

By Senator Siplin

19-01662A-09

20092232\_\_

1                   A bill to be entitled  
2           An act relating to high school graduation; providing a  
3           short title; establishing the General Education  
4           Development Exit Option Program; providing a purpose  
5           for such program; providing definitions; providing  
6           eligibility criteria for students to enroll in the  
7           program; providing that enrollment in the program is  
8           voluntary and requires parental notification and  
9           consent; providing that a student enrolled in the  
10          program may participate in all high school curricular  
11          and extracurricular activities if eligible; providing  
12          an exemption for students enrolled in the program from  
13          the minimum graduation requirements for a standard  
14          high school diploma; requiring that such exemption be  
15          documented in an exceptional student's individual  
16          education plan; requiring that a student who is  
17          enrolled in the program be promoted to grade 10 or the  
18          grade level of his or her cohort group upon enrollment  
19          in the program; providing that such student may take  
20          the grade 10 Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test;  
21          providing that a student who does not meet the  
22          graduation requirements in his or her senior year may  
23          return for a 13th year of school to enroll in the  
24          program; providing that such student is not required  
25          to take classes upon meeting the program requirements  
26          and is deemed a high school graduate; providing  
27          requirements for the successful completion of the  
28          program; requiring that a student's transcript  
29          identify certain information regarding the program;

19-01662A-09

20092232\_\_

30 requiring that the Department of Education include the  
31 program in its calculation of the high school  
32 graduation rate; providing an effective date.

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

36 Section 1. This act may be cited as the "Graduates  
37 Realizing Academic Dreams Act."

38 Section 2. General Education Development Exit Option  
39 Program.—

40 (1) PURPOSE.—The General Education Development (GED) Exit  
41 Option Program is established to provide a graduation strategy  
42 for currently enrolled high school students who are at risk of  
43 not receiving a standard high school diploma and not graduating  
44 with their cohort group.

45 (2) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section, the term:

46 (a) "Cohort group" means the group or class of students  
47 with whom a student has entered kindergarten and will graduate  
48 from high school.

49 (b) "Program" means the GED Exit Option Program.

50 (3) ELIGIBILITY.—In order to enroll in the program, a  
51 student must:

52 (a) Be enrolled in a public K-12 education program in  
53 courses that meet the high school graduation requirements;

54 (b) Be 16 years of age or older;

55 (c) Be older than the average age of students in his or her  
56 grade level;

57 (d) Be behind in meeting the credit and grade point average  
58 requirements for graduation;

19-01662A-09

20092232\_\_

59 (e) Have a cohort group that is graduating or has  
60 graduated;

61 (f) At a minimum, be documented as reading at a 7th-grade  
62 level;

63 (g) Earn acceptable scores on the official GED practice  
64 tests administered under approved testing conditions;

65 (h) Be recommended for the program by a teacher,  
66 administrator, or guidance counselor who is employed by the  
67 school in which the student is enrolled; and

68 (i) Have a cumulative record that indicates that the  
69 program is the most appropriate graduation alternative.

70  
71 Enrollment in the program is voluntary and requires parental  
72 notification and consent. A student and his or her parent or  
73 guardian must be properly notified and informed of the program  
74 and its requirements. The student must also obtain permission  
75 from his or her parent or guardian before enrolling in the  
76 program.

77 (4) SCHOOL PARTICIPATION.—A student who is enrolled in the  
78 program may participate in all high school curricular and  
79 extracurricular activities for which he or she meets the age and  
80 eligibility requirements, including, but not limited to,  
81 graduation ceremonies.

82 (5) ENROLLMENT.—

83 (a) Promotion.—A student who has not met the criteria for  
84 promotion to grade 10 shall be promoted to grade 10 or the grade  
85 level of his or her cohort group upon enrollment in the program.  
86 Such student may take the grade 10 Florida Comprehensive  
87 Assessment Test (FCAT).

19-01662A-09

20092232

88 (b) Completion of the program.-

89 1. A student who is enrolled in the program may not take  
90 the GED tests until he or she has passed the FCAT and earned a  
91 minimum score of 500 on the GED practice tests.

92 2. A student must pass the GED tests and all sections of  
93 the grade 10 FCAT to complete the program and earn a standard  
94 high school diploma. Students must also complete any vocational  
95 requirements that are included in an approved district school  
96 board plan.

97 3. A student who enrolls in the program may not graduate  
98 before his or her cohort group.

99 4. A student who passes only the GED tests shall be awarded  
100 a State of Florida Diploma.

101 (c) Exemption.-A student who is enrolled in the program is  
102 exempt from the minimum graduation requirements for a standard  
103 high school diploma, including the credit and grade point  
104 average requirements. Such exemption must be documented in an  
105 exceptional student's individual education plan.

106 (6) RETURNING HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS.-A student who does not  
107 meet the high school graduation requirements in his or her  
108 senior year and chooses to return for the 13th year of high  
109 school in order to enroll in the program is not required to  
110 continue taking classes upon meeting the program requirements  
111 and is deemed a high school graduate. If the district school  
112 board or school has implemented a program that requires the  
113 completion of a vocational course or program, such student may  
114 be required to complete the requirement before he or she is  
115 deemed a high school graduate even if the FCAT and GED  
116 requirements have been met.

19-01662A-09

20092232

117       (7) TRANSCRIPTS.—A student who is enrolled in the program,  
118 and his or her parent or guardian, must be informed that the  
119 student's transcript will indicate that he or she chose an  
120 alternative graduation route. The transcript must identify only  
121 the actual credits earned, successful completion of the FCAT  
122 requirement, and the date on which the diploma was awarded. Such  
123 information must be provided to the student and his or her  
124 parent or guardian along with the notice and information  
125 required in subsection (3).

126       (8) GRADUATION RATE.—The Department of Education shall  
127 include the program in its calculation of the high school  
128 graduation rate.

129       Section 3. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.