

# FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

## FINAL BILL ANALYSIS

*This bill analysis was prepared by nonpartisan committee staff and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.*

**BILL #:** [CS/CS/CS/HB 1105](#)

**TITLE:** Education

**SPONSOR(S):** Kincart Jonsson

**COMPANION BILL:** [CS/CS/SB 270](#) (Burgess)

**LINKED BILLS:** None

**RELATED BILLS:** [CS/CS/SB 140](#), [CS/CS/HB 127](#), [HB 949](#), [CS/HB 1051](#), [HB 1107](#), [CS/CS/HB 1115](#), [CS/HB 1145](#), and [SB 1688](#)

**FINAL HOUSE FLOOR ACTION:** 85 Y's

14 N's

**GOVERNOR'S ACTION:**

Approved

### SUMMARY

#### Effect of the Bill:

The bill expands eligibility for the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program (Bright Futures). Among other provisions, it also:

- requires the Department of Education (DOE) to develop additional equivalent, applied, or integrated courses that allow students to earn dual credit;
- requires the DOE to develop and implement a workforce credential program for students with autism spectrum disorder or students on modified curriculum;
- eliminates the certificate of completion and requires notification of alternative options to students who fail to earn a standard high school diploma;
- prohibits student use of cell phones during the school day in grades K-8, except in certain circumstances, and requires a pilot study in six school districts on prohibiting student cell phone use during the entire school day in district high schools;
- requires a school district to share revenues it may receive from a local government infrastructure surtax with eligible charter schools;
- authorizes a municipality to establish a job engine charter school;
- revises the votes necessary for a public school to convert to a charter school; and
- requires the DOE to establish competencies for a math endorsement.

#### Fiscal or Economic Impact:

The bill is expected to have a significant negative fiscal impact on Bright Futures and an indeterminate fiscal impact on the DOE, school districts, and Florida Memorial University.

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### ANALYSIS

#### **EFFECT OF THE BILL:**

The Department of Education (DOE) must develop, for approval by the State Board of Education (SBE), multiple additional equivalent, applied, or integrated courses that meet similar requirements as [career education courses](#)<sup>1</sup> and allow students to earn [credit in both](#) the career education course and courses required for high school graduation. (Section [10](#)).

Information regarding work-related internships approved by the SBE and identified in the course code directory<sup>2</sup> must be included in counseling materials and [presented](#) with courses required for graduation. (Section [10](#)).

A workforce credential program for [students with autism](#) spectrum disorder (ASD) or on a modified curriculum will be established with the goal of assisting students with securing employment upon graduation. The DOE must

<sup>1</sup> Section [1003.493\(2\), \(4\)-\(5\), F.S.](#)

<sup>2</sup> Florida Department of Education, *2024-2025 Course Directory*, [2024-2025 Course Directory](#) (last visited May 16, 2025).

**STORAGE NAME:** h1105z1

**DATE:** 6/2/2025

develop and implement this program by January 31, 2026. Adoption and implementation of the workforce credential program is at the discretion of school districts.

The program must allow students to earn badges that indicate they have acquired specific skills that meet employer needs. Each workforce certificate must require the student to demonstrate five discrete skills or behaviors, including, but not limited to, workplace safety. Additionally, the student's demonstration of the required skills for each workforce certificate must be validated by two instructional staff members who specialize in exceptional student education.

In developing the workforce credential program, the DOE is required to work with the Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities housed within the University of Central Florida. For those badges associated with workplace safety, the DOE must consult with the Occupational Health and Safety Administration.

Beginning in 2026 and continuing through 2030, the bill requires the DOE to prepare an annual report by January 31 of the following year detailing the program's operations. At a minimum, the report must include:

- The badges offered by the program;
- Data on post-graduation student employment;
- Student participation rates; and
- Any other outcome data deemed necessary by the DOE. (Section [15](#)).

[Career dual enrollment agreements](#) between career centers and the high schools they serve must include how students will be notified of transportation options and address scheduling changes that will increase access and student participation. [Dual enrollment articulation agreements](#) between district superintendents and public postsecondary institution presidents must include any scheduling changes necessary to increase access and student participation. (Section [25](#)).

Eligibility requirements for a high school graduate to receive the [Florida Seal of Fine Arts](#) are revised to include Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) courses in dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts. (Section [11](#)).

A student may use completion of 2 years of marching band to satisfy the one-credit requirement in physical education or the one-credit requirement in performing arts necessary to earn a [standard high school diploma](#). This credit cannot be used to satisfy the personal fitness or adaptive physical education requirements under an individual education plan (IEP) or 504 plan. (Section [10](#)).

[Certificates of completion](#) are eliminated. By January 1, 2026, the DOE must create a document for students who cannot earn a standard high school diploma that describes their other options and school districts must provide this document to those students, including students with a disability, along with their transcripts. If a student's IEP references earning a certificate of completion, it must be revised at the annual IEP review. (Sections [7](#), [10](#), [12](#), [17](#)).

#### [Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program \(Bright Futures\)](#)

Students who earned a high school diploma from a non-Florida school while living with a parent or guardian who, within 12 months before the student's high school graduation, retired from military or public service assignment away from Florida are eligible for Bright Futures. Currently, a student who earns a high school diploma from a non-Florida school may only qualify for Bright Futures if that student is living with a parent or guardian who is on military or public service assignment away from Florida. (Section [21](#)).

The [Advanced Placement \(AP\) Capstone](#) designation is eligible for the Florida Academic Scholarship (FAS) requirements on the same basis as the International Baccalaureate (IB) or AICE diplomas beginning with high school students graduating in 2025-2026. The AP Capstone designation may only be used for the FAS award if the student earns a score of three or higher on six AP Examinations, including AP Seminar and AP Research. For students who began high school before the 2025-2026 school year, four AP Examinations are required. For students who begin high school during the 2025-2026 school year and after, three AP Examinations that satisfy the English language, mathematics, science and social studies credit requirements to earn a standard high school

diploma<sup>3</sup> plus an AP Examination of the student's choice are required. Earning an AP Capstone designation does not satisfy the requirements for a standard high school diploma. (Section [22](#)).

A [Florida Career and Professional Education \(CAPE\) Act](#) 3-year strategic plan must promote the benefits of the Gold Seal Vocational Scholarship (GSV) and Gold Seal CAPE Scholarship (GSC). Career and professional academies and high schools providing a career-themed course must provide students the opportunity to attain the GSC as well as the GSV.<sup>4</sup> (Sections [13](#) and [14](#)).

Eligibility for the GSV is increased by removing the requirement that the three required career and technical education (CTE) courses complete a sequential program of studies.<sup>5</sup> For students entering grade 9 in the 2024-2025 school year and thereafter, 75 hours of volunteer service are authorized as meeting a requirement for the GSV and the GSC. (Section [24](#)).

Workforce education programs and Florida College System (FCS) institutions are prohibited from including the transportation access fee when calculating the award amount for the GSC, similar to other Bright Futures scholarships. (Sections [18](#) and [19](#)).

Obsolete language regarding when paid work became eligible for meeting award requirements for Bright Futures and student eligibility for GSV and GSC was removed, and a cross-reference conformed. (Sections [20](#), [22](#), [23](#), [24](#)).

### [Charter Schools](#)

#### [Charter School Conversions](#)

Parents who apply for a conversion charter school must be parents whose children are enrolled in the existing public school. It is no longer required that 50 percent of the teachers employed at a school demonstrate support for a conversion. Parental support is the sole determinant. A FCS institution or state university that denies an application for a conversion charter is subject to the same requirements as a district school board.

A school district is prohibited from charging rental or leasing fees for existing facilities or normally inventoried property to principals and school advisory councils organizing a conversion charter school, in addition to teachers and parents. A municipality must negotiate rental or leasing fees with the district school board when organizing a conversion charter school. Property normally inventoried to a school may not be removed in the event of a conversion. (Section [6](#)).

#### [Job Engine Charter Schools](#)

A municipality may apply to the district school board to convert an existing public school to a job engine charter school or seek a job engine charter from a school district, FCS institution, or state university. The purpose of a job engine charter school is to attract job-producing entities to the municipality. A municipality operating a job engine charter school must:

- Make available an annual report to the sponsor that documents investments made to attract and maintain job-producing entities.
- Include career education opportunities.
- Provide provisions for exceptional student education.
- Use sufficient security technology to secure facilities.
- Accept responsibility for all debts incurred by the school.

A municipality operating a job engine charter school may provide an enrollment preference for the children of employees of a job-producing entity identified by the municipality in the annual report. (Section [6](#)).

Charter schools are eligible for the [Workforce Development](#) Capitalization Incentive Grant Program (CAP Grant), in addition to school districts and FCS institutions. A postsecondary CTE program must also serve secondary students

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<sup>3</sup> Section [1003.4282, F.S.](#)

<sup>4</sup> Section [1009.536, F.S.](#)

<sup>5</sup> Section [1009.536\(1\)\(a\), F.S.](#)

in grades 6 through 12 in order to be eligible for a CAP Grant. The SBE must prioritize CAP Grant applications from job engine charter schools. (Section [28](#)).

### Standard Monitoring Tool

A charter school sponsor must use a DOE-developed standard monitoring tool to monitor and review the school in its progress toward the goals established in the charter. (Section [6](#)).

