

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to postsecondary options for students
3 with disabilities; creating s. 1004.6501, F.S.;
4 providing a short title; providing purposes and
5 legislative intent; defining terms; establishing the
6 Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities;
7 providing center duties and responsibilities;
8 providing for Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive
9 Transition Programs at eligible institutions;
10 requiring the center to oversee the programs;
11 providing for application, application submission
12 deadlines, and approval and renewal process for the
13 programs; requiring certain information to be included
14 on the application; requiring the programs to provide
15 certain notification and to submit an annual report;
16 providing student eligibility for program admittance;
17 requiring the center to provide a report to the
18 Governor, Legislature, Chancellor of the State
19 University System, and Commissioner of Education and
20 to provide certain recommendations to the Legislature;
21 providing for rulemaking; repealing s. 19, chapter
22 2014-184, Laws of Florida; abrogating the scheduled
23 repeal of s. 1003.438, F.S., relating to special high
24 school graduation requirements for certain exceptional
25 students; providing an effective date.
26

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

28

29 Section 1. Section 1004.6501, Florida Statutes, is created
30 to read:

31 1004.6501 Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition
32 Program and Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities.-

33 (1) SHORT TITLE.-This section shall be known and may be
34 cited as the "Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition
35 Program Act."

36 (2) PURPOSE AND LEGISLATIVE INTENT.-The purpose of this
37 section is to increase independent living, inclusive and
38 successful experiential postsecondary education, and employment
39 opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities
40 through degree, certificate, and nondegree programs and to
41 establish statewide coordination of the dissemination of
42 information regarding programs and services for students with
43 disabilities. It is the intent of the Legislature that students
44 with intellectual disabilities and students with disabilities be
45 provided the opportunity to obtain important postsecondary
46 education credentials and participate in meaningful campus
47 experiences.

48 (3) DEFINITIONS.-As used in this section, the term:

49 (a) "Center" means the Florida Center for Students with
50 Unique Abilities.

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

52 (c) "Eligible institution" means a state university, a

53 Florida College System institution, a career center, a charter
 54 technical career center, or an independent college or university
 55 that is eligible to participate in the William L. Boyd, IV,
 56 Florida Resident Access Grant Program.

57 (d) "FPCTP" means a Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive
 58 Transition Program that is approved pursuant to subsection (5)
 59 and offered by an eligible institution.

60 (e) "Transitional student" means a student who is at least
 61 18 but not older than 26 years of age who meets the eligibility
 62 requirements of paragraph (5) (e).

63 (4) FLORIDA CENTER FOR STUDENTS WITH UNIQUE ABILITIES.—
 64 There is established within the University of Central Florida
 65 the Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities. The
 66 center shall:

67 (a) Disseminate information to students with disabilities
 68 and their parents, which must include, but is not limited to,
 69 information relating to:

70 1. Education programs, services, and resources that are
 71 available at eligible institutions.

72 2. Supports, accommodations, technical assistance, and
 73 training programs provided by eligible institutions, the
 74 advisory council established under s. 383.141, and regional
 75 autism centers established under s. 1004.55.

76 3. Mentoring, networking, and employment opportunities.

77 (b) Coordinate, facilitate, and oversee the statewide
 78 implementation of this section, including, but not limited to,

79 creating the application, deadlines for the submission of an
80 application, and the approval and renewal process for an FPCTP
81 under subsection (5).

82 (c) Consult and collaborate with the National Center for
83 Information and Technical Support for Postsecondary Students
84 with Disabilities and the coordinating center established under
85 20 U.S.C. s. 1140q regarding guidelines established by the
86 Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities for the
87 effective implementation of programs for students with
88 disabilities and for students with intellectual disabilities
89 that align with the federal requirements and standards, quality
90 indicators, and benchmarks identified by the National Center for
91 Information and Technical Support for Postsecondary Students
92 with Disabilities and the coordinating center.

93 (d) Consult and collaborate with the Higher Education
94 Coordinating Council to identify important credentials for
95 FPCTPs and to engage businesses and stakeholders in the
96 promotion of experiential training and employment opportunities
97 for students with intellectual disabilities.

98 (e) Provide information and technical assistance to
99 administrators, instructors, staff, and other interested parties
100 at an eligible institution relating to programs and services for
101 students with intellectual disabilities, which must include, but
102 are not limited to:

103 1. Holding meetings and annual workshops to share
104 successful practices and address issues or concerns.

