

By Senator Legg

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1                                   A bill to be entitled  
2       An act relating to student choice; amending s.  
3       1002.31, F.S.; authorizing a parent to enroll his or  
4       her child in and transport his or her child to any  
5       public school that has not reached capacity, including  
6       charter schools, in any school district in this state;  
7       requiring the school to accept and report the student  
8       for funding purposes; defining the term "capacity";  
9       amending s. 1002.33, F.S.; clarifying requirements for  
10      the creation of a virtual charter school; revising  
11      required contents of charter school applications;  
12      conforming provisions regarding the appeal process for  
13      denial of a high-performing charter school  
14      application; revising charter provisions relating to  
15      long-term charters and termination of a charter;  
16      revising conditions for termination of a charter;  
17      requiring a charter school's governing board to  
18      appoint a representative to provide information and  
19      assistance to parents; requiring the governing board  
20      to hold a certain number of meets that are noticed,  
21      open, and accessible to the public per school year;  
22      revising the participants in and activities of charter  
23      school cooperatives; providing requirements for  
24      payment to charter schools; requiring the Department  
25      of Education to include a standard application form  
26      when providing information to the public on how to  
27      form, operate, and enroll in a charter school;  
28      amending ss. 1002.331 and 1002.37, F.S.; conforming  
29      cross-references and provisions to changes made by the

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30 act; amending s. 1002.45, F.S.; revising conditions  
31 for termination of a virtual instruction provider's  
32 contract; conforming a cross-reference; repealing s.  
33 1002.455, F.S., relating to student eligibility for K-  
34 12 virtual instruction; amending s. 1003.498, F.S.;  
35 conforming a cross-reference; creating s. 1003.5711,  
36 F.S.; providing that certain students who are deemed  
37 eligible for hospitalized program services are  
38 considered students with a disability; authorizing an  
39 individual education plan to be modified to  
40 accommodate the services; requiring the student to  
41 continue to receive educational instruction; requiring  
42 a school district to provide the student with a  
43 certified teacher under certain circumstances;  
44 requiring the department to transfer funds for the  
45 student; creating s. 1004.6491, F.S.; establishing the  
46 Florida Charter School Innovation Institute;  
47 specifying requirements for the institute; requiring  
48 an annual report to the Governor and the Legislature;  
49 requiring a report on the institute's annual financial  
50 audit to the Auditor General, the Board of Governors  
51 of the State University System, and the State Board of  
52 Education; amending s. 1011.62, F.S.; revising  
53 eligibility requirements for charter school capital  
54 outlay funding; providing an effective date.

55  
56 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

57  
58 Section 1. Subsection (6) is added to section 1002.31,

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59 Florida Statutes, to read:

60 1002.31 Controlled open enrollment; public school parental  
61 choice.—

62 (6) Notwithstanding any law, a parent may choose to enroll  
63 his or her child in, and transport his or her child to, any  
64 public school, including a charter school, which has not reached  
65 capacity in any school district in this state.

66 (a) The school district shall accept the student and report  
67 the student for purposes of the district's funding pursuant to  
68 the Florida Education Finance Program.

69 (b) As used in this subsection, the term "capacity" means a  
70 school in which the capital outlay FTE enrollment exceeds 95  
71 percent of the space and occupant design capacity of its  
72 nonrelocatable facilities. However, if a school's initial design  
73 incorporated relocatable or modular instructional space, the  
74 term means a school in which the capital outlay FTE enrollment  
75 exceeds 95 percent of the space and occupant design capacity of  
76 its core facilities.

77 Section 2. Subsection (1), paragraphs (a), (b), and (c) of  
78 subsection (6), subsection (7), paragraphs (e), (f), and (g) of  
79 subsection (8), paragraphs (g), (n), and (p) of subsection (9),  
80 subsection (13), paragraph (e) of subsection (17), and paragraph  
81 (a) of subsection (21) of section 1002.33, Florida Statutes, are  
82 amended, and paragraphs (h) and (i) are added to subsection (8)  
83 of that section, to read:

84 1002.33 Charter schools.—

85 (1) AUTHORIZATION.—Charter schools are ~~shall be~~ part of the  
86 state's program of public education. All charter schools in this  
87 state Florida are public schools. A charter school may be formed

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88 by creating a new school or converting an existing public school  
89 to charter status. A charter school may operate a virtual  
90 charter school pursuant to s. 1002.45(1)(d) to provide full-time  
91 online instruction to eligible students, ~~pursuant to s.~~  
92 ~~1002.455,~~ in kindergarten through grade 12. An existing A  
93 charter school that is seeking to become a virtual charter  
94 school must amend its charter or submit a new application  
95 pursuant to subsection (6) to become a virtual charter school. A  
96 virtual charter school is subject to the requirements of this  
97 section; however, a virtual charter school is exempt from  
98 subsections (18) and (19), subparagraphs (20)(a)2., 4., 5., and  
99 7., paragraph (20)(c), and s. 1003.03. A public school may not  
100 use the term charter in its name unless it has been approved  
101 under this section.

102 (6) APPLICATION PROCESS AND REVIEW.—Charter school  
103 applications are subject to the following requirements:

104 (a) A person or entity seeking ~~wishing~~ to open a charter  
105 school shall prepare and submit an application on a model  
106 application form prepared by the Department of Education which:

107 1. Demonstrates how the school will use the guiding  
108 principles and meet the statutorily defined purpose of a charter  
109 school.

110 2. Provides a detailed curriculum plan that illustrates how  
111 students will be provided services to attain the Sunshine State  
112 Standards.

113 3. Contains goals and objectives for improving student  
114 learning and measuring that improvement. These goals and  
115 objectives must indicate how much academic improvement students  
116 are expected to show each year, how success will be evaluated,

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117 and the specific results to be attained through instruction.

118 4. Describes the reading curriculum and differentiated  
119 strategies that will be used for students reading at grade level  
120 or higher and a separate curriculum and strategies for students  
121 who are reading below grade level. A sponsor shall deny an  
122 application ~~a charter~~ if the school does not propose a reading  
123 curriculum that is consistent with effective teaching strategies  
124 that are grounded in scientifically based reading research, but  
125 the sponsor may not require the school to implement any  
126 curriculum adopted by the school district.

127 5. Contains an annual financial plan for each year  
128 requested by the charter for operation of the school for up to 5  
129 years. This plan must contain anticipated fund balances based on  
130 revenue projections, a spending plan based on projected revenues  
131 and expenses, and a description of controls that will safeguard  
132 finances and projected enrollment trends.

133 6. Discloses the name of each applicant, governing board  
134 member, and proposed management company, if any; the name and  
135 sponsor of any charter school operated by such parties; and the  
136 academic and financial history of such charter schools, which  
137 the sponsor shall consider in deciding to approve or deny the  
138 application.

