

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Higher Education Committee

BILL: SB 1194

INTRODUCER: Senator Oelrich

SUBJECT: Postsecondary Education

DATE: March 11, 2011

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Harkey	Matthews	HE	Pre-meeting
2.			CF	
3.			BC	
4.				
5.				
6.				

I. Summary:

This bill revises statutes to remove obsolete references to the College Level Academic Skills Test, to make college readiness testing uniform and to codify the Articulation Coordinating Committee. The bill removes a barrier to postsecondary education for individuals with intellectual disabilities by allowing them to use reasonable substitutions for admission to postsecondary programs. The bill authorizes the Department of Education (DOE) to certify community service hours for home education students' Bright Futures Scholarship requirements.

This bill amends ss. 467.009, 1004.04, 1004.68, 1007.01, 1007.25, 1007.264, 1007.265, 1008.30, 1008.345, 1008.38, 1009.534, and 1012.56, Florida Statutes.

II. Present Situation:

College Level Skills

Public postsecondary institutions are currently following the requirements established in s. 1007.25, F.S., relating to the mastery of college-level communication and computation skills. The College-Level Academic Skills Test (CLAST) was administered from October 1982 to June 2009 to students seeking associate in arts (AA), bachelor of arts (BA), or bachelor of science (BS) degrees from a Florida public college or university.¹

Articulation

The Articulation Coordinating Committee (ACC) serves as an advisory board to the State Board of Education (SBE), Board of Governors and Higher Education Coordinating Council, on

¹ Department of Education, <http://www.fldoe.org/asp/clast/>

postsecondary transition issues. The ACC is no longer codified in law; it is established in SBE Rule 6A-10.024.²

Students with Intellectual Disabilities

The federal Higher Education Opportunity Act reauthorization³ creates incentives for states to provide transition to postsecondary education programs for students with intellectual disabilities—those with mental retardation or a cognitive impairment characterized by significant limitation in intellectual and cognitive functioning who are or were provided a free and appropriate public education under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Three Florida institutions—the University of South Florida, St. Petersburg (USFSP); University of North Florida (UNF); and Lynn University have received a grant, funded for \$421,000 a year for 5 years, to form a consortium⁴ to oversee the following grant activities:

- Expansion of the quality and depth of the current transition programs on the campuses of USFSP, UNF, and Lynn University;
- Support for other existing transition programs for students with intellectual disabilities at institutions of higher education across the State of Florida; and
- Expansion of the transition programs in these institutions across Florida.

While students with disabilities are eligible for reasonable substitutions for requirements for graduation, admission to postsecondary program, or entry into the upper division of a postsecondary program, ss. 1007.264 and 21007.265, F.S., specifically excludes students who have been documented as having intellectual disabilities. A repeal of these prohibitions may be necessary to allow certain students with intellectual disabilities to work toward a postsecondary degree or certificate.

Common Placement Testing

Minimum college placement test scores are currently established in SBE Rule 6A-10.0315. Florida College System institutions have flexibility to establish higher college placement scores so a student could be eligible for college level coursework at one college with a certain score, but not at another college. This inconsistency may cause unintended inequities for students seeking a degree. Establishing college placement scores statewide will enable students to transfer test scores from college to college and be eligible for the same course placement.

According to the DOE, there is no statewide consistency in remediation policies. Remediation courses have been approved for high schools on the basis of the highest level of developmental education (i.e., remediation) offered at Florida College System institutions. The implementation of the high school remediation courses is voluntary and student enrollment is also voluntary. For high schools offering the remediation courses, students who enroll and pass a remediation course with a grade of “C” or better and pass the Basic Skills Exit Test will be guaranteed entry to college credit coursework without additional testing or remediation on admission to a Florida college. Colleges may offer students alternative remediation opportunities and retests.

² Section 3, ch. 2002-387, L.O.F., transferred the ACC to the State Board of Education.

³ P.L.110-315

⁴ The Florida Consortium on Postsecondary Education Transition Programs and Intellectual Disabilities

Students may accumulate more than 12 college credit hours without demonstrating readiness in mathematics, reading, or writing, provided they are co-enrolled in developmental education. The Florida College System has recently developed statewide developmental education competencies and established common course numbers that will be implemented in fall 2011. Current law does not fully reflect all provisions to implement the postsecondary readiness testing.

Bright Futures Community Service Hours

Home school students are required to complete community service hours to be eligible for a Florida Academic Scholars award. Currently, the DOE, Office of Student Financial Assistance certifies home education students' community service hours for the purpose of Bright Futures Scholarship initial eligibility. However, current law does not explicitly give the department authority to approve community service hours for home education students.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

College Level Skills

The bill removes obsolete references to the College Level Academic Skills Test (CLAST) in ss. 467.009, 1004.04, 1004.68, 1007.25, 1008.29, 1008.345, 1008.38, and 1012.516 F.S. The CLAST is no longer administered for these purposes.

Articulation

The Articulation Coordinating Committee (ACC) would be statutorily authorized as an advisory body that would report to the Commissioner of Education. The ACC would propose policies to coordinate among the education sectors to promote smooth and efficient student educational transitions.

Students with Intellectual Disabilities

The bill amends ss. 1007.264 and 1007.265, F.S., to provide access to postsecondary education for individuals with intellectual disabilities by allowing reasonable substitutions for entry, admission to a program of study, and graduation requirements, as is currently provided to other students with disabilities. The proposed changes will align Florida statutes with the provisions of the Higher Education Opportunities Act and facilitate activities to help them prepare for gainful employment.

Common Placement Testing

The bill authorizes the DOE the authority to establish statewide consistency in the implementation of the common placement requirements. The bill requires the State Board of Education to establish by rule the test scores a student must achieve to demonstrate readiness for postsecondary work, provisions for remediation and retesting policies.

By requiring colleges to inform students of the possible implications of amassing college credit prior to successful completion of developmental education, students will have the necessary information to make informed decisions when registering for courses.

By establishing developmental education competencies in SBE rule, there will be consistency in the delivery of developmental education in the Florida College System, as well as high schools. High school teachers would have access to the competencies Florida faculty have identified as

necessary for success in entry level college credit courses. Establishing the competencies in rule will result in better informed instruction at the secondary level and better prepared students coming to the Florida colleges.

Bright Futures Community Service Hours

The bill requires the DOE to approve community service hours for home education students to be eligible for the Bright Futures Florida Academic Scholars award.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

Currently, the DOE reimburses Florida Colleges for common placement tests provided to high school students who are evaluated for college readiness. To the extent this bill increases the number of high school students taking such tests, the costs for reimbursement may increase. The specific impact cannot be determined at this time.

Colleges may incur additional expenses relating to the notice requirement for students who accumulate 12 college credit hours with developmental education coursework remaining. The exact cost is indeterminate, but likely to be insignificant.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Additional Information:

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.

This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.
