

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 1480

INTRODUCER: Senator Wise

SUBJECT: Career and Professional Academies

DATE: March 21, 2006

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Carrouth</u>	<u>Matthews</u>	<u>ED</u>	Favorable
2.	_____	_____	<u>CM</u>	_____
3.	_____	_____	<u>EA</u>	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____

I. Summary:

This bill creates s. 1003.493, F.S., to codify the establishment of career and professional academies (academies) in public high schools. Career academies offer a rigorous and relevant curriculum that leads to industry-recognized certification in high demand occupations and allows students to simultaneously earn college credit and credit toward a high school diploma.

The bill provides that career academy courses that emphasize reading, writing, math, and science would be considered core courses when approved by the Commissioner of Education.

The bill outlines academy goals to include increased student achievement, a focus on careers and postsecondary education, and increased student engagement and motivation in academics.

Provisions are included in the bill for two different types of academies: a Career High-Skill Occupational Initiative for Career Education (CHOICE) academy; and a comprehensive career academy. Specific definitions are included for each academy type.

The bill authorizes the Department of Education (DOE) to establish a CHOICE project and a comprehensive career academy project and to select school districts to participate based on specific eligibility requirements. The DOE must work in consultation with Workforce Florida, Inc., to establish standards. Additionally, the DOE must work with Workforce Florida, Inc., and Enterprise Florida, Inc. for the designation of CHOICE academies. The bill also provides for an expedited review of existing CHOICE academies funded through Workforce Florida, Inc., prior to July 1, 2006.

The bill requires the DOE to respond within 30 days to requests by participating school districts to substitute, for courses required for high school graduation, appropriate rigorous and relevant coursework in the academy deemed critical for student success in industry.

The DOE must report on participating academies to the Governor, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House, and the State Board of Education annually by July 1.

This bill amends sections 1003.43, 288.9015, and 445.004 and creates sections 1003.493, 1003.494, and 1003.495 of the Florida Statutes.

II. Present Situation:

The Florida Senate Interim Project Report 2006-115 addressed the education trends and research associated with career academies that engage students in rigorous college preparatory level work while simultaneously preparing them for high demand jobs with industry level certifications. The CHOICE¹ model described in the bill was cited in the report as a structure for organizing career training to ensure that outcomes are focused on viable occupations and industry needs and based on career clusters as defined by the U.S. Department of Education.² The Career Academy National Standards of Practice³ outlined in the research and used as the foundation for the CHOICE model require collaboration and regularly scheduled planning opportunities between school districts and local workforce boards, postsecondary institutions, and local business and industry leaders.

As a result of 2004 legislation⁴, Florida convened the Career Education Task Force, headed by Lieutenant Governor Toni Jennings. The Task Force identified the need for greater focus on and support of career and professional education.

The 2005 Legislature appropriated \$6 million to provide startup grant funds for career and professional academies through the SUCCEED, Florida! Program. The DOE reports that 39 projects in 34 schools are currently being funded for the 2005-2006 school year.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill creates s. 1003.493, F.S., to codify the establishment of career and professional academies in public high schools. The goals of a career and professional academy include increased student achievement, a focus on careers and postsecondary education, and increased student engagement and motivation in academics.

Two different types of academies are authorized, a CHOICE academy and a comprehensive career academy. These academies are defined as follows:

- A CHOICE academy is based on a single career theme as part of an existing high school or based upon a school-within-a-school concept.⁵

¹ <http://www.choiceinstitutes.com>

² www.careerclusters.org

³ www.hsalliance.org/resources/resource.asp?id=85

⁴ ch. 2004-357, L.O.F.

