

By Senator Wise

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to postsecondary education; creating s.
3 1009.893, F.S.; creating the Workforce Education Grant
4 Program within the Department of Education; providing
5 legislative intent with respect to workforce education;
6 prescribing eligibility criteria for students to receive
7 grants under the program; defining the term "eligible
8 nonpublic institution of higher education"; providing that
9 students who are eligible for certain other grant programs
10 are not eligible for the Workforce Education Grant
11 Program; directing the State Board of Education to adopt
12 rules; providing an effective date.

13
14 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

15
16 Section 1. Section 1009.893, Florida Statutes, is created
17 to read:

18 1009.893 Workforce Education Grant Program --

19 (1) The Legislature finds that workforce education programs
20 are a critical component of the state's educational system and
21 that it is in the state's interest to promote student choice, the
22 responsiveness of postsecondary institutions to students' needs,
23 and the relevance of educational programs to the state's economic
24 development needs across all sectors of the state's postsecondary
25 education system. The Legislature further finds that nonpublic
26 institutions eligible to participate in the Workforce Education
27 Grant Program are an integral part of the higher education system
28 in this state and that the Workforce Education Grant Program will
29 help meet the state's interests in regard to workforce education

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30 and promote consistency in its support of workforce education.
31 The Legislature intends to create a grant program that is not
32 based on a student's financial need or other criteria upon which
33 financial aid programs are based, but is a tuition assistance
34 program for state residents.

35 (2) There is created the Workforce Education Grant Program,
36 or WEG Program, to be administered by the Department of
37 Education.

38 (3) Subject to legislative appropriation, the department
39 shall issue a grant under the WEG Program to any student who:

40 (a) Meets the residency requirement provided in s. 1009.40;
41 and

42 (b) Is enrolled as a full-time undergraduate student in a
43 program at a campus in this state of an eligible nonpublic
44 institution of higher education and is seeking an associate or
45 higher degree leading to employment in occupations that are
46 consistent with the workforce needs of employers and economic
47 development strategies listed on the Agency for Workforce
48 Innovation's Florida Statewide Targeted Occupations List or on a
49 regional targeted occupations list of a regional workforce board
50 at the time of enrollment.

51 (4) As used in this section, the term "eligible nonpublic
52 institution of higher education" means an institution:

53 (a) That is licensed by the Commission for Independent
54 Education under chapter 1005.

55 (b) That is accredited by an accrediting agency recognized
56 by the United States Secretary of Education as a reliable
57 authority as to the quality of education or training offered at
58 its accredited institutions.

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59 (c) That meets performance requirements for student
60 achievement which include minimum objective quantitative
61 standards, including completion rates and placement rates,
62 established by its recognized accrediting agency set forth in
63 paragraph (b) or by the Commission for Independent Education.

64 (5) Students who are eligible to participate in the Access
65 to Better Learning and Education Grant Program or the William L.
66 Boyd, IV, Florida Resident Access Grant Program are not eligible
67 to participate in this program.

68 (6) The State Board of Education shall adopt rules pursuant
69 to ss. 120.53(1) and 120.54 to administer the WEG Program.

70 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2008.