139 ~~7.6.~~ Contains additional information a sponsor may require,  
140 which shall be attached as an addendum to the charter school  
141 application described in this paragraph.

142 ~~8.7.~~ For the establishment of a virtual charter school,  
143 documents that the applicant has contracted with a provider of  
144 virtual instruction services pursuant to s. 1002.45(1)(d).

145 (b) A sponsor shall receive and review all applications for

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146 a charter school using the ~~an~~ evaluation instrument developed by  
147 the Department of Education. A sponsor shall receive and  
148 consider charter school applications received on or before  
149 August 1 of each calendar year for charter schools to be opened  
150 at the beginning of the school district's next school year, or  
151 to be opened at a time agreed to by the applicant and the  
152 sponsor. A sponsor may not refuse to receive a charter school  
153 application submitted before August 1 and may receive an  
154 application submitted later than August 1 if it chooses. In  
155 order to facilitate greater collaboration in the application  
156 process, an applicant may submit a draft charter school  
157 application on or before May 1 with an application fee of \$500.  
158 If a draft application is timely submitted, the sponsor shall  
159 review and provide feedback as to material deficiencies in the  
160 application by July 1. The applicant shall then have until  
161 August 1 to resubmit a revised and final application. The  
162 sponsor may approve the draft application. Except as provided  
163 for a draft application, a sponsor may not charge an applicant  
164 for a charter any fee for the processing or consideration of an  
165 application, and a sponsor may not base its consideration or  
166 approval of a final application upon the promise of future  
167 payment of any kind. Before approving or denying any final  
168 application, the sponsor shall allow the applicant, upon receipt  
169 of written notification, at least 7 calendar days to make  
170 technical or nonsubstantive corrections and clarifications,  
171 including, but not limited to, corrections of grammatical,  
172 typographical, and like errors or missing signatures, if such  
173 errors are identified by the sponsor as cause to deny the final  
174 application.

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175           1. In order to facilitate an accurate budget projection  
176 process, a sponsor shall be held harmless for FTE students who  
177 are not included in the FTE projection due to approval of  
178 charter school applications after the FTE projection deadline.  
179 In a further effort to facilitate an accurate budget projection,  
180 within 15 calendar days after receipt of a charter school  
181 application, a sponsor shall report to the Department of  
182 Education the name of the applicant entity, the proposed charter  
183 school location, and its projected FTE.

184           2. In order to ensure fiscal responsibility, an application  
185 for a charter school shall include a full accounting of expected  
186 assets, a projection of expected sources and amounts of income,  
187 including income derived from projected student enrollments and  
188 from community support, and an expense projection that includes  
189 full accounting of the costs of operation, including start-up  
190 costs.

191           3.a. A sponsor shall by a majority vote approve or deny an  
192 application no later than 60 calendar days after the application  
193 is received, unless the sponsor and the applicant mutually agree  
194 in writing to temporarily postpone the vote to a specific date,  
195 at which time the sponsor shall by a majority vote approve or  
196 deny the application. If the sponsor fails to act on the  
197 application, an applicant may appeal to the State Board of  
198 Education as provided in paragraph (c). If an application is  
199 denied, the sponsor shall, within 10 calendar days after such  
200 denial, articulate in writing the specific reasons, based upon  
201 good cause, supporting its denial of the ~~charter~~ application and  
202 shall provide the letter of denial and supporting documentation  
203 to the applicant and to the Department of Education.

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204           b. An application submitted by a high-performing charter  
205 school identified pursuant to s. 1002.331 may be denied by the  
206 sponsor only if the sponsor demonstrates by clear and convincing  
207 evidence that:

208           (I) The application does not materially comply with the  
209 requirements in paragraph (a);

210           (II) The charter school proposed in the application does  
211 not materially comply with the requirements in paragraphs  
212 (9) (a) - (f);

213           (III) The proposed charter school's educational program  
214 does not substantially replicate that of the applicant or one of  
215 the applicant's high-performing charter schools;

216           (IV) The applicant has made a material misrepresentation or  
217 false statement or concealed an essential or material fact  
218 during the application process; or

219           (V) The proposed charter school's educational program and  
220 financial management practices do not materially comply with the  
221 requirements of this section.

222  
223 Material noncompliance is a failure to follow requirements or a  
224 violation of prohibitions applicable to charter school  
225 applications, which failure is quantitatively or qualitatively  
226 significant either individually or when aggregated with other  
227 noncompliance. An applicant is considered to be replicating a  
228 high-performing charter school if the proposed school is  
229 substantially similar to at least one of the applicant's high-  
230 performing charter schools and the organization or individuals  
231 involved in the establishment and operation of the proposed  
232 school are significantly involved in the operation of replicated



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233 schools.

234 c. If the sponsor denies an application submitted by a  
235 high-performing charter school, the sponsor must, within 10  
236 calendar days after such denial, state in writing the specific  
237 reasons, based upon the criteria in sub-subparagraph b.,  
238 supporting its denial of the application and must provide the  
239 letter of denial and supporting documentation to the applicant  
240 and to the Department of Education. The applicant may appeal the  
241 sponsor's denial of the application ~~directly~~ to the State Board  
242 of Education pursuant to paragraph (c) and must provide the  
243 sponsor with a copy of the appeal ~~sub-subparagraph (c)3.b.~~

244 4. For budget projection purposes, the sponsor shall report  
245 to the Department of Education the approval or denial of an a  
246 ~~charter~~ application within 10 calendar days after such approval  
247 or denial. In the event of approval, the report to the  
248 Department of Education shall include the final projected FTE  
249 for the approved charter school.

250 5. Upon approval of an a ~~charter~~ application, the initial  
251 startup shall commence with the beginning of the public school  
252 calendar for the district in which the charter is granted unless  
253 the sponsor allows a waiver of this subparagraph for good cause.

254 (c)1. An applicant may appeal any denial of that  
255 applicant's application or failure to act on an application to  
256 the State Board of Education within ~~no later than~~ 30 calendar  
257 days after receipt of the sponsor's decision or failure to act  
258 and shall notify the sponsor of its appeal. Any response of the  
259 sponsor shall be submitted to the State Board of Education  
260 within 30 calendar days after notification of the appeal. Upon  
261 receipt of notification from the State Board of Education that a

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262 charter school applicant is filing an appeal, the Commissioner  
263 of Education shall convene a meeting of the Charter School  
264 Appeal Commission to study and make recommendations to the State  
265 Board of Education regarding its pending decision about the  
266 appeal. The commission shall forward its recommendation to the  
267 state board at least 7 calendar days before the date on which  
268 the appeal is to be heard. An appeal regarding the denial of an  
269 application submitted by a high-performing charter school  
270 pursuant to s. 1002.331 shall be conducted by the State Board of  
271 Education in accordance with this paragraph, except that the  
272 commission shall not convene to make recommendations regarding  
273 the appeal. However, the Commissioner of Education shall review  
274 the appeal and make a recommendation to the state board.