### Surtax Revenue Sharing

Any interlocal agreement for the distribution of local government infrastructure surtax revenues that includes a school district must require the surtax revenues allocated to the school district to be shared with eligible charter schools based on the charter school's proportionate share of the total school district enrollment. Surtax revenues must be expended by a charter school consistent with the allowable uses for charter school capital outlay funds.<sup>6</sup> If a school's charter is not renewed or is terminated and the school is dissolved, any unencumbered funds received from such a surtax must be returned to the charter school's sponsor. The requirement that revenues from such a surtax are shared with eligible charter schools applies to levies authorized on or after July 1, 2025. (Sections [2](#) and [3](#)).

Annually, by July 1, school districts must provide charter schools the following information pertaining to shared revenues generated by a discretionary half-cent sales surtax, voted district school operating millage, and nonvoted district school capital improvement millage:

- The estimated total revenue to be received from each tax.
- The estimated per-student allocation to charter schools from each tax and the methodology used to determine the estimate.
- The estimated timeframe within which the charter school will receive funds from each tax.
- A detailed explanation for each revenue transmission at the time funds are transferred.

Annually, by March 31, each school district must provide the DOE with a summary report, by charter school, of distributed revenues, by revenue source, and must also post the report on its website. (Section [6](#)).

Liability insurance is added as a type of casualty insurance that a school district may use revenue generated by their [discretionary millage levy](#) to pay for the cost of premiums. (Section [27](#)).

A school bus is defined as any vehicle operated, owned, or contracted by a school district for student transportation. A clearly posted sign or a verbal warning by a school bus operator, a principal, a school district employee, or law enforcement personnel regarding [trespassing](#) constitutes sufficient notice and satisfies the prior warning requirement for immediate arrest and prosecution of a person who boards, enters, or remains on a school bus without authorization. Trespassing on school grounds or facilities, including school buses, is probable cause for arrest without a warrant. (Sections [4](#) and [5](#)).

[Private schools](#) in certain counties with four incorporated municipalities (which are Bradford, Clay, and Sarasota) are authorized to construct new temporary or permanent facilities on property that was owned by a church, library, theater, or school that was actively used for the zoned purpose within 5 years of an executed agreement under its existing zoning and land use designations. Additionally, the same applies to land that was owned by a FCS institution or university or land that was recently used to house a school or childcare facility. The new facility constructed by the private school is required to meet all applicable state and local health, safety, and welfare laws, codes, and rules, including fire safety and building safety. (Section [8](#)).

Elementary and middle school students are prohibited from using [wireless communication devices](#) during the school day, except for in designated areas with administrative approval and for students authorized through an IEP, 504 plan, or by a doctor for medical reasons. The DOE is required to conduct a pilot study in coordination with six school districts on prohibiting student cell phone use during the entire school day in district high schools. By December 1, 2026, the DOE must provide a report to the Legislature summarizing the effect of each school district

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<sup>6</sup> Section [1013.62\(4\), F.S.](#)

policy on student achievement and behavior, as well as a model policy that school districts and charter schools may adopt. (Sections [9](#), [16](#), [30](#)).

The [Council on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys](#) (council) is transferred from the Office of the Attorney General's Department of Legal Affairs to [Florida Memorial University \(FMU\)](#), shifting administrative responsibilities, including staffing support, and expense reimbursements. Additionally, the authority to approve the council's meeting times is transferred from the Attorney General to the president of FMU, a quorum is reduced from eleven council members to nine, and council members are authorized to participate in meetings virtually. This section of statute is transferred from [s. 16.615, F.S.](#) to [s. 1001.216, F.S.](#) (Section [1](#)).

The chair of the Florida Prepaid College Board is authorized to assign a designee to serve in his or her place on the board of directors of [Florida ABLE, Inc.](#) The board of Florida ABLE, Inc. must annually elect a board member to serve as chair instead of the chair of the Florida Prepaid College Board being designated to serve as the chair. (Section [26](#)).

Finally, by August 1, 2026, the DOE must establish competencies for a mathematics [endorsement](#) aligned with evidence-based mathematics instructional and intervention strategies that include:

- Numbers and operations.
- Fractions.
- Algebraic reasoning.
- Measurement.
- Geometric reasoning.
- Data analysis and probability.

The competencies must be at the elementary and secondary level and be approved by the SBE. (Section [29](#)).

The bill was approved by the Governor on May 30, 2025, ch. 2025-109, L.O.F., and will become effective on July 1, 2025. (Section [31](#)).

## **RULEMAKING:**

Current law requires the SBE to adopt rules to implement requirements for earning a high school diploma, to administer Bright Futures, and regarding the charter school standard monitoring tool.<sup>7</sup> The SBE is also authorized to adopt rules establishing a charter school conversion ballot process. The bill modifies provisions of law already under the SBE's rulemaking authority, thus allowing the SBE to make rules to implement the bill.

***Lawmaking is a legislative power; however, the Legislature may delegate a portion of such power to executive branch agencies to create rules that have the force of law. To exercise this delegated power, an agency must have a grant of rulemaking authority and a law to implement.***

## **FISCAL OR ECONOMIC IMPACT:**

### **STATE GOVERNMENT:**

The bill increases the number of students who are eligible for a Bright Futures scholarship. The fiscal impact for expanding Bright Futures to include those students earning an AP Capstone designation would grant initial eligibility to an additional 660 students for the 2026-2027 academic year, resulting in approximately a \$3.8 million fiscal impact. Based on the current forecast growth, the total cost for initial eligibility and students meeting the renewal requirements would result in a cost of \$7.6 million for 2027-2028, \$9.8 million for 2028-2029, and \$11.2 million for 2029-2030.<sup>8</sup> The additional pathway would increase the number of students eligible for Bright Futures

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<sup>7</sup> Sections [1002.33\(28\)](#), [1003.4282\(11\)](#), and [1009.53\(3\), F.S.](#)

<sup>8</sup> Email from Amelia Johnson, Deputy Chief of Staff, Florida Department of Education (Feb. 27, 2025), on file with the House Education & Employment Committee. Numbers were updated based on deferring the effective day to 2026.

scholarships, but some students who receive an AP Capstone designation may already qualify for a FAS or Florida Medallion Scholarship (FMS) by earning the required test score and grade point average (GPA), with the fiscal impact of such considered by future Postsecondary Student Financial Aid estimating conferences.

The fiscal impact for expanding Bright Futures eligibility requirements for students who earn a high school diploma from a non-Florida school while living with a parent or guardian who, within 12 months before the student's graduation, retired from military or public service assignment away from Florida, has an indeterminate fiscal impact.

While the bill may create an increase in the number of students eligible for GSV and GSC, the increase in these scholarship types would have a minimal impact on Bright Futures costs.

The bill requires the DOE to develop and implement a workforce credential program for students with ASD and students on a modified curriculum. A curriculum framework for students with disabilities already exists. It is unclear if the bill requires DOE to leverage this existing framework or create a brand-new framework, so a potential fiscal impact on state expenditures is indeterminate.

There is also an indeterminate fiscal impact on FMU for the administrative responsibilities for the council.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT:

Adoption and implementation of the workforce credential program is at the discretion of school districts; therefore, the bill will have an indeterminate impact on local government expenditures.

## RELEVANT INFORMATION

### SUBJECT OVERVIEW:

#### [Career Education Courses](#)

"Career education" means education that provides instruction for the following purposes:<sup>9</sup>

- At the elementary, middle, and high school levels, exploratory courses designed to give students initial exposure to a broad range of occupations to assist them in preparing their academic and occupational plans, and practical arts courses that provide generic skills that may apply to many occupations but are not designed to prepare students for entry into a specific occupation. Career education provided before high school completion must be designed to strengthen both occupational awareness and academic skills integrated throughout all academic instruction.
- At the high school level, job-preparatory instruction in the competencies that prepare students for effective entry into an occupation, including diversified cooperative education, work experience, and job-entry programs that coordinate directed study and on-the-job training.
- At the postsecondary education level, courses of study that provide competencies needed for entry into specific occupations or for advancement within an occupation.

#### [Dual Credit for Career Education Courses](#)

Students can fulfill required credits for a standard high school diploma through equivalent, applied or integrated courses or career education courses, including work-related internships approved by the SBE and identified in the course directory.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Section [1003.01\(2\), F.S.](#)

<sup>10</sup> Section [1003.4282\(1\)\(b\), F.S.](#) An equivalent course is one or more courses identified by content-area experts as being a match to the core curricular content of another course, based upon review of the state academic standards for that subject. An applied course aligns with state academic standards and includes real-world applications of a career and technical education standard used in business or industry. An integrated course includes content from several courses within a content area or across content areas.



