

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.)

Prepared By: Education Committee

BILL: SB 2604

SPONSOR: Senator Lynn

SUBJECT: Florida Virtual School Funding

DATE: April 10, 2005

REVISED: 04/26/05

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

I. Summary:

The bill amends s. 1002.37, F.S. regarding funding for the Florida Virtual School (FLVS) through the FEFP. Funding for FTE students enrolled in the FLVS would be adjusted and calculated based on a formula derived from non-completion rates for public school students. Adjustments to funding calculations would address and offset existing financial losses incurred as a result of FLVS non-completers.

This bill substantially amends section 1002.37 of the Florida Statutes:

II. Present Situation:

The Florida Virtual School (FLVS) has operated as a web-based, online school since 1997 for development and delivery of on-line distance learning with priority given to students in areas with limited access to advanced courses and to those pursuing accelerated access to a high school diploma. The Legislature presently includes Florida Virtual School in the state's FEFP based exclusively on successful completions. FLVS initiated this funding standard based on a commitment to and belief in performance-based rewards.¹

Florida Virtual School is fully accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and the Commission on International and Trans-Regional Education. While the FLVS receives funding only when a student successfully completes a course, in order to maintain accreditation status, the school hires, trains, and retains teaching staff based on numbers of students who actually enroll. For the 2004-2005 school year, FLVS projects that it will have over

¹ Accreditation and History of FLVS - http://www.flvs.net/general/accreditation_information.php

12,000 successful credit completions but will also serve 2,200 student credits that will not be completed. This non-completion rate reflects approximately 15% of total enrollment for FLVS and 26 full time teaching staff.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill would adjust full-time equivalent (FTE) funding under the FEFP for Florida Virtual School students. FTE's for the FLVS would be calculated by multiplying the reported FTE by 1 plus the prior year's statewide non-completion rate for courses attempted in public high schools.

Data presently available from the Department of Education actually reflects credits attempted versus credits earned. This could prove to be problematic for several reasons; the data could include students earning "F's", dropouts, students moving from one school to another, students who change schedules and transfer from one course to another, and students who opt into other alternative programs, etc.

Traditional schools operating in Florida school districts may argue that they also earn and earmark funds based solely on FTE counts in October and February but regularly have new students who enroll after the FTE count for which they receive no additional funding.

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:

The bill would establish FEFP funding greater than the standard 1.0 FTE; however, the overall financial impact is indeterminate as there is no way to estimate the number of

students who would enroll. Furthermore, an actual FTE funding weight has not yet been determined.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

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

VIII. Summary of Amendments:

Barcode # 525548 by Education:

Provides for additional full-time equivalent membership for the Florida Virtual School. Such membership shall be equal to FTE membership multiplied by .118.

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