

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

BILL #: CS/HB 401 Mastery-based Education
SPONSOR(S): PreK-12 Innovation Subcommittee, DiCeglie and others
TIED BILLS: None **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:** SB 226

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR or BUDGET/POLICY CHIEF
1) PreK-12 Innovation Subcommittee	12 Y, 2 N, As CS	Hoeft	Brink
2) Education Committee	16 Y, 0 N	D'Souza	Hassell

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

In 2016, the Legislature created the Competency-Based Education Pilot Program within the Department of Education (DOE) to provide an educational environment that allows students to progress to higher levels of learning based upon the mastery of concepts and skills. Under the program, the State Board of Education may allow the Commissioner of Education to waive rules relating to student progression and awarding of credits. Participation in the voluntary pilot program is limited to the P.K. Yonge Developmental Research School and the Lake, Palm Beach, Pinellas, and Seminole County school districts. The pilot program is set to expire in 2021.

The bill:

- Renames the Competency-Based Education Pilot Program as the Mastery-Based Education Pilot Program.
- Allows any school district in the state to submit an application to the DOE to participate in the program.
- Authorizes participating districts to approve and use an alternative interpretation of letter grades using rigorous scoring rubrics to measure student success in grades 6-12. Districts must continue to use a four-point scale for calculating a student's grade-point average.
- Allows participating districts to determine and award one full credit toward high school graduation based on the student's mastery of core content and skills without meeting the current minimum requirement of 135 or 120 hours of instruction.
- Requires participating districts to amend their student progression plans to conform to the alternative awarding of credit.
- Revises requirements for the statewide articulation agreement to provide fair and equitable access for students who graduate with a standard high school diploma and have earned high school credit through a mastery-based education program.

The bill does not appear to have a fiscal impact.

The bill has an effective date of July 1, 2019.

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

Present Situation

In 2016, the Legislature created the 5-year Competency-Based Education Pilot Program (CBEPP) within the Department of Education (DOE) to provide an educational environment allowing students to progress through Florida's Next Generation Sunshine State Standards (NGSSS) at their own pace to demonstrate higher levels of learning through the mastery of concepts and skills.^{1,2} Voluntary participation in the CBEPP is limited to the P.K. Yonge Developmental Research School and the Lake, Palm Beach, Pinellas, and Seminole County school districts.³ The program is scheduled to end in 2021.

The DOE was required to:

- Develop a pilot program application.
- Compile student and staff schedules of participating schools before and after pilot program implementation.
- Provide participants with access to statewide, standardized assessments.
- Submit an annual report by June 1 to the Governor, Senate President, and House Speaker summarizing the CBEPP activities, accomplishments, and recommendations for statutory revisions.⁴

School districts applying to participate in the pilot program were required to include the following:

- Vision and timelines for implementing competency-based education within the district.
- Annual goals and performance outcomes for participating schools, including student performance, promotion and retention rates, graduation rates, and indicators of college and career readiness.
- Communication plan for parents and other stakeholders.
- Scope and timelines for professional development for school instructional and administrative personnel.
- Plan for student progression based on the mastery of content.
- Plan for using technology and digital and blended learning to enhance student achievement.
- Proposed allocation of resources for the pilot program.
- Recruitment and selection of participating schools.
- Rules to be waived for participating schools.⁵

The State Board of Education (SBE) may allow the Commissioner of Education to waive rules relating to student progression and the awarding of credit.⁶ This is in addition to the commissioner's waiver authority to facilitate innovative practices and allow local selection of educational methods.⁷

Students enrolled in a participating pilot program school are reported for and generate funding consistent with other public schools.⁸

¹ Section 1003.4996, F.S.

² Rule 6A-6.0652, F.A.C.

³ Section 1003.4996(1), F.S.

⁴ Section 1003.4996(1),(2) and (5), F.S.

⁵ Section 1003.4996(2), F.S.

