

By Senator Fasano

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to disability awareness; amending s.
3 1003.4205, F.S.; requiring that district school boards
4 provide disability history and awareness instruction
5 in all K-12 public schools; requiring certification of
6 individuals delivering the instruction; requiring that
7 the Governor's Commission on Disabilities initiate a
8 study on disability awareness training to be conducted
9 by a private nonprofit entity; providing requirements
10 for the study and submission of findings to the
11 commission; requiring that the commission oversee a
12 statewide disability awareness training provider and
13 certification program; providing program components to
14 include requirements for approval of providers and
15 certification of individuals to provide disability
16 awareness instruction; providing for the payment of
17 certain fees; requiring that the commission promote
18 disability awareness training in all public entities
19 in the state; requiring rulemaking; providing an
20 effective date.

21
22 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

23
24 Section 1. Section 1003.4205, Florida Statutes, is amended
25 to read:

26 1003.4205 Disability history and awareness instruction.—

27 (1) Each district school board shall ~~may~~ provide disability
28 history and awareness instruction in all K-12 public schools in
29 the district during the first 2 weeks in October each year. The

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30 district school board shall designate these 2 weeks as
31 "Disability History and Awareness Weeks."

32 (2) (a) During this 2-week period, students shall ~~may~~ be
33 provided intensive instruction to expand their knowledge,
34 understanding, and awareness of individuals with disabilities,
35 the history of disability, and the disability rights movement.
36 Disability history must ~~may~~ include the events and timelines of
37 the development and evolution of services to, and the civil
38 rights of, individuals with disabilities. Disability history
39 must ~~may~~ also include the contributions of specific individuals
40 with disabilities, including the contributions of acknowledged
41 national leaders.

42 (b) The instruction shall ~~may~~ be integrated into the
43 existing school curriculum in ways including, but not limited
44 to, supplementing lesson plans, holding school assemblies, or
45 providing other school-related activities. Beginning with the
46 2012-2013 school year, the instruction shall ~~may~~ be delivered by
47 individuals who are certified to provide disability awareness
48 instruction ~~qualified school personnel or by knowledgeable guest~~
49 ~~speakers~~, with a particular focus on including individuals with
50 disabilities as instructors.

51 (3) The goals of disability history and awareness
52 instruction include:

53 (a) Better treatment for individuals with disabilities,
54 especially for youth in school, and increased attention to
55 preventing the bullying or harassment of students with
56 disabilities.

57 (b) Encouragement to individuals with disabilities to
58 develop increased self-esteem, resulting in more individuals

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59 with disabilities gaining pride in being an individual with a
60 disability, obtaining postsecondary education, entering the
61 workforce, and contributing to their communities.

62 (c) Reaffirmation of the local, state, and federal
63 commitment to the full inclusion in society of, and the equal
64 opportunity for, all individuals with disabilities.

65 Section 2. Disability awareness training standards,
66 protocol, and curriculum; certification.-

67 (1) The Governor's Commission on Disabilities shall
68 initiate a study on disability awareness training beginning July
69 1, 2011, to be conducted by a private nonprofit entity that
70 promotes disability awareness in the classroom and the community
71 at large and provides disability awareness training. State
72 agencies and programs shall cooperate with the private nonprofit
73 entity as it conducts the study to establish disability
74 awareness training standards, protocol, and curriculum. The
75 study shall:

76 (a) Evaluate and recommend standards and criteria necessary
77 for authorizing providers to conduct disability awareness
78 training.

79 (b) Establish guidelines and curriculum for a certification
80 program for disability awareness instructors.

81 (c) Provide a summary of the current trends in disability
82 awareness training.

83
84 The private nonprofit entity conducting the study shall submit
85 its findings to the commission by July 1, 2012.

86 (2) Beginning July 1, 2012, the commission shall oversee a
87 statewide disability awareness training provider and

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88 certification program that must include, but need not be limited
89 to, the following components:

90 (a) Disability awareness training providers must meet all
91 criteria established and published by the commission to be
92 approved to conduct continuing education courses to certify
93 individuals as disability awareness training instructors. A
94 provider may charge a service fee for the continuing education
95 courses in an amount that is sufficient to cover its costs in
96 providing the courses.

97 (b) To be approved by the commission, a disability
98 awareness training provider must have a minimum of 5 years of
99 experience working in the field of disabilities, submit an
100 application to the commission to provide disability awareness
101 training, pay an application or renewal fee set by the
102 commission, and submit an annual report to the commission
103 documenting the provider's training activities. An approved
104 provider shall be required to renew its approved status with the
105 commission every 3 years.

106 (c) Approved providers must use the commission's approved
107 training methods and curriculum materials for conducting
108 continuing education courses.

109 (d) A list of providers approved to offer disability
110 awareness training for certification shall be published and made
111 available to the public by the commission.

112 (e) Individuals seeking certification to provide disability
113 awareness instruction shall participate in continuing education
114 courses conducted by commission-approved providers. Individuals
115 who successfully complete the required disability awareness
116 continuing education courses shall be certified by the

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117 commission to provide disability awareness instruction in the
118 state and shall pay a certification or certification renewal fee
119 set by the commission. Certified individuals shall be required
120 to renew certification with the commission every 3 years.

121 (3) The commission shall promote the inclusion in society
122 of, and the equal opportunity for, individuals with disabilities
123 through disability awareness training in all public entities in
124 the state. Activities that provide instruction to expand
125 knowledge, understanding, and awareness of individuals with
126 disabilities, the history of disability, and the disability
127 rights movement shall be encouraged.

128 (4) The commission shall adopt rules pursuant to ss.
129 120.536(1) and 120.54, Florida Statutes, to administer the
130 provisions of this section.

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