

FOR CONSIDERATION By the Committee on Higher Education

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1                                   A bill to be entitled  
2       An act relating to postsecondary education for  
3       students with disabilities; creating s. 1004.6501,  
4       F.S.; providing a short title; providing purposes and  
5       legislative intent; defining terms; establishing  
6       eligibility requirements for enrollment in the Florida  
7       Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Program;  
8       requiring eligible institutions to make student  
9       eligibility determinations; establishing the Florida  
10      Center for Students with Unique Abilities; specifying  
11      the duties of the center and the center director;  
12      specifying application requirements for initial  
13      approval and renewal of approval; requiring an  
14      eligible institution with an approved program to  
15      submit an annual report to the center by a specified  
16      date; establishing a Florida Postsecondary  
17      Comprehensive Transition Program Scholarship for  
18      certain qualified students; specifying the  
19      requirements for a student to maintain eligibility for  
20      the scholarship; providing for the distribution of  
21      scholarship funds; requiring an eligible institution  
22      to report certain data and information to the center;  
23      requiring an eligible institution to certify and  
24      report the amount of funds disbursed and undisbursed  
25      advances to the center by a specified date; requiring  
26      the center, with the Board of Governors and the State  
27      Board of Education, to identify program progress and  
28      performance indicators; requiring an annual report to  
29      the Governor, the President of the Senate, the Speaker

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30 of the House of Representatives, the Chancellor of the  
31 State University System, and the Commissioner of  
32 Education by a specified date; requiring the center,  
33 with other stakeholders, to submit to the Governor,  
34 the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the  
35 House of Representatives statutory or budget  
36 recommendations for the program; requiring the Board  
37 of Governors and the State Board of Education, in  
38 consultation with the center, to adopt regulations and  
39 rules; providing an effective date.

40  
41 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

42  
43 Section 1. Section 1004.6501, Florida Statutes, is created  
44 to read:

45 1004.6501 Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition  
46 Program and the Florida Center for Students with Unique  
47 Abilities.—

48 (1) SHORT TITLE.—This section shall be known and may be  
49 cited as the "Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition  
50 Program Act."

51 (2) PURPOSE AND LEGISLATIVE INTENT.—The purpose of this  
52 section is to increase independent living, inclusive and  
53 experiential postsecondary education, and employment  
54 opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities  
55 through degree, certificate, or nondegree programs and to  
56 establish statewide coordination of the dissemination of  
57 information regarding programs and services for students with  
58 disabilities. It is the intent of the Legislature that students

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59 with intellectual disabilities and students with disabilities  
60 have access to meaningful postsecondary education credentials  
61 and a meaningful campus experience.

62 (3) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section, the term:

63 (a) "Center" means the Florida Center for Students with  
64 Unique Abilities established under subsection (5).

65 (b) "Director" means the director of the center.

66 (c) "Eligible institution" means a state university; a  
67 Florida College System institution; a career center; a charter  
68 technical career center; or an independent college or university  
69 that is located and chartered in this state, is not for profit,  
70 is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern  
71 Association of Colleges and Schools, and is eligible to  
72 participate in the William L. Boyd, IV, Florida Resident Access  
73 Grant Program.

74 (d) "Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Program  
75 Scholarship" or "scholarship" means the scholarship established  
76 under this section to provide state financial assistance awards  
77 to students who meet the student eligibility requirements  
78 specified in subsection (4) and are enrolled in an FPCTP.

79 (e) "FPCTP" means a Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive  
80 Transition Program that is approved pursuant to paragraph (5)(b)  
81 and offered by an eligible institution.

82 (f) "Transitional student" means a student who is 18 to 26  
83 years of age and meets the student eligibility requirements  
84 specified in subsection (4).

85 (4) STUDENT ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible to enroll in an  
86 FPCTP at an eligible institution, a student must, as determined  
87 by the institution, based on guidelines established by the

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88 center:

89 (a) Be a "student with an intellectual disability" as that  
90 term is defined in 20 U.S.C. s. 1140(2), including, but not  
91 limited to, a transitional student.

92 (b) Physically attend the eligible institution.

93 (c) Submit to the eligible institution documentation  
94 regarding his or her intellectual disability. Such documentation  
95 may include, but not be limited to, a current individualized  
96 plan for employment associated with an evaluation completed  
97 pursuant to s. 413.20(3) or a diagnosis from a physician who is  
98 licensed under chapter 458 or chapter 459 or a psychologist  
99 licensed under chapter 490.

