

By Senator Fasano

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1 A bill to be entitled

2 An act relating to disability history and awareness;
3 creating the Pilot Project for Disability History and
4 Awareness in Hillsborough, Leon, Pasco, and Pinellas
5 Counties; providing for the respective county school
6 boards to administer the project; providing requirements;
7 encouraging schools to cooperate with community-based
8 organizations; encouraging postsecondary institutions to
9 conduct and promote related activities; providing for
10 technical assistance; requiring a report to legislative
11 education committees and the Commissioner of Education;
12 providing appropriations; providing an effective date.

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

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16 Section 1. Pilot project for disability history and
17 awareness; creation; administration.--There is created the Pilot
18 Project for Disability History and Awareness in Hillsborough,
19 Leon, Pasco, and Pinellas Counties. Each county school board
20 shall administer the pilot project in its county.

21 (1) During the state Disability History and Awareness
22 Weeks, each public school in Hillsborough, Leon, Pasco, and
23 Pinellas Counties shall provide instruction in disability
24 history, people with disabilities, and the disability rights
25 movement and shall strive to raise disability awareness.
26 Disability history must include the people, events, and timelines
27 of the development and evolution of services to, and the civil
28 rights of, people with disabilities, including people with
29 disabilities from this state, as well as acknowledged national

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30 leaders. Disability history must also include the contributions
31 of specific people with disabilities. Disability awareness means
32 a level of competence in working and interacting with, and living
33 beside, people with different types of disabilities. The
34 awareness aspect of the project must emphasize a "people-first"
35 or socio-civil-rights model approach. The instruction must be
36 integrated into the existing school curriculum in ways that
37 include, but are not limited to, supplementing existing lesson
38 plans, holding school assemblies, and providing other school-
39 related activities such as disability-focused film festivals. The
40 instruction may be delivered by qualified school personnel or by
41 knowledgeable guest speakers, with a particular focus on
42 including people with disabilities.

43 (2) Desired outcomes for this pilot program include:

44 (a) Better treatment for people with disabilities in
45 society, especially for youth in school, and increased attention
46 to preventing the bullying of students with disabilities.

47 (b) Promotion of the goal that, in the future, students who
48 have been exposed to disability history and awareness will be
49 more likely to hire, retain, and promote people with
50 disabilities.

51 (c) Encouraging people with disabilities to have increased
52 self-esteem, resulting in more people with disabilities gaining
53 pride in being a person with a disability, going to college,
54 leaving social security, entering the workforce, and contributing
55 to their communities.

56 (3) In implementing the pilot project, the schools in the
57 participating counties are encouraged to collaborate with
58 community-based organizations such as centers for independent

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59 living, youth information centers, parent training and
60 information centers, and other consumer-driven groups and
61 disability membership organizations. Local businesses, internship
62 programs, and mentoring programs should be included in outreach
63 as well.

64 (4) State institutions of higher education are encouraged
65 to conduct and promote activities that provide education,
66 awareness, and understanding about disability history, people
67 with disabilities, and the disability rights movement.

68 (5) The University Center for Excellence in Developmental
69 Disabilities Education, Research, and Service (UCEDD) at the
70 University of South Florida, in collaboration with the Florida
71 Youth Council, shall provide technical assistance to the
72 participants in the pilot project.

73 (6) After the first year of the project, the University of
74 South Florida UCEDD, in collaboration with the Florida Youth
75 Council, shall prepare a report of the implementation of and
76 outcomes achieved by the pilot program and shall, by January 30,
77 2009, submit the report to the education committees of the Senate
78 and the House of Representatives and to the Commissioner of
79 Education.

80 Section 2. There is appropriated from the General Revenue
81 Fund to:

82 (1) The Hillsborough County School Board the sum of
83 \$10,000;

84 (2) The Leon County School Board the sum of \$10,000;

85 (3) The Pasco County School Board the sum of \$10,000; and

86 (4) The Pinellas County School Board the sum of \$10,000
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88 | to be used to implement the Pilot Project on Disability History
89 | and Awareness as described in this act.

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