

1 A bill to be entitled
 2 An act relating to high school graduation; creating s.
 3 1003.452, F.S.; establishing the Florida National Guard
 4 Youth Challenge Program for the purpose of training and
 5 mentoring certain high school dropouts; requiring that the
 6 Clay County School District, the Department of Juvenile
 7 Justice, the Department of Children and Family Services,
 8 and the Florida National Guard jointly administer the
 9 program; providing for the program to be located at Camp
 10 Blanding Military Reservation; requiring that certain core
 11 academic courses be taught; requiring that the program
 12 include occupational or technical studies and physical
 13 training or applied health studies; requiring that
 14 students be prepared to assume leadership roles and
 15 demonstrate the principles of followership; requiring that
 16 each student volunteer to benefit his or her community and
 17 work as an unpaid intern or paid employee in order to
 18 successfully complete the program; providing for a
 19 residential and postresidential component of the program;
 20 providing for mentorship; requiring that students pass all
 21 sections of the General Education Development test and
 22 both parts of the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test;
 23 providing for funding the program; creating s. 1003.4282,
 24 F.S.; establishing the general education development exit
 25 option for the purpose of providing an alternative route
 26 to receiving a standard high school diploma for students
 27 who are enrolled in the Florida National Guard Youth
 28 Challenge Program or programs offered by or under contract

29 with the Department of Juvenile Justice and approved by
 30 the Department of Education; specifying eligibility
 31 requirements for student participation; providing certain
 32 exemptions and requirements for successful completion of
 33 the GED exit option; requiring that a student's transcript
 34 identify certain information regarding the program;
 35 requiring that the Department of Education include the
 36 program in its calculation of the high school graduation
 37 rate; amending s. 1003.435, F.S.; providing that the
 38 Department of Education may authorize a school district to
 39 award high school equivalency diplomas; amending s.
 40 1008.34, F.S.; revising provisions relating to the student
 41 assessment data used in determining school grades;
 42 providing that a school may earn additional points toward
 43 its grade if a significant percentage of the school's
 44 students are earning high school equivalency diplomas in
 45 lieu of standard diplomas; providing an effective date.

46
 47 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

48
 49 Section 1. Section 1003.452, Florida Statutes, is created
 50 to read:

51 1003.452 The Florida National Guard Youth Challenge
 52 Program.—

53 (1) PURPOSE.—The Florida National Guard Youth Challenge
 54 Program is created as a community-based program for the purpose
 55 of leading, training, and mentoring at-risk youths to become
 56 productive citizens in the future.

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57 (2) ADMINISTRATION.—The program shall be jointly
58 administered on a statewide basis by the Clay County School
59 District, the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Department of
60 Children and Family Services, and the Florida National Guard.
61 The program facilities shall be located at Camp Blanding
62 Military Reservation.

63 (3) ELIGIBILITY.—High school dropouts who are between the
64 ages of 16 years and 19 years, who have not been convicted of a
65 felony, and who are drug free are eligible to participate in the
66 program.

67 (4) PROGRAM DURATION.—

68 (a) The program shall consist of at least a 22-week
69 residential component during which each student must raise his
70 or her mathematics, science, and reading scores.

71 (b) After the residential component of the program, each
72 student shall be assigned a case manager and a highly trained
73 mentor for a period of at least 12 months.

74 (5) CORE ACADEMICS.—Each core academic course shall be
75 taught in a traditional classroom setting by computer-assisted
76 instructors or shall be taught virtually. The core academic
77 courses must include, at a minimum:

78 (a) Mathematics;

79 (b) Communications;

80 (c) Science;

81 (d) Social studies; and

82 (e) Literature.

83 (6) OCCUPATIONAL OR TECHNICAL STUDIES.—The program must
84 also include occupational or technical studies taught in

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85 cooperation with a technical training center or college that
86 awards occupational or technical certificates.

87 (7) PHYSICAL TRAINING OR APPLIED HEALTH STUDIES.—The
88 program must also include physical training or applied health
89 studies.

90 (8) LEADERSHIP ROLES.—Students shall be prepared to assume
91 leadership roles and demonstrate the principles of good
92 followership and the value of collaborative effort.

93 (9) VOLUNTEERISM.—In addition to the program's academic
94 requirements, each student shall be required to volunteer his or
95 her service for the benefit of the student's community.

96 (10) INTERNSHIPS OR EMPLOYMENT.—Each student must also
97 successfully work as an unpaid intern or paid worker during the
98 12-month, postresidential component of the program in order to
99 successfully complete the program.

