

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to education; amending s. 445.009,
3 F.S.; revising the services for which the one-stop
4 delivery system is intended to provide access to;
5 amending s. 1003.21, F.S.; requiring a student's
6 certified school counselor or other school personnel
7 to inform the student of opportunities in specified
8 programs; amending s. 1003.435, F.S.; requiring
9 district school boards to notify all candidates for
10 the high school equivalency diploma of adult secondary
11 and postsecondary education options, including
12 specified eligibility requirements; creating s.
13 1004.933, F.S.; providing definitions; establishing
14 the Graduation Alternative to Traditional Education
15 (GATE) Program for a specified purpose; requiring
16 institutions to waive payments for specified student
17 fees; providing eligibility requirements; providing
18 that students participating in the program are
19 eligible for a specified stipend under certain
20 circumstances; prohibiting an institution from
21 imposing additional eligibility requirements;
22 providing Department of Education responsibilities;
23 providing department reporting requirements; requiring
24 the State Board of Education to adopt rules; creating
25 s. 1009.711, F.S.; creating the GATE Scholarship

26 | Program; requiring the department to administer the
27 | program; requiring the program to reimburse eligible
28 | institutions for specified student fees and costs;
29 | requiring participating institutions to report
30 | specified information to the department; requiring the
31 | department to reimburse participating institutions
32 | within a specified timeframe; providing that
33 | reimbursements are contingent upon legislative
34 | appropriation and must be prorated under certain
35 | circumstances; requiring the state board to adopt
36 | rules; amending s. 1011.80, F.S.; revising the number
37 | of courses certain students may be reported for
38 | certain funding purposes; providing that such courses
39 | do not have to be core curricula courses; deleting a
40 | requirement for the department to develop a list of
41 | courses to be designated as core curricula courses;
42 | creating s. 1011.804, F.S.; creating the GATE Program
43 | Student Success Incentive Fund; defining the term
44 | "institution"; subject to appropriation, requiring
45 | each participating institution to receive an
46 | allocation based on certain student performance and
47 | according to specified metrics; requiring students to
48 | meet or exceed such metrics in order for a
49 | participating institution to receive such allocation;
50 | providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Paragraph (g) of subsection (1) of section 445.009, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

445.009 One-stop delivery system.—

(1) The one-stop delivery system is the state's primary customer-service strategy for offering every Floridian access, through service sites or telephone or computer networks, to the following services:

(g) Adult education, ~~and~~ basic skills training, integrated education and training, and the Graduation Alternative to Traditional Education Program under s. 1004.933.

Section 2. Paragraph (c) of subsection (1) of section 1003.21, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1003.21 School attendance.—

(1)

(c) A student who attains the age of 16 years during the school year is not subject to compulsory school attendance beyond the date upon which he or she attains that age if the student files a formal declaration of intent to terminate school enrollment with the district school board. Public school students who have attained the age of 16 years and who have not graduated are subject to compulsory school attendance until the formal declaration of intent is filed with the district school

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76 board. The declaration must acknowledge that terminating school
77 enrollment is likely to reduce the student's earning potential
78 and must be signed by the student and the student's parent. The
79 school district shall notify the student's parent of receipt of
80 the student's declaration of intent to terminate school
81 enrollment. The student's certified school counselor or other
82 school personnel shall conduct an exit interview with the
83 student to determine the reasons for the student's decision to
84 terminate school enrollment and actions that could be taken to
85 keep the student in school. The student's certified school
86 counselor or other school personnel shall inform the student of
87 opportunities to continue his or her education in a different
88 environment, including, but not limited to, adult education, ~~and~~
89 high school equivalency examination preparation, and the
90 Graduation Alternative to Traditional Education Program under s.
91 1004.933. Additionally, the student shall complete a survey in a
92 format prescribed by the Department of Education to provide data
93 on student reasons for terminating enrollment and actions taken
94 by schools to keep students enrolled.

95 Section 3. Subsection (3) of section 1003.435, Florida
96 Statutes, is amended to read:

97 1003.435 High school equivalency diploma program.—

98 (3) Each district school board shall:

99 (a) Offer and administer the high school equivalency
100 diploma examinations and the subject area examinations to all

101 candidates pursuant to rules of the State Board of Education.

102 (b) Notify each candidate of adult secondary and
 103 postsecondary education options available in or near the school
 104 district, including the Graduation Alternative to Traditional
 105 Education Program under s. 1004.933. The candidate must also be
 106 informed of the eligibility requirements and any minimum
 107 academic requirements for each available option.