The DOE must develop, for approval by the SBE, multiple, career education courses, or a series of courses, which allow students to earn credit in both the career education course and courses required for high school graduation.<sup>11</sup> Such courses must:

- include workforce and digital literacy skills; and
- integrate required course content with practical applications and designated rigorous coursework that results in one or more industry certifications or clearly articulated credit or advanced standing in a 2-year or 4-year certificate or degree program, including work-related internships or apprenticeships.<sup>12</sup>

Additionally, school districts, postsecondary institutions, education consortia, local workforce boards, and local business and industry leaders may collaborate in creating career education courses that lead to academic course credit. Courses developed through this collaborative process must meet the same rigorous standards as those created by DOE and be approved by the state board.<sup>13</sup>

A student may substitute to satisfy the high school graduation requirement of four credits in mathematics and three credits in science by using industry certification courses that lead to college credit. Substitutions allow for up to two mathematics credits and one science credit, except for Algebra I, Geometry, and Biology I. Industry certification that can be substituted for credit must have a statewide college credit articulation agreement approved by the state board.<sup>14</sup>

In addition, a student who earns credit upon completion of 1 year of related technical instruction for an apprenticeship program or preapprenticeship program registered with the DOE may use such credit to satisfy the high school graduation credit requirement, requirements for fine or performing arts, speech and debate, or CTE, or electives. The SBE is required to approve and identify in the Course Code Directory the apprenticeship and preapprenticeship programs from which earned credit may be used to satisfy high school graduation requirements.<sup>15</sup>

A student in grades 6 through 12 may be awarded one high school credit upon providing his or her school with verifiable documentation showing an accumulation of at least 135 hours of participation in Career and Technical Student Organization activities that occur outside of regular class time.<sup>16</sup>

### Career Education Notification

District school boards must notify the parent of a student who earns an industry certification which articulates for college credit. The notification must include:<sup>17</sup>

- the estimated cost savings of earning an industry certification prior to high school graduation versus the costs of acquiring such certification after high school graduation;
- the postsecondary credits available and the tuition and fees associated with those postsecondary credits; and
- any additional industry certifications available to the student.

District school boards are also required, at the beginning of each school year, to notify students in or entering high school and their parents of the opportunity and benefits of:<sup>18</sup>

- AP, IB, AICE, and dual enrollment courses;
- career and professional academies;
- career-themed courses;
- the CTE pathway to earn a standard high school diploma;<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Section [1003.4282\(7\)\(a\), F.S.](#)

<sup>12</sup> Section [1003.4282\(7\)\(a\)2., F.S.](#)

<sup>13</sup> Section [1003.4282\(7\)\(b\) and \(c\), F.S.](#)

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

<sup>15</sup> Section [1003.4282\(7\)\(a\)3., F.S.](#)

<sup>16</sup> Rule 6A-1.09442(4), F.A.C.; *see also* s. [1003.4282\(7\)\(a\)4., F.S.](#)

<sup>17</sup> Section [1003.02\(1\)\(i\), F.S.](#)

<sup>18</sup> Section [1003.02\(1\)\(i\), F.S.](#)

<sup>19</sup> Section [1003.4282\(10\), F.S.](#)

- work-based learning opportunities, including internships and apprenticeship and preapprenticeship programs;
- foundational and soft-skill credentialing programs;<sup>20</sup>
- Florida Virtual School courses; and
- options for early graduation.<sup>21</sup>

The parents and students must also be provided with guidance on accessing and utilizing Florida's online career planning and work-based learning coordination system and the contact information of a certified school counselor who can advise students on these options.<sup>22</sup>

### Career Dual Enrollment Agreements

Career dual enrollment includes courses offered through career certificate (clock hour programs) and career associate degree (college credit) programs that lead to an industry certification.<sup>23</sup>

Additionally, career dual enrollment must be provided as a curricular option for high school students to earn an industry certification that counts as credit toward a high school diploma and which may articulate toward college credit.<sup>24</sup> A student must have a 2.0 unweighted GPA for enrollment in career certificate courses.<sup>25</sup>

Each district school board career center must enter into a career dual enrollment agreement with each high school in any school district it serves.<sup>26</sup> Articulation agreements must be annually submitted by the career center to the DOE on or before August 1, and must include, at a minimum:<sup>27</sup>

- The available courses and programs, and the clock hour credits a student will earn upon completion of each course and program.
- Delineate the high school course credits earned for each completed course.
- Identify any college credit articulation agreements associated with each career clock hour program.
- Describe how students and parents will be informed of career dual enrollment opportunities, including related workforce demand, student eligibility criteria, application processes and course registration procedures, as well as the postsecondary career education expectations for participating students.
- Establish additional eligibility criteria for participation and outline a process for assessing eligibility and monitoring the progress of participating students.
- Delineate costs associated with providing transportation to students who are unable to provide their own.

### Dual Enrollment Articulation Agreements

Each public postsecondary institution and school district in its service area is required to jointly develop and implement a comprehensive dual enrollment articulation agreement.<sup>28</sup> The dual enrollment articulation agreement must be submitted annually to the DOE on or before August 1 and must include, but is not limited to, the following components:

- The delineation of courses and programs available to students who participate in dual enrollment.<sup>29</sup>
- A description of the processes by which students and parents are informed about and exercise options to participate in dual enrollment, including registration.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Section [445.06, F.S.](#)

<sup>21</sup> Section [1003.4281, F.S.](#)

<sup>22</sup> Section [1003.02\(1\)\(i\), F.S.](#)

<sup>23</sup> Section [1007.271\(7\), F.S.](#); see also r. 6A-6.0575, F.A.C., and Florida Department of Education, Dual Enrollment, 2024-2025 Dual Enrollment Course – High School Subject Area Equivalency List, [Dual Enrollment](#) (last visited May 16, 2025).

<sup>24</sup> *Id.*

<sup>25</sup> Section [1007.271\(3\), F.S.](#)

<sup>26</sup> Section [1007.271\(7\), F.S.](#)

<sup>27</sup> Section [1007.271\(7\)\(a\)-\(f\), F.S.](#)

<sup>28</sup> Section [1007.271\(21\), F.S.](#)

<sup>29</sup> Section [1007.271\(21\)\(c\), F.S.](#)

<sup>30</sup> Section [1007.271\(21\)\(b\), \(d\), and \(i\), F.S.](#) Career centers, FCS institutions, and SUS institutions must also delineate courses and programs for dually enrolled home education students. Courses and programs may be added, revised, or deleted at any time. Any course or program limitations may not exceed those for other dual enrollment students. Section [1007.271\(13\)\(b\)1, F.S.](#)



- The type of high school credit earned for passage of a dual enrollment course.<sup>31</sup>
- A listing of any additional student eligibility criteria.<sup>32</sup>
- Each institution's responsibilities for determining student eligibility and performance monitoring, transmission of grades, program costs including instructional materials, and student transportation.<sup>33</sup>

District school boards must enter dual enrollment articulation agreements with local FCS institutions if capacity allows.<sup>34</sup> Additionally, district school boards must make reasonable efforts to enter into dual enrollment articulation agreements with a FCS institution that offers online dual enrollment courses.<sup>35</sup>

### Florida CAPE Act

In 2007, the Florida Legislature passed the CAPE Act<sup>36</sup> to provide a statewide planning partnership between the business and education communities to attract, expand, and retain targeted, high-value industry to sustain a strong, knowledge-based economy.<sup>37</sup> The primary purpose of the CAPE Act is to:<sup>38</sup>

- improve middle and high school academic performance by providing rigorous and relevant curriculum opportunities;
- provide rigorous and relevant career-themed courses that articulate to postsecondary-level coursework and lead to industry certification;
- support local and regional economic development;
- respond to Florida's critical workforce needs; and
- provide state residents with access to high-wage and high-demand careers.

In accordance with the CAPE Act, school boards are required to develop a 3-year strategic plan in partnership with local workforce development boards, economic development agencies, and state-approved postsecondary institutions to better align academy programs or career-themed courses with local and regional workforce needs. Two or more school districts may collaborate in the development of the strategic plan.<sup>39</sup>

The strategic plan must describe in detail provisions for the efficient transportation of students, the maximum use of shared resources, access to courses aligned to state curriculum standards through virtual education providers legislatively authorized to provide part-time instruction to middle school students. Additionally, the plan must include an objective review of proposed career and professional academy courses and other career-themed courses to determine if the courses will lead to the attainment of industry certifications included on the CAPE Industry Certification Funding List.<sup>40</sup>

The 3-year strategic plan must be constructed and based, in part, on the following strategies:

- using state labor projections to determine local and regional workforce needs for the ensuing 3 years and developing and implementing career academies or career-themed courses based on occupations identified by the Labor Market Statistics Center within the Florida Commerce and the Labor Market Estimating Conference;<sup>41</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Section [1007.271\(21\)\(f\), F.S.](#)

<sup>32</sup> Section [1007.271\(21\)\(e\), F.S.](#) Career centers, FCS institutions, and SUS institutions must also identify eligibility criteria for home education student participation, not to exceed those required of other dually enrolled students. Section [1007.271\(13\)\(b\)2., F.S.](#) Exceptions to the required grade point average may be granted on an individual student basis. Section [1007.271\(21\)\(h\), F.S.](#)

<sup>33</sup> Section [1007.271\(21\)\(l\)-\(o\), F.S.](#)

<sup>34</sup> Section [1007.271\(4\)\(a\), F.S.](#)

<sup>35</sup> Section [1007.271\(4\)\(b\), F.S.](#)

<sup>36</sup> Section [1, ch. 2007-216, L.O.F.](#)

<sup>37</sup> Section [1003.491, F.S.](#)

<sup>38</sup> Section [1003.491\(1\), F.S.](#)

<sup>39</sup> Section [1003.491\(2\), F.S.](#)

<sup>40</sup> *Id.*; see also Florida Department of Education, *Cape Industry Certification Funding List*, available at <https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/5398/urlt/2324CAPECertFundList.pdf>.