- A comprehensive career academy is based on one or more career themes or academies within a single high school.⁶

The bill requires the following components to be included within both types of academies:

- A rigorous and relevant academic curriculum based on a career theme that emphasizes multiple learning styles, applied learning strategies, and quality workplace ethics;
- Partnerships with one or more local businesses and economic development organizations that include:
 - Provisions for businesses to provide instruction and offer expertise;
 - Use of state-of-the-art equipment;
 - Internships and externships; and
 - On-the-job training opportunities.
- Partnerships with one or more regionally or nationally accredited private or public postsecondary institutions that agree to articulate coursework, maximize credit transfers, and offer degrees, diplomas, or certificates in the career theme offered by the academy;
- Student advisement opportunities to include parent involvement and coordination of information through middle school exploratory courses to promote the career academy concept;
- Instruction, certification, or credentials in work-related skills that include communication skills and other appropriate work ethic; and
- Establishment of student eligibility criteria that includes engagement of students who are less successful in traditional classroom settings.

The bill provides that courses taken within an academy that emphasize reading, writing, math, and science shall be considered core courses when approved by the Commissioner of Education.

The partnerships with regionally and nationally accredited public and private postsecondary institutions are not limited to those located in the state.

CHOICE Model

The bill authorizes the DOE to establish a CHOICE project to select school districts on a competitive basis and to designate schools within the selected districts to participate as CHOICE academies. A school must meet the goals and requirements of a CHOICE academy as specified in the bill and must offer a curriculum that leads to industry-recognized certification in high-demand occupations identified by the local workforce. CHOICE academies must also provide opportunities for students to simultaneously earn college credit and credit toward a high school diploma. Additionally, the designated schools must also focus on preparing students to earn a passing score on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) and to make appropriate choices regarding future education and employment.

The bill requires DOE to establish application guidelines for district participation as a CHOICE project and to consult with Workforce Florida, Inc., and Enterprise Florida in determining the

⁵ http://www.firm.edu/doe/workforce/ca_modles.htm

⁶ Ibid.

number of districts to participate. Participating districts would be required to dedicate district resources and assure the ability and willingness of the local business community to partner with and support the CHOICE academy.

The DOE, in consultation with Workforce Florida, Inc., shall establish standards for designation of specific CHOICE academies. The bill specifies that Okaloosa County School District may serve in an advisory capacity. Eligibility requirements include, at a minimum, the following:

- An existing partnership with local businesses and the regional workforce board or local economic development organization identified by Enterprise Florida, Inc., to improve the local economy;
- An existing partnership with at least one postsecondary institution that includes an articulation agreement;
- Existing opportunities to involve home-education students, students with disabilities, and nontraditional students;
- An existing plan to sustain the CHOICE academy.

The bill does not specify that the existing partnership for articulation purposes must be with a regionally or nationally accredited postsecondary institution.

School districts that participate in the CHOICE academy project must:

- Identify an appropriate location for the academy;
- Ensure responsiveness to the abilities of students and the needs of partnering businesses;
- Redirect and use existing funds for the academy;
- Plan for the future of the academy without additional funding;
- Assist in program technical support for students in private, charter, and home education programs and allow these students to participate in the academy through dual enrollment.

The bill directs the school district to redirect appropriated funding from ongoing activities to a CHOICE academy. This provision may need to be clarified to reflect redirection within the Legislature's direction as funds appropriated for a particular purpose may not be used for a different purpose.

The bill requires the DOE, with assistance from Workforce Florida, Inc., to provide technical assistance to school districts in submitting applications, reorganizing career opportunities, developing academies with appropriate career themes based on local needs, and developing funding plans. The bill also requires the DOE to work in consultation with Workforce, Florida, Inc., and school districts to develop evaluation criteria for CHOICE academies to be based on an increase in student achievement using school-level accountability data.

The bill provides for an expedited review of existing CHOICE academies funded through Workforce Florida, Inc., prior to July 1, 2006. There are currently five CHOICE academies that have been authorized funds to replicate the Okaloosa model.

Because the CHOICE model prepares students through rigorous and relevant coursework for industry level certification, state and national associations specific to a particular industry often develop the curriculum. Additionally, industry certification programs are accredited by national organizations associated with the specific industry, which industry may require the use of an identified curriculum, and certain rigorous courses not presently identified through the Course Code Directory.