108 Section 4. Section 1004.933, Florida Statutes, is created
 109 to read:

110 1004.933 Graduation Alternative to Traditional Education
 111 (GATE) Program.—

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

113 (a) "Career education program" means an applied technology
 114 diploma program as defined in s. 1004.02(7) or a career
 115 certificate program as defined in s. 1004.02(20).

116 (b) "Institution" means a school district career center
 117 established under s. 1001.44, a charter technical career center
 118 established under s. 1002.34, or a Florida College System
 119 institution identified in s. 1000.21.

120 (2) ESTABLISHMENT; PURPOSE.—The Graduation Alternative to
 121 Traditional Education (GATE) Program is created within the
 122 Department of Education for the following purposes:

123 (a) Assisting students who may have challenges in
 124 completing the requirements for a standard high school diploma
 125 in a traditional setting.

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126 (b) Creating an alternative education pathway that
127 supports this state's commitment to educational accessibility
128 for all students by providing additional opportunities for
129 students 16 to 21 years of age who have discontinued enrollment
130 in traditional high school programs.

131 (c) Increasing the number of students who successfully
132 earn a high school credential in this state.

133 (d) Increasing the number of students in career education
134 programs.

135 (3) PAYMENT WAIVER; ELIGIBILITY.—

136 (a) Notwithstanding s. 445.009(8)(d) and subject to
137 appropriation, an institution shall waive 100 percent of the
138 registration, tuition, laboratory, and examination fees after
139 all other federal aid is applied for a student participating in
140 the GATE Program, including Workforce Innovation and Opportunity
141 Act funds. Instructional materials assigned for use under the
142 GATE Program must be made available to GATE Program students
143 free of charge. An institution may not require payment by
144 students of instructional materials costs eligible for
145 reimbursement under s. 1009.711.

146 (b) To be eligible for participation in the GATE Program,
147 a student may not have earned a standard high school diploma
148 pursuant to s. 1003.4282 or a high school equivalency diploma
149 pursuant to s. 1003.435 before enrolling in the GATE Program and
150 must:

- 151 1. Be a resident of this state as defined in s.
 152 1009.21(1);
- 153 2. Be 16 to 21 years of age at the time of initial
 154 enrollment;
- 155 3. Select the adult secondary education program and career
 156 education program of his or her choice at the time of admission
 157 to the GATE Program, provided that the program is included on
 158 the Master Credentials List under s. 445.004(4). The student may
 159 not change the requested pathway after enrollment;
- 160 4. Maintain a 2.0 GPA for career and technical education
 161 coursework; and
- 162 5. Notwithstanding s. 1003.435(4), complete the programs
 163 under subparagraph 3. within 3 years after his or her initial
 164 enrollment unless the institution determines that an extension
 165 is warranted due to extenuating circumstances.
- 166 (c) Subject to the availability of funds, a student who
 167 meets the requirements of paragraph (b) and is enrolled in the
 168 GATE Program is eligible to receive the stipend specified in s.
 169 1009.895(3).
- 170 (d) An institution may not impose additional criteria to
 171 determine a student's eligibility to receive a waiver under this
 172 section.
- 173 (4) STUDENT SUPPORT.—In addition to administering the GATE
 174 Program, the Department of Education shall perform the following
 175 duties:

176 (a) Develop and implement a statewide recruitment campaign
177 in conjunction with eligible institutions, local workforce
178 development boards, and other local, regional, or state
179 initiatives that interact with the GATE Program's target
180 population.

181 (b) Connect prospective students directly to eligible
182 institutions.

183 (c) Provide access to online career planning tools.

184 (5) REPORTING.—Beginning October 1, 2025, and each October
185 1 thereafter, the Department of Education shall submit a report
186 to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of
187 the House of Representatives on the number and value of
188 registration, tuition, laboratory, and examination fees and
189 instructional materials costs waived and reimbursed, by
190 institution; the number of students who have obtained a standard
191 high school diploma or high school equivalency diploma while
192 participating in the GATE Program; the number of students
193 completing an applied technology diploma or career certificate
194 while participating in the GATE Program; and the number of
195 students who have earned an industry certification on the CAPE
196 Industry Certification Funding List while participating in the
197 GATE Program. The reporting period shall cover the previous
198 academic year.

199 (6) RULES.—The State Board of Education shall adopt rules
200 to implement this section.

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201 Section 5. Section 1009.711, Florida Statutes, is created
202 to read:

203 1009.711 GATE Scholarship Program.—

204 (1) The GATE Scholarship Program is created to financially
205 support institutions participating in the GATE Program
206 established pursuant to s. 1004.933.

207 (2) The Department of Education shall administer the GATE
208 Scholarship Program in accordance with rules adopted by the
209 State Board of Education pursuant to subsection (6).

