 technical programs per year in comprehensive high schools as the task force recommended.

Funding for High School Vocational Programs

High school vocational education is funded through the formula used for all public school education in grades K-12, the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP). The Workforce Development Education Fund is for postsecondary-level programs only.

The FEFP takes into account the local property tax base, costs of education programs, costs of living (cost differential), and sparsity of student population. The basic unit of measurement in the FEFP is the full-time-equivalent student (FTE). One FTE equals 900 hours or one school year of instruction provided to a student. Twice a year, students are counted to determine the number of students enrolled in each of seven programs. The programs are associated with a cost factor that is used to “weight” the FTE for funding. The total FTE funding generated by a student is the program weight multiplied by the base student allocation, which each Legislature establishes in the General Appropriations Act. The programs and their weights are:

Kindergarten – grade 3	1.036	Exceptional student level 4	3.948
Grades 4-8	1.000	Exceptional student level 5	5.591
Grades 9-12	1.096	Vocational ed., grades 6-12	1.211
Intensive English	1.0226		

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The legislation under consideration states the Legislature’s intent to phase in changes in high school vocational education programs. The changes will be statewide and will require:

- C Certification or endorsement of the technical portions by business and industry;
- C A strong academic component with all required academic courses above level 2;
- C A core course, experience in the workplace, and a final project conducted with assistance by a guidance counselor and a business partner;

- C A passing score on the College Entry Level Placement Test; and
- C Articulation with postsecondary education.

By 2006, 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 2006, 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 or endorsement of each vocational area by the relevant business or industry and also requires students to have clinical experience in the workplace.

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 or Endorsement (Creates new section)

Effective July 1, 2006, 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. 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. Earning a passing score on the College Entry Level Placement Test.

A student who completes the technical program earns an endorsement upon graduation. If the Legislature appropriates funds, the endorsement may generate an incentive for the school district, in a way similar to how Advance Placement students and International Baccalaureate students generate funds for their school district by successfully passing an AP or IB examination.

Section 4. 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 3 credit hours or 12 in-service points in technical education or 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 re-certification 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 5, 6, 7, and 9: Career Specialists (Amend ss. 228.041, 229.601, 229.602, 239.121, F.S.)

Change the title of *occupational specialist* to *career specialist*, to conform to changes made by the 2000 Legislature.

Section 8. Amends s. 236.081, Florida Statutes, the *Florida Education Finance Program*

- Provides for enhanced weighted funding for programs certified or endorsed.
- Programs not industry certified will receive no funding unless they meet one of the exclusions.
- The Department of Education will conduct a study of cost factors to determine if differential funding for certified or endorsed programs is needed.
- Effective in 2006, the bill establishes an additional funding category for the certified or endorsed programs.
- Funding in the FEFP for career and technical education certified courses will be 1.5 times the basic grades 9-12 weight.
- Amends provisions for substituting vocational courses for required courses to allow a course-to-course substitution rather than requiring students to complete a program prior to the time a substitution occurs.
- Changes the reference for vocational courses in grades 7-12 to grades 6-12.

Section 10: 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 11. Provides an effective date

The bill takes effect July 1, 2001.

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:

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:

FTE in the FEFP (Projected)	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
FTE in Industry Certified Programs	5,000	10,000	20,000
Increase Weighting Factor	0.4635	0.4635	0.4635
Weighted FTE Increase over Prior Year	2,318	4,635	9,270
Proposed Base Student Allocation	\$3,416.73	\$3,519.23	\$3,624.81
Total Impact from FTE	\$7,918,272	\$16,311,640	\$33,601,978
Performance Incentives for Endorsements			
Anticipated Number of Endorsements	2,000	4,000	8,000
Amount Per Endorsement	\$200	\$200	\$200
Incentives for Student Endorsements*	\$400,000	\$800,00	\$1,600,000
Total Impact	\$8,318,272	\$17,111,640	\$35,201,978

*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.

The following assumptions were used in completing this analysis:

- The Basic 9-12 weight for 2001-2002 is 1.113.
- When multiplied times 1.5 (the weight for programs certified or endorsed by industry) the funding weight is 1.6695. Therefore, the difference in the two weights is 0.4635.
- All career and technical education programs are in the current FEFP projections at a weight of 1.206.
- The calculations indicate the increased amount of weighted FTE needed to implement this program.
- The bill will phase in the emphasis to industry-certified or endorsed programs over 5 years' time.
- For 2001-2002, only a small number of programs will be certified and a small number of students will receive the endorsements.
- The numbers provided will vary based on the impact of the District Cost Differential.
- The 2000-2001 Base Student Allocation was used. For future years an increase of 3% was built into the calculation.
- The impact totals represent an aggregate of the impact over the three-year period.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Amendments:

None.