The bill requires the DOE to respond within 30 days to requests by participating districts to substitute, for courses required for high school graduation, appropriate rigorous and relevant coursework in the academy deemed critical for student success in industry. If the DOE does not respond within 30 days, a district school board may substitute the coursework according to its adopted pupil progression plan under s. 1003.43, F.S. According to the DOE, the 30 day time period to approve a school district's proposal for the substitution of a CHOICE course is inadequate. Additionally, the DOE notes that the course substitution process differs on the current school district substitution model and that course substitution should occur no less than 180 days prior to the upcoming school year in order to students to meet graduation requirements.

The DOE must report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House and the State Board of Education annually by July 1 school district participation, the business theme of career academies including enrollment and completion data, continuing education of participating students, industry satisfaction, employment placement, and earnings of academy graduates.

The bill authorizes the DOE to award one-time startup funds to five districts participating in the CHOICE project contingent upon an appropriation through the General Appropriations Act.

Comprehensive Career Academies

The bill authorizes the DOE to establish a comprehensive career academy project to provide for designation of academies in select school districts. A school must meet the goals and requirements of a comprehensive career academy as specified in the bill and must offer a rigorous and relevant curriculum that prepares students for college, careers, and productive citizenship.

The bill requires the DOE to work in consultation with school districts to develop evaluation criteria and a self-assessment tool based on national standards of practice relating to comprehensive career academies. Each participating academy must perform a self-assessment using the assessment tool at the end of the first year and periodically thereafter. The bill authorizes the DOE to designate a comprehensive career academy if requested by the district and the DOE determines that the academy meets the national standards of practice.

The bill requires the DOE to respond within 30 days to requests by participating districts to substitute, for courses required for high school graduation, appropriate rigorous and relevant coursework deemed critical for student success in industry. If the Department does not respond within 30 days, the bill would allow the district school board to substitute the coursework

according to its adopted pupil progression plan pursuant to s. 1003.43, F.S. The DOE has indicated some concern with this provision.⁷

The bill amends s. 1003.43, F.S., relating to general requirements for high school graduation. Each district school board would be required to provide in their adopted pupil progression plan substitution of up to two academic credits required for graduation and identified in the Course Code Directory for courses offered in a CHOICE or comprehensive career academy.

Sections 288.9015 and 445.004, F.S., are conformingly amended to require Workforce Florida, Inc., and Enterprise Florida, Inc., to work with the DOE and each other in designation school district participation in the CHOICE project.

The bill would take effect July 1, 2006.

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:

Local businesses would be required to partner with local school districts and offer technical staff assistance and use of state-of-the-art equipment. These same businesses would reap the benefits of a more highly skilled local workforce.

Certain private postsecondary institutions may collaborate with the school district and offer articulation, thereby potentially increasing student enrollment at these institutions upon graduation from an academy. Conversely, greater articulation may mean less tuition if students graduate from the postsecondary institution more quickly.

⁷ See *infra*.

The bill may benefit the state's workforce with the engagement of non-traditional students in continuing education and advanced employability skills in higher wage occupations.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The fiscal impact of the bill is indeterminate at this time.

School districts would be required to redirect existing resources for CHOICE academies and develop a plan to continue the academies in the event of no additional funding.

The bill would allow five school districts to receive startup funds through the DOE for CHOICE academies as determined through the General Appropriations Act.

Certain public postsecondary institutions may collaborate with the school district and offer articulation, thereby potentially increasing student enrollment at these institutions upon graduation from an academy. Conversely, greater articulation may mean less tuition if students graduate from the postsecondary institution more quickly.

The DOE estimates \$273,585 would be required to fund staff necessary to carry out the requirements of the bill.

VII. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VI. Related Issues:

None.

VII. Summary of Amendments:

None.

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