

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 for which certain students may be reported  
 38 for certain funding purposes; providing that such  
 39 courses do not have to be core curricula courses;  
 40 deleting a requirement for the department to develop a  
 41 list of courses to be designated as core curricula  
 42 courses; creating s. 1011.804, F.S.; establishing the  
 43 GATE Startup Grant Program within the department for a  
 44 specified purpose; providing eligibility requirements;  
 45 providing department duties; providing requirements  
 46 for grant proposals, grant awards, and the use of  
 47 grant funds; providing reporting requirements;  
 48 authorizing the state board to adopt rules; providing  
 49 an effective date.

50

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

52

53 Section 1. Paragraph (g) of subsection (1) of section  
54 445.009, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

55 445.009 One-stop delivery system.—

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

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

63 Section 2. Paragraph (c) of subsection (1) of section  
64 1003.21, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

65 1003.21 School attendance.—

66 (1)

67 (c) A student who attains the age of 16 years during the  
68 school year is not subject to compulsory school attendance  
69 beyond the date upon which he or she attains that age if the  
70 student files a formal declaration of intent to terminate school  
71 enrollment with the district school board. Public school  
72 students who have attained the age of 16 years and who have not  
73 graduated are subject to compulsory school attendance until the  
74 formal declaration of intent is filed with the district school  
75 board. The declaration must acknowledge that terminating school

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

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

96 1003.435 High school equivalency diploma program.—

97 (3) Each district school board shall:

98 (a) Offer and administer the high school equivalency  
99 diploma examinations and the subject area examinations to all  
100 candidates pursuant to rules of the State Board of Education.

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

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

109        1004.933 Graduation Alternative to Traditional Education  
 110 (GATE) Program.—

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

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

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

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

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

125        (b) Creating an alternative education pathway that

126 supports this state's commitment to educational accessibility  
127 for all students by providing additional opportunities for  
128 students 16 to 21 years of age who have discontinued enrollment  
129 in traditional high school programs.

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

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

134 (3) PAYMENT WAIVER; ELIGIBILITY.—

135 (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of state law,  
136 including ss. 445.009(8)(d) and 1009.895(3), and contingent upon  
137 an appropriation provided pursuant to s. 1009.711(5), an  
138 institution shall waive 100 percent of the registration,  
139 tuition, laboratory, and examination fees after all other  
140 federal and state aid is applied for a student participating in  
141 the GATE Program, including Workforce Innovation and Opportunity  
142 Act funds. Instructional materials assigned for use under the  
143 GATE Program must be made available to GATE Program students  
144 free of charge. An institution may not require payment by  
145 students of instructional materials costs eligible for  
146 reimbursement under s. 1009.711.

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

151 must:

152 1. Be a resident of this state as defined in s.  
 153 1009.21(1);

154 2. Be 16 to 21 years of age at the time of initial  
 155 enrollment;

156 3. Select the adult secondary education program and career  
 157 education program of his or her choice at the time of admission  
 158 to the GATE Program, provided that the program is included on  
 159 the Master Credentials List under s. 445.004(4). The student may  
 160 not change the requested pathway after enrollment;

161 4. Maintain a 2.0 GPA for career and technical education  
 162 coursework; and

163 5. Notwithstanding s. 1003.435(4), complete the programs  
 164 under subparagraph 3. within 3 years after his or her initial  
 165 enrollment unless the institution determines that an extension  
 166 is warranted due to extenuating circumstances.

167 (c) Subject to the availability of funds, a student who  
 168 meets the requirements of paragraph (b) and is enrolled in the  
 169 GATE Program is eligible to receive the stipend specified in s.  
 170 1009.895(3).

171 (d) An institution may not impose additional criteria to  
 172 determine a student's eligibility to receive a waiver under this  
 173 section.