100 (5) CENTER RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Florida Center for  
101 Students with Unique Abilities is established within the  
102 University of Central Florida. At a minimum, the center shall:

103 (a) Disseminate information to students with disabilities  
104 and their parents, including, but not limited to:

105 1. Education programs, services, and resources that are  
106 available at eligible institutions.

107 2. Supports, accommodations, technical assistance, or  
108 training provided by eligible institutions, the advisory council  
109 established pursuant to s. 383.141, and regional autism centers  
110 established pursuant to s. 1004.55.

111 3. Mentoring, networking, and employment opportunities.

112 (b) Coordinate and facilitate the statewide implementation  
113 of this section. The director of the center shall oversee the  
114 approval of the comprehensive transition programs.

115 Notwithstanding the program approval requirements of s. 1004.03,  
116 the director shall review applications for the initial approval

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117 of an application for, or renewal of approval of, a  
118 comprehensive transition program proposed by an eligible  
119 institution. Within 30 days after receipt of an application, the  
120 director shall issue his or her recommendation regarding  
121 approval to the Chancellor of the State University System or the  
122 Commissioner of Education, as applicable, or shall give written  
123 notice to the applicant of any deficiencies in the application,  
124 which the eligible institution must be given an opportunity to  
125 correct. Within 15 days after receipt of a notice of  
126 deficiencies, the eligible institution shall, if the eligible  
127 institution seeks program approval, correct the application  
128 deficiencies and return the application to the center. Within 30  
129 days after receipt of a revised application, the director shall  
130 recommend approval or disapproval of the revised application to  
131 the chancellor or the commissioner, as applicable. Within 15  
132 days after receipt of the director's recommendation for approval  
133 or disapproval, the chancellor or the commissioner shall approve  
134 or disapprove the recommendation. If the chancellor or the  
135 commissioner does not take action on the director's  
136 recommendation within 15 days after receipt of such  
137 recommendation, the comprehensive transition program proposed by  
138 the institution shall be considered an FPCTP by default.

139 Additionally, the director shall:

140 1. Consult and collaborate with the National Center and the  
141 Coordinating Center, as identified in 20 U.S.C. s. 1140q,  
142 regarding guidelines established by the center for effective  
143 implementation of the programs for students with disabilities  
144 and for students with intellectual disabilities which align with  
145 the federal requirements and standards, quality indicators, and

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146 benchmarks identified by the National Center and the  
147 Coordinating Center.

148 2. Consult and collaborate with the Higher Education  
149 Coordinating Council to identify meaningful credentials for  
150 FPCTPs and to engage businesses and stakeholders to promote  
151 experiential training and employment opportunities for students  
152 with intellectual disabilities.

153 3. Create the application for the initial approval and  
154 renewal of approval as an FPCTP for use by an eligible  
155 institution which, at a minimum, must align with the federal  
156 comprehensive transition and postsecondary program application  
157 requirements.

158 4. Establish requirements and timelines for the:

159 a. Submission and review of an application.

160 b. Approval or disapproval of an initial or renewal  
161 application. Initial approval of an application for an FPCTP  
162 that meets the requirements of subsection (6) is valid for the 3  
163 academic years immediately following the academic year during  
164 which the approval is granted. An eligible institution may  
165 submit an application to the center requesting that the initial  
166 approval be renewed. If the approval is granted and the FPCTP  
167 continues to meet the requirements of this section, including,  
168 but not limited to, program and student performance outcomes,  
169 and federal requirements, a renewal is valid for the 5 academic  
170 years immediately following the academic year during which the  
171 renewal is initially granted.

172 c. Implementation of an FPCTP, beginning no later than the  
173 academic year immediately following the academic year during  
174 which the approval is granted.

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175 5. Administer scholarship funds.

176 6. Oversee and report on the implementation and  
177 administration of this section by planning, advising, and  
178 evaluating approved degree, certificate, and nondegree programs  
179 and the performance of students and programs pursuant to  
180 subsection (8).

181 (c) Provide technical assistance regarding programs and  
182 services for students with intellectual disabilities to  
183 administrators, instructors, staff, and others, as applicable,  
184 at eligible institutions by:

185 1. Holding meetings and annual workshops to share  
186 successful practices and to address issues or concerns.