100 (11) MENTORSHIP.—Each student must be paired with an
101 individual who, through his or her accomplishments, rank, or
102 social posture, serves as a positive role model and mentor who
103 will help guide the student on a successful path to productivity
104 and social assimilation.

105 (12) TESTING REQUIREMENTS.—Students must also pass all
106 five sections of the General Education Development (GED) test
107 and pass both parts of the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test
108 (FCAT).

109 (13) FUNDING.—The Department of Defense, through a
110 cooperative agreement with the National Guard Bureau and the
111 Florida National Guard, and in conjunction with the Department
112 of Juvenile Justice and the Department of Children and Family

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113 Services, shall provide for the costs associated with the
114 program, including student housing, food, and clothing. The Clay
115 County School District shall fund the instructional component of
116 the program through funds provided in the Florida Education
117 Finance Program.

118 Section 2. Section 1003.4282, Florida statutes, is created
119 to read:

120 1003.4282 General education development exit option.—

121 (1) GENERAL EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT EXIT OPTION.—The general
122 education development (GED) exit option is a graduation strategy
123 for students who are enrolled in the Florida National Guard
124 Youth Challenge Program created in s. 1003.452 or programs
125 offered by or under contract with the Department of Juvenile
126 Justice and approved by the Department of Education.

127 (a) Eligibility.—To be eligible to participate in the GED
128 exit option, a student must be enrolled in the Florida National
129 Guard Youth Challenge Program or a selected program offered by
130 or under contract with the Department of Juvenile Justice and
131 approved by the Department of Education and must meet the
132 following criteria:

133 1. Be enrolled in courses that meet high school graduation
134 requirements.

135 2. Have been a drop-out student or currently be in the
136 custody of the Department of Juvenile Justice.

137 3. Have earned acceptable scores on the official GED
138 practice test administered under the student-testing conditions
139 approved by the school district.

140 4. Have a student cumulative record that indicates that

141 the GED exit option is the most appropriate educational program
142 for the student.

143 (b) Exemption and requirements.-

144 1. A student who participates in the GED exit option shall
145 be exempt from the minimum graduation requirements prescribed
146 for the standard high school diploma, including the grade point
147 average and credit requirements. For exceptional education
148 students, this exemption shall be included in the individual
149 education plan.

150 2. Upon entering the GED exit option, a student who has
151 not previously met the requirements for promotion to grade 10
152 shall be promoted to grade 10 to enable the student to take the
153 grade 10 FCAT.

154 3. A student who does not meet the requirements for high
155 school graduation in grade 12 and who chooses to return for a
156 13th year of school in order to participate in the GED exit
157 option is not required to continue classes upon meeting the GED
158 exit option requirements for graduation. After completing the
159 requirements of the GED exit option, a student shall be
160 considered a high school graduate. If the school district or
161 school to which the student returns for a 13th year has
162 implemented a program that requires a vocational component for
163 graduation, the student may be required to complete this
164 requirement in addition to the GED exit option requirements in
165 order to be considered a high school graduate.

166 (c) Successful completion.-

167 1. To successfully complete the GED exit option and
168 receive a standard high school diploma, a student must pass the

169 GED test and all sections of the grade 10 FCAT. A student must
 170 also complete any vocational components included in an approved
 171 school program.

172 2. A student who participates in the GED exit option may
 173 not graduate before his or her cohort group.

174 (d) Transcripts.—The transcript shall identify only the
 175 actual credits earned, the successful completion of the FCAT
 176 requirements, and the date on which the diploma is awarded.

177 (2) GRADUATION RATE.—A student who successfully completes
 178 the GED exit option and receives a standard high school diploma
 179 shall be included in the graduation rate calculated by the
 180 Department of Education.

181 Section 3. Subsection (2) of section 1003.435, Florida
 182 Statutes, is amended to read:

183 1003.435 High school equivalency diploma program.—

184 (2) The department may award high school equivalency
 185 diplomas or authorize a school district to award high school
 186 equivalency diplomas to candidates who meet the performance
 187 standards prescribed by the State Board of Education.

188 Section 4. Paragraph (c) of subsection (3) of section
 189 1008.34, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

190 1008.34 School grading system; school report cards;
 191 district grade.—

192 (3) DESIGNATION OF SCHOOL GRADES.—

193 (c) Student assessment data used in determining school
 194 grades shall include:

195 1. The aggregate scores of all eligible students enrolled
 196 in the school who have been assessed on the FCAT.

197 2. The aggregate scores of all eligible students enrolled
198 in the school who have been assessed on the FCAT and who have
199 scored at or in the lowest 25th percentile of students in the
200 school in reading, mathematics, or writing, unless these
201 students are exhibiting satisfactory performance.