174 (4) STUDENT SUPPORT.—In addition to administering the GATE  
 175 Program, the Department of Education shall perform the following

176 duties:

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

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

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

185 (5) REPORTING.—Beginning October 1, 2025, and each October  
186 1 thereafter, the Department of Education shall submit a report  
187 to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of  
188 the House of Representatives on the number and value of  
189 registration, tuition, laboratory, and examination fees and  
190 instructional materials costs waived and reimbursed, by  
191 institution; the number of students who have obtained a standard  
192 high school diploma or high school equivalency diploma while  
193 participating in the GATE Program; the number of students  
194 completing an applied technology diploma or career certificate  
195 while participating in the GATE Program; the number of students  
196 participating in the GATE Program who receive a stipend under s.  
197 1009.895(3); and the number of students who have earned an  
198 industry certification on the CAPE Industry Certification  
199 Funding List while participating in the GATE Program. The  
200 reporting period shall cover the previous academic year.



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

203       Section 5. Section 1009.711, Florida Statutes, is created  
 204 to read:

205       1009.711 GATE Scholarship Program.—

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

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

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

219       (4) Each participating institution shall report to the  
 220 department all students enrolled in the GATE Program during the  
 221 fall, spring, or summer terms within 30 days after the end of  
 222 regular registration. For each eligible student, the institution  
 223 shall report the total reimbursable expenses by category, which  
 224 the department must consider in determining an institution's  
 225 award under this section. The department shall reimburse each

226 participating institution no later than 30 days after the  
227 institution has reported enrollment for that term.

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

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

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

239 1011.80 Funds for operation of workforce education  
240 programs.—

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

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

276 ~~The Department of Education shall develop a list of courses to~~  
277 ~~be designated as core curricula courses for the purposes of~~  
278 ~~enrollment.~~

279 Section 7. Section 1011.804, Florida Statutes, is created  
280 to read:

281 1011.804 GATE Startup Grant Program.-

282 (1) The GATE Startup Grant Program is established within  
283 the Department of Education to fund and support the startup and  
284 implementation of the new GATE Programs, subject to legislative  
285 appropriation. The purpose of the grant program is to increase  
286 access to programs that support adult learners earning a high  
287 school credential, either a high school diploma or its  
288 equivalent, and a workforce credential aligned to statewide or  
289 regional demand. The department shall administer the grants,  
290 determine eligibility, and distribute grant awards.

291 (2) The department may solicit proposals from school  
292 districts and Florida College System institutions without  
293 programs that meet the requirements of s. 1004.933(1)(a). Such  
294 school districts and institutions must be located in or serve a  
295 rural area of opportunity as designated by the Governor.

296 (3) The department shall prioritize grant proposals that  
297 combine adult secondary education and career education programs  
298 at one location or allow students to complete programs through  
299 distance learning. An applicant may not receive more than 10  
300 percent of the total amount appropriated for the program.

301 (4) The department shall make the grant application  
302 available to potential applicants no later than August 15, 2024.

303 A grant proposal must include:

304 (a) The Florida College System institution or institutions  
305 that will provide the adult secondary education and career  
306 education programs;

307 (b) The proposed adult secondary education program or  
308 programs the institution or institutions will provide and the  
309 projected enrollment for such program or programs;

310 (c) The proposed career education program or programs the  
311 institution or institutions will provide and the projected  
312 enrollment for such program or programs;

313 (d) The credential or credentials associated with the  
314 career education program or programs. Such credential or  
315 credentials must be included on the Master Credentials List  
316 under s. 445.004(4);

317 (e) The cost of instruction for all programs contemplated  
318 in the proposal, including costs for tuition, fees,  
319 registration, and laboratory, examination, and instructional  
320 materials costs;

321 (f) Outreach strategies, including collaboration with  
322 local workforce development boards; and

323 (g) A plan or timeline for implementing s. 1004.933 and  
324 enrolling students.

325 (5) Grant funds may be used for planning activities and

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326 other expenses associated with the creation of a new GATE  
327 Program, such as expenses related to program instruction,  
328 instructional equipment, supplies, instructional personnel, and  
329 student services. Grant funds may not be used for indirect  
330 costs. Grant recipients must submit an annual report in a format  
331 prescribed by the department. The department shall consolidate  
332 such annual reports and include the reports in the report  
333 required by s. 1004.933(5).

334 (6) The State Board of Education may adopt rules to  
335 administer this section.

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