275 2. The Charter School Appeal Commission or, in the case of  
276 an appeal regarding an application submitted by a high-  
277 performing charter school, the State Board of Education may  
278 reject an appeal submission for failure to comply with  
279 procedural rules governing the appeals process. The rejection  
280 shall describe the submission errors. The appellant shall have  
281 15 calendar days after notice of rejection in which to resubmit  
282 an appeal that meets the requirements set forth in State Board  
283 of Education rule. An appeal submitted subsequent to such  
284 rejection is considered timely if the original appeal was filed  
285 within 30 calendar days after receipt of notice of the specific  
286 reasons for the sponsor's denial of the ~~charter~~ application.

287 3.a. The State Board of Education shall by majority vote  
288 accept or reject the decision of the sponsor no later than 90  
289 calendar days after an appeal is filed in accordance with State  
290 Board of Education rule. The State Board of Education shall

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291 remand the application to the sponsor with its written decision  
292 that the sponsor approve or deny the application. The sponsor  
293 shall implement the decision of the State Board of Education.  
294 The decision of the State Board of Education is not subject to  
295 the provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act, chapter 120.

296 b. If an appeal concerns an application submitted by a  
297 high-performing charter school identified pursuant to s.  
298 1002.331, the State Board of Education shall determine whether  
299 the sponsor's denial of the application complies with the  
300 requirements in sub-subparagraph (b)3.b. sponsor has shown, by  
301 clear and convincing evidence, that:

302 ~~(I) The application does not materially comply with the~~  
303 ~~requirements in paragraph (a);~~

304 ~~(II) The charter school proposed in the application does~~  
305 ~~not materially comply with the requirements in paragraphs~~  
306 ~~(9)(a)-(f);~~

307 ~~(III) The proposed charter school's educational program~~  
308 ~~does not substantially replicate that of the applicant or one of~~  
309 ~~the applicant's high-performing charter schools;~~

310 ~~(IV) The applicant has made a material misrepresentation or~~  
311 ~~false statement or concealed an essential or material fact~~  
312 ~~during the application process; or~~

313 ~~(V) The proposed charter school's educational program and~~  
314 ~~financial management practices do not materially comply with the~~  
315 ~~requirements of this section.~~

316  
317 The State Board of Education shall approve or reject the  
318 sponsor's denial of an application no later than 90 calendar  
319 days after an appeal is filed in accordance with State Board of

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320 Education rule. The State Board of Education shall remand the  
321 application to the sponsor with its written decision that the  
322 sponsor approve or deny the application. The sponsor shall  
323 implement the decision of the State Board of Education. The  
324 decision of the State Board of Education is not subject to the  
325 Administrative Procedure Act, chapter 120.

326 (7) CHARTER.—The major issues involving the operation of a  
327 charter school shall be considered in advance and written into  
328 the charter. The charter shall be signed by the governing board  
329 of the charter school and the sponsor, following a public  
330 hearing to ensure community input.

331 (a) The charter shall address and criteria for approval of  
332 the charter shall be based on:

333 1. The school's mission, the students to be served, and the  
334 ages and grades to be included.

335 2. The focus of the curriculum, the instructional methods  
336 to be used, any distinctive instructional techniques to be  
337 employed, and identification and acquisition of appropriate  
338 technologies needed to improve educational and administrative  
339 performance which include a means for promoting safe, ethical,  
340 and appropriate uses of technology which comply with legal and  
341 professional standards.

342 a. The charter shall ensure that reading is a primary focus  
343 of the curriculum and that resources are provided to identify  
344 and provide specialized instruction for students who are reading  
345 below grade level. The curriculum and instructional strategies  
346 for reading must be consistent with the Next Generation Sunshine  
347 State Standards and grounded in scientifically based reading  
348 research.

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349           b. In order to provide students with access to diverse  
350 instructional delivery models, to facilitate the integration of  
351 technology within traditional classroom instruction, and to  
352 provide students with the skills they need to compete in the  
353 21st century economy, the Legislature encourages instructional  
354 methods for blended learning courses consisting of both  
355 traditional classroom and online instructional techniques.  
356 Charter schools may implement blended learning courses which  
357 combine traditional classroom instruction and virtual  
358 instruction. Students in a blended learning course must be full-  
359 time students of the charter school and receive the online  
360 instruction in a classroom setting at the charter school.  
361 Instructional personnel certified pursuant to s. 1012.55 who  
362 provide virtual instruction for blended learning courses may be  
363 employees of the charter school or may be under contract to  
364 provide instructional services to charter school students. At a  
365 minimum, such instructional personnel must hold an active state  
366 or school district adjunct certification under s. 1012.57 for  
367 the subject area of the blended learning course. The funding and  
368 performance accountability requirements for blended learning  
369 courses are the same as those for traditional courses.

370           3. The current incoming baseline standard of student  
371 academic achievement, the outcomes to be achieved, and the  
372 method of measurement that will be used. The criteria listed in  
373 this subparagraph shall include a detailed description of:

374           a. How the baseline student academic achievement levels and  
375 prior rates of academic progress will be established.

376           b. How these baseline rates will be compared to rates of  
377 academic progress achieved by these same students while

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378 attending the charter school.

379 c. To the extent possible, how these rates of progress will  
380 be evaluated and compared with rates of progress of other  
381 closely comparable student populations.

382

383 The district school board is required to provide academic  
384 student performance data to charter schools for each of their  
385 students coming from the district school system, as well as  
386 rates of academic progress of comparable student populations in  
387 the district school system.

388 4. The methods used to identify the educational strengths  
389 and needs of students and how well educational goals and  
390 performance standards are met by students attending the charter  
391 school. The methods shall provide a means for the charter school  
392 to ensure accountability to its constituents by analyzing  
393 student performance data and by evaluating the effectiveness and  
394 efficiency of its major educational programs. Students in  
395 charter schools shall, at a minimum, participate in the  
396 statewide assessment program created under s. 1008.22.

397 5. In secondary charter schools, a method for determining  
398 that a student has satisfied the requirements for graduation in  
399 s. 1002.3105(5), s. 1003.4281, or s. 1003.4282.

400 6. A method for resolving conflicts between the governing  
401 board of the charter school and the sponsor.

402 7. The admissions procedures and dismissal procedures,  
403 including the school's code of student conduct.

404 8. The ways by which the school will achieve a  
405 racial/ethnic balance reflective of the community it serves or  
406 within the racial/ethnic range of other public schools in the

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407 same school district.

