

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to public school attendance; creating s.
3 1003.215, F.S.; creating the Student Preparedness Pilot
4 Program; requiring the Duval County School District and
5 each selected school district to review and identify
6 curricula options for certain students; requiring students
7 who attain the age of 16 years but have not reached the
8 age of 18 years in pilot program districts who do not
9 regularly attend school to be subject to specific
10 attendance and completion requirements; providing for an
11 application and selection process for school district
12 participation; specifying procedures for termination of
13 school enrollment and requirements for pilot program
14 attendance and completion; specifying that students who
15 select a nontraditional academic option are not eligible
16 students for purposes of school grading; requiring an
17 annual study and reporting by the Office of Program Policy
18 Analysis and Government Accountability; amending s.
19 1003.01, F.S.; providing that habitual truancy provisions
20 apply to students subject to pilot program requirements;
21 defining regular program attendance in a pilot program
22 school district; amending s. 1003.21, F.S.; requiring a
23 student in a pilot program school district to be informed
24 of attendance and completion requirements; amending s.
25 1003.26, F.S.; conforming cross-references; amending s.
26 1004.99, F.S., relating to the Florida Ready to Work
27 Program; providing requirements for attaining bronze,

28 silver, and gold credential levels; providing an effective
 29 date.

30
 31 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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 33 Section 1. Section 1003.215, Florida Statutes, is created
 34 to read:

35 1003.215 Student Preparedness Pilot Program.--

36 (1) The Legislature finds it to be in the public interest
 37 that all students exit from the public schools with academic
 38 skills that provide the students with the opportunity to pursue
 39 postsecondary education or with skills that lead to ready to
 40 work certification, industry certification, or skill licensure.

41 (2) (a) Beginning with the 2008-2009 school year, and
 42 continuing through the 2014-2015 school year, there is created
 43 the Student Preparedness Pilot Program to be piloted by school
 44 districts. Students in a school district selected to implement
 45 the pilot program pursuant to subsection (3) who attain the age
 46 of 16 years but have not reached the age of 18 years and who
 47 choose to exercise their option not to regularly attend school
 48 pursuant to s. 1003.21(1)(c) shall be subject to the attendance
 49 and completion requirements of this section.

50 (b) In the 2008-2009 school year, each school district
 51 selected pursuant to subsection (3) shall review, identify, and
 52 develop curricula options for the implementation of the pilot
 53 program requirements pursuant to paragraph (5)(a) for students
 54 who attain the age of 16 years but have not reached the age of
 55 18 years whose academic goals may not include a traditional high

56 school diploma. These options shall include, but are not limited
57 to, nontraditional academic options and flexible attendance
58 options and may include a phase-in of students by age or grade.
59 Each selected school district must develop a plan to meet the
60 student's needs and the attendance and completion requirements
61 of this section prior to implementation of the pilot program in
62 the 2009-2010 school year.

63 (3) The Department of Education shall develop an
64 application process for all school districts to apply to
65 participate in the pilot program. The State Board of Education
66 shall select the pilot program districts, one of which shall be
67 the Duval County School District.

68 (4) Parents of public school students enrolled in a
69 participating pilot program district must receive accurate and
70 timely information regarding their child's academic progress and
71 must be informed of ways they can help their child to succeed in
72 school.

73 (5) (a) A student in a participating pilot program district
74 who attains the age of 16 years but has not reached the age of
75 18 years has the right to file a formal declaration of intent to
76 terminate school enrollment if the declaration is signed by the
77 parent. The parent has the right to be notified by the school
78 district of the district's receipt of the student's declaration
79 of intent to terminate school enrollment. The student's guidance
80 counselor or other school personnel must conduct an exit
81 interview pursuant to s. 1003.21(1)(c). Any student in a
82 participating pilot program district who files a declaration
83 seeking to terminate school enrollment but has not reached the

84 age of 18 years shall be required, until completion or
85 attainment of the age of 18 years, to continue pursuing credits
86 toward a high school diploma, pursue a high school equivalency
87 diploma with participation in the Florida Ready to Work
88 Certification Program under s. 1004.99, participate in a career
89 or job training program leading to industry certification or
90 skill licensure that is developed by or in cooperation with the
91 district school board, or participate in the Florida Ready to
92 Work Certification Program under s. 1004.99.

93 (b) A Student Preparedness Pilot Program student subject
94 to the attendance and completion requirements of this section is
95 not an "eligible student" for purposes of school grading under
96 s. 1008.34(3)(b) if the student has selected a nontraditional
97 academic option of the pilot program.

