

By the Committee on Education Pre-K - 12; and Senator Gaetz

581-04937-08

20081906c1

1 A bill to be entitled

2 An act relating to alternative credit high school courses;  
3 creating s. 1002.375, F.S.; establishing a pilot project  
4 for awarding high school credit to students enrolled in  
5 industry certification programs; requiring the  
6 Commissioner of Education to establish criteria for  
7 program participation; requiring that a school district  
8 submit a letter of interest by a specified date in order  
9 to participate in the pilot project; requiring that the  
10 Commissioner of Education submit a report to the Governor  
11 and the Legislature; providing for specified courses to be  
12 included as alternative credit courses; exempting  
13 alternative credit courses from certain requirements;  
14 authorizing the Department of Education to approve certain  
15 courses for credit by examination; requiring the  
16 Department of Education to adopt passing minimum scores on  
17 approved assessments and maintain a course directory;  
18 requiring the State Board of Education to adopt rules;  
19 amending s. 1011.61, F.S., relating to definitions for the  
20 Florida Education Finance Program; providing for an  
21 alternate method of reporting full-time equivalent  
22 membership for credit earned in alternative high school  
23 credit courses for the pilot project created under s.  
24 1002.375, F.S.; providing an effective date.

25  
26 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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28 Section 1. Section 1002.375, Florida Statutes, is created  
29 to read:

581-04937-08

20081906c1

30 1002.375 Alternative credit for high school courses; pilot  
31 project.--

32 (1) The Commissioner of Education shall implement a pilot  
33 project in up to three school districts beginning in the 2008-  
34 2009 school year which allows school districts to award  
35 alternative course credit for students enrolled in nationally or  
36 state-recognized industry certification programs, as defined by  
37 the Agency for Workforce Innovation in accordance with the  
38 criteria described in s. 1003.492(2). The Commissioner of  
39 Education shall establish criteria for districts that participate  
40 in the pilot program. School districts interested in  
41 participating in the program must submit a letter of interest by  
42 July 15, 2008, to the Commissioner of Education identifying up to  
43 five nationally or state-recognized industry certification  
44 programs, as defined by the Agency for Workforce Innovation in  
45 accordance with the criteria described in s. 1003.492(2), under  
46 which the district would like to award alternative credit for the  
47 eligible courses identified in subsection (2). The Commissioner  
48 of Education shall select up to three participating school  
49 districts by July 30, 2008. The Commissioner of Education shall  
50 submit a report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and  
51 the Speaker of the House of Representatives identifying the  
52 number of students choosing to earn alternative credit, the  
53 number of students that received alternative credit, and  
54 legislative recommendations for expanding the use of alternative  
55 credit for core academic courses required for high school  
56 graduation. The report shall be submitted by January 1, 2010.

57 (2) For purposes of designing and implementing a successful  
58 pilot project, eligible alternative credit courses include

581-04937-08

20081906c1

59 Integrated Math 1, Integrated Math 2, Algebra 1a, Algebra 1b,  
60 Algebra 1, Geometry, and Biology. Alternative credits shall be  
61 awarded for courses in which a student is not enrolled, but for  
62 which the student may earn academic credit by enrolling in  
63 another course or sequence of courses required to earn a  
64 nationally or state-recognized industry certificate, as defined  
65 by the Agency for Workforce Innovation in accordance with the  
66 criteria described in s. 1003.492(2), of which the majority of  
67 the standards-based content in the course description is  
68 consistent with the alternative credit course description  
69 approved by the Department of Education.

70 (3) An alternative credit course is not subject to:

71 (a) The definition of credit under s. 1003.436;

72 (b) The time requirements of s. 1011.60(2); or

73 (c) The net hours of instruction requirements for purposes  
74 of determining full-time equivalency pursuant to s.

75 1011.61(1)(a)1. under the Florida Education Finance Program.

