

## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

**BILL #:** CS/HB 445 Certificates of Completion

**SPONSOR(S):** Valdés and others

**TIED BILLS:** None. **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:** SB 1168

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR or BUDGET/POLICY CHIEF
1) Education Quality Subcommittee	16 Y, 0 N, As CS	McDaniel	Sanchez
2) PreK-12 Appropriations Subcommittee			
3) Education & Employment Committee			

### SUMMARY ANALYSIS

A Florida high school student who earns the required 24 credits for a standard high school diploma, or the required 18 credits through the Academically Challenging Curriculum to Enhance Learning (ACCEL) options graduation pathway, but fails to pass the required statewide assessments or achieve a 2.0 GPA must be awarded a certificate of completion. However, a student who is otherwise entitled to a certificate of completion may elect to remain in high school for up to one additional year and receive special instruction designed to remedy his or her identified deficiencies.

The bill requires school districts to provide written notification to parents and students who are eligible for a certificate of completion of the option for the student to remain in high school for up to one additional year to receive special instruction to remedy the student's identified deficiencies and graduate with a high school diploma.

A school district may earn additional full-time equivalent (FTE) funding for each student who is eligible for a certificate of completion that elects to remain in high school for up to one additional year and that is awarded a standard high school diploma. Each school district must allocate bonus FTE funding to the school whose students generate the funds. Funds may only be used for special instruction and support services for students eligible for a certificate of completion who elect to remain in high school for up to 1 additional year.

Should the student choose to be awarded a certificate of completion and forgo the additional year of instruction, the bill requires the student's certified school counselor or other school personnel to inform the student of opportunities to continue his or her education.

The bill requires the SBE to adopt rules to monitor compliance related to requirements for students eligible for certificates of completions.

The bill has an indeterminate fiscal impact. See Fiscal Comments.

The bill has an effective date of July 1, 2023.

# FULL ANALYSIS

## I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

### A. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

#### Present Situation

##### Florida High School Diploma

##### *Requirements*

Florida law establishes academic requirements for earning a standard high school diploma to include five options:

- 24-credit program;<sup>1</sup>
- 18-credit Academically Challenging Curriculum to Enhance Learning (ACCEL) option;<sup>2</sup>
- Career and Technical Education (CTE) Pathway option;<sup>3</sup>
- an International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum;<sup>4</sup> or
- an Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) curriculum.<sup>5</sup>

The 24 credits required for a standard high school diploma include:<sup>6</sup>

- four credits in English Language Arts (ELA);
- four credits in mathematics;
- three credits in science;
- three credits in social studies;
- one credit in fine or performing arts, speech, and debate, or practical arts;
- one credit in physical education; and
- eight credits in electives.<sup>7</sup>

Within the 24 credits, at least one course must be completed through online learning.<sup>8</sup> In addition to successful completion of the required courses, a student must earn a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale<sup>9</sup> and must pass the following required statewide standardized assessments:

- grade 10 ELA assessment or earn a concordant score on the SAT or ACT;<sup>10</sup> and
- Algebra I end-of-course (EOC) assessment or, earn a comparative score on the Math section of the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT), the SAT, the ACT or the Geometry EOC assessment.<sup>11</sup>

The 18-credit ACCEL option requirements are similar to those of the 24-credit option, with the following exceptions:

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<sup>1</sup> Section 1003.4282(1)(a), F.S.

<sup>2</sup> Section 1002.3105(5), F.S.

<sup>3</sup> Section 1003.4282(10), F.S.

<sup>4</sup> Section 1003.4282(1)(a), F.S.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

<sup>6</sup> Section 1003.4282(3)(a)-(g), F.S.

<sup>7</sup> Section 1003.4282(3)(g) and (h), F.S. Beginning with the cohort entering in grade 9 in the 2023-24 school year, a student must complete seven and one-half credits in electives and one-half credit in personal financial literacy in order to graduate with a standard high school diploma. *Id.*

<sup>8</sup> Section 1003.4282(4), F.S.