<sup>41</sup> Section [1003.491\(3\)\(a\) and \(b\), F.S.](#)

- to ensure instruction by industry-certified faculty and standards and strategies to maintain current industry credentials and for recruiting and retaining faculty to meet those standards;<sup>42</sup>
- to improve the passage rate for industry certification examinations if the rate falls below 50 percent;<sup>43</sup>
- to recruit students into career-themed courses and career and professional academies which include opportunities for students who have been unsuccessful in traditional classrooms but who are interested in enrolling in career-themed courses or a career and professional academy. School boards must provide opportunities for students who may be deemed as potential dropouts or whose cumulative GPA drops below a 2.0 to enroll in career-themed courses or participate in career and professional academies;<sup>44</sup>
- to implement career-themed courses or career and professional academy training that lead to industry certification in juvenile justice education programs;<sup>45</sup>
- to provide professional development for high school certified school counselors on the benefits of career and professional academies and career-themed courses that lead to industry certifications;<sup>46</sup>
- to redirect appropriated career funding in high schools and postsecondary institutions to support career academies and career-themed courses that lead to industry certification;<sup>47</sup> and
- to inform and promote the CTE opportunities available in the district to students, parents, the community and stakeholders.<sup>48</sup>

Within their strategic 3-year plans, each school board must include alignment of requirements for middle school career planning, middle and high school career and professional academies or career-themed course leading to industry certification or postsecondary credit, and high school graduation requirements. The plan must include provisions to ensure that career-themed courses and courses offered through career and professional academies are academically rigorous, meet or exceed appropriate state-adopted subject area standards, result in attainment of industry certification, and, when appropriate, result in postsecondary credit.<sup>49</sup>

The strategic plan must be reviewed, updated, and jointly approved every 3 years by the local school district, local workforce development boards, economic development agencies, and state-approved postsecondary institutions.<sup>50</sup>

### Autism Spectrum Disorder and Workforce Challenges

ASD is a developmental disability caused by differences in the brain.<sup>51</sup> As individuals with ASD transition to adolescence and adulthood, they may face challenges in developing and maintaining friendships, communicating with peers and adults, or understanding what behaviors are expected in school or on the job.<sup>52</sup> These challenges can make it difficult to secure and sustain competitive employment, even for those with strong technical skills.<sup>53</sup>

Research indicates that employees with ASD have many skills that can contribute a great deal to the workforce. Despite possessing valuable skill sets, individuals with ASD face higher unemployment and underemployment rates compared to the general population.<sup>54</sup> Research suggests that targeted training, employer-recognized

<sup>42</sup> Section [1003.491\(3\)\(d\), F.S.](#)

<sup>43</sup> Section [1003.491\(3\)\(i\), F.S.](#)

<sup>44</sup> Section [1003.491\(3\)\(j\), F.S.](#)

<sup>45</sup> Section [1003.491\(3\)\(l\), F.S.](#)

<sup>46</sup> Section [1003.491\(3\)\(p\), F.S.](#)

<sup>47</sup> Section [1003.491\(3\)\(q\), F.S.](#)

<sup>48</sup> Section [1003.491\(3\)\(r\), F.S.](#)

<sup>49</sup> Section [1003.491\(3\)\(f\) and \(g\), F.S.](#)

<sup>50</sup> Section [1003.491\(2\), F.S.](#)

<sup>51</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *About Autism Spectrum Disorder*, <https://www.cdc.gov/autism/about/index.html> (last visited May 16, 2025).

<sup>52</sup> *Id.*

<sup>53</sup> Kate Jackson, *Autism in the Technology Workplace*, *Social Work Today*, Vol. 13, No. 6, p. 8 (Nov./Dec. 2013), available at <https://www.socialworktoday.com/archive/111113p8.shtml>.

<sup>54</sup> A.J. Griffiths et al., *Developing Employment Environments Where Individuals with ASD Thrive: Using Machine Learning to Explore Employer Policies and Practices*, *Brain Sci.*, Vol. 10, No. 9, p. 632 (Sept. 11, 2020), available at <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7564237/>.

credentials, and structured workforce support can significantly enhance employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities, including ASD.<sup>55</sup>

### Career Education Services for Students with Disabilities

The DOE has adopted a curriculum framework specifically for career education services for students with disabilities through a structured sequence of courses designed to develop employability skills, technical training, and industry certification opportunities. This program is individualized for each student through that student's IEP or other accommodations plan and allows students to gain the skills necessary for competitive employment in their desired occupation.<sup>56</sup>

The curriculum framework integrates competency-based applied learning, including instruction in:<sup>57</sup>

- Career Ready Practices;<sup>58</sup>
- Workplace safety;
- Job-seeking and employability skills;
- Self-advocacy and career planning; and
- Technical skills in industry-specific fields.

Students may earn multiple credits as they progress through career education courses, with their achievements documented through the Occupational Completion Point system. Some students may also participate in on-the-job training opportunities.<sup>59</sup>

### Florida Seal of Fine Arts Program

In 2024, the Legislature established the Florida Seal of Fine Arts Program within the Department of Education to encourage students to pursue exemplary skill in the performing or visual arts and recognize high school graduates who demonstrated high proficiency in the area of fine arts.<sup>60</sup>

To receive the Florida Seal of Fine Arts, a student must earn a standard high school diploma and complete at least three year-long courses in dance, music, theatre, or the visual arts with a grade of "A" or higher in each course or earn three sequential course credits in such courses with an "A" or higher. A student must also meet at least two of the following requirements:<sup>61</sup>

- Complete a fine arts IB, AP, dual enrollment, or honors course in the formerly listed fine arts subjects with a grade of "B" or higher;
- Participate in a district or statewide organization's juried event as a selected student participant for 2 or more years;
- Complete at least 25 volunteer hours of arts-related community service and present on their experiences;
- Meet the requirements of a portfolio-based program identifying the student as an exemplary practitioner of the fine arts; and
- Receive district, state, or national recognition for the creation and submission of an original work of art.

A rubric is used to confirm a student meets the requirements to receive a seal. School districts must keep records to identify a student has met the requirements and notify the Commissioner of Education of how many students

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<sup>55</sup> Florida Department of Education, Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, and CareerSource Florida, *2024-2028 WIOA Combined Plan*, pp. 426-507, available at <https://careersourceflorida.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/2024-2028-WIOA-Combined-Plan.pdf>.

<sup>56</sup> Florida Department of Education, *2024-25 CTE Curriculum Frameworks*, available at <https://www.fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/career-tech-edu/curriculum-frameworks/2024-25-frameworks/additional-cte-programs-courses.shtml>, download "Career Education Services for Students with Disabilities (9603100) (RTF)." (last visited May 16, 2025).

<sup>57</sup> *Id.*

<sup>58</sup> Career Ready Practices include, but are not limited to, acting as a responsible and contributing citizen and employee, applying appropriate academic and technical skills, communicating clearly, and using technology to enhance productivity. *Id.*

<sup>59</sup> *Id.*

<sup>60</sup> Florida Department of Education, *Florida Seal of Fine Arts Memo* (2024), available at [Content Areas - Fine Arts](#).

<sup>61</sup> Section [1003.4321, F.S.](#)

have met the requirements to receive the seal. The Commissioner of Education provides seals to school districts to affix to the diplomas of students who earn the Seal of Fine Arts.<sup>62</sup>

### High School Graduation Requirements

Nearly all states have established minimum credit and course requirements to earn a standard diploma, but graduation requirements may also serve to assess specific skills and content knowledge prioritized by the state, evaluate college and career readiness, or offer multiple pathways to a diploma. At least 34 states and the District of Columbia require students to complete specific assessments to meet a graduation requirement.<sup>63</sup>

To earn a standard high school diploma a student must complete 24 credits, an International Baccalaureate curriculum, or an Advanced International Certificate of Education curriculum.<sup>64</sup>

The 24-credit option for a standard diploma includes:

- Four credits in ELA I, II, III, and IV.
- Four credits in mathematics, including one in Algebra I and one in Geometry.
- Three credits in science, two of which must have a laboratory component and one of which must include Biology I.
- Three credits in social studies including one credit in United States History, one credit in World History, one-half credit in economics, and one-half credit in United States Government.
- One credit in fine or performing arts, speech and debate, or career and technical education.
- One credit in physical education which includes the integration of health.
- Seven and one-half credits in electives.
- One-half credit in personal financial literacy.

Florida allows completion of one semester with a grade of “C” or higher in a marching band class, in a physical activity class that requires participation in marching band activities as an extracurricular activity, or in a dance class to satisfy one-half credit in physical education or one-half credit in performing arts. Additionally, completion of two years in a Reserve Officer Training Corps (R.O.T.C.) class where a significant component of the class is drills, may be used to satisfy the one-credit requirement in physical education and the one-credit requirement in performing arts.<sup>65</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). However, a student who is otherwise entitled to a certificate of completion may elect to remain in high school either as a full-time or part-time student for up to one additional year and receive special instruction designed to remedy his or her identified deficiencies.<sup>66</sup>

During the transition planning process,<sup>67</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>68</sup> A student with a disability who receives a certificate of completion may continue to

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<sup>62</sup> *Id.*

<sup>63</sup> Education Commission of the States, *50- State Comparison: High School Graduation Requirements*, <https://www.ecs.org/50-state-comparison-high-school-graduation-requirements-2023/> (last visited May 16, 2025).

<sup>64</sup> Section 1003.4282, F.S.

<sup>65</sup> Section 1003.4282(3), F.S.

<sup>66</sup> Section 1003.4282(6)(c), F.S.

<sup>67</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>68</sup> Section 1003.4282(9)(a), F.S.

