

1                   A bill to be entitled  
2           An act relating to schools of innovation; creating s.  
3           1003.65, F.S.; establishing the Schools of Innovation  
4           Program within the Department of Education; providing  
5           the purpose of the program; defining terms;  
6           authorizing the State Board of Education to authorize  
7           the Commissioner of Education to waive certain rules;  
8           authorizing public school districts to apply for  
9           identified schools to receive the designation of  
10          school of innovation; requiring school districts  
11          participating in the Competency-Based Education Pilot  
12          Program to transition to the School of Innovation  
13          Program before a specified school year; authorizing  
14          school districts to submit innovation plans to the  
15          department; requiring the department to approve or  
16          reject innovation plans submitted by school districts  
17          within a specified timeframe; requiring that a school  
18          maintains its designation as a school of innovation  
19          for a 5-year period upon approval of an innovation  
20          plan; authorizing the department to revoke the  
21          designation if specified metrics are not met;  
22          specifying requirements for innovation plans;  
23          authorizing innovation plans to include a request for  
24          waivers from certain rules; specifying duties of the  
25          department; prohibiting a student attending a school

26 of innovation who transfers to another school from  
 27 being subject to specified penalties; providing for  
 28 funding; requiring the state board to adopt rules;  
 29 amending s. 1003.436, F.S.; revising the definition of  
 30 the term "credit"; amending s. 1003.437, F.S.;  
 31 authorizing schools designated as schools of  
 32 innovation to use an alternative definition of letter  
 33 grades; requiring such schools to calculate grade  
 34 point averages according to a certain scale; amending  
 35 s. 1007.23, F.S.; requiring the statewide articulation  
 36 agreement to ensure fair and equitable access for high  
 37 school graduates with mastery-based, nontraditional  
 38 diplomas and transcripts; providing an effective date.

39

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

41

42 Section 1. Section 1003.65, Florida Statutes, is created  
 43 to read:

44 1003.65 Schools of Innovation Program.—Beginning with the  
 45 2022-2023 school year, the Schools of Innovation Program is  
 46 created within the Department of Education. The purpose of the  
 47 program is to provide a mechanism for public schools to operate  
 48 with greater flexibility in regard to instructional delivery and  
 49 instructional strategies to improve student achievement and  
 50 enhance academic opportunities.

51 (1) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section, the term:

52 (a) "Innovation" means an alternative to the existing  
53 instructional and administrative practices which is intended to  
54 improve learning or enhance academic opportunities for all  
55 students.

56 (b) "School of innovation" is a designation given to a  
57 public school with an approved application, in accordance with  
58 subsection (4).

59 (2) EXEMPTION FROM RULES.—In addition to the waivers  
60 authorized in s. 1001.10(3), the State Board of Education may  
61 authorize the Commissioner of Education to waive State Board of  
62 Education rules relating to student progression and the awarding  
63 of credits.

64 (3) PARTICIPATION.—

65 (a) Any public school district may apply for identified  
66 schools to receive the designation of school of innovation.

67 (b) Before the 2023-2024 school year, school districts  
68 participating in the Competency-Based Education Pilot Program  
69 authorized by s. 1003.4996 shall transition to the Schools of  
70 Innovation Program.

71 (4) APPLICATION.—

72 (a) School districts may submit an innovation plan in  
73 accordance with subsection (6) to the department.

74 (b) Within 60 days after receiving an innovation plan  
75 submission, the department shall approve or reject the

76 innovation plan and notify the district accordingly.

77 (5) DURATION.—

78 (a) Upon approval of an innovation plan by the department,  
 79 a school shall maintain the school of innovation designation for  
 80 a 5-year period.

81 (b) The department may revoke the innovation designation  
 82 if the innovation plan goals, performance indicators, or  
 83 implementation milestones are not being met.

84 (6) INNOVATION PLAN REQUIREMENTS.—An innovation plan, at a  
 85 minimum, must include the following information for each school  
 86 to be considered:

87 (a) A statement of the school's mission and why  
 88 designation as a school of innovation would enhance the school's  
 89 ability to achieve its mission.

90 (b) A description of the innovative practices the school  
 91 would like to implement and a detailed implementation timeline  
 92 not to exceed 5 years.

93 (c) A plan to address the programs, policies, or  
 94 operations at the local level which would need to change to  
 95 successfully implement the innovation plan.

96 (d) A description of annual goals and expected performance  
 97 outcomes, including, but not limited to:

98 1. Student performance as defined in s. 1008.34.

99 2. Promotion and retention rates.

100 3. Graduation rates.

101 4. Indicators of college and career readiness.

102 (e) Anticipated timelines for implementation and proposed  
103 allocation of resources and support at the school and district  
104 levels, including flexibility given under local policies and  
105 procedures to support implementation.

106 (f) The scope of and timelines for professional  
107 development for school instructional and administrative  
108 personnel.

109 (g) A summary that demonstrates that meaningful parental,  
110 educator, and community input was gathered in creating the  
111 innovation plan.