210 (3) The GATE Scholarship Program shall reimburse eligible
211 institutions for registration, tuition, laboratory, and
212 examination fees and related instructional materials costs for
213 students enrolled in the GATE Program. School district career
214 centers and Florida College System institutions must be
215 reimbursed at the in-state resident tuition rate established in
216 s. 1009.22(3)(c).

217 (4) Each participating institution shall report to the
218 department all students enrolled in the GATE Program during the
219 fall, spring, or summer terms within 30 days after the end of
220 regular registration. For each eligible student, the institution
221 shall report the total reimbursable expenses by category, which
222 the department must consider in determining an institution's
223 award under this section. The department shall reimburse each
224 participating institution no later than 30 days after the
225 institution has reported enrollment for that term.

226 (5) Reimbursements from the GATE Scholarship Program are
 227 contingent upon an annual appropriation in the General
 228 Appropriations Act. If the statewide reimbursement amount is
 229 greater than the appropriation, the institutional reimbursement
 230 amounts specified in subsection (3) must be prorated among the
 231 institutions that have timely reported eligible students to the
 232 department.

233 (6) The State Board of Education shall adopt rules to
 234 implement this section.

235 Section 6. Subsection (10) of section 1011.80, Florida
 236 Statutes, is amended to read:

237 1011.80 Funds for operation of workforce education
 238 programs.—

239 (10) A high school student dually enrolled under s.
 240 1007.271 in a workforce education program operated by a Florida
 241 College System institution or school district career center
 242 generates the amount calculated for workforce education funding,
 243 including any payment of performance funding, and the
 244 proportional share of full-time equivalent enrollment generated
 245 through the Florida Education Finance Program for the student's
 246 enrollment in a high school. If a high school student is dually
 247 enrolled in a Florida College System institution program,
 248 including a program conducted at a high school, the Florida
 249 College System institution earns the funds generated for
 250 workforce education funding, and the school district earns the

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251 proportional share of full-time equivalent funding from the
252 Florida Education Finance Program. If a student is dually
253 enrolled in a career center operated by the same district as the
254 district in which the student attends high school, that district
255 earns the funds generated for workforce education funding and
256 also earns the proportional share of full-time equivalent
257 funding from the Florida Education Finance Program. If a student
258 is dually enrolled in a workforce education program provided by
259 a career center operated by a different school district, the
260 funds must be divided between the two school districts
261 proportionally from the two funding sources. A student may not
262 be reported for funding in a dual enrollment workforce education
263 program unless the student has completed the basic skills
264 assessment pursuant to s. 1004.91. A student who is coenrolled
265 in a K-12 education program and an adult education program may
266 be reported for purposes of funding in an adult education
267 program. If a student is coenrolled in ~~core curricula~~ courses
268 for credit recovery or dropout prevention purposes and does not
269 have a pattern of excessive absenteeism or habitual truancy or a
270 history of disruptive behavior in school, the student may be
271 reported for funding for up to four ~~two~~ courses per year. Such a
272 student is exempt from the payment of the block tuition for
273 adult general education programs provided in s. 1009.22(3)(c).
274 ~~The Department of Education shall develop a list of courses to~~
275 ~~be designated as core curricula courses for the purposes of~~

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276 ~~reenrollment.~~

277 Section 7. Section 1011.804, Florida Statutes, is created
278 to read:

279 1011.804 GATE Program Student Success Incentive Fund.—

280 (1) A GATE Program Student Success Incentive Fund is
281 created to reward school districts and institutions for the
282 documented success of students participating in the GATE Program
283 established under s. 1004.933.

284 (2) As used in this section, the term "institution" means
285 a school district career center established under s. 1001.44, a
286 charter technical career center established under s. 1002.34, or
287 a Florida College System institution identified in s. 1000.21
288 which offers the GATE Program pursuant to s. 1004.933.

289 (3)(a) Subject to legislative appropriation, each
290 participating institution must receive an allocation based on
291 the performance of students in its GATE Program according to the
292 following metrics:

293 1. The number of students obtaining a standard high school
294 diploma or high school equivalency diploma while participating
295 in the program; and

296 2. The number of postsecondary industry certifications or
297 other program completion credentials included on the Master
298 Credentials List under s. 445.004(4) earned by students
299 participating in the program. Eligible industry certifications
300 must be identified on the CAPE Industry Certification Funding

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301 List approved by the State Board of Education under s. 1008.44.
302 (b) In order for a school district or an institution to
303 receive an allocation for a student under this section, the
304 student must meet or exceed the metrics for both subparagraphs
305 (a)1. and 2.

306 Section 8. This act shall take effect July 1, 2024.