202 3. Effective with the 2005-2006 school year, the
203 achievement scores and learning gains of eligible students
204 attending alternative schools that provide dropout prevention
205 and academic intervention services pursuant to s. 1003.53. The
206 term "eligible students" in this subparagraph does not include
207 students attending an alternative school who are subject to
208 district school board policies for expulsion for repeated or
209 serious offenses, who are in dropout retrieval programs serving
210 students who have officially been designated as dropouts, or who
211 are in programs operated or contracted by the Department of
212 Juvenile Justice. The student performance data for eligible
213 students identified in this subparagraph shall be included in
214 the calculation of the home school's grade. As used in this
215 section and s. 1008.341, the term "home school" means the school
216 to which the student would be assigned if the student were not
217 assigned to an alternative school. If an alternative school
218 chooses to be graded under this section, student performance
219 data for eligible students identified in this subparagraph shall
220 not be included in the home school's grade but shall be included
221 only in the calculation of the alternative school's grade. A
222 school district that fails to assign the FCAT scores of each of
223 its students to his or her home school or to the alternative
224 school that receives a grade shall forfeit Florida School

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225 Recognition Program funds for 1 fiscal year. School districts
226 must require collaboration between the home school and the
227 alternative school in order to promote student success. This
228 collaboration must include an annual discussion between the
229 principal of the alternative school and the principal of each
230 student's home school concerning the most appropriate school
231 assignment of the student.

232 4. Beginning with the 2009-2010 school year for schools
233 comprised of high school grades 9, 10, 11, and 12, or grades 10,
234 11, and 12, the data listed in subparagraphs 1.-3. and the
235 following data as the Department of Education determines such
236 data are valid and available:

237 a. The high school graduation rate of the school as
238 calculated by the Department of Education;

239 b. The participation rate of all eligible students
240 enrolled in the school and enrolled in College Board Advanced
241 Placement courses; International Baccalaureate courses; dual
242 enrollment courses; Advanced International Certificate of
243 Education courses; and courses or sequence of courses leading to
244 industry certification, as determined by the Agency for
245 Workforce Innovation under s. 1003.492(2) in a career and
246 professional academy, as described in s. 1003.493;

247 c. The aggregate scores of all eligible students enrolled
248 in the school in College Board Advanced Placement courses,
249 International Baccalaureate courses, and Advanced International
250 Certificate of Education courses;

251 d. Earning of college credit by all eligible students
252 enrolled in the school in dual enrollment programs under s.

253 1007.271;

254 e. Earning of an industry certification, as determined by
 255 the Agency for Workforce Innovation under s. 1003.492(2) in a
 256 career and professional academy, as described in s. 1003.493;

257 f. The aggregate scores of all eligible students enrolled
 258 in the school in reading, mathematics, and other subjects as
 259 measured by the SAT, the ACT, and the common placement test for
 260 postsecondary readiness;

261 g. The high school graduation rate of all eligible at-risk
 262 students enrolled in the school who scored at Level 2 or lower
 263 on the grade 8 FCAT Reading and Mathematics examinations;

264 h. The performance of the school's students on statewide
 265 standardized end-of-course assessments administered under s.
 266 1008.22; and

267 i. The growth or decline in the data components listed in
 268 sub-subparagraphs a.-h. from year to year.

269 j. Beginning in the 2010-2011 school year, a school may
 270 earn additional points toward its grade if a significant
 271 percentage of the school's students are earning high school
 272 equivalency diplomas pursuant to ss. 1003.435 and 1003.4282 in
 273 lieu of standard diplomas pursuant to s. 1003.43.

274
 275 The State Board of Education shall adopt appropriate criteria
 276 for each school grade. The criteria must also give added weight
 277 to student achievement in reading. Schools designated with a
 278 grade of "C," making satisfactory progress, shall be required to
 279 demonstrate that adequate progress has been made by students in
 280 the school who are in the lowest 25th percentile in reading,

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281 mathematics, or writing on the FCAT, unless these students are
282 exhibiting satisfactory performance. Beginning with the 2009-
283 2010 school year for schools comprised of high school grades 9,
284 10, 11, and 12, or grades 10, 11, and 12, the criteria for
285 school grades must also give added weight to the graduation rate
286 of all eligible at-risk students, as defined in this paragraph.
287 Beginning in the 2009-2010 school year, in order for a high
288 school to be designated as having a grade of "A," making
289 excellent progress, the school must demonstrate that at-risk
290 students, as defined in this paragraph, in the school are making
291 adequate progress.

292 Section 5. This act shall take effect July 2, 2010.