

20081906e1

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:

27
28 Section 1. Section 1002.375, Florida Statutes, is created
29 to read:

20081906e1

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

20081906e1

59 Algebra 1a, Algebra 1b, Algebra 1, Geometry, and Biology.
60 Alternative credits shall be awarded for courses in which a
61 student is not enrolled, but for which the student may earn
62 academic credit by enrolling in another course or sequence of
63 courses required to earn a nationally or state-recognized
64 industry certificate, as defined by the Agency for Workforce
65 Innovation in accordance with the criteria described in s.
66 1003.492(2), of which the majority of the standards-based content
67 in the course description is consistent with the alternative
68 credit course description approved by the Department of
69 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 assessments for Algebra 1a, Algebra 1b, Algebra 1,
84 Geometry, and Biology developed by the Florida Virtual School, or
85 end-of-course statewide standardized assessments for these
86 courses which may be adopted or developed by the department. The
87 department shall approve the method of administering end-of-

20081906e1

88 course assessments for alternative credit courses in each
89 participating school district in order to ensure the validity of
90 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:

20081906e1

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

20081906e1

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.

156
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.