<sup>9</sup> Section 1003.4282(6)(a), F.S.

<sup>10</sup> Section 1003.4282(3)(a), F.S.; Rule 6A-1.09422(8)(a)2., F.A.C. Beginning with students who entered grade 9 in the 2018-2019 school year, students and adults who have not earned the required passing score on the Grade 10 FSA ELA assessment, may meet the testing requirement to earn a high school diploma by earning a specified concordant score.

<sup>11</sup> Section 1003.4282(3)(b)1., F.S.; Rule 6A-1.09422(8)(b)2., F.A.C. Beginning with students who entered grade 9 in the 2018-2019 school year, students and adults who have not earned the required passing score on the Algebra 1 EOC assessment, may meet the testing requirements to earn a high school diploma by earning a specified comparative score.

- three elective credits instead of eight;
- a physical education credit is not required; and
- an online course is not required.<sup>12</sup>

### *Certificate of Completion*

A student who earns the required 24 credits, or the required 18 credits through the ACCEL options graduation pathway, but fails to pass the required statewide assessments or achieve a 2.0 GPA must be awarded a certificate of completion in a form prescribed by the State Board of Education (SBE).<sup>13</sup> However, a student who is otherwise entitled to a certificate of completion may elect to remain in high school either as a full-time student or a part-time student for up to one additional year and receive special instruction designed to remedy his or her identified deficiencies.<sup>14</sup>

During the transition planning process,<sup>15</sup> a parent of a student with a disability must declare an intention for the student to graduate from high school with either a standard high school diploma or a certificate of completion. A certificate of completion must be awarded to a student with a disability who does not satisfy the standard high school diploma requirements.<sup>16</sup> A student with a disability who receives a certificate of completion may continue to receive Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) until their 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday, or, until the end of the school semester or year in which the student turns 22.<sup>17</sup>

### Certificate of Completion- Admission to Postsecondary Education

Current law requires a student who has been awarded a certificate of completion to be eligible to enroll in certificate career education programs at a Florida College System (FCS) institution.<sup>18</sup> A certificate career education program is defined as a course of study that leads to at least one occupational completion point.<sup>19</sup> The program may also confer credit that may articulate with a diploma or career degree education program, if authorized by rules of the SBE.<sup>20</sup>

### Florida Education Finance Program

The Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) allocates funds to each school district based on student enrollment.<sup>21</sup> The FEFP uses a unit of measure for each student called a full-time equivalent (FTE). One FTE equals one school year of instruction provided to a student.<sup>22</sup> Districts may earn additional FTE for students who meet qualifying student attainment metrics in specific bonus FTE programs or courses.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Paul O. Burns, EdD., *High School Graduation and Completion Options*, presentation before the Education Quality Subcommittee (Feb. 8, 2023).

<sup>13</sup> Section 1003.4282(6)(c), F.S.

<sup>14</sup> *Id.*

<sup>15</sup> Section 1003.5716(1), F.S. An individualized education plan (IEP) team must identify the need for transition services before a student with a disability enters high school to ensure quality planning for postsecondary education and career opportunities. The plan must be ready for implementation by the first day of the student's first year in high school. *Id.*

<sup>16</sup> Section 1003.4282(9)(a), F.S.

<sup>17</sup> Paul O. Burns, EdD., *High School Graduation and Completion Options*, presentation before the Education Quality Subcommittee (Feb. 8, 2023).

<sup>18</sup> Section 1007.263(4), F.S.

<sup>19</sup> Section 1004.02(20), F.S.; *see also* s. 1004.02(21), F.S. An occupational completion point means the occupational competencies that qualify a person to enter an occupation that is linked to a career and technical program.

<sup>20</sup> *Id.*

<sup>21</sup> *See* s. 1011.62(1)(d)1., F.S.

<sup>22</sup> Section 1011.61(1)(a), F.S.