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105 2. Facilitating collaboration between eligible
106 institutions, school districts, private schools, and the parents
107 of students enrolled in home education programs to better assist
108 students with intellectual disabilities and their parents in
109 planning for the transition of such students into an FPCTP or
110 another program at an eligible institution.

111 3. Assisting eligible institutions with FPCTP and federal
112 comprehensive transition and postsecondary program applications.

113 4. Assisting eligible institutions with the identification
114 of funding sources for an FPCTP and for student financial
115 assistance for students enrolled in an FPCTP.

116 5. Monitoring federal and state law relating to the
117 comprehensive transition program and notifying the Legislature,
118 the Governor, the Board of Governors, and the State Board of
119 Education of any change in law that may impact the
120 implementation of this section.

121 (f) Plan, advise, and evaluate approved degree,
122 certificate, and nondegree programs and evaluate the performance
123 of students and FPCTPs using the performance indicators included
124 in the application pursuant to subparagraph (5) (c) 6.

125 (5) FLORIDA POSTSECONDARY COMPREHENSIVE TRANSITION
126 PROGRAMS.—Any eligible institution desiring to offer an FPCTP
127 shall submit an application to the center in a manner prescribed
128 by the center. The application must be approved by the eligible
129 institution's governing board and be submitted by the
130 institution's president or director by a date established by the

131 center.

132 (a) Notwithstanding the program approval requirements of
133 s. 1004.03, within 30 days after receipt of an application from
134 an eligible institution to offer an FPCTP, the director shall
135 issue a recommendation for approval of the application to the
136 Chancellor of the State University System, if the institution is
137 a state university, or the Commissioner of Education, for all
138 other eligible institutions, or give written notice to the
139 eligible institution of any deficiencies in the application.
140 Within 15 days after receipt of the notice of deficiencies, the
141 eligible institution shall correct the deficiencies and return
142 the application to the center or withdraw the application from
143 consideration. Upon receipt of the revised application, the
144 director shall, within 30 days, recommend approval or
145 disapproval of the revised application to the chancellor or
146 commissioner, as applicable. Within 15 days after receipt of the
147 director's recommendation, the chancellor or commissioner shall
148 approve or disapprove the eligible institution's application. If
149 the chancellor or commissioner does not take action within the
150 15-day period, the application shall be considered approved.

151 (b) Initial approval of an FPCTP is valid for the 3
152 academic years immediately following the academic year in which
153 the approval is granted. An eligible institution may submit, in
154 the same manner as the initial application, an application for
155 renewal of an FPCTP. The application for renewal must be
156 submitted before the end of the initial 3-year period. If the

157 eligible institution and the FPCTP continue to meet the
158 requirements of this section, a renewal shall be granted for an
159 additional 5 academic years. The renewal period shall begin at
160 the end of the original approval period.

161 (c) The application developed by the center must:

162 1. Address the requirements of the federal comprehensive
163 transition and postsecondary program in 20 U.S.C. s. 1140 and
164 this section.

165 2. Identify the credential awarded to a student with an
166 intellectual disability upon completion of an FPCTP if he or she
167 meets the eligibility requirements of paragraph (e).

168 3. Outline the length and design of an FPCTP, including,
169 but not limited to, inclusive and successful experiential
170 postsecondary education practices relating to curricular,
171 assessment, and advising structure and internship and employment
172 opportunities that support a student with an intellectual
173 disability who is seeking to continue academic, career,
174 technical, and independent living instruction at an eligible
175 institution, including, but not limited to, opportunities to
176 earn industry certifications, to prepare such student for
177 gainful employment. If an eligible institution offers a credit-
178 bearing degree program, the institution is responsible for
179 maintaining the rigor and effectiveness of a comprehensive
180 transition degree program at the same level as other comparable
181 degree programs offered by the institution pursuant to
182 applicable accreditation standards.

183 4. Address the ways in which students with intellectual
184 disabilities will be socially and academically integrated, to
185 the maximum extent possible, with nondisabled students, which
186 must be on at least a half-time basis. Such integration must
187 include one or more of the following for such students:

188 a. Regular enrollment in credit-bearing courses at an
189 eligible institution.

190 b. Audit of or participation in noncredit-bearing courses
191 at an eligible institution.

192 c. Enrollment in noncredit-bearing, nondegree courses at
193 an eligible institution.

194 d. Participation in internships or employment training
195 programs.