112 (h) The formative, benchmark, and summative assessments  
113 that will be used to monitor progress and outcomes.

114 (i) A communication plan for parents and other  
115 stakeholders, including local businesses and community members.

116 (7) WAIVER REQUEST.—An innovation plan may include a  
117 request for waivers from State Board of Education rules.

118 (8) DEPARTMENT DUTIES.—The department shall:

119 (a) Support all schools of innovation through a statewide  
120 innovation network. The statewide innovation network should be  
121 composed of stakeholders from each school of innovation and  
122 convene annually to share best practices, lessons learned, and  
123 recommendations.

124 (b) Develop a process and timeline by which schools of  
125 innovation report on the outcomes of their innovation plans.

HB 961

2022

126 (c) Compile the schools of innovation reports into a  
127 single annual report that analyzes the status of innovation  
128 across this state and includes a list of requested and approved  
129 flexibility requests as well as any statutory recommendations.  
130 The report shall be presented annually, by June 1, to the  
131 Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the  
132 House of Representatives.

133 (9) STUDENT PROTECTIONS.—A student attending a school of  
134 innovation who transfers to another school within this state may  
135 not be penalized by being required to repeat coursework or  
136 content that the student has already demonstrated mastery of, by  
137 having his or her grades changed, or by receiving any other  
138 penalty related to the student's previous attendance at a school  
139 of innovation.

140 (10) STUDENT FUNDING.—Students enrolled in a participating  
141 school shall be reported for and generate funding pursuant to s.  
142 1011.62.

143 (11) RULES.—The State Board of Education shall adopt rules  
144 to administer this section.

145 Section 2. Paragraph (a) of subsection (1) of section  
146 1003.436, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

147 1003.436 Definition of "credit."—

148 (1)(a) For the purposes of requirements for high school  
149 graduation, one full credit means a minimum of 135 hours of bona  
150 fide instruction in a designated course of study that contains

HB 961

2022

151 student performance standards, except as otherwise provided  
152 through the Credit Acceleration Program (CAP) under s.  
153 1003.4295(3). One full credit means a minimum of 120 hours of  
154 bona fide instruction in a designated course of study that  
155 contains student performance standards for purposes of meeting  
156 high school graduation requirements in a district school that  
157 has been authorized to implement block scheduling by the  
158 district school board. The State Board of Education shall  
159 determine the number of postsecondary credit hours earned  
160 through dual enrollment pursuant to s. 1007.271 that satisfy the  
161 requirements of a dual enrollment articulation agreement  
162 according to s. 1007.271(21) and that equal one full credit of  
163 the equivalent high school course identified pursuant to s.  
164 1007.271(9). In lieu of the 135-hour and 120-hour instruction  
165 requirements, a school designated as a school of innovation  
166 pursuant to s. 1003.65 may determine and award credit based on a  
167 student's mastery of the core content and skills, consistent  
168 with s. 1003.41.

169 Section 3. Section 1003.437, Florida Statutes, is amended  
170 to read:

171 1003.437 Middle and high school grading system.—

172 (1) The grading system and interpretation of letter grades  
173 used to measure student success in grade 6 through grade 12  
174 courses for students in public schools is ~~shall be~~ as follows:

175 (a) ~~(1)~~ Grade "A" equals 90 percent through 100 percent,

HB 961

2022

176 has a grade point average value of 4, and is defined as  
177 "outstanding progress."

178 ~~(b)(2)~~ Grade "B" equals 80 percent through 89 percent, has  
179 a grade point average value of 3, and is defined as "above  
180 average progress."

181 ~~(c)(3)~~ Grade "C" equals 70 percent through 79 percent, has  
182 a grade point average value of 2, and is defined as "average  
183 progress."

184 ~~(d)(4)~~ Grade "D" equals 60 percent through 69 percent, has  
185 a grade point average value of 1, and is defined as "lowest  
186 acceptable progress."

187 ~~(e)(5)~~ Grade "F" equals zero percent through 59 percent,  
188 has a grade point average value of zero, and is defined as  
189 "failure."

190 ~~(f)(6)~~ Grade "I" equals zero percent, has a grade point  
191 average value of zero, and is defined as "incomplete."

192 (2) Schools with a school of innovation designation  
193 pursuant to s. 1003.65 may use an alternative definition of  
194 letter grades to measure student success in kindergarten through  
195 grade 12; however, the student's grade point average must be  
196 calculated using the 4-point scale established in subsection  
197 (1).

198  
199 For the purposes of class ranking, district school boards may  
200 exercise a weighted grading system pursuant to s. 1007.271.



HB 961

2022

201 Section 4. Subsection (10) is added to section 1007.23,  
202 Florida Statutes, to read:

203 1007.23 Statewide articulation agreement.—

204 (10) The articulation agreement must ensure fair and  
205 equitable access for high school graduates with mastery-based,  
206 nontraditional diplomas and transcripts.

207 Section 5. This act shall take effect July 1, 2022.