<sup>23</sup> Section 1011.61(1)(l)-(p), F.S. Bonus FTE programs include Advanced Placement exams, College Board AP Capstone Diploma, International Baccalaureate exams, International Baccalaureate Diploma, Advanced International Certificate of Education exams, Advanced International Certification of Education diploma, Career and Professional Education, and Early High School Graduation. *Id.*

## Effect of Proposed Changes

The bill requires school districts to provide written notification parents and students who are eligible for a certificate of completion of the option for the student to remain in high school for up to one additional year in order to receive special instruction to remedy the student's identified deficiencies and graduate with a high school diploma. The written notification must contain the contact information of a certified school counselor who can advise the student and parent on this option.

The bill provides school districts with .50 additional FTE for each student who is eligible for a certificate of completion that elects to remain in high school for up to one additional year and that is awarded a standard high school diploma. Such value must be added to the total FTE student membership in basic programs for grades 9 through 12 in the subsequent fiscal year. Each school district must allocate the funds received from the bonus FTE funding to the school whose students generate the funds. Funds may only be used for special instruction and support services for students eligible for a certificate of completion who elect to remain in high school for up to 1 additional year.

Should the student choose to be awarded a certificate of completion and forgo the additional year of instruction, the bill requires the student's certified school counselor or other school personnel to inform the student of opportunities to continue his or her education through eligible postsecondary, workforce, or adult education programs.

The bill requires the SBE to adopt rules to monitor compliance related to requirements for students eligible for certificates of completions.

### B. SECTION DIRECTORY:

**Section 1.** Amending s. 1002.45, F.S., conforming a cross reference.

**Section 2.** Amending s. 1003.4282, F.S., requiring school districts to notify students entitled to a certificate of completion and their parents of specified education options; providing notification requirements; requiring the State Board of Education to adopt rules for specified purposes.

**Section 3.** Amending s. 1011.62, F.S., providing additional funding through the Florida Education Finance Program to school districts for certain students who earn a standard high school diploma; providing requirements for such funding.

**Section 4.** Provides an effective date.

## II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

### A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None. See Fiscal Comments.

### B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

None. See Fiscal Comments.

2. Expenditures:

None.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

None.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

Increasing the eligibility for students to receive additional FTE student membership will have a negative indeterminate fiscal impact on the FEFP and a positive indeterminate fiscal impact on school district budgets.

### III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

None.

2. Other:

None.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

The bill requires the SBE to adopt rules to monitor compliance related to requirements for students eligible for certificates of completions.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

None.

### IV. AMENDMENTS/COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES

On March 29, 2023, the Education Quality Subcommittee adopted a proposed committee substitute (PCS) and reported the bill favorably as a committee substitute. The PCS differed from HB 445 in the following ways:

- requires school districts to provide written notification to parents and students who are eligible for a certificate of completion of the option for the student to remain in high school for up to one additional year in order to receive special instruction to remedy the student's identified deficiencies and graduate with a high school diploma;
- requires the written notification to contain the contact information of a certified school counselor who can advise the student and parent on this option;
- requires the student's certified school counselor or other school personnel to inform the student of opportunities to continue his or her education through eligible postsecondary, workforce, or adult education programs should the student forgo the additional year of instruction and choose to be awarded a certificate of completion;
- requires the SBE to adopt rules to monitor compliance related to requirements for students eligible for certificates of completion;
- provides school districts with .50 additional FTE for each student who is eligible for a certificate of completion that elects to remain in high school for up to one additional year and that is awarded a standard high school diploma;
- requires that the value must be added to the total FTE student membership in basic programs for grades 9 through 12 in the subsequent fiscal year;
- requires each school district to allocate the funds received from the bonus FTE funding to the school whose students generate the funds; and
- requires funds to only be used for special instruction and support services for students eligible for a certificate of completion who elect to remain in high school for up to 1 additional year.

The bill analysis is drafted to the committee substitute adopted by the Education Quality Subcommittee.