

1 A bill to be entitled
 2 An act relating to service learning in the public school
 3 system; creating s. 1003.497, F.S.; providing legislative
 4 intent; defining service learning and its components;
 5 requiring each school district to adopt a plan to provide
 6 multiple service learning opportunities for students;
 7 providing requirements for service learning plans and
 8 projects; providing for Department of Education
 9 administration, plan approval, technical assistance, and
 10 reporting; providing for grants to school districts and
 11 disbursement thereof; authorizing credit toward high
 12 school graduation and scholarship community service
 13 requirements; providing for phased-in implementation;
 14 authorizing rules; providing an appropriation; providing
 15 an effective date.

16
 17 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

18
 19 Section 1. Section 1003.497, Florida Statutes, is created
 20 to read:

21 1003.497 Service learning.--

22 (1) SHORT TITLE.--This section may be cited as the
 23 "Florida Service Learning Act of 2007."

24 (2) INTENT.--It is the intent of the Legislature to:

25 (a) Promote and support policies and activities at the
 26 school district level that help students gain the knowledge,
 27 skills, behaviors, and habits of citizenship in school to allow
 28 them to be productive and contributing citizens.

29 (b) Emphasize increasing rigor, relevance, and
30 relationships in K-12 education.

31 (c) Continue public schools' historic tradition of
32 teaching citizenship, values, and character education to
33 students.

34 (d) Promote effective education strategies that provide
35 students with hands-on opportunities to apply and practice
36 skills and behaviors that the students need to learn. When
37 students use these hands-on strategies to actually help others
38 and meet real community needs, learning has enhanced rigor,
39 relevance, and relationship-building potential for students.

40 (3) SERVICE LEARNING.--

41 (a) Service learning is a teaching and learning strategy
42 in which students, as a formal part of one or more courses,
43 learn about community needs and then help design and conduct
44 service activities to address those needs. The service is both a
45 means and an application of learning.

46 (b) "Service learning" means a method under which students
47 learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully
48 organized service that is conducted in and meets the needs of a
49 community; that is coordinated with an elementary school, middle
50 school, secondary school, or institution of higher education and
51 the community; that helps foster civic responsibility; and that
52 is integrated into and enhances the academic curriculum of the
53 students and provides structured time for the students or
54 participants to reflect on the service experience.

55 (c) Effective service learning projects include
56 assignments in which students prepare for service through data

57 gathering, research, and project design; conduct service
58 activities based on the students' preparation; demonstrate
59 learning in ways that can be assessed by teachers; reflect on
60 their projects and activities and the impact the projects and
61 activities have; and are recognized for their efforts.

62 (d) Service learning activities may be:

63 1. Direct activities, including, but not limited to,
64 tutoring, working with elders, or providing translations for new
65 immigrants.

66 2. Indirect activities, including, but not limited to,
67 publishing a town history, environmental activities, or creating
68 a new student guide for a school.

69 3. Advocacy activities, including, but not limited to,
70 performing plays on drug prevention, teaching bicycle safety, or
71 giving lessons on healthy eating habits.

72 4. Research activities, including, but not limited to,
73 conducting a school energy audit, testing local water, or
74 performing flora or fauna studies.

75 5. A combination of activities listed in subparagraphs 1.-
76 4.

77 (e) Research indicates that well-designed projects
78 positively impact participating students in four domains:
79 academic, social, civic, and career preparation. Research also
80 shows that students who participate in service learning projects
81 have a stronger sense of personal efficacy and are much more
82 likely to volunteer and be actively engaged in their communities
83 than students who do not serve.

84 (4) OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS TO ENGAGE IN SERVICE
85 LEARNING.--

86 (a) Each school district must develop and adopt an
87 approved plan to provide multiple opportunities for all students
88 to engage in quality curriculum-based and course-based service
89 learning.

90 (b) District plans shall include one or more service
91 learning opportunities in elementary school, one or more service
92 learning opportunities in middle school, and three or more
93 service learning opportunities in high school, for a total of at
94 least five service learning opportunities in K-12.

95 (c) Each service learning project must be of sufficient
96 depth and duration to include the components of service learning
97 described in paragraphs (3) (b)-(d) and include an average of at
98 least 20 hours per project per student. Each district plan,
99 therefore, must provide at least 100 total hours of service
100 learning for students in K-12. Time spent by students on the
101 elements of service learning preparation, action, demonstration,
102 and reflection may be counted as service learning hours. Time
103 spent by students on service learning recognition may not be
104 counted as service learning hours.