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>69</sup>

## Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program

### *Overview*

Bright Futures is a lottery-funded scholarship program for Florida high school graduates who merit high academic achievement and enroll in a degree, certificate, or applied technology program at an eligible Florida public or private postsecondary education institution.<sup>70</sup> Since the 1997-1998 academic year, Bright Futures has disbursed approximately \$9.2 billion for over 3.3 million students to attend an eligible postsecondary institution in Florida.<sup>71</sup>

### *General Eligibility Requirements*

Florida high school students who wish to qualify for a Bright Futures scholarship must meet the following initial eligibility requirements:

- Be a Florida resident for at least one year preceding an award.
- Earn a standard Florida high school diploma or a high school equivalency diploma unless:
  - The student completes a home education program.
  - The student earns a high school diploma from a non-Florida school while living with a parent or guardian who is on military or public service assignment away from Florida; or
  - The student earns a high school diploma from an eligible Florida private school.
- Be accepted by and enroll in an eligible Florida public or independent postsecondary education institution.
- Be enrolled for at least six semester credit hours or the equivalent in quarter hours or clock hours.
- Not have been found guilty of, or entered a plea of nolo contendere to, a felony charge, unless the student has been granted clemency.
- Apply for a scholarship by high school graduation, or by December 31 for mid-year graduates.<sup>72</sup>

### *Academic Eligibility Requirements*

There are four awards through Bright Futures, including the Florida Academic Scholarship, the Florida Medallion Scholarship, the Gold Seal CAPE Scholarship, and the Gold Seal Vocational Scholarship.<sup>73</sup> In the 2023-2024 academic year, 35,111 students received an initial disbursement for one of the four awards offered through Bright Futures.<sup>74</sup>

## Florida Academic Scholarship (FAS)

Florida high school students who wish to qualify for the FAS award must meet the following academic requirements:

- Graduate from a Florida public high school with a standard diploma, from a registered private high school, earn a GED, complete a home education program, or graduate from a non-Florida high school if specific eligibility requirements are met.
- Complete the required high school coursework.
- Achieve the required minimum high school GPA of 3.5.<sup>75</sup>
- Achieve the required minimum score on either the ACT, CLT, or SAT college entrance exam.<sup>76</sup>
- Complete 100 total hours of volunteer service, paid work hours, or combination of both.
- Submit a Florida Financial Aid Application no later than August 31 after high school graduation.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Paul O. Burns, EdD., *High School Graduation and Completion Options*, presentation before the Education Quality Subcommittee (Feb. 8, 2023), available at [loaddoc.aspx](#).

<sup>70</sup> Section [1009.53\(1\), F.S.](#)

<sup>71</sup> Florida Department of Education, Office of Student Financial Assistance, *Florida Bright Futures Student Counts and Total Costs* (2024), available at [BFReportsA](#).

<sup>72</sup> Section [1009.531\(1\), F.S.](#)

<sup>73</sup> Section [1009.53\(2\), F.S.](#)

<sup>74</sup> Florida Department of Education, Office of Student Financial Assistance, *2023-2024 Florida Bright Futures End-of-Year Report* (2024), available at [EndOfYearReport](#).

<sup>75</sup> Florida Department of Education, Office of Student Financial Assistance, *2024-2025 Bright Futures Student Handbook* (2024), available at [Bright Futures Student Handbook- Chapter 1](#), at 3.

<sup>76</sup> Section [1009.531\(6\), F.S.](#) The SAT score requirement for the FAS must be set no lower than the 89th national percentile. The corresponding ACT and CLT scores must be concordant with the applicable SAT scores.



A student is exempt from the required ACT, CLT, or SAT college entrance exam scores if he or she is:

- Awarded an IB Diploma from the IB Office or an AICE Diploma from the University of Cambridge International Examinations Office;
- Recognized by the merit or achievement programs of the National Merit Scholarship Corporation as a scholar or finalist; or
- Recognized by the National Hispanic Recognition Program as a scholar recipient.<sup>78</sup>

#### Florida Medallion Scholarship (FMS)

Florida high school students who wish to qualify for the FMS award must meet the following academic requirements:

- Graduate from a Florida public high school with a standard diploma, from a registered private high school, earn a GED, complete a home education program, or graduate from a non-Florida high school if specific eligibility requirements are met.
- Complete the required high school coursework.
- Achieve the required minimum high school GPA of 3.0.
- Achieve the required minimum score on either the ACT, CLT, or SAT college entrance exam.<sup>79</sup>
- Complete 75 hours of volunteer service, 100 hours of paid work, or 100 hours of a combination of both.
- Submit a Florida Financial Aid Application no later than August 31 after high school graduation.<sup>80</sup>

A student is exempt from the required ACT, CLT, or SAT college entrance exam scores if he or she is:

- Awarded an IB Diploma from the IB Office or an AICE Diploma from the University of Cambridge International Examinations Office;
- Recognized by the merit or achievement programs of the National Merit Scholarship Corporation as a scholar or finalist; or
- Recognized by the National Hispanic Recognition Program as a scholar recipient.<sup>81</sup>

#### Gold Seal CAPE Scholarship (GSC)

Florida high school students who wish to qualify for the GSC award must meet the following initial eligibility requirements:

- Earn a minimum of five postsecondary credit hours through CAPE industry certifications that articulate for college credit.
- Complete 30 volunteer service hours, 100 paid work hours, or a combination of 100 total hours.<sup>82</sup>

#### Gold Seal Vocational Scholarship (GSV)

Florida high school students who wish to qualify for a GSV award must meet the following initial eligibility requirements:

- Achieve the required weighted minimum 3.0 GPA in non-elective high school courses.
- Take at least three full credits in a single career and technical education program.
- Achieve the required minimum 3.5 unweighted GPA in career education courses.
- Achieve the required minimum score on the ACT, SAT, or Florida Postsecondary Education Readiness Test (PERT).
- Complete 30 volunteer service hours, 100 paid work hours, or a combination of 100 total hours.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Florida Department of Education, Office of Student Financial Assistance, *2024-2025 Bright Futures Student Handbook* (2024), available at [Bright Futures Student Handbook- Chapter 1](#), at 3.

<sup>78</sup> Section [1009.534\(1\), F.S.](#)

<sup>79</sup> Section [1009.531\(6\), F.S.](#) The SAT score requirement for the FAS must be set no lower than the 75<sup>th</sup> national percentile. The corresponding ACT and CLT scores must be concordant with the applicable SAT scores.

<sup>80</sup> Florida Department of Education, Office of Student Financial Assistance, *2024-2025 Bright Futures Student Handbook* (2024), available at [Bright Futures Student Handbook- Chapter 1](#), at 3.

<sup>81</sup> Florida Department of Education, Office of Student Financial Assistance, *2024-2025 Bright Futures Student Handbook* (2024), available at [Bright Futures Student Handbook- Chapter 1](#), at 5.

<sup>82</sup> Florida Department of Education, Office of Student Financial Assistance, *2024-2025 Bright Futures Student Handbook* (2024), available at [Bright Futures Student Handbook- Chapter 1](#), at 8.



## Utilization

Number of Students Disbursed Bright Futures Funds 2023-2024 <sup>84</sup>				
Florida Bright Futures	FAS	FMS	GSC	GSV
Initial Recipients	20,093	14,442	284	292
Renewal Recipients	48,165	34,384	117	290
Total Recipients	68,258	48,826	401	582
Total Disbursements	\$400,539,928	\$204,984,425	\$345,222	\$509,419

## Enrollment Caps

Program Length Specifications <sup>85</sup>		
Number of FAS/FMS Hours Funding Available	Number of GSC/GSV Hours Funding Available <sup>86</sup>	Duration of Funding Available <sup>87</sup>
100% of program of study	100% of program of study, up to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 72 hours (AS, AAS, CCC, or PSAV)</li> <li>• 60 hours (ATD)</li> </ul>	Up to 5 years from high school graduation

## Advanced Placement Capstone Designation

The AP Capstone is a diploma program based on two yearlong AP courses: AP Seminar and AP Research. These courses are designed to complement other AP courses that the AP Capstone student may take. The AP Seminar course is an introductory AP class for grades 10 and 11, and serves as a prerequisite for AP Research, which is typically offered in grades 11 or 12. The AP scores for both courses are based on teacher assessment of student presentation components and College Board scoring of student-written components plus an end-of-course examination (for AP Seminar only). To earn an AP Capstone designation, students must earn scores of three or higher in the AP Seminar and AP Research courses, and on four additional AP Examinations of their choosing. Students who earn scores of three or higher in the AP Seminar and AP Research courses, but not on four additional AP Examinations, receive the AP Seminar and Research Certificate.<sup>88</sup>

## Florida's Charter Schools

Charter schools are tuition-free public schools created through an agreement or "charter" that provides flexibility relative to regulations created for traditional public schools. During the 2023-2024 school year, 395,745 students were enrolled in 730 charter schools operating in 50 of Florida's 67 school districts.<sup>89</sup>

<sup>83</sup> Florida Department of Education, Office of Student Financial Assistance, *2024-2025 Bright Futures Student Handbook* (2024), available at [Bright Futures Student Handbook- Chapter 1](#), at 6.

<sup>84</sup> Florida Department of Education, Office of Student Financial Assistance, *Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Statistical Reports*, [Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Statistical Reports - Florida Student Scholarship & Grant Programs](#) (last visited May 16, 2025).

<sup>85</sup> Florida Department of Education, Office of Student Financial Assistance, *2024-2025 Bright Futures Student Handbook* (2024), available at [Bright Futures Student Handbook- Chapter 2](#).

<sup>86</sup> Beginning with 2016-17 high school graduates, students who earn a GSC award and attain an AS or AAS degree may receive an additional 60 hours of funding toward a qualifying BS or BAS degree program.