408       9. The financial and administrative management of the  
409 school, including a reasonable demonstration of the professional  
410 experience or competence of those individuals or organizations  
411 applying to operate the charter school or those hired or  
412 retained to perform such professional services and the  
413 description of clearly delineated responsibilities and the  
414 policies and practices needed to effectively manage the charter  
415 school. A description of internal audit procedures and  
416 establishment of controls to ensure that financial resources are  
417 properly managed must be included. Both public sector and  
418 private sector professional experience shall be equally valid in  
419 such a consideration.

420       10. The asset and liability projections required in the  
421 application which are incorporated into the charter and shall be  
422 compared with information provided in the annual report of the  
423 charter school.

424       11. A description of procedures that identify various risks  
425 and provide for a comprehensive approach to reduce the impact of  
426 losses; plans to ensure the safety and security of students and  
427 staff; plans to identify, minimize, and protect others from  
428 violent or disruptive student behavior; and the manner in which  
429 the school will be insured, including whether or not the school  
430 will be required to have liability insurance, and, if so, the  
431 terms and conditions thereof and the amounts of coverage.

432       12. The term of the charter which shall provide for  
433 cancellation of the charter if insufficient progress has been  
434 made in attaining the student achievement objectives of the  
435 charter and if it is not likely that such objectives can be

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436 achieved before expiration of the charter. The initial term of  
 437 the a charter is either shall be for 4 years or 5 years. ~~In~~  
 438 ~~order to facilitate access to long-term financial resources for~~  
 439 ~~charter school construction,~~ Charter schools that are operated  
 440 by a municipality or other public entity, as provided by law, or  
 441 a private, not-for-profit corporation granted 501(c)(3) status  
 442 by the Internal Revenue Service are eligible for up to a 15-year  
 443 charter, subject to approval by the district school board. A  
 444 charter lab school is also eligible for a charter for a term of  
 445 up to 15 years. ~~In addition, to facilitate access to long-term~~  
 446 ~~financial resources for charter school construction, charter~~  
 447 ~~schools that are operated by a private, not-for-profit, s.~~  
 448 ~~501(c)(3) status corporation are eligible for up to a 15-year~~  
 449 ~~charter, subject to approval by the district school board.~~ Such  
 450 long-term charters remain subject to annual review and may be  
 451 terminated during the term of the charter, but only according to  
 452 ~~the provisions set forth in~~ subsection (8) or paragraph (9)(n).

453 13. Termination or nonrenewal of the charter pursuant to  
 454 subsection (8) or paragraph (9)(n).

455 14.13. The facilities to be used and their location. The  
 456 sponsor may not require a charter school to have a certificate  
 457 of occupancy or a temporary certificate of occupancy for such a  
 458 facility earlier than 15 calendar days before the first day of  
 459 school.

460 15.14. The qualifications to be required of the teachers  
 461 and the potential strategies used to recruit, hire, train, and  
 462 retain qualified staff to achieve best value.

463 16.15. The governance structure of the school, including  
 464 the status of the charter school as a public or private employer



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465 as required in paragraph (12)(i).

466 ~~17.16.~~ A timetable for implementing the charter which  
467 addresses the implementation of each element thereof and the  
468 date by which the charter shall be awarded in order to meet this  
469 timetable.

470 ~~18.17.~~ In the case of an existing public school that is  
471 being converted to charter status, alternative arrangements for  
472 current students who choose not to attend the charter school and  
473 for current teachers who choose not to teach in the charter  
474 school after conversion in accordance with the existing  
475 collective bargaining agreement or district school board rule in  
476 the absence of a collective bargaining agreement. However,  
477 alternative arrangements shall not be required for current  
478 teachers who choose not to teach in a charter lab school, except  
479 as authorized by the employment policies of the state university  
480 which grants the charter to the lab school.

481 ~~19.18.~~ Full disclosure of the identity of all relatives  
482 employed by the charter school who are related to the charter  
483 school owner, president, chairperson of the governing board of  
484 directors, superintendent, governing board member, principal,  
485 assistant principal, or any other person employed by the charter  
486 school who has equivalent decisionmaking authority. For the  
487 purpose of this subparagraph, the term "relative" means father,  
488 mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, first  
489 cousin, nephew, niece, husband, wife, father-in-law, mother-in-  
490 law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law,  
491 stepfather, stepmother, stepson, stepdaughter, stepbrother,  
492 stepsister, half brother, or half sister.

493 ~~20.19.~~ Implementation of the activities authorized under s.

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494 1002.331 by the charter school when it satisfies the eligibility  
495 requirements for a high-performing charter school. A high-  
496 performing charter school shall notify its sponsor in writing by  
497 March 1 if it intends to increase enrollment or expand grade  
498 levels the following school year. The written notice shall  
499 specify the amount of the enrollment increase and the grade  
500 levels that will be added, as applicable.

501 (b)1. A charter may be renewed provided that a program  
502 review demonstrates that the criteria in paragraph (a) have been  
503 successfully accomplished and that none of the grounds for  
504 nonrenewal established by paragraph (8)(a) has been documented.  
505 ~~In order to facilitate long-term financing for charter school~~  
506 ~~construction,~~ Charter schools operating for a minimum of 3 years  
507 and demonstrating exemplary academic programming and fiscal  
508 management are eligible for a 15-year charter renewal. Such  
509 long-term charter is subject to annual review and may be  
510 terminated during the term of the charter.

511 2. The 15-year charter renewal that may be granted pursuant  
512 to subparagraph 1. shall be granted to a charter school that has  
513 received a school grade of "A" or "B" pursuant to s. 1008.34 in  
514 3 of the past 4 years and is not in a state of financial  
515 emergency or deficit position as defined by this section. Such  
516 long-term charter is subject to annual review and may be  
517 terminated during the term of the charter pursuant to subsection  
518 (8).

519 (c) A charter may be modified during its initial term or  
520 any renewal term upon the recommendation of the sponsor or the  
521 charter school's governing board and the approval of both  
522 parties to the agreement. Modification may include, but is not

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523 limited to, consolidation of multiple charters into a single  
524 charter if the charters are operated under the same governing  
525 board and physically located on the same campus, regardless of  
526 the renewal cycle.