105 (d) The teacher of a relevant course shall verify the
106 accumulation of hours, which may occur in or out of the
107 classroom and during or outside of school hours. A student who
108 satisfactorily completes a relevant course shall automatically
109 receive credit for the service learning hours in the course.

110 (e) Because of student mobility, potential failure by a
111 student to complete a course, scheduling conflicts, and other

112 factors, students are not required to complete 100 hours of
113 course-based service learning in order to graduate from high
114 school. Each district must, however, provide opportunities for
115 all of its students to engage in at least five service learning
116 projects in K-12 and record those hours.

117 (f) Each district may develop its own plan to address the
118 requirements of this section. Districts may:

119 1. Integrate service learning into required courses or
120 subjects that all students must take in a given grade;

121 2. Encourage individual teachers to integrate service
122 learning into coursework until all students have the requisite
123 service learning opportunities at a school;

124 3. Provide opportunities for older students to tutor
125 younger students during or after school provided that the older
126 students receive course credit for tutoring;

127 4. Facilitate participation of large numbers of students
128 in service learning events during or outside of school, such as
129 the National & Global Youth Service Day or the Dr. Martin Luther
130 King, Jr., National Holiday Day of Service;

131 5. Count individual service learning activities if they
132 are tied to a required or elective credit course and include the
133 components of service learning described in paragraphs (3)(b)-
134 (d);

135 6. Develop "cascading" service learning projects in which
136 older students conduct joint service learning activities with
137 younger students within the school's feeder pattern; or

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138 7. Develop some combination of the activities listed in
139 this paragraph or offer other activities as part of its adopted
140 plan.

141 (5) DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION; ADMINISTRATION; PLAN
142 APPROVAL; FUNDING.--

143 (a) The Department of Education shall administer and
144 oversee implementation of this section and district adherence to
145 its requirements.

146 (b) Each district must submit to the department for
147 approval a plan for implementing the requirements of this
148 section. The plan shall strive to ensure that the district's
149 service learning projects do not duplicate services offered by
150 other entities or school programs. Existing district consortia
151 may submit consortia plans in lieu of individual district plans.

152 (c) Funds shall be appropriated by the Legislature to
153 provide seed and implementation grants to districts or district
154 consortia; to support district and school-level coordination,
155 training, development, and dissemination of resource materials;
156 to provide incentives for special and unique district
157 initiatives; and to support state-level coordination. A school
158 district may receive other public and private funds for the
159 support of its program or any component thereof.

160 (d) A portion of grant funds shall be disbursed to:

161 1. Districts on a formula basis to ensure that all
162 districts receive resources.

163 2. Districts on a competitive basis to support innovative
164 ideas and development and dissemination of model and pilot
165 programs.

166 3. Institutions of higher education on a competitive basis
167 to support the participation of teacher education students in K-
168 12 service learning projects and to provide teacher education
169 students the training and experiences to use service learning as
170 an instructional strategy when they become teachers.

171 (e) The department shall provide technical assistance to
172 districts in implementing this section.

173 (f) The department shall review, negotiate, approve, and
174 monitor district implementation plans and report annually to the
175 President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of
176 Representatives on the progress of implementation of the plans.

177 (6) CREDIT TOWARD COMMUNITY SERVICE REQUIREMENTS.--The
178 hours that high school students devote to course-based service
179 learning projects address community needs and provide for the
180 development of students as effectively as those in standard
181 community service projects. Therefore, service learning hours
182 are eligible to be counted toward district community-service-
183 hour high school graduation requirements and community-service-
184 hour requirements of the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship
185 Program.

186 (7) PHASED-IN IMPLEMENTATION.--

187 (a) It is anticipated that 10 to 20 districts will submit
188 plans each year during the 2007-2008 through 2010-2011 school
189 years. A district may submit a plan and be approved to begin
190 implementation by the beginning of the 2007-2008 school year.
191 Incentives shall be provided to districts that submit plans that
192 include creation of curricula, lesson plans, and other resources

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193 that may be disseminated to help other districts adopt or adapt
194 similar strategies.

195 (b) All districts must submit and have an approved plan by
196 the beginning of the 2011-2012 school year.

197 (8) RULES.--The Department of Education may adopt rules
198 pursuant to ss. 120.536(1) and 120.54 to implement the
199 provisions of this section.

200 Section 2. There is appropriated from the General Revenue
201 Fund to the Department of Education for fiscal year 2007-2008
202 the sum of \$2 million to implement the provisions of s.
203 1003.497, Florida Statutes, as created by this act.

204 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2007.