<sup>87</sup> For students graduating high school in 2010-11 and thereafter, if annual renewal requirements were not met due to a verifiable illness or other documented emergency (as reported by the postsecondary institution), an exception of one academic year to the renewal timeframe may be granted if a course of study is not completed after five academic years.

<sup>88</sup> College Board, *How AP Capstone Works*, [How AP Capstone Works – AP Central | College Board](#) (Last visited May 16, 2025).

<sup>89</sup> Email from Steve Koncar, Deputy Chief of Staff, Florida Department of Education (Oct. 18, 2024), on file with the House Education & Employment Committee.

An application for a new charter school may be made by an individual, teachers, parents, a group of individuals, a municipality or a legal entity organized under Florida law.<sup>90</sup> The school must be organized as a nonprofit organization, and may be operated by a municipality, a public entity authorized under the law, or a nonprofit organization.<sup>91</sup> While a charter school must be a public or nonprofit entity, it may be managed by a for-profit education management organization.<sup>92</sup>

In Florida, several types of entities may sponsor charter schools:

- School districts, FCS institutions, and state universities may sponsor charter schools.<sup>93</sup>
- State universities may sponsor charter lab schools.<sup>94</sup>
- School districts, FCS institutions, or a consortium of school districts or FCS institutions may sponsor a charter technical career center.<sup>95</sup>

A sponsor's responsibilities include:

- approving or denying charter school applications;
- overseeing each sponsored charter school's progress toward the goals established in the charter;
- monitoring the revenues and expenditures of the charter school;
- ensuring that the charter school participates in the state's education accountability system; and
- intervening when a sponsored charter school demonstrates deficient student performance or financial instability.<sup>96</sup>

Charter schools are open to all students residing within the district; however, charter schools are allowed to target students within specific age groups or grade levels, students considered at-risk of dropping out or failing, students wishing to enroll in a charter school-in-the-workplace or charter school-in-a-municipality, students residing within a reasonable distance of the school, students who meet reasonable academic, artistic or other eligibility standards established by the charter school, or students articulating from one charter school to another.<sup>97</sup>

Charter schools are funded through the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) in the same way as all other public schools in the school district. The charter school receives operating funds from the FEFP based on the number of full-time students enrolled.<sup>98</sup>

Charter school funding includes gross state and local funds, discretionary lottery funds, and funds from the school district's current operating discretionary millage levy; divided by the total funded weighted full-time equivalent (FTE) students in the school district; multiplied by the weighted FTE students in the charter school. Charter schools are entitled to their proportionate share of categorical program funds, for eligible students and programs. Charter schools may also access federal funds through a competitive grant process that awards funds to charter schools for planning and implementation grants and best practices dissemination grants.<sup>99</sup>

Charter schools receive capital outlay funds from a non-voted school district discretionary capital improvement levy.<sup>100</sup> Charter schools may also receive funds from a school capital outlay surtax based on their proportionate share of total school district capital outlay full-time equivalent enrollment.<sup>101</sup>

<sup>90</sup> Section [1002.33\(3\)\(a\), F.S.](#); see also r. 6A-6.0786, F.A.C. and Florida Department of Education, Charter Schools, *Model Application Forms, Statutes, Rules & Model Forms* (last visited May 5, 2025).

<sup>91</sup> Section [1002.33\(12\)\(i\), F.S.](#)

<sup>92</sup> *Id.*

<sup>93</sup> Section [1002.33\(5\)\(a\)1. and 3., F.S.](#)

<sup>94</sup> Sections [1002.32\(2\)](#) and [1002.33\(5\)\(a\)2., F.S.](#)

<sup>95</sup> Section [1002.34\(3\)\(a\)-\(b\), F.S.](#)

<sup>96</sup> Section [1002.33\(5\)\(b\), F.S.](#)

<sup>97</sup> Florida Department of Education, *Frequently Asked Questions (Charter Schools)*, <https://www.fldoe.org/schools/school-choice/charter-schools/charter-school-faqs.html> (last visited May 16, 2025). See also [s. 1002.33\(10\), F.S.](#)

<sup>98</sup> Florida Department of Education, *Frequently Asked Questions (Charter Schools)*, <https://www.fldoe.org/schools/school-choice/charter-schools/charter-school-faqs.html> (last visited May 16, 2025). See also [s. 1002.33\(17\), F.S.](#)

<sup>99</sup> *Id.*

<sup>100</sup> Section [1013.62, F.S.](#)

### [Conversion Charter Schools](#)

Conversion charter schools are traditional public schools that have been converted to charter schools.<sup>102</sup> The school must have operated for at least 2 years as a traditional public school, including a school-within-a-school, before an application to convert. An application for a conversion charter school may be made by the district school board, the principal, teachers, parents, and/or the school advisory council.<sup>103</sup>

An application submitted proposing to convert an existing public school to a charter school must demonstrate the support of at least 50 percent of the teachers employed at the school and 50 percent of the parents voting whose children are enrolled at the school, provided that a majority of the parents eligible to vote participate in the ballot process, according to rules adopted by the SBE.<sup>104</sup> To initiate a ballot process, the applicant must submit a request in writing to the school administrator to conduct a vote for conversion, and the administrator must complete the ballot process within 60 days of receipt of the written request. Written notification of a ballot must be provided to teachers and parents at least 30 days prior to conducting the ballot and only one vote per calendar year may be held. For parent voting, each household receives one ballot regardless of the number of students residing in the household. If a student has two households, the household of the enrolling parent will receive the ballot. If a majority of teachers employed at the school and a majority of voting parents support the charter proposal, the conversion charter application must be submitted during the same calendar year the vote is held.<sup>105</sup> If a district school board denies an application for a conversion charter school, it must provide written notice of the denial, including specific reasons and supporting documentation, to the applicants within 10 days after the meeting at which the application was denied.<sup>106</sup>

A district school board may not charge the parents or teachers organizing a conversion charter school rental or leasing fees for the existing facility or property normally inventoried to the school.<sup>107</sup> The charter for a conversion charter school must identify the alternative arrangements that will be put in place to serve current students that choose not to attend the school after it is converted. Conversion charter schools are not eligible for charter school capital outlay funding if the conversion charter school operates in facilities provided to them by the school district.<sup>108</sup>

### [Charter Schools-in-a-Municipality](#)

A municipality that possesses a charter of incorporation may be granted a charter “school-in-a-municipality.” The charter school-in-a-municipality must enroll students based upon a random lottery that involves all of the children of the residents of that municipality who are seeking enrollment and enroll students according to the racial/ethnic balance provisions described in law. Any portion of the land and facility used for a public charter school is exempt from ad valorem taxes for the duration of its use as a public school.<sup>109</sup>

A charter school-in-a-municipality may give enrollment preference to a resident or employee of a municipality that operates the charter school or allows the charter school to use a school facility or portion of land provided by the municipality for the operation of the charter school.<sup>110</sup> A charter school may limit the enrollment process to target students enrolling in a charter school-in-a-municipality.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Section [212.055\(6\)\(c\), F.S.](#)

<sup>102</sup> [Section 1002.33\(3\)\(b\), F.S.](#)

<sup>103</sup> [Id.](#); [r. 6A-6.0786, F.A.C.](#) A person or entity submitting a charter school application must use form IEPC-M1, Model Florida Charter School Application. The form requires a school seeking approval to convert an existing public school to charter status to show evidence of compliance with the voting requirements under [s. 1002.33\(3\)\(b\), F.S.](#)

<sup>104</sup> [Section 1002.33\(3\)\(b\), F.S.](#); see [r. 6A-6.0787, F.A.C.](#)

<sup>105</sup> [Rule 6A-6.0787, F.A.C.](#)

<sup>106</sup> [Section 1002.33\(3\)\(b\), F.S.](#)

<sup>107</sup> [Section 1002.33\(18\)\(e\), F.S.](#)

<sup>108</sup> Florida Department of Education, Frequently Asked Questions (Charter Schools), <https://www.fldoe.org/schools/school-choice/charter-schools/charter-school-faqs.shtml> (last visited May 16, 2025).

<sup>109</sup> Section 1002.33(15)(c), F.S.

<sup>110</sup> Section 1002.33(10)(d)4.b., F.S.

<sup>111</sup> Section 1002.33(10)(e)3., F.S.

Sixteen charter schools-in-a-municipality operated in Florida during the 2023-2024 school year.<sup>112</sup>

### [Workforce Development](#)

The CAP Grant addresses the need for school districts and FCS institutions to be able to respond to emerging local or statewide economic development needs and is critical to the workforce development system. This program provides grants to school districts and FCS institutions to fund costs associated with the creation or expansion of career and technical education programs that lead to industry certifications included on the CAPE Act or CAPE Industry Certification Funding List.<sup>113</sup>

### [Charter School Standard Monitoring Tool](#)

The DOE is required to provide information to the public, directly and through sponsors, on how to form and operate a charter school and how to enroll in a charter school once it is created. The information must include the standard application form, standard charter and virtual charter contracts, standard evaluation instrument, and standard charter and virtual charter renewal contracts.<sup>114</sup> To fulfill these requirements, the DOE, after consulting with sponsors and charter school directors, must recommend that the SBE adopt rules to implement the forms. The rules must require minimum paperwork and must not limit charter school flexibility authorized by statute. The SBE must adopt rules to implement a standard charter application form, standard application form for the replication of charter schools in a high-performing charter school system, standard evaluation instrument, standard monitoring tool, and standard charter and charter renewal contracts.<sup>115</sup> The requirement for the SBE to adopt rules to implement a standard monitoring tool for conducting annual site review of charter schools was passed by the Legislature in 2023, but the tool has not yet been developed.<sup>116</sup>

### [Local Government Infrastructure Surtax](#)

#### *Background*

Counties have been granted limited authority to levy discretionary sales surtaxes for specific purposes on all transactions occurring in the county subject to the state sales tax in ch. 212, F.S.<sup>117</sup> A discretionary sales surtax is based on the rate in the county where the taxable goods or services are sold, or delivered into, and is levied in addition to the state sales and use tax of 6 percent. The surtax does not apply to the sales price above \$5,000 on any item of tangible personal property.<sup>118</sup>

There are nine discretionary sales surtaxes that serve as potential revenue sources for county and municipal governments and school districts. They are:<sup>119</sup>

- The charter county and regional transportation system surtax.
- The local government infrastructure surtax.
- The small county surtax.
- The indigent care and trauma center surtax.
- The county public hospital surtax.
- The school capital outlay surtax.
- The voter-approved indigent care surtax.
- The emergency fire rescue services and facilities surtax.
- The pension liability surtax.

