

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

BILL #: HB 801 CS
SPONSOR(S): Patterson
TIED BILLS:

Florida Ready to Work Certification Program
IDEN./SIM. BILLS:

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR
1) Community Colleges & Workforce Committee	7 Y, 0 N, w/CS	Thomas	Ashworth
2) Education Appropriations Committee			
3) Education Council			
4) _____	_____	_____	_____
5) _____	_____	_____	_____

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

HB 801 CS creates the Florida Ready to Work Certification Program which will enhance Florida students' workplace skills to better prepare them for successful entry-level employment in specific occupations.

Florida Ready to Work Certification Programs shall be composed of:

- A comprehensive identification of workplace skills for each occupation identified for inclusion in the program by the Agency for Workforce Innovation.
- A preinstructional assessment that delineates the student's mastery level on the specific workplace skills identified for that occupation.
- A targeted instructional program limited to those identified workplace skills in which the student is not proficient. Instruction may be web based and must meet specific needs of local employers.
- A certificate and portfolio awarded to students upon successful completion of the instruction.

Florida Ready to Work Certification Programs may be conducted at public high schools, community colleges, technical centers, one-stop career centers, vocational rehabilitation centers and Department of Juvenile Justice educational facilities.

HB 801 CS requires the Department of Education (DOE) to establish institutional readiness criteria for the implementation of the Florida Ready to Work Certification Program.

HB 801 CS provides rulemaking authority to the State Board of Education, in consultation with the Agency for Workforce Innovation, for the implementation of the Florida Ready to Work Certification Program.

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. HOUSE PRINCIPLES ANALYSIS:

Promote personal responsibility – The bill provides an opportunity for students to graduate from high school capable of entering into the workforce.

Provide limited government – The bill provides rulemaking authority to the State Board of Education and the Agency for Workforce Innovation for the implementation of the Florida Ready to Work Certification Program.

Empower families – The bill provides the opportunity for students who complete the Florida Ready to Work Certification Program to be able to obtain and sustain a job and realize economic self-sufficiency.

B. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

Present Situation

According to a new RAND report, *The 21st Century at Work*, rapid technological change and increased international competition place the spotlight on the skill and preparation of the workforce, particularly the ability to adapt to changing technologies and shifting product demand. The growing importance of knowledge-based work favors workers with the skills of abstract reasoning, problem solving, communication and collaboration. Knowledge workers will need high-level skills for managing, interpreting, validating, transforming, communicating and acting on information.¹

Career education (a term often interchangeably used for vocational education, workforce education, or technical education) is critically important to Florida's students and to Florida's economic development. A significant percentage of Florida's students currently leave high school without adequate preparation to enter a career or continue into a technical center, community college or university program. Of every ten 9th graders, three students drop out and three of the remaining seven do not pursue additional education; six students (60%) do not go to college. Only four out of the 10 (40%) attend college.² Reformed career education programs in the high school years would not only benefit the six students who do not attend college, but has the potential of benefiting all students.

Career Education Certification

Currently, section 1003.431, F.S., provides that a career education certification may be placed on a student's high school diploma. The certification is designed to indicate that a student is prepared for both postsecondary education without the need for remediation and that the student has marketable employment skills. The State Board of Education was given the authority to adopt rules for a standard format for the career education certification. Currently, the SBE has not adopted rules for the career education certification and no school districts offer this for high school diplomas.

Work Readiness Credential Models

National Work Readiness Credential Project

The U.S. Chamber's Center for Workforce Preparation (CWP) and the Equipped for the Future Work Readiness Credential are in the process of developing a new program which will provide an assessment-based certification that affirms that entry-level job seekers have communication,

¹ Education Commission of the States, January 2005. *State Strategies for Redesigning High Schools and Promoting High School to College Transitions*, p. 1.

² *Career and Professional Education: Preparing Florida's Students for the Knowledge Economy*, Council for Education Policy, Research and Improvement (CEPRI), September 2004

interpersonal, decision-making, and lifelong learning skills. This partnership is in response to business concerns about the difficulty in finding qualified applicants for entry-level work. National and state leaders in business, government, and labor have come together to build a national Work Readiness Credential (WRC) based on a business-defined standard of the critical skills needed by entry-level workers. Employers using the Work Readiness Credential will reduce recruitment cost, improve productivity, minimize turnover and lower on-the-job training costs by being able to confidently hire entry-level workers. The credential assessment and delivery system is currently being field tested in 6 partner states. Florida is one of those states. The program is expected to be available for broad use by chambers, businesses, one-stop centers, and education and training providers in June 2006.

WorkKeys

WorkKeys is a job skills assessment system measuring “real world” skills that employers believe are critical to job success. The abilities to learn, listen, communicate, work in teams and solve problems are important assets for any worker, regardless of career choice. WorkKeys assessments measures these abilities in three key areas:

- communication – (business writing, listening, reading for information, writing);
- problem solving – (applied mathematics, applied technology, locating information, observation); and
- interpersonal skills – (teamwork).

The WorkKeys job profiling component analyzes the skills needed for specific jobs and describes those needs to educators, students and job applicants. By comparing job profile information with an individual’s scores on the WorkKeys tests, skill gaps can be identified and guide training decisions to improve the individual’s WorkKeys scores. The certificates validate the WorkKeys skill levels an individual has achieved. Several states are developing WorkKeys readiness certificates to help individuals document their skills for potential employers.

Effect of Proposed Changes

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C. SECTION DIRECTORY:

Section 1: Creates s. 1004.99, F.S., The Florida Ready to Work Certification Program; providing students with workforce skills assessment, instruction related to an occupation, and certification based on demonstration of such skills; providing for institutional eligibility; providing program components; authorizing rulemaking.

Section 2: Providing an effective date of July 1, 2006.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues: See Fiscal Comments
2. Expenditures: See Fiscal Comments

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues: See Fiscal Comments
2. Expenditures: See Fiscal Comments

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

The implementation of this program could require appropriations for the Department of Education and Agency for Workforce Innovation for assessments, curriculum, instruction, business outreach and profiling. The Department of Education estimates that they would require five (5) positions: one (1) supervisor, three (3) program specialists, and one (1) administrative support person.

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision: None
2. Other: None

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

The State Board of Education, in consultation with the Agency for Workforce Innovation are given rulemaking authority for the implementation of the Florida Ready to Work Certification Program.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

IV. AMENDMENTS/COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE & COMBINED BILL CHANGES

On March 7, 2006, the Community College and Workforce Committee adopted a strike-all amendment. The strike-all amendment provides the following:

- Removes all fiscal appropriations language.
- Clarifies language creating the program, the purpose of the program, and the components of the program.
- Clarifies agency roles for rulemaking authority.