527 ~~(d)1. Each charter school's governing board must appoint a~~  
528 ~~representative to facilitate parental involvement, provide~~  
529 ~~access to information, assist parents and others with questions~~  
530 ~~and concerns, and resolve disputes. The representative must~~  
531 ~~reside in the school district in which the charter school is~~  
532 ~~located and may be a governing board member, charter school~~  
533 ~~employee, or individual contracted to represent the governing~~  
534 ~~board. If the governing board oversees multiple charter schools~~  
535 ~~in the same school district, the governing board must appoint a~~  
536 ~~separate individual representative for each charter school in~~  
537 ~~the district. The representative's contact information must be~~  
538 ~~provided annually in writing to parents and posted prominently~~  
539 ~~on the charter school's website if a website is maintained by~~  
540 ~~the school. The sponsor may not require that governing board~~  
541 ~~members reside in the school district in which the charter~~  
542 ~~school is located if the charter school complies with this~~  
543 ~~paragraph.~~

544 ~~2. Each charter school's governing board must hold at least~~  
545 ~~two public meetings per school year in the school district. The~~  
546 ~~meetings must be noticed, open, and accessible to the public,~~  
547 ~~and attendees must be provided an opportunity to receive~~  
548 ~~information and provide input regarding the charter school's~~  
549 ~~operations. The appointed representative and charter school~~  
550 ~~principal or director, or his or her equivalent, must be~~  
551 ~~physically present at each meeting.~~

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552 (8) CAUSES FOR NONRENEWAL OR TERMINATION OF CHARTER.—

553 (e) When a charter is not renewed or is terminated or when  
554 a charter school is closed voluntarily by the operator, the  
555 school shall be dissolved under the provisions of law under  
556 which the school was organized, and any unencumbered public  
557 funds, except for capital outlay funds and federal charter  
558 school program grant funds, from the charter school shall revert  
559 to the sponsor. Capital outlay funds provided pursuant to s.  
560 1013.62 and federal charter school program grant funds that are  
561 unencumbered shall revert to the department to be redistributed  
562 among eligible charter schools. In the event a charter school is  
563 dissolved or is otherwise terminated, all district school board  
564 property and improvements, furnishings, and equipment purchased  
565 with public funds shall automatically revert to full ownership  
566 by the district school board, subject to complete satisfaction  
567 of any lawful liens or encumbrances. Any unencumbered public  
568 funds from the charter school, district school board property  
569 and improvements, furnishings, and equipment purchased with  
570 public funds, or financial or other records pertaining to the  
571 charter school, in the possession of any person, entity, or  
572 holding company, other than the charter school, shall be held in  
573 trust upon the district school board's request, until any appeal  
574 status is resolved.

575 (f) If a charter is not renewed or is terminated or a  
576 charter school is closed voluntarily by the operator, the  
577 charter school is responsible for all debts of the charter  
578 school. The district may not assume the debt from any contract  
579 made between the governing body of the school and a third party,  
580 except for a debt that is previously detailed and agreed upon in

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581 writing by both the district and the governing body of the  
582 school and that may not reasonably be assumed to have been  
583 satisfied by the district.

584 (g) If a charter is not renewed or is terminated, a student  
585 who attended the school may apply to, and shall be enrolled in,  
586 another public school. Normal application deadlines shall be  
587 disregarded under such circumstances.

588 (h) The governing board of a charter school that closes  
589 voluntarily shall notify the sponsor and the department in  
590 writing within 7 calendar days of its decision to cease  
591 operations. The notice must state the reasons for the closure  
592 and acknowledge that the governing board agrees to follow the  
593 procedures for dissolution and reversion of public funds  
594 specified in this subsection and paragraph (9) (o).

595 (i) For a high-performing charter school that is having the  
596 charter agreement renewed, the charter contract, as that  
597 contract exists on the day the term of the contract is to  
598 terminate, must be automatically renewed for 15 years if the  
599 charter school governing board and sponsor have not executed the  
600 renewal before the term of the charter agreement is scheduled to  
601 expire.

602 (9) CHARTER SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS.—

603 (g)1. In order to provide financial information that is  
604 comparable to that reported for other public schools, charter  
605 schools are to maintain all financial records that constitute  
606 their accounting system:

607 a. In accordance with the accounts and codes prescribed in  
608 the most recent issuance of the publication titled "Financial  
609 and Program Cost Accounting and Reporting for Florida Schools";

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610 or

611 b. At the discretion of the charter school's governing  
612 board, a charter school may elect to follow generally accepted  
613 accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations, but must  
614 reformat this information for reporting according to this  
615 paragraph.

616 2. Charter schools shall provide annual financial report  
617 and program cost report information in the state-required  
618 formats for inclusion in district reporting in compliance with  
619 s. 1011.60(1). Charter schools that are operated by a  
620 municipality or are a component unit of a parent nonprofit  
621 organization may use the accounting system of the municipality  
622 or the parent but must reformat this information for reporting  
623 according to this paragraph.

624 3. A charter school shall, upon execution of the contract,  
625 provide the sponsor with a concise, uniform, monthly financial  
626 statement summary sheet that contains a balance sheet and a  
627 statement of revenue, expenditures, and changes in fund balance.  
628 The balance sheet and the statement of revenue, expenditures,  
629 and changes in fund balance shall be in the governmental funds  
630 format prescribed by the Governmental Accounting Standards  
631 Board. A high-performing charter school pursuant to s. 1002.331  
632 may provide a quarterly financial statement in the same format  
633 and requirements as the uniform monthly financial statement  
634 summary sheet. The sponsor shall review each monthly financial  
635 statement, to identify the existence of any conditions  
636 identified in s. 1002.345 (1) (a).

637 4. A charter school shall maintain and provide financial  
638 information as required in this paragraph. The financial

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639 statement required in subparagraph 3. must be in a form  
640 prescribed by the Department of Education.

641 (n)1. The director and a representative of the governing  
642 board of a charter school that has earned a grade of "D" or "F"  
643 pursuant to s. 1008.34 shall appear before the sponsor to  
644 present information concerning each contract component having  
645 noted deficiencies. The director and a representative of the  
646 governing board shall submit to the sponsor for approval a  
647 school improvement plan to raise student performance. Upon  
648 approval by the sponsor, the charter school shall begin  
649 implementation of the school improvement plan. The department  
650 shall offer technical assistance and training to the charter  
651 school and its governing board and establish guidelines for  
652 developing, submitting, and approving such plans.

653 2.a. If a charter school earns three consecutive grades of  
654 "D," two consecutive grades of "D" followed by a grade of "F,"  
655 or two nonconsecutive grades of "F" within a 3-year period, the  
656 charter school governing board shall choose one of the following  
657 corrective actions:

658 (I) Contract for educational services to be provided  
659 directly to students, instructional personnel, and school  
660 administrators, as prescribed in state board rule;

661 (II) Contract with an outside entity that has a  
662 demonstrated record of effectiveness to operate the school;

663 (III) Reorganize the school under a new director or  
664 principal who is authorized to hire new staff; or

665 (IV) Voluntarily close the charter school.

666 b. The charter school must implement the corrective action  
667 in the school year following receipt of a third consecutive

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668 grade of "D," a grade of "F" following two consecutive grades of  
669 "D," or a second nonconsecutive grade of "F" within a 3-year  
670 period.