⁶ Section 1003.4996(3), F.S.

⁷ See s. 1001.10(3), F.S.

⁸ Section 1003.4996(4), F.S.

Four of the five eligible school districts participated in the CBEPP during the 2016-2017 school year, with Seminole using 2016-2017 as a planning year. Four districts, including Seminole, participated in the 2017-2018 school year, while Lake chose to pause its participation in the 2017-2018 school year.

The four participating school districts implemented the pilot program partially in 64 elementary schools, two middle schools, ten high schools, and one K-12 school during the 2017-2018 school year.⁹

Definition of Credit

Current law defines, for purposes of high school graduation requirements, one full credit as a minimum of 135 hours of bona fide instruction in a designated course of study containing student performance standards, except as otherwise provided through the Credit Acceleration Program. For districts authorized to implement block scheduling, one full credit means a minimum of 120 hours of bona fide instruction in a designated course of study containing student performance standards.¹⁰

Each district school board must maintain a one-half credit earned system that includes courses provided on a full-year basis in awarding credit for high school graduation. A student who is enrolled in a full-year course but successfully completes only the first half or the second half of the course must receive one-half credit if the averaged grades would result in a failing grade.¹¹

Middle and High School Grading System

Current law defines the grade 6 through grade 12 grading system and interpretation of letter grades used to measure student success as follows:

- Grade “A” equals 90%-100%, has a grade point average value of 4, and is defined as “outstanding progress.”
- Grade “B” equals 80%-89%, has a grade point average value of 3, and is defined as “above average progress.”
- Grade “C” equals 70%-79%, has a grade point average value of 2, and is defined as “average progress.”
- Grade “D” equals 60%-69%, has a grade point average value of 1, and is defined as “lowest acceptable progress.”
- Grade “F” equals 0%-59%, has a grade point average value of zero, and is defined as “failure.”
- Grade “I” equals zero percent, has a grade point average value of zero, and is defined as “incomplete.”¹²

For purposes of class ranking, district school boards are authorized to exercise a weighted grading system in accordance with the weighted provisions allowed in dual enrollment courses.¹³

Alternative Grading

One form of alternative grading is a standards-based learning grading system which measures students’ understanding or mastery of the knowledge and skills they are expected to learn as they progress through their education. Concise, written descriptions of what students are expected to know and be able to do at specific points in their education set the goals of a lesson or course, and teachers then determine how and what to teach so the students meet the standards’ learning expectations.¹⁴

⁹ Florida Department of Education, *Competency-Based Education Pilot Program, 2017-2018 Annual Report* (June 1, 2018), available at <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7749/urlt/CBPP-Report.pdf>.

¹⁰ Section 1003.436(1)(a), F.S.

¹¹ Section 1003.436(2), F.S.

¹² Section 1003.437, F.S.

¹³ Section 1003.437, F.S.

¹⁴ Glossary of Education Reform, *Standards-Based*, at <https://www.edglossary.org/standards-based> (last visited Feb. 11, 2019).

“Standards-based learning” is different than “standards-referenced learning” in which what gets taught or tested is “referenced” to or derived from learning standards, whereas “standards-based” refers to student demonstration of competence on the expected standards.¹⁵

The P.K. Yonge Developmental Research School has indicated that it is moving to a standards-based grading system to provide parents, students and teachers with more accurate information about students’ progress toward meeting the content and skill standards. Students will receive a separate progress report for each subject within a course, rather than for an entire course, in order to help students set goals and achieve standards. Student progress is reported as a level of proficiency, i.e., *Expert (A), Proficient (B), Approaching Proficiency (C), Beginning (D), and Not Meeting (F)*.¹⁶

Student Progression Plan

Each district school board must establish a comprehensive plan for student progression which provides for a student’s progression from one grade to another based on the student’s mastery of the NGSSS, specifically in English Language Arts, mathematics, science, and social studies standards.¹⁷ Among other things, the progression plan must specify requirements for whole-grade and midyear promotions, provide subject matter acceleration and early graduation options, and specify available dual enrollment courses.¹⁸