Current rates range from 0.5% to 2.0%, and are levied by 65 of the 67 counties.<sup>120</sup> Many of the levies have restrictions on what combination of taxes can be levied by a single county at one time.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Email, Florida Department of Education (Oct. 18, 2024).

<sup>113</sup> Section [1011.801, F.S.](#)

<sup>114</sup> Section [1002.33\(21\)\(a\), F.S.](#)

<sup>115</sup> Section [1002.33\(28\), F.S.](#)

<sup>116</sup> Section [1002.33\(28\), F.S.](#); r. 6A-6.0786, F.A.C.

<sup>117</sup> The tax rates, duration of the surtax, method of imposition, and proceed uses are individually specified in s. [212.055, F.S.](#) General limitations, administration, and collection procedures are set forth in s. [212.054, F.S.](#)

<sup>118</sup> Section [212.054\(2\)\(b\), F.S.](#)

<sup>119</sup> Section [212.055, F.S.](#)

### *The Local Government Infrastructure Surtax*

A county may levy a discretionary sales surtax of 0.5 percent or 1 percent pursuant to ordinance enacted by a majority of the members of the county and approved by a majority of the electors of the county voting in a referendum on the surtax.<sup>122</sup> Surtax proceeds are distributed to the county and the municipalities within the county according to an interlocal agreement between the county governing authority and the governing bodies of the municipalities representing a majority of the county's municipal population. The agreement may include a school district with the consent of the county governing authority and the governing bodies of the municipalities.<sup>123</sup> If there is no interlocal agreement, the proceeds are distributed according to the formula defined in statute.<sup>124</sup>

The proceeds of the surtax and any accrued interest must generally be expended only to:<sup>125</sup>

- Finance, plan, and construct infrastructure.
- Acquire land for public recreation, conservation, or protection of natural resources.
- Provide loans, grants, or rebates to residential or commercial property owners who make energy efficiency improvements to their residential or commercial property, if a local government ordinance authorizing the use is approved by referendum.
- Finance the closure of county-owned or municipally owned solid waste landfills that are closed or are required to be closed by order of the Department of Environmental Protection.

The term “infrastructure” includes any fixed capital expenditure or fixed capital outlay associated with the construction, reconstruction, or improvement of public facilities that have a life expectancy of five or more years, any related land acquisition, land improvement, design, and engineering costs, and all other professional and related costs required to bring the public facilities into service.<sup>126</sup>

“Infrastructure” also includes instructional technology used solely in a school district’s classrooms. Instructional technology is defined as an interactive device that assists a teacher in instructing a class or a group of students. The hardware and software necessary to operate the interactive device and a support system in which an interactive device may mount are also included as authorized expenditures.<sup>127</sup>

This surtax is currently levied in 26 of 67 eligible counties.<sup>128</sup>

### School Board Discretionary Millage Levy

Each district school board is authorized to levy 1.5 mills against the taxable value for public school purposes to fund specific needs as identified in law, including, for example:

- New construction, remodeling projects, sites and site improvement or expansion to new sites, existing sites, auxiliary facilities, athletic facilities, or ancillary facilities.
- Payments for educational facilities and sites due under a lease-purchase agreement.
- Payment of costs of leasing relocatable educational facilities, of renting or leasing educational facilities and sites, or of renting or leasing buildings or space within existing buildings.<sup>129</sup>

In addition, a district school board may expend up to \$200 per unweighted FTE student from the revenue generated by the millage levy to fund expenses for:

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<sup>120</sup> Discretionary Sales Surtax Information for Calendar Year 2025, Form DR-15DSS, available at [dr15dss.pdf](#) (last visited May 16, 2025).

<sup>121</sup> See, e.g., s. [212.055\(4\)\(a\)6, F.S.](#), s. [212.055\(5\)\(f\), F.S.](#), and s. [212.055\(9\)\(g\), F.S.](#)

<sup>122</sup> Section [212.055\(2\)\(a\)1, F.S.](#)

<sup>123</sup> Section [212.055\(2\)\(c\)1, F.S.](#)

<sup>124</sup> Section [212.055\(2\)\(c\)2, F.S.](#); see s. [218.62, F.S.](#)

<sup>125</sup> Section [212.055\(2\)\(d\), F.S.](#)

<sup>126</sup> Section [212.055\(2\)\(d\)1.a., F.S.](#)

<sup>127</sup> Section [212.055\(2\)\(d\)1.f., F.S.](#)

<sup>128</sup> Levy details available at [2023LDSSrates.pdf](#) (last visited May 16, 2025).

<sup>129</sup> Section [1011.71\(2\), F.S.](#)



- The purchase, lease-purchase, or lease of driver's education vehicles; motor vehicles used for the maintenance or operation of plants and equipment; security vehicles; or vehicles used in storing or distributing materials and equipment.
- Payment of the cost of premiums property and casualty insurance necessary to insure school district educational and ancillary plants.<sup>130</sup>

### [Trespassing on School Grounds](#)

Florida law describes instances when a person who does not have legitimate business on a school campus or any additional authorization, license or invitation to enter or remain on school property or is a student who is currently suspended or expelled is guilty of a misdemeanor of the second degree when that person enters and remains on school property. Additionally, any person who enter or remains on school property after the principal or designee has directed the person to leave school property or to not enter school property is guilty of a misdemeanor of the first degree.<sup>131</sup>

Florida law provides instances when an officer may make a lawful arrest without a warrant. These instances generally cover circumstances where an officer reasonably believes the person committed the offense, the offense was committed in the presence of the officer, a warrant has been issued and is held by another peace officer, or there is probable cause in certain circumstances.<sup>132</sup>

### [Private School Facilities](#)

A private school is defined in Florida law, as “an individual, association, copartnership, or corporation or department, division, or section of such organizations, that designates itself as an educational center that includes kindergarten or a higher grade” and is below the college level. Private elementary and secondary schools in Florida are not licensed, approved, accredited, or regulated by the DOE. Private schools are required to complete an online annual survey to provide information for inclusion in a statewide directory. A private school may be a parochial, religious, denominational, for-profit, or nonprofit school.<sup>133</sup>

Specifically related to facilities, private schools are permitted to use property owned or leased by a library, community service organization, museum, performing arts venue, theater, cinema, church facility, FCS institution or university, or other similar public institutional facilities, or a facility recently used to house a school or childcare facility under the facilities preexisting zoning and land use designations. There are similar provisions regarding the purchase of the same types of facilities by private schools. The facilities used or purchased must meet state and local health, safety, and welfare laws, codes, and rules, including fire safety and building safety.<sup>134</sup>

### [Wireless Communications Device Use in Florida Public Schools](#)

Under Florida law, as part of a district school board’s responsibility for control of students, a board must adopt rules for the control, attendance, discipline, in-school suspension, suspension, and expulsion of students and decide all cases recommended for expulsion and maintain a code of student conduct.<sup>135</sup> The law provides that a student may possess a wireless communications device while on school property or in attendance at a school function,<sup>136</sup> however, a district school board has the authority to adopt rules governing the use of the device by a student while on school property or in attendance at a school function within the district’s code of student conduct.<sup>137</sup>

In 2023, the Legislature prohibited students from using wireless communications devices at school during instructional time, except when expressly directed by a teacher solely for educational purposes. Under the law and within the framework of a district school board’s code of student conduct, teachers and other instructional

<sup>130</sup> Section [1011.71\(5\), F.S.](#)

<sup>131</sup> Section [810.097, F.S.](#)

<sup>132</sup> Section [901.15, F.S.](#)

<sup>133</sup> Section [1002.01\(3\), F.S.](#)

<sup>134</sup> Section [1002.42\(19\), F.S.](#)

<sup>135</sup> Section [1003.02\(1\)\(c\), F.S.](#) See also [s. 1006.07, F.S.](#)

<sup>136</sup> Section [1006.07\(2\)\(f\), F.S.](#)

<sup>137</sup> *Id.*



personnel have the authority to undertake specific actions to manage student behavior to ensure the safety of all students and provide the opportunity to learn in an orderly and disciplined classroom.<sup>138</sup> Such actions include establishing classroom rules of conduct, including designating an area for wireless communications devices during instructional time.<sup>139</sup>

#### Florida Council on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys

The 2006 Florida Legislature established the council to study conditions negatively affecting black males in our state.<sup>140</sup> The council is housed within the Department of Legal Affairs in the Office of the Attorney General.<sup>141</sup>

The council is comprised of 19 appointed members who serve 4-year terms.<sup>142</sup> These members include representatives of state agencies and the Legislature, as well as citizens who represent relevant areas of interest. The members include:<sup>143</sup>

- Two members of the Senate who are not members of the same political party, appointed by the President of the Senate with the advice of the minority leader of the Senate.
- Two members of the House of Representatives who are not members of the same political party, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives with the advice of the minority leader of the House of Representatives.
- The Secretary of Children and Family Services (DCF), or his or her designee.
- The director of the Mental Health Program Office within the DCF, or his or her designee.
- The State Surgeon General, or his or her designee.
- The Commissioner of Education, or his or her designee.
- The Secretary of Corrections, or his or her designee.
- The Attorney General, or his or her designee.
- The Secretary of Management Services, or his or her designee.
- The Secretary of Commerce, or his or her designee.
- A businessperson who is an African American appointed by the Governor.
- Two persons appointed by the President of the Senate who are not members of the Legislature or employed by state government. One of these appointments must be a clinical physiologist.
- Two persons appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives who are not members of the Legislature or employed by state government. One of these appointments must be an Africana studies professional.
- The deputy secretary for Medicaid in the Agency for Health Care Administration, or his or her designee.
- The Secretary of Juvenile Justice, or his or her designee.