671 c. The sponsor may annually waive a corrective action if it  
672 determines that the charter school is likely to improve a letter  
673 grade if additional time is provided to implement the  
674 intervention and support strategies prescribed by the school  
675 improvement plan. Notwithstanding this sub-subparagraph, a  
676 charter school that earns a second consecutive grade of "F" is  
677 subject to subparagraph 4.

678 d. A charter school is no longer required to implement a  
679 corrective action if it improves by at least one letter grade.  
680 However, the charter school must continue to implement  
681 strategies identified in the school improvement plan. The  
682 sponsor must annually review implementation of the school  
683 improvement plan to monitor the school's continued improvement  
684 pursuant to subparagraph 5.

685 e. A charter school implementing a corrective action that  
686 does not improve by at least one letter grade after 2 full  
687 school years of implementing the corrective action must select a  
688 different corrective action. Implementation of the new  
689 corrective action must begin in the school year following the  
690 implementation period of the existing corrective action, unless  
691 the sponsor determines that the charter school is likely to  
692 improve a letter grade if additional time is provided to  
693 implement the existing corrective action. Notwithstanding this  
694 sub-subparagraph, a charter school that earns a second  
695 consecutive grade of "F" while implementing a corrective action  
696 is subject to subparagraph 4.



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697 3. A charter school with a grade of "D" or "F" that  
698 improves by at least one letter grade must continue to implement  
699 the strategies identified in the school improvement plan. The  
700 sponsor must annually review implementation of the school  
701 improvement plan to monitor the school's continued improvement  
702 pursuant to subparagraph 5.

703 4. A charter school's charter is automatically terminated  
704 if the school earns two consecutive grades of "F" after all  
705 school grade appeals are final ~~The sponsor shall terminate a~~  
706 ~~charter if the charter school earns two consecutive grades of~~  
707 ~~"F" unless:~~

708 a. The charter school is established to turn around the  
709 performance of a district public school pursuant to s.  
710 1008.33(4)(b)3. Such charter schools shall be governed by s.  
711 1008.33;

712 b. The charter school serves a student population the  
713 majority of which resides in a school zone served by a district  
714 public school that earned a grade of "F" in the year before the  
715 charter school opened and the charter school earns at least a  
716 grade of "D" in its third year of operation. The exception  
717 provided under this sub-subparagraph does not apply to a charter  
718 school in its fourth year of operation and thereafter; or

719 c. The state board grants the charter school a waiver of  
720 termination. The charter school must request the waiver within  
721 15 days after the department's official release of school  
722 grades. The state board may waive termination if the charter  
723 school demonstrates that the Learning Gains of its students on  
724 statewide assessments are comparable to or better than the  
725 Learning Gains of similarly situated students enrolled in nearby

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726 district public schools. The waiver is valid for 1 year and may  
727 only be granted once. Charter schools that have been in  
728 operation for more than 5 years are not eligible for a waiver  
729 under this sub-subparagraph.

730

731 The sponsor shall notify in writing the charter school's  
732 governing board, the charter school principal, and the  
733 department when a charter is terminated under this subparagraph.

734 A charter terminated under this subparagraph is governed by the  
735 requirements of paragraphs (8) (e)-(g) and paragraph (o) of this  
736 subsection.

737 5. The director and a representative of the governing board  
738 of a graded charter school that has implemented a school  
739 improvement plan under this paragraph shall appear before the  
740 sponsor at least once a year to present information regarding  
741 the progress of intervention and support strategies implemented  
742 by the school pursuant to the school improvement plan and  
743 corrective actions, if applicable. The sponsor shall communicate  
744 at the meeting, and in writing to the director, the services  
745 provided to the school to help the school address its  
746 deficiencies.

747 6. Notwithstanding any provision of this paragraph except  
748 sub-subparagraphs 4.a.-c., the sponsor may terminate the charter  
749 at any time pursuant to subsection (8).

750 (p)1. Each charter school shall maintain a website that  
751 enables the public to obtain information regarding the school;  
752 the school's academic performance; the names of the governing  
753 board members; the programs at the school; any management  
754 companies, service providers, or education management

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755 corporations associated with the school; the school's annual  
756 budget and its annual independent fiscal audit; the school's  
757 grade pursuant to s. 1008.34; and, on a quarterly basis, the  
758 minutes of governing board meetings.

759 2. Each charter school's governing board shall appoint a  
760 representative to facilitate parental involvement, provide  
761 access to information, assist parents and others with questions  
762 and concerns, and resolve disputes. The representative must  
763 reside in the school district in which the charter school is  
764 located and may be a governing board member, charter school  
765 employee, or individual contracted to represent the governing  
766 board. If the governing board oversees multiple charter schools  
767 in the same school district, the governing board must appoint a  
768 separate individual representative for each charter school in  
769 the district. The representative's contact information must be  
770 provided annually, in writing, to parents and posted prominently  
771 on the charter school's website. The sponsor may not require  
772 that governing board members reside in the school district in  
773 which the charter school is located if the charter school  
774 complies with this paragraph.

775 3. Each charter school's governing board must hold at least  
776 two public meetings per school year in the school district where  
777 the charter school is located. The meetings must be noticed,  
778 open, and accessible to the public, and attendees must be  
779 provided an opportunity to receive information and provide input  
780 regarding the charter school's operations. The appointed  
781 representative and charter school principal or director, or his  
782 or her equivalent, must be physically present at each meeting.

783 (13) CHARTER SCHOOL COOPERATIVES.—Charter schools may enter

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784 into cooperative agreements with other charter schools or  
785 educational institutions to form charter school cooperative  
786 organizations that may provide ~~the following~~ services to further  
787 educational, enrollment, operational, and administrative  
788 initiatives in which the participating charter schools share  
789 common interests: ~~charter school planning and development,~~  
790 ~~direct instructional services, and contracts with charter school~~  
791 ~~governing boards to provide personnel administrative services,~~  
792 ~~payroll services, human resource management, evaluation and~~  
793 ~~assessment services, teacher preparation, and professional~~  
794 ~~development.~~

795 (17) FUNDING.—Students enrolled in a charter school,  
796 regardless of the sponsorship, shall be funded as if they are in  
797 a basic program or a special program, the same as students  
798 enrolled in other public schools in the school district. Funding  
799 for a charter lab school shall be as provided in s. 1002.32.

