

By Senator Wise

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

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30 Florida National Guard Youth Challenge Program or
31 programs offered by or under contract with the
32 Department of Juvenile Justice and approved by the
33 Department of Education; specifying eligibility
34 requirements for student participation; providing
35 certain exemptions and requirements for successful
36 completion of the GED exit option; requiring that a
37 student's transcript identify certain information
38 regarding the program; requiring that the Department
39 of Education include the program in its calculation of
40 the high school graduation rate; amending s. 1003.435,
41 F.S.; providing that the Department of Education may
42 authorize a school district to award high school
43 equivalency diplomas; amending s. 1008.34, F.S.;

44 revising provisions relating to the student assessment
45 data used in determining school grades; providing that
46 a school may earn additional points toward its grade
47 if a significant percentage of the school's students
48 are earning high school equivalency diplomas in lieu
49 of standard diplomas; providing an effective date.

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

52
53 Section 1. Section 1003.452, Florida Statutes, is created
54 to read:

55 1003.452 The Florida National Guard Youth Challenge
56 Program.—

57 (1) PURPOSE.—The Florida National Guard Youth Challenge
58 Program is created as a community-based program for the purpose

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59 of leading, training, and mentoring at-risk youths to become
60 productive citizens in the future.

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

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

71 (4) PROGRAM DURATION.—

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

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

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

82 (a) Mathematics;

83 (b) Communications;

84 (c) Science;

85 (d) Social studies; and

86 (e) Literature.

87 (6) OCCUPATIONAL OR TECHNICAL STUDIES.—The program must

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88 also include occupational or technical studies taught in
89 cooperation with a technical training center or college that
90 awards occupational or technical certificates.

91 (7) PHYSICAL TRAINING OR APPLIED HEALTH STUDIES.—The
92 program must also include physical training or applied health
93 studies.

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

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

100 (10) INTERNSHIPS OR EMPLOYMENT.—Each student must also
101 successfully work as an unpaid intern or paid worker during the
102 12-month, postresidential component of the program in order to
103 successfully complete the program.

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

109 (12) TESTING REQUIREMENTS.—Students must also pass all five
110 sections of the General Education Development (GED) test and
111 pass both parts of the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test
112 (FCAT).

113 (13) FUNDING.—The Department of Defense, through a
114 cooperative agreement with the National Guard Bureau and the
115 Florida National Guard, and in conjunction with the Department
116 of Juvenile Justice and the Department of Children and Family

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

122 Section 2. Section 1003.4282, Florida statutes, is created
123 to read:

124 1003.4282 General education development exit option.-

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

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

137 1. Be enrolled in courses that meet high school graduation
138 requirements.

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

141 3. Have earned acceptable scores on the official GED
142 practice test administered under the student-testing conditions
143 approved by the school district.

144 4. Have a student cumulative record that indicates that the
145 GED exit option is the most appropriate educational program for

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146 the student.

147 (b) Exemption and requirements.-

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

154 2. Upon entering the GED exit option, a student who has not
155 previously met the requirements for promotion to grade 10 shall
156 be promoted to grade 10 to enable the student to take the grade
157 10 FCAT.

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

170 (c) Successful completion.-

171 1. To successfully complete the GED exit option and receive
172 a standard high school diploma, a student must pass the GED test
173 and all sections of the grade 10 FCAT. A student must also
174 complete any vocational components included in an approved

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175 school program.

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

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

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

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

187 1003.435 High school equivalency diploma program.—

188 (2) The department may award high school equivalency
189 diplomas or authorize a school district to award high school
190 equivalency diplomas to candidates who meet the performance
191 standards prescribed by the State Board of Education.

192 Section 4. Paragraph (c) of subsection (3) of section
193 1008.34, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

194 1008.34 School grading system; school report cards;
195 district grade.—

196 (3) DESIGNATION OF SCHOOL GRADES.—

197 (c) Student assessment data used in determining school
198 grades shall include:

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

201 2. The aggregate scores of all eligible students enrolled
202 in the school who have been assessed on the FCAT and who have
203 scored at or in the lowest 25th percentile of students in the

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204 school in reading, mathematics, or writing, unless these
205 students are exhibiting satisfactory performance.

206 3. Effective with the 2005-2006 school year, the
207 achievement scores and learning gains of eligible students
208 attending alternative schools that provide dropout prevention
209 and academic intervention services pursuant to s. 1003.53. The
210 term "eligible students" in this subparagraph does not include
211 students attending an alternative school who are subject to
212 district school board policies for expulsion for repeated or
213 serious offenses, who are in dropout retrieval programs serving
214 students who have officially been designated as dropouts, or who
215 are in programs operated or contracted by the Department of
216 Juvenile Justice. The student performance data for eligible
217 students identified in this subparagraph shall be included in
218 the calculation of the home school's grade. As used in this
219 section and s. 1008.341, the term "home school" means the school
220 to which the student would be assigned if the student were not
221 assigned to an alternative school. If an alternative school
222 chooses to be graded under this section, student performance
223 data for eligible students identified in this subparagraph shall
224 not be included in the home school's grade but shall be included
225 only in the calculation of the alternative school's grade. A
226 school district that fails to assign the FCAT scores of each of
227 its students to his or her home school or to the alternative
228 school that receives a grade shall forfeit Florida School
229 Recognition Program funds for 1 fiscal year. School districts
230 must require collaboration between the home school and the
231 alternative school in order to promote student success. This
232 collaboration must include an annual discussion between the

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233 principal of the alternative school and the principal of each
234 student's home school concerning the most appropriate school
235 assignment of the student.

236 4. Beginning with the 2009-2010 school year for schools
237 comprised of high school grades 9, 10, 11, and 12, or grades 10,
238 11, and 12, the data listed in subparagraphs 1.-3. and the
239 following data as the Department of Education determines such
240 data are valid and available:

241 a. The high school graduation rate of the school as
242 calculated by the Department of Education;

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

251 c. The aggregate scores of all eligible students enrolled
252 in the school in College Board Advanced Placement courses,
253 International Baccalaureate courses, and Advanced International
254 Certificate of Education courses;

255 d. Earning of college credit by all eligible students
256 enrolled in the school in dual enrollment programs under s.
257 1007.271;

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

261 f. The aggregate scores of all eligible students enrolled

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262 in the school in reading, mathematics, and other subjects as
263 measured by the SAT, the ACT, and the common placement test for
264 postsecondary readiness;

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

268 h. The performance of the school's students on statewide
269 standardized end-of-course assessments administered under s.
270 1008.22; and

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

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

278
279 The State Board of Education shall adopt appropriate criteria
280 for each school grade. The criteria must also give added weight
281 to student achievement in reading. Schools designated with a
282 grade of "C," making satisfactory progress, shall be required to
283 demonstrate that adequate progress has been made by students in
284 the school who are in the lowest 25th percentile in reading,
285 mathematics, or writing on the FCAT, unless these students are
286 exhibiting satisfactory performance. Beginning with the 2009-
287 2010 school year for schools comprised of high school grades 9,
288 10, 11, and 12, or grades 10, 11, and 12, the criteria for
289 school grades must also give added weight to the graduation rate
290 of all eligible at-risk students, as defined in this paragraph.

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291 Beginning in the 2009-2010 school year, in order for a high
292 school to be designated as having a grade of "A," making
293 excellent progress, the school must demonstrate that at-risk
294 students, as defined in this paragraph, in the school are making
295 adequate progress.

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