98 (6) Students who become or have become married or who are
99 pregnant and parenting have the right to attend school and
100 receive the same or equivalent educational instruction as other
101 students.

102 (7) The Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government
103 Accountability (OPPAGA), in cooperation with the participating
104 pilot program districts, the applicable state attorneys' offices
105 and regional workforce boards, the Agency for Workforce
106 Innovation, the Department of Education, and the Department of
107 Juvenile Justice, shall conduct a study annually of the impact
108 of the pilot program on dropout and graduation rates, on the
109 employability of students, and on juvenile crime, using 2007-
110 2008 data as the baseline for the research. OPPAGA shall develop
111 criteria for collection and reporting of data with input from

112 the cooperating entities. The results of each annual report
 113 shall be made available to participating pilot program
 114 districts, the applicable state attorneys' offices and regional
 115 workforce boards, the Agency for Workforce Education, the
 116 Department of Education, the Department of Juvenile Justice, the
 117 Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the
 118 House of Representatives by January 1 following each school
 119 year, beginning January 1, 2012.

120 Section 2. Subsections (8) and (13) of section 1003.01,
 121 Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

122 1003.01 Definitions.--As used in this chapter, the term:

123 (8) "Habitual truant" means a student who: has 15
 124 unexcused absences within 90 calendar days with or without the
 125 knowledge or consent of the student's parent; ~~is~~ is subject to
 126 compulsory school attendance under s. 1003.21(1) and (2)(a) or
 127 is subject to the Student Preparedness Pilot Program under s.
 128 1003.215; ~~and~~ and is not exempt under s. 1003.21(3), ~~or~~ s. 1003.24,
 129 ~~or by meeting the criteria for~~ any other exemption specified by
 130 law or rules of the State Board of Education. Such a student
 131 must have been the subject of the activities specified in ss.
 132 1003.26 and 1003.27(3), without resultant successful remediation
 133 of the truancy problem before being dealt with as a child in
 134 need of services according to the provisions of chapter 984.

135 (13) (a) "Regular school attendance" means the actual
 136 attendance of a student during the school day as defined by law
 137 and rules of the State Board of Education. Regular attendance
 138 within the intent of s. 1003.21 may be achieved by attendance
 139 in:

- 140 ~~1.(a)~~ A public school supported by public funds;
- 141 ~~2.(b)~~ A parochial, religious, or denominational school;
- 142 ~~3.(c)~~ A private school supported in whole or in part by
- 143 tuition charges or by endowments or gifts;
- 144 ~~4.(d)~~ A home education program that meets the requirements
- 145 of chapter 1002; or
- 146 ~~5.(e)~~ A private tutoring program that meets the
- 147 requirements of chapter 1002.

148 (b) "Regular program attendance" for a student in the
 149 Student Preparedness Pilot Program under s. 1003.215 means
 150 actual attendance by the student in traditional or
 151 nontraditional academic options as defined by law and rules of
 152 the State Board of Education. The district school superintendent
 153 shall be responsible for enforcing such attendance.

154 Section 3. Paragraph (c) of subsection (1) of section
 155 1003.21, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

156 1003.21 School attendance.--

157 (1)

158 (c) A student who attains the age of 16 years during the
 159 school year is not subject to compulsory school attendance
 160 beyond the date upon which he or she attains that age if the
 161 student files a formal declaration of intent to terminate school
 162 enrollment with the district school board. Public school
 163 students who have attained the age of 16 years and who have not
 164 graduated are subject to compulsory school attendance until the
 165 formal declaration of intent is filed with the district school
 166 board. The declaration must acknowledge that terminating school
 167 enrollment is likely to reduce the student's earning potential

168 and must be signed by the student and the student's parent. The
169 school district must notify the student's parent of receipt of
170 the student's declaration of intent to terminate school
171 enrollment. The student's guidance counselor or other school
172 personnel must conduct an exit interview with the student to
173 determine the reasons for the student's decision to terminate
174 school enrollment and actions that could be taken to keep the
175 student in school. The student must be informed of opportunities
176 to continue his or her education in a different environment,
177 including, but not limited to, adult education and GED test
178 preparation. Additionally, the student must complete a survey in
179 a format prescribed by the Department of Education to provide
180 data on student reasons for terminating enrollment and actions
181 taken by schools to keep students enrolled. A student enrolled
182 in a Student Preparedness Pilot Program school district must
183 receive information regarding the program's attendance and
184 completion requirements under s. 1003.215.