800 (e) District school boards shall make timely and efficient  
801 payment and reimbursement to charter schools, including  
802 processing paperwork required to access special state and  
803 federal funding for which they may be eligible. The district  
804 school board may distribute funds to a charter school for up to  
805 3 months based on the projected full-time equivalent student  
806 membership of the charter school. Thereafter, the results of  
807 full-time equivalent student membership surveys shall be used in  
808 adjusting the amount of funds distributed monthly to the charter  
809 school for the remainder of the fiscal year. The payment shall  
810 be issued no later than 10 working days after the district  
811 school board receives a distribution of state or federal funds.  
812 If a warrant for payment is not issued within 10 working days

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813 after receipt of funding by the district school board, the  
814 school district shall pay to the charter school, in addition to  
815 the amount of the scheduled disbursement, interest at a rate of  
816 1 percent per month calculated on a daily basis on the unpaid  
817 balance from the expiration of the 10 working days until such  
818 time as the warrant is issued. The district school board may not  
819 delay payment to a charter school of any portion of the funds  
820 provided in paragraph (b) based on the timing of receipt of  
821 local funds by the district school board.

822 (21) PUBLIC INFORMATION ON CHARTER SCHOOLS.—

823 (a) The Department of Education shall provide information  
824 to the public, directly and through sponsors, on how to form and  
825 operate a charter school and how to enroll in a charter school  
826 once it is created. This information shall include a standard  
827 ~~model~~ application form, standard charter contract, standard  
828 application evaluation instrument, and standard charter renewal  
829 contract, which shall include the information specified in  
830 subsection (7) and shall be developed by consulting and  
831 negotiating with both school districts and charter schools  
832 before implementation. The charter and charter renewal contracts  
833 shall be used by charter school sponsors.

834 Section 3. Paragraph (e) of subsection (2) and subsection  
835 (5) of section 1002.331, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

836 1002.331 High-performing charter schools.—

837 (2) A high-performing charter school is authorized to:

838 (e) Receive a modification of its charter to a term of 15  
839 years or a 15-year charter renewal. The charter may be modified  
840 or renewed for a shorter term at the option of the high-  
841 performing charter school. The charter must be consistent with

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842 s. 1002.33(7)(a)20. ~~s. 1002.33(7)(a)19.~~ and (10)(h) and (i), is  
843 subject to annual review by the sponsor, and may be terminated  
844 during its term pursuant to s. 1002.33(8).

845

846 A high-performing charter school shall notify its sponsor in  
847 writing by March 1 if it intends to increase enrollment or  
848 expand grade levels the following school year. The written  
849 notice shall specify the amount of the enrollment increase and  
850 the grade levels that will be added, as applicable. If a charter  
851 school notifies the sponsor of its intent to expand, the sponsor  
852 shall modify the charter within 90 days to include the new  
853 enrollment maximum and may not make any other changes. The  
854 sponsor may deny a request to increase the enrollment of a high-  
855 performing charter school if the commissioner has declassified  
856 the charter school as high-performing. If a high-performing  
857 charter school requests to consolidate multiple charters, the  
858 sponsor shall have 40 days after receipt of that request to  
859 provide an initial draft charter to the charter school. The  
860 sponsor and charter school shall have 50 days thereafter to  
861 negotiate and notice the charter contract for final approval by  
862 the sponsor.

863 (5) The Commissioner of Education, upon request by a  
864 charter school, shall verify that the charter school meets the  
865 criteria in subsection (1) and provide a letter to the charter  
866 school and the sponsor stating that the charter school is a  
867 high-performing charter school pursuant to this section. The  
868 commissioner shall annually determine whether a high-performing  
869 charter school under subsection (1) continues to meet the  
870 criteria in that subsection. Such high-performing charter school

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871 shall maintain its high-performing status unless the  
 872 commissioner determines that the charter school no longer meets  
 873 the criteria in subsection (1), at which time the commissioner  
 874 shall send a letter to the charter school and its sponsor  
 875 providing notification that the charter school has been  
 876 declassified ~~of its declassification~~ as a high-performing  
 877 charter school.

878 Section 4. Paragraph (a) of subsection (8) of section  
 879 1002.37, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

880 1002.37 The Florida Virtual School.—

881 (8) (a) The Florida Virtual School may provide full-time and  
 882 part-time instruction for students in kindergarten through grade  
 883 12. ~~To receive part-time instruction in kindergarten through~~  
 884 ~~grade 5, a student must meet at least one of the eligibility~~  
 885 ~~criteria in s. 1002.455(2).~~

886 Section 5. Subsection (5) and paragraphs (c) and (d) of  
 887 subsection (8) of section 1002.45, Florida Statutes, are amended  
 888 to read:

889 1002.45 Virtual instruction programs.—

890 (5) STUDENT ELIGIBILITY.—Students in kindergarten through  
 891 grade 12 ~~A student~~ may enroll in a virtual instruction program  
 892 provided by the school district or by a virtual charter school  
 893 operated in the district in which he or she resides ~~if the~~  
 894 ~~student meets eligibility requirements for virtual instruction~~  
 895 ~~pursuant to s. 1002.455.~~

896 (8) ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY.—

897 (c) An approved provider that receives a school grade of  
 898 "D" or "F" under s. 1008.34 or a school improvement rating of  
 899 "Unsatisfactory" ~~"Declining"~~ under s. 1008.341 must file a

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900 school improvement plan with the department for consultation to  
901 determine the causes for low performance and to develop a plan  
902 for correction and improvement.

903 (d) An approved provider's contract is automatically ~~must~~  
904 ~~be~~ terminated if the provider earns two consecutive school  
905 grades of ~~receives a school grade of "D" or "F" under s.~~  
906 1008.34, receives two consecutive ~~or a school improvement~~  
907 ratings rating of "Unsatisfactory" "Declining" under s.  
908 1008.341, for 2 years during any consecutive 4-year period or  
909 has violated any qualification requirement pursuant to  
910 subsection (2). A provider that has a contract terminated under  
911 this paragraph may not be an approved provider for a period of  
912 at least 1 year after the date upon which the contract was  
913 terminated and until the department determines that the provider  
914 is in compliance with subsection (2) and has corrected each  
915 cause of the provider's low performance.

916 Section 6. Section 1002.455, Florida Statutes, is repealed.

917 Section 7. Subsection (2) of section 1003.498, Florida  
918 Statutes, is amended to read:

919 1003.498 School district virtual course offerings.—

920 (2) School districts may offer virtual courses for students  
921 enrolled in the school district. These courses must be  
922 identified in the course code directory. ~~Students who meet the~~  
923 ~~eligibility requirements of s. 1002.455 may participate in these~~  
924 ~~virtual course offerings.~~

925 (a) Any eligible student who is enrolled in a school  
926 district may register and enroll in an online course offered by  
927 his or her school district.

928 (b)1. Any eligible student who is enrolled in a school



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929 district may register and enroll in an online course offered by  
 930 any other school district in the state. The school district in  
 931 which the student completes the course shall report the  
 932 student's completion of that course for funding pursuant to s.  
 933 1011.61(1)(c)1.b.(VI), and the home school district shall not  
 934 report the student for funding for that course.