The council is tasked with conducting a systematic study of the social and economic conditions affecting black men and boys, including, but not limited to:<sup>144</sup>

- Homicide rates;
- Arrest and incarceration rates;
- Poverty;
- Violence;
- Drug use;
- Death rates;
- Disparate annual income levels;
- School performance in all grade levels including postsecondary levels; and

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<sup>138</sup> Section [1003.32\(1\), F.S.](#)

<sup>139</sup> Section [1003.32\(1\)\(a\), F.S.](#)

<sup>140</sup> Section [16.615, F.S.](#); Florida Council on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys, *About the Council*, <https://cssbmb.com/about-the-council/> (last visited May 16, 2025).

<sup>141</sup> Section [16.615\(1\), F.S.](#)

<sup>142</sup> Section [16.615, \(1\) and \(2\), F.S.](#) For the purpose of providing staggered terms of the initial appointments, 9 members are appointed to 2-year terms, and 10 members are appointed to 4-year terms. A member of the council may be removed at any time by the member's appointing authority who must fill the vacancy on the council.

<sup>143</sup> Section [16.615\(1\), F.S.](#)

<sup>144</sup> Section [16.615\(4\)\(a\), F.S.](#)

- Health issues.

Based on these findings, the council proposes legislative and nonlegislative measures to alleviate and correct the underlying causes of these conditions. In addition to its mandated studies, the council may explore additional topics at the direction of the Legislature or its chair. It also receives input from legislators, government agencies, advocacy organizations, and private citizens. Furthermore, the council is responsible for developing a strategic program and funding initiative to establish local councils dedicated to addressing these issues at the community level.<sup>145</sup> Additionally, it is tasked with developing a strategic program and funding initiative for the establishment of local councils.<sup>146</sup>

The council has statutory authority to access public records from state agencies, request research assistance from the Office of Economic and Demographic Research and the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability, seek assistance from state or local government entities, and apply for and accept funding from public and private sources to support its work.<sup>147</sup> It may also collaborate with Florida's Historically Black Colleges and Universities to address education-related issues.<sup>148</sup>

The Office of the Attorney General provides staffing and administrative support and oversees the council's meeting schedule. The council meets quarterly and may hold additional meetings with the approval of the Attorney General.<sup>149</sup> A quorum of 11 members is required for official actions, with a majority vote needed for final decisions.<sup>150</sup> The council must submit an annual report by December 15 to the Governor, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the relevant legislative committees outlining its findings and recommendations.<sup>151</sup>

As a public entity, the council and any subcommittees it forms are subject to Florida's public records law and public meetings law, ensuring transparency.<sup>152</sup> Additionally, members not already required to file a financial disclosure statement must submit a disclosure of financial interests.<sup>153</sup>

Council members serve without compensation but are eligible for reimbursement for per diem and travel expenses. State officers and employees receive reimbursement through their respective agencies, while other members may be reimbursed through the Department of Legal Affairs.<sup>154</sup>

### [Florida Memorial University](#)

FMU is a private coeducational institution with the distinction of being one of the oldest academic centers in the state, and the only historically black university in southern Florida. The university offers 27 undergraduate degree programs and 3 master's programs.<sup>155</sup>

### [Florida ABLE, Inc.](#)

Congress enacted the ABLE Act (Achieving a Better Life Experience Act) in 2014.<sup>156</sup> The ABLE Act permits a state to implement an ABLE Program and establish ABLE accounts for eligible individuals with disabilities<sup>157</sup> to spend

<sup>145</sup> Section [16.615\(4\)\(b\)-\(d\), F.S.](#)

<sup>146</sup> Section [16.615\(4\)\(e\), F.S.](#)

<sup>147</sup> Section [16.615\(5\)\(a\)-\(e\), F.S.](#)

<sup>148</sup> Section [16.615\(5\)\(f\), F.S.](#)

<sup>149</sup> Section [16.615\(6\) and \(7\), F.S.](#)

<sup>150</sup> Section [16.615\(8\), F.S.](#)

<sup>151</sup> Section [16.615\(9\), F.S.](#)

<sup>152</sup> Section [16.615\(11\), F.S.](#)

<sup>153</sup> Section [16.615\(12\), F.S.](#)

<sup>154</sup> Section [16.615\(10\), F.S.](#)

<sup>155</sup> Florida Memorial University, *About FMU*, <https://www.fmu.edu/about-fmu/fmu-at-a-glance/> (last visited May 16, 2025).

<sup>156</sup> Pub. L. No. 113-295, 128 Stat. 4056 (Dec. 19, 2014).

<sup>157</sup> 26 U.S.C. § 529(e). An individual is an eligible individual for a taxable year if during such taxable year: (1) the individual is entitled to benefits based on blindness or disability under title II or XVI of the Social Security Act, and such blindness or disability occurred before the date on which the individual attained age 26; or (2) a disability certification with respect to such individual is filed with the Secretary of Education for such taxable year.

distributions on “qualified disability expenses.”<sup>158</sup> The purposes of the ABLE Act are to encourage individuals and families to save money to support individuals with disabilities to maintain health, independence, and quality of life and to provide secure funding for disability-related expenses on behalf of designated beneficiaries with disabilities to supplement benefits provided through other sources.<sup>159</sup>

The Florida ABLE Program was created in 2015 to encourage and assist the saving of private funds in tax-exempt accounts in order to pay for the qualified expenses of eligible individuals with disabilities.<sup>160</sup> The Florida Prepaid College Board was required to establish a direct-support organization to be known as “Florida ABLE, Inc.” to establish and administer the Florida ABLE Program.<sup>161</sup>

Current law requires the board of directors of the Florida ABLE program to consist of:

- The chair of Florida Prepaid, who must serve as the chair of the board.
- One individual who possesses knowledge, skill, and experience in the areas of accounting, risk management, or investment management, who must be appointed by Florida Prepaid. A current member of Florida Prepaid, other than the chair, may be appointed.
- One individual who possesses knowledge, skill, and experience in the areas of accounting, risk management, or investment management, who must be appointed by the Governor.
- Two individuals who are advocates of persons with disabilities, one of whom must be appointed by the President of the Senate and one of whom must be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives. At least one of the individuals appointed must be an advocate of persons with developmental disabilities, as that term is defined in statute.<sup>162</sup>

Currently, the Governor-appointee and the individuals appointed by the President of the Senate and Speaker of the House all serve 3-year terms and each may be reappointed for up to one consecutive term.<sup>163</sup>

### Educator Endorsements

Educators who hold a currently valid Florida Temporary or Professional Certificate may be eligible to add another subject coverage or endorsement.<sup>164</sup> An endorsement is a rider on a Florida certificate with a full subject coverage and denotes a particular expertise in an instructional level or methodology. An endorsement cannot stand alone on a certificate. Academic endorsements are available in the following areas:<sup>165</sup>

- American Sign Language
- Athletic Coaching
- Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Driver Education
- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
- Gifted
- Orientation and Mobility
- Prekindergarten Disabilities
- Reading
- Severe or Profound Disabilities

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<sup>158</sup> 26 U.S.C. § 529(e)(5). “Qualified disability expense” is defines as “any expense related to the eligible individual’s blindness or disability which are made for the benefit of an eligible individual who is the designated beneficiary, including the following expenses: education, housing, transportation, employment training and support, assistive technology and personal support services, health, prevention and wellness, financial management and administrative services, legal fees, expenses for oversight and monitoring, funeral and burial expenses, and other expenses, which are approved by the Secretary under regulations and consistent with the purposes of this section.”

<sup>159</sup> 26 U.S.C. § 529(b).

<sup>160</sup> Section 2, ch. 2015-56, L.O.F.

<sup>161</sup> Section [1009.986\(3\), F.S.](#)

<sup>162</sup> Sections [393.063](#) and [1009.986\(3\)\(d\)1., F.S.](#)

<sup>163</sup> Section [1009.986\(3\)\(d\)2.b., F.S.](#)

<sup>164</sup> Florida Department of Education, Educator Certification, *Certificate Additions*, <https://www.fldoe.org/teaching/certification/additions/> (last visited May 16, 2025)

<sup>165</sup> Florida Department of Education, Educator Certification, *