

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 to provide grants to students enrolled in degree
5 programs in nonpublic educational institutions; providing
6 legislative intent with respect to workforce education;
7 prescribing eligibility criteria for such students;
8 defining the term "eligible nonpublic institution of
9 higher education"; directing the State Board of Education
10 to adopt rules; providing an effective date.

11
12 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

13
14 Section 1. Section 1009.893, Florida Statutes, is created
15 to read:

16 1009.893 Workforce Education Grant Program.--

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

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30 Legislature intends to create a grant program that is not based
31 on a student's financial need or other criteria upon which
32 financial aid programs are based but is a tuition assistance
33 program for state residents.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

58 (c) That meets performance requirements for student

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

63 (d) Whose students are eligible to participate in the
64 Access to Better Learning and Education Grant Program and the
65 William L. Boyd, IV, Florida Resident Access Grant Program.

66 (5) The State Board of Education shall adopt rules pursuant
67 to ss. 120.53(1) and 120.54 to administer the WEG Program.

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