935 2. The full-time equivalent student membership calculated  
 936 under this subsection is subject to the requirements in s.  
 937 1011.61(4). The Department of Education shall establish  
 938 procedures to enable interdistrict coordination for the delivery  
 939 and funding of this online option.

940 Section 8. Section 1003.5711, Florida Statutes, is created  
 941 to read:

942 1003.5711 Instruction for students receiving hospitalized  
 943 program services.-

944 (1) A public school student in prekindergarten through  
 945 grade 12 who is deemed eligible for hospitalized program  
 946 services in this state is considered a student with a  
 947 disability.

948 (a) If the student has an individual education plan (IEP),  
 949 the IEP must be followed, but upon request of the student's  
 950 parent, the IEP may be modified to accommodate the student's use  
 951 of hospitalized program services in a children's hospital  
 952 pursuant to this section.

953 (b) The student's IEP may be modified to reduce the  
 954 student's course load to core courses identified in s.  
 955 1002.20(19)(a). The student may be excused or exempted from  
 956 physical education classes or instruction based on the IEP or  
 957 orders from the student's medical doctor. The student's IEP may

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958 allow the student to receive instruction beyond the normal  
959 school hours, school day, or school year of the school district.

960 (2) A student who is admitted to a children's hospital for  
961 hospitalized program services must continue to receive  
962 educational instruction.

963 (a) If a student is expected to be absent from school and  
964 admitted to the children's hospital for hospitalized program  
965 services for at least 15 consecutive days, no later than the  
966 fifth day of the student's hospital stay, the school district in  
967 which the student is or was most recently enrolled may choose to  
968 provide a certified teacher to the children's hospital to  
969 provide instruction to the student. If that school district  
970 declines to provide a certified teacher, the school district in  
971 which the children's hospital is located must provide a  
972 certified teacher to provide the student with instruction, or  
973 must partner with the Florida Virtual School for instructional  
974 services as authorized in this section. Such school district  
975 shall also provide the student's instructional materials and  
976 other necessary educational support and services identified in  
977 the IEP.

978 (b) A student in prekindergarten through grade 6 shall be  
979 taught in person by the certified teacher. A student in grades 7  
980 through 12 shall be taught in person by the certified teacher,  
981 or the student may choose to utilize instruction from the  
982 Florida Virtual School. If the Florida Virtual School is used by  
983 any student, at least one certified teacher from the Florida  
984 Virtual School must be present at the hospital to assist with  
985 online learning.

986 (3) If a school district other than the one in which the

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987 student was previously enrolled provides the hospitalized  
988 program services, the Department of Education must transfer the  
989 funds from the school district in which the student was  
990 previously enrolled to the school district in which the  
991 children's hospital providing hospitalized program services is  
992 located. This transfer shall occur no later than each subsequent  
993 quarterly FEFP payment.

994 (4) The children's hospital providing the hospitalized  
995 program services is responsible for providing adequate  
996 educational space for each student, but is not required to  
997 comply with chapter 1013. The hospital and applicable school  
998 district must enter into an agreement to implement this section.  
999 The agreement may be student-specific or address all students as  
1000 necessary.

1001 (5) The intent of this section is to supplement existing  
1002 laws, rules, and regulations concerning hospitalized students  
1003 that use hospitalized program services at a children's hospital.

1004 Section 9. Section 1004.6491, Florida Statutes, is created  
1005 to read:

1006 1004.6491 Florida Institute for Charter School Innovation.—

1007 (1) There is established the Florida Institute for Charter  
1008 School Innovation within the Florida State University. The  
1009 purpose of the institute is to advance charter school  
1010 accountability, quality, and innovation; provide support and  
1011 technical assistance to charter school applicants; connect  
1012 aspiring teachers to opportunities to experience teaching in  
1013 schools of choice; and conduct research and develop and promote  
1014 best practices for charter school authorization, financing,  
1015 management, operations, and instructional practices.

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1016       (2) The institute shall:

1017       (a) Conduct research to inform both policy and practice  
1018 related to charter school accountability, financing, management,  
1019 operations, and instructional practices.

1020       (b) Partner with state-approved teacher preparation  
1021 programs in this state to provide opportunities for aspiring  
1022 teachers to experience teaching in schools of choice.

1023       (c) Provide technical assistance and support to charter  
1024 school applicants with innovative charter school concepts.

1025       (3) The President of the Florida State University shall  
1026 appoint a director of the institute. The director is responsible  
1027 for overall management of the institute and for developing and  
1028 executing the work of the institute consistent with this  
1029 section. The director may engage individuals in other state  
1030 universities with accredited colleges of education to  
1031 participate in the institute.

1032       (4) By each October 1, the institute shall provide a  
1033 written report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and  
1034 the Speaker of the House of Representatives which outlines its  
1035 activities in the preceding year, reports significant research  
1036 findings, details expenditures of state funds, and provides  
1037 specific recommendations for improving the institute's ability  
1038 to fulfil its mission and for changes to statewide charter  
1039 school policy.

1040       (5) Within 180 days after completion of the institute's  
1041 fiscal year, the institute shall provide to the Auditor General,  
1042 the Board of Governors of the State University System, and the  
1043 State Board of Education a report on the results of an annual  
1044 financial audit conducted by an independent certified public

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1045 accountant in accordance with s. 11.45.

1046 Section 10. Subsection (11) of section 1011.62, Florida  
1047 Statutes, is amended to read:

1048 1011.62 Funds for operation of schools.—If the annual  
1049 allocation from the Florida Education Finance Program to each  
1050 district for operation of schools is not determined in the  
1051 annual appropriations act or the substantive bill implementing  
1052 the annual appropriations act, it shall be determined as  
1053 follows:

1054 (11) VIRTUAL EDUCATION CONTRIBUTION.—The Legislature may  
1055 annually provide in the Florida Education Finance Program a  
1056 virtual education contribution. The amount of the virtual  
1057 education contribution shall be the difference between the  
1058 amount per FTE established in the General Appropriations Act for  
1059 virtual education and the amount per FTE for each district and  
1060 the Florida Virtual School, which may be calculated by taking  
1061 the sum of the base FEFP allocation, the discretionary local  
1062 effort, the state-funded discretionary contribution, the  
1063 discretionary millage compression supplement, the research-based  
1064 reading instruction allocation, and the instructional materials  
1065 allocation, and then dividing by the total unweighted FTE. This  
1066 difference shall be multiplied by the virtual education  
1067 unweighted FTE for programs and options identified in ss.  
1068 1002.33(1), 1002.45(1)(b), and 1003.498 ~~s. 1002.455(3)~~ and the  
1069 Florida Virtual School and its franchises to equal the virtual  
1070 education contribution and shall be included as a separate  
1071 allocation in the funding formula.

1072 Section 11. This act shall take effect July 1, 2015.