

20081906e2

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to alternative high school courses and
3 programs; creating s. 1002.375, F.S.; establishing a pilot
4 project for awarding high school credit to students
5 enrolled in 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.; encouraging school districts to enter into
25 partnerships with local businesses for certain purposes;
26 authorizing the Palm Beach County school district to
27 recognize its business partners by displaying such
28 business partners' names on school district property in
29 unincorporated areas if displayed in a manner consistent

20081906e2

30 with certain standards; providing an effective date.

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32 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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34 Section 1. Section 1002.375, Florida Statutes, is created
35 to read:

36 1002.375 Alternative credit for high school courses; pilot
37 project.--

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

20081906e2

59 number of students that received alternative credit, and
60 legislative recommendations for expanding the use of alternative
61 credit for core academic courses required for high school
62 graduation. The report shall be submitted by January 1, 2010.

63 (2) For purposes of designing and implementing a successful
64 pilot project, eligible alternative credit courses include
65 Algebra 1a, Algebra 1b, Algebra 1, Geometry, and Biology.
66 Alternative credits shall be awarded for courses in which a
67 student is not enrolled, but for which the student may earn
68 academic credit by enrolling in another course or sequence of
69 courses required to earn a nationally or state-recognized
70 industry certificate, as defined by the Agency for Workforce
71 Innovation in accordance with the criteria described in s.
72 1003.492(2), of which the majority of the standards-based content
73 in the course description is consistent with the alternative
74 credit course description approved by the Department of
75 Education.

76 (3) An alternative credit course is not subject to:
77 (a) The definition of credit under s. 1003.436;
78 (b) The time requirements of s. 1011.60(2); or
79 (c) The net hours of instruction requirements for purposes
80 of determining full-time equivalency pursuant to s.
81 1011.61(1)(a)1. under the Florida Education Finance Program.

82 (4) The Department of Education may approve a course as an
83 alternative credit course pursuant to this section. In order to
84 earn credit, each participating student must pass an end-of-
85 course assessment that measures proficiency in the Sunshine State
86 Standards addressed by the course. The Department of Education
87 shall approve each end-of-course assessment and the minimum

20081906e2

88 passing score for each assessment. Approved assessments shall be
89 limited to assessments for Algebra 1a, Algebra 1b, Algebra 1,
90 Geometry, and Biology developed by the Florida Virtual School, or
91 end-of-course statewide standardized assessments for these
92 courses which may be adopted or developed by the department. The
93 department shall approve the method of administering end-of-
94 course assessments for alternative credit courses in each
95 participating school district in order to ensure the validity of
96 the assessment results.

97 (5) School districts shall report all enrollments and
98 credits awarded for alternative education courses pursuant to
99 this section under procedures prescribed by the Department of
100 Education.

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

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

115 Section 2. Paragraph (c) of subsection (1) of section
116 1011.61, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

20081906e2

117 1011.61 Definitions.--Notwithstanding the provisions of s.
118 1000.21, the following terms are defined as follows for the
119 purposes of the Florida Education Finance Program:

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

123 (c)1. A "full-time equivalent student" is:

124 a. A full-time student in any one of the programs listed in
125 s. 1011.62(1)(c); or

126 b. A combination of full-time or part-time students in any
127 one of the programs listed in s. 1011.62(1)(c) which is the
128 equivalent of one full-time student based on the following
129 calculations:

130 (I) A full-time student, except a postsecondary or adult
131 student or a senior high school student enrolled in adult
132 education when such courses are required for high school
133 graduation, in a combination of programs listed in s.

134 1011.62(1)(c) shall be a fraction of a full-time equivalent
135 membership in each special program equal to the number of net
136 hours per school year for which he or she is a member, divided by
137 the appropriate number of hours set forth in subparagraph (a)1.
138 or subparagraph (a)2. The difference between that fraction or sum
139 of fractions and the maximum value as set forth in subsection (4)
140 for each full-time student is presumed to be the balance of the
141 student's time not spent in such special education programs and
142 shall be recorded as time in the appropriate basic program.

143 (II) A prekindergarten handicapped student shall meet the
144 requirements specified for kindergarten students.

20081906e2

145 (III) A Florida Virtual School full-time equivalent student
146 shall consist of six full credit completions in the programs
147 listed in s. 1011.62(1)(c)1. and 4. Credit completions can be a
148 combination of either full credits or half credits.

149 (IV) Each successfully completed credit earned under the
150 alternative high school course credit requirements authorized in
151 s. 1002.375, which is not reported as a portion of the 900 net
152 hours of instruction pursuant to subparagraph (1)(a)1., shall be
153 calculated as 1/6 FTE.

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

162
163 The department shall determine and implement an equitable method
164 of equivalent funding for experimental schools and for schools
165 operating under emergency conditions, which schools have been
166 approved by the department to operate for less than the minimum
167 school day.

168 Section 3. (1) School districts are encouraged to enter
169 into partnerships with local businesses for purposes of
170 mentorship opportunities, the development of employment options
171 and additional funding sources, and other mutual benefits.

172 (2) As a pilot program through June 30, 2011, the Palm
173 Beach County school district may recognize its business partners

20081906e2

174 by publicly displaying such business partners' names on school
175 district property in the unincorporated areas. "Project
176 Graduation" and athletic sponsorships are examples of appropriate
177 recognition. The district shall make every effort to display its
178 business partners' names in a manner that is consistent with the
179 county standards for uniformity in size, color, and placement of
180 signs. If the provisions of this section are inconsistent with
181 the county ordinances or regulations relating to signs in the
182 unincorporated areas or inconsistent with chapter 125, chapter
183 166, or chapter 479, Florida Statutes, the provisions of this
184 section prevail.

185 Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2008.