76 (4) The Department of Education may approve a course as an  
77 alternative credit course pursuant to this section. In order to  
78 earn credit, each participating student must pass an end-of-  
79 course assessment that measures proficiency in the Sunshine State  
80 Standards addressed by the course. The Department of Education  
81 shall approve each end-of-course assessment and the minimum  
82 passing score for each assessment. Approved assessments shall be  
83 limited to statewide standardized assessments for Integrated Math  
84 1, Integrated Math 2, Algebra 1a, Algebra 1b, Algebra 1,  
85 Geometry, and Biology developed by the Florida Virtual School,  
86 regardless of whether the student is enrolled in a Florida  
87 Virtual School course. The department shall approve the method of

581-04937-08

20081906c1

88 administering end-of-course assessments for alternative credit  
89 courses in each participating school district in order to ensure  
90 the validity of the assessment results.

91 (5) School districts shall report all enrollments and  
92 credits awarded for alternative education courses pursuant to  
93 this section under procedures prescribed by the Department of  
94 Education.

95 (6) The Department of Education shall maintain a list of  
96 approved assessments and minimum passing scores for each approved  
97 course. The approved list must be incorporated into the Course  
98 Code Directory. The department shall prescribe the information a  
99 district must provide in order to have a course considered for  
100 inclusion in the directory listing for the approved courses used  
101 in the pilot program. A properly completed request by a district  
102 to have a course included in the directory must be approved or  
103 denied by the department within 30 days after receipt. When a  
104 request is denied, the department must provide the district with  
105 its reason for denial in writing within 10 days after the denial.

106 (7) The State Board of Education shall adopt rules pursuant  
107 to ss. 120.536(1) and 120.54 to implement the pilot program  
108 created in this section.

109 Section 2. Paragraph (c) of subsection (1) of section  
110 1011.61, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

111 1011.61 Definitions.--Notwithstanding the provisions of s.  
112 1000.21, the following terms are defined as follows for the  
113 purposes of the Florida Education Finance Program:

114 (1) A "full-time equivalent student" in each program of the  
115 district is defined in terms of full-time students and part-time  
116 students as follows:

581-04937-08

20081906c1

- 117 (c)1. A "full-time equivalent student" is:
- 118 a. A full-time student in any one of the programs listed in
- 119 s. 1011.62(1)(c); or
- 120 b. A combination of full-time or part-time students in any
- 121 one of the programs listed in s. 1011.62(1)(c) which is the
- 122 equivalent of one full-time student based on the following
- 123 calculations:
- 124 (I) A full-time student, except a postsecondary or adult
- 125 student or a senior high school student enrolled in adult
- 126 education when such courses are required for high school
- 127 graduation, in a combination of programs listed in s.
- 128 1011.62(1)(c) shall be a fraction of a full-time equivalent
- 129 membership in each special program equal to the number of net
- 130 hours per school year for which he or she is a member, divided by
- 131 the appropriate number of hours set forth in subparagraph (a)1.
- 132 or subparagraph (a)2. The difference between that fraction or sum
- 133 of fractions and the maximum value as set forth in subsection (4)
- 134 for each full-time student is presumed to be the balance of the
- 135 student's time not spent in such special education programs and
- 136 shall be recorded as time in the appropriate basic program.
- 137 (II) A prekindergarten handicapped student shall meet the
- 138 requirements specified for kindergarten students.
- 139 (III) A Florida Virtual School full-time equivalent student
- 140 shall consist of six full credit completions in the programs
- 141 listed in s. 1011.62(1)(c)1. and 4. Credit completions can be a
- 142 combination of either full credits or half credits.
- 143 (IV) Each successfully completed credit earned under the
- 144 alternative high school course credit requirements authorized in
- 145 s. 1002.375, which is not reported as a portion of the 900 net

581-04937-08

20081906c1

146 hours of instruction pursuant to subparagraph (1)(a)1., shall be  
147 calculated as 1/6 FTE.

148         2. A student in membership in a program scheduled for more  
149 or less than 180 school days is a fraction of a full-time  
150 equivalent membership equal to the number of instructional hours  
151 in membership divided by the appropriate number of hours set  
152 forth in subparagraph (a)1.; however, for the purposes of this  
153 subparagraph, membership in programs scheduled for more than 180  
154 days is limited to students enrolled in juvenile justice  
155 education programs and the Florida Virtual School.

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157 The department shall determine and implement an equitable method  
158 of equivalent funding for experimental schools and for schools  
159 operating under emergency conditions, which schools have been  
160 approved by the department to operate for less than the minimum  
161 school day.

162         Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2008.