Statewide Articulation Agreement

The SBE and Board of Governors of the State University System must enter into a statewide articulation agreement to preserve Florida’s “2+2” articulation system and facilitate the seamless articulation of student credit between Florida’s educational entities, including between secondary and postsecondary educational institutions.¹⁹ The articulation agreement governs articulation between secondary and postsecondary programs.²⁰

Effect of Proposed Changes

The bill renames the Competency-Based Education Pilot Program as the Mastery-Based Education Pilot Program (MBEPP) and expands the option to participate in the MBEPP to all school districts. The bill does not extend the program beyond the 2020-2021 school year.

The bill authorizes school districts participating in the MBEPP to award course credit as a student demonstrates mastery of the core content and skills, consistent with the NGSSS, rather than award credit based on the 135 or 120 hour instructional requirements. The district school board must approve a participating school’s use of mastery-based progression in lieu of instructional time. Some students may progress more rapidly through a course by mastering core content and skills without having to meet the minimum instructional hours’ requirement, while others may need more than 135 or 120 hours of instruction to master course core content and skills.

The bill authorizes participating school districts to use alternatives for the interpretation of middle and high school letter grades (“alternative grading system”) to measure student success in grades 6–12, but participating districts must continue to use the established four-point scale for calculating a student’s grade-point average.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Standards-Based Grading, *What is Standards-Based Grading?*, available at <https://pkyonge.ufl.edu/academics/standards-based-grading/> (last visited Feb. 11, 2019).

¹⁷ Section 1008.25(2), F.S.

¹⁸ See s. 1008.25(2)(b), F.S.

¹⁹ Section 1007.23(1), F.S.

²⁰ Section 1007.23(1)(a), F.S.

The bill allows participating school districts, beginning with the 2019-2020 school year, to amend their applications to include alternatives for awarding credit and alternative grading systems for middle and high school letter grades. Applications that are amended must be approved by the district school board.

Alternatives to awarding credit must include verification of the student's mastery of the applicable course content using rigorous scoring rubrics to evaluate the student's work.²¹ A participating school district that uses an alternative to awarding credit must amend its student progression plan to conform to the alternative awarding of credits.

The bill revises the requirements for the statewide articulation agreement to provide fair and equitable access for students who graduate with a standard high school diploma and have earned high school credit through a mastery-based education program.

B. SECTION DIRECTORY:

Section 1. Amends s. 1003.436, F.S., relating to definition of "credit."

Section 2. Amends s. 1003.437, F.S., relating to middle and high school grading system.

Section 3. Amends s. 1003.4996, F.S., relating to the Competency-Based Education Pilot Program.

Section 4. Amends s. 1007.23, F.S., relating to the statewide articulation agreement.

Section 5. Provides an effective date of July 1, 2019.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

²¹ A "rubric" is an evaluation tool used to promote the consistent application of learning expectations or learning standards in the classroom, or to measure their attainment against a consistent set of criteria, and to clearly define academic expectations for students and help to ensure consistency in the evaluation of academic work. Glossary of Education Reform, *Rubric*, available at <https://www.edglossary.org/rubric/> (last visited Feb. 11, 2019).

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

None.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

Indeterminate, as any costs can likely be absorbed within existing DOE resources.

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

None.

2. Other:

None.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

None.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

None.

IV. AMENDMENTS/ COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES

On February 13, 2019, the PreK-12 Innovation Subcommittee adopted an amendment and reported the bill favorably as a committee substitute. The amendment deletes language relating to nontraditional diplomas and specifies that the statewide articulation agreement must provide for fair and equitable access for students who graduate with a standard high school diploma and have earned high school credit through a mastery-based education program.

The bill analysis is drafted to the committee substitute.