187 2. Facilitating collaboration between eligible institutions  
188 and school districts, private schools pursuant to s. 1002.42,  
189 and parents of students enrolled in home education programs  
190 pursuant to s. 1002.41 in assisting students with intellectual  
191 disabilities and their parents to plan for the transition of  
192 such students into an FPCTP or another program at an eligible  
193 institution.

194 3. Assisting eligible institutions with state FPCTP and  
195 federal comprehensive transition and postsecondary program  
196 applications.

197 4. Assisting eligible institutions with the identification  
198 of funding sources for an FPCTP and for student financial  
199 assistance for students enrolled in an FPCTP.

200 5. Monitoring federal and state law relating to the  
201 comprehensive transition program and notifying the Legislature,  
202 the Governor, the Board of Governors, and the State Board of  
203 Education of any change in law which may impact the

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204 implementation of this section.

205 (6) INSTITUTION ELIGIBILITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES.—

206 (a) To offer an FPCTP, the president or executive director  
207 of an eligible institution, as applicable, must submit to the  
208 center, by a date established by the center, the following:

209 1. An application for approval of a comprehensive  
210 transition program proposed by the eligible institution which  
211 must be approved by the institution's governing board and must  
212 address the requirements of the federal comprehensive transition  
213 and postsecondary program under 20 U.S.C. s. 1140 and the  
214 requirements of this section, including, but not limited to:

215 a. Identification of a credential associated with the  
216 proposed program, which is awarded to a student with an  
217 intellectual disability who meets the student eligibility  
218 requirements specified in subsection (4) upon completion of the  
219 FPCTP.

220 b. The program length and design, including, at a minimum,  
221 inclusive and successful experiential education practices  
222 relating to curricular, assessment, and advising structure and  
223 internship and employment opportunities which must support  
224 students with intellectual disabilities who are seeking to  
225 continue academic, career and technical, and independent living  
226 instruction at an eligible institution, including, but not  
227 limited to, opportunities to earn industry certifications, to  
228 prepare students for gainful employment. If offering a college  
229 credit-bearing degree program, an institution shall be  
230 responsible for maintaining the rigor and effectiveness of a  
231 comprehensive transition degree program at the same level as  
232 another comparable degree program offered by the institution



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233 pursuant to the applicable accreditation standards.

234 c. The plan for students with intellectual disabilities to  
235 be integrated socially and academically with nondisabled  
236 students, to the maximum extent possible, and to participate on  
237 not less than a half-time basis, as determined by the eligible  
238 institution, with such participation focusing on academic  
239 components and occurring through one or more of the following  
240 activities with nondisabled students:

241 (I) Regular enrollment in credit-bearing courses offered by  
242 the institution.

243 (II) Auditing or participating in courses offered by the  
244 institution for which the student does not receive academic  
245 credit.

246 (III) Enrollment in noncredit-bearing, nondegree courses.

247 (IV) Participation in internships or work-based training.

248 d. The plan for partnerships with businesses to promote  
249 experiential training and employment opportunities for students  
250 with intellectual disabilities.

251 e. Performance indicators pursuant to subsection (8) and  
252 other requirements identified by the center.

253 f. A 5-year plan incorporating enrollment and operational  
254 expectations for the program.

255 2. Documented evidence of a federally approved  
256 comprehensive transition and postsecondary program that is  
257 determined to be an eligible program for the federal student aid  
258 programs and is currently offered at the institution, documented  
259 evidence of the submission of an application for such federal  
260 approval of a comprehensive transition and postsecondary program  
261 proposed by the institution, or documentation demonstrating the

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262 commitment of the institution's governing board to submit an  
263 application within the subsequent academic year for federal  
264 approval of a comprehensive transition and postsecondary program  
265 proposed by the institution pursuant to 20 U.S.C. s. 1140.

266 (b) An eligible institution may submit an application to  
267 the center for approval pursuant to the requirements of this  
268 section for implementation of the FPCTP no later than the  
269 academic year immediately following the academic year during  
270 which the approval is granted. An eligible institution must  
271 submit a renewal application to the center no later than 3 years  
272 following the year during which the approval is initially  
273 granted.

274 (c) By August 1 of each year, an eligible institution that  
275 has an FPCTP shall submit an annual report to the center which,  
276 at minimum, for the prior academic year, addresses the following  
277 performance indicators:

278 1. Efforts to recruit students in the FPCTP and the number  
279 of students enrolled in the program.

280 2. Efforts to retain students in the FPCTP and the  
281 retention rate of students in the program.

282 3. The completion rate of students enrolled in the FPCTP  
283 and courses, as applicable.