196 5. Identify a plan for partnerships with businesses to
197 promote experiential training and employment opportunities for a
198 student with an intellectual disability.

199 6. Identify, after collaboration with the Board of
200 Governors and the State Board of Education, performance
201 indicators for the satisfactory progress of a student with an
202 intellectual disability in an FPCTP and for the performance of
203 an FPCTP and any other requirements specified by the center.
204 Each eligible institution must address the performance
205 indicators identified by the center in its application for the
206 approval and renewal of a proposed FPCTP and in the annual
207 report that the institution submits to the center.

208 7. Outline a 5-year plan incorporating enrollment and

209 operational expectations for an FPCTP.

210 8. Include documented evidence of a federally approved
211 comprehensive transition and postsecondary program that is
212 determined to be an eligible program for the federal student aid
213 programs and is currently offered at the institution, documented
214 evidence of the submission of an application for such federal
215 approval of a comprehensive transition and postsecondary program
216 proposed by the institution, or documentation demonstrating the
217 commitment of the institution's governing board to submit an
218 application within the subsequent academic year for federal
219 approval of a comprehensive transition and postsecondary program
220 proposed by the institution pursuant to 20 U.S.C. s. 1140.

221 (d) Upon approval of an application, an eligible
222 institution must notify students with intellectual disabilities
223 and their parents of the FPCTP and student eligibility
224 requirements for participation in the FPCTP.

225 (e) To be eligible to enroll in an FPCTP at an eligible
226 institution, a student must, as determined by the institution
227 and based on guidelines established by the center:

228 1. Be a student with an intellectual disability as defined
229 in 20 U.S.C. s. 1140(2), including, but not limited to, a
230 transitional student.

231 2. Physically attend the eligible institution.

232 3. Submit to the eligible institution documentation
233 regarding his or her intellectual disability. Such documentation
234 may include, but not be limited to, a current individualized

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235 plan for employment associated with a review completed pursuant
236 to s. 413.20(3) or a diagnosis from a physician licensed under
237 chapter 458 or chapter 459 or a psychologist licensed under
238 chapter 490.

239 (f) By August 1 of each year, an eligible institution with
240 an FPCTP shall submit an annual report to the center that, at a
241 minimum, addresses the following performance indicators for the
242 previous academic year:

243 1. Efforts to recruit students to enroll in the FPCTP and
244 the number of students enrolled in the FPCTP.

245 2. Efforts to retain student enrollment in the FPCTP and
246 the retention rate of students in the FPCTP.

247 3. The completion rate of students enrolled in the FPCTP
248 and related courses, as applicable.

249 4. Transition success of students who complete the FPCTP,
250 as measured by employment rates and salary levels at 1 year and
251 5 years after completion, as available.

252 5. Other performance indicators identified by the center
253 under subparagraph (c) 6.

254 (6) ACCOUNTABILITY.—

255 (a) By October 1 of each year, the center shall provide to
256 the Governor, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the
257 House of Representatives, the Chancellor of the State University
258 System, and the Commissioner of Education a report that
259 includes, but is not limited to:

260 1. The status of the statewide coordination of FPCTPs and

261 the implementation of FPCTPs at eligible institutions including,
262 but not limited to, the number of applications approved or
263 disapproved, the reasons for each disapproval, and the number of
264 applications on which no action was taken by the chancellor or
265 the commissioner, as applicable.

266 2. Performance indicators identified by the center under
267 subparagraph (5)(c)6. and the performance of each eligible
268 institution based on such indicators.

269 3. The projected number of students with intellectual
270 disabilities who may be eligible to enroll in the FPCTPs within
271 the next academic year.

272 4. Education programs and services for students with
273 intellectual disabilities that are available at an eligible
274 institution.

275 (b) Beginning December 1, 2015, and annually thereafter,
276 the center, in collaboration with the Board of Governors, the
277 State Board of Education, the Higher Education Coordinating
278 Council, and other stakeholders, shall submit to the Governor,
279 the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of
280 Representatives statutory and budget recommendations for
281 improving the implementation and delivery of FPCTPs and other
282 education programs and services for students with disabilities.

283 (7) RULES.—The Board of Governors and the State Board of
284 Education, in consultation with the center, shall expeditiously
285 adopt the necessary regulations and rules, as applicable, to
286 allow the center to perform its responsibilities pursuant to

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287 | this section beginning in the 2015-2016 fiscal year.

288 | Section 2. Section 19 of chapter 2014-184, Laws of
289 | Florida, is repealed.

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