185 Section 4. Paragraph (f) of subsection (1) of section
186 1003.26, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

187 1003.26 Enforcement of school attendance.--The Legislature
188 finds that poor academic performance is associated with
189 nonattendance and that school districts must take an active role
190 in promoting and enforcing attendance as a means of improving
191 student performance. It is the policy of the state that each
192 district school superintendent be responsible for enforcing
193 school attendance of all students subject to the compulsory
194 school age in the school district and supporting enforcement of
195 school attendance by local law enforcement agencies. The

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196 responsibility includes recommending policies and procedures to
197 the district school board that require public schools to respond
198 in a timely manner to every unexcused absence, and every absence
199 for which the reason is unknown, of students enrolled in the
200 schools. District school board policies shall require the parent
201 of a student to justify each absence of the student, and that
202 justification will be evaluated based on adopted district school
203 board policies that define excused and unexcused absences. The
204 policies must provide that public schools track excused and
205 unexcused absences and contact the home in the case of an
206 unexcused absence from school, or an absence from school for
207 which the reason is unknown, to prevent the development of
208 patterns of nonattendance. The Legislature finds that early
209 intervention in school attendance is the most effective way of
210 producing good attendance habits that will lead to improved
211 student learning and achievement. Each public school shall
212 implement the following steps to promote and enforce regular
213 school attendance:

214 (1) CONTACT, REFER, AND ENFORCE.--

215 (f)1. If the parent of a child who has been identified as
216 exhibiting a pattern of nonattendance enrolls the child in a
217 home education program pursuant to chapter 1002, the district
218 school superintendent shall provide the parent a copy of s.
219 1002.41 and the accountability requirements of this paragraph.
220 The district school superintendent shall also refer the parent
221 to a home education review committee composed of the district
222 contact for home education programs and at least two home
223 educators selected by the parent from a district list of all

224 home educators who have conducted a home education program for
225 at least 3 years and who have indicated a willingness to serve
226 on the committee. The home education review committee shall
227 review the portfolio of the student, as defined by s. 1002.41,
228 every 30 days during the district's regular school terms until
229 the committee is satisfied that the home education program is in
230 compliance with s. 1002.41(1)(b). The first portfolio review
231 must occur within the first 30 calendar days of the
232 establishment of the program. The provisions of subparagraph 2.
233 do not apply once the committee determines the home education
234 program is in compliance with s. 1002.41(1)(b).

235 2. If the parent fails to provide a portfolio to the
236 committee, the committee shall notify the district school
237 superintendent. The district school superintendent shall then
238 terminate the home education program and require the parent to
239 enroll the child in an attendance option that meets the
240 definition of "regular school attendance" under s.
241 1003.01(13)(a) 1., 2., 3., or 5., ~~(b), (c), or (e)~~, within 3
242 days. Upon termination of a home education program pursuant to
243 this subparagraph, the parent shall not be eligible to reenroll
244 the child in a home education program for 180 calendar days.
245 Failure of a parent to enroll the child in an attendance option
246 as required by this subparagraph after termination of the home
247 education program pursuant to this subparagraph shall constitute
248 noncompliance with the compulsory attendance requirements of s.
249 1003.21 and may result in criminal prosecution under s.
250 1003.27(2). Nothing contained herein shall restrict the ability
251 of the district school superintendent, or the ability of his or

252 her designee, to review the portfolio pursuant to s.
253 1002.41(1)(b).

254 Section 5. Paragraph (d) of subsection (3) of section
255 1004.99, Florida Statutes, is amended, subsection (4) is
256 renumbered as subsection (5), and a new subsection (4) is added
257 to that section, to read:

258 1004.99 Florida Ready to Work Certification Program.--

259 (3) The Florida Ready to Work Certification Program shall
260 be composed of:

261 (d) A Florida Ready to Work Credential ~~certificate~~ and
262 portfolio awarded to students upon successful completion of the
263 instruction. Each portfolio must delineate the skills
264 demonstrated by the student as evidence of the student's
265 preparation for employment.

266 (4) A Florida Ready to Work Credential shall be awarded to
267 a student who successfully passes assessments in Reading for
268 Information, Applied Mathematics, and Locating Information or
269 any other assessments of comparable rigor. Each assessment shall
270 be scored on a scale of 3 to 7. The level of the credential each
271 student receives is based on the following:

272 (a) A bronze-level credential requires a minimum score of
273 3 or above on each of the assessments.

274 (b) A silver-level credential requires a minimum score of
275 4 or above on each of the assessments.

276 (c) A gold-level credential requires a minimum score of 5
277 or above on each of the assessments.

278 Section 6. This act shall take effect July 1, 2008.