284 4. Transition success of students who complete an FPCTP, as  
285 measured by employment rates and salary levels at 1 year and 5  
286 years after completion.

287 5. Other performance indicators identified by the center  
288 pursuant to subsection (8).

289 (d) An eligible institution shall notify students with  
290 intellectual disabilities and their parents of the student

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291 eligibility requirements specified in subsection (4) and the  
292 scholarship requirements and eligibility requirements specified  
293 in subsection (7).

294 (7) FLORIDA POSTSECONDARY COMPREHENSIVE TRANSITION PROGRAM  
295 SCHOLARSHIP.—

296 (a) Beginning in the 2015-2016 academic year, the Florida  
297 Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Program Scholarship is  
298 established for students who meet the student eligibility  
299 requirements specified in subsection (4) and who are enrolled in  
300 an FPCTP.

301 (b) To maintain eligibility to receive a scholarship, a  
302 student must continue to meet the requirements of paragraph (a)  
303 and must demonstrate satisfactory academic progress in the  
304 FPCTP, as determined by the eligible institution that the  
305 student attends, based on the indicators identified by the  
306 center pursuant to subsection (8).

307 (c) Payment of scholarship funds shall be transmitted to  
308 the director of the center, or to his or her designee, in  
309 advance of the registration period. The director, or his or her  
310 designee, shall disburse the scholarship funds to the eligible  
311 institutions that are responsible for awarding the scholarship  
312 to students who meet the requirements of paragraphs (a) and (b).

313 (d) During each academic term, by a date established by the  
314 center, an eligible institution shall report to the center the  
315 number and value of all scholarships awarded under this  
316 subsection. Each eligible institution shall also report to the  
317 center necessary demographic and eligibility data and other data  
318 requested by the center for students who received the  
319 scholarship awards.

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320 (e) By a date annually established by the center, each  
321 eligible institution shall certify to the center the amount of  
322 funds disbursed to each student and shall remit to the center  
323 any undisbursed advances by June 1 of each year.

324 (f) Funding for the scholarship and the maximum allowable  
325 award shall be as provided annually in the General  
326 Appropriations Act. If funds appropriated are not adequate to  
327 provide the maximum allowable award to each eligible student,  
328 the awards may be prorated.

329 (8) ACCOUNTABILITY.—

330 (a) The center, in collaboration with the Board of  
331 Governors and the State Board of Education, shall identify  
332 indicators for the satisfactory progress of a student in an  
333 FPCTP and for the performance of such programs. Each eligible  
334 institution must address the indicators identified by the center  
335 in its application for the approval of a proposed FPCTP and for  
336 the renewal of an FPCTP and in the annual report that the  
337 institution submits to the center.

338 (b) By October 1 of each year, the center shall provide to  
339 the Governor, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the  
340 House of Representatives, the Chancellor of the State University  
341 System, and the Commissioner of Education, a summary of  
342 information including, but not limited to:

343 1. The status of the statewide coordination of FPCTPs and  
344 the implementation of FPCTPs at eligible institutions including,  
345 but not limited to:

346 a. The number of applications approved and disapproved and  
347 the reasons for each disapproval and no action taken by the  
348 chancellor or the commissioner.

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349 b. The number and value of all scholarships awarded to  
350 students and undisbursed advances remitted to the center  
351 pursuant to subsection (7).

352 2. Indicators identified by the center pursuant to  
353 paragraph (a) and the performance of each eligible institution  
354 based on the indicators identified in paragraph (6)(c).

355 3. The projected number of students with intellectual  
356 disabilities who may be eligible to enroll in the FPCTPs within  
357 the next academic year.

358 4. Education programs and services for students with  
359 intellectual disabilities which are available at an eligible  
360 institution.

361 (c) Beginning in the 2015-2016 fiscal year, the center, in  
362 collaboration with the Board of Governors, State Board of  
363 Education, Higher Education Coordinating Council, and other  
364 stakeholders, by December 1 each year, shall submit to the  
365 Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the  
366 House of Representatives statutory or budget recommendations for  
367 improving the implementation and delivery of FPCTPs and other  
368 education programs and services for students with disabilities.

369 (9) RULES.—The Board of Governors and the State Board of  
370 Education, in consultation with the center, shall expeditiously  
371 adopt the necessary regulations and rules, as applicable, to  
372 allow the center to perform its responsibilities pursuant to  
373 this section beginning in the 2015-2016 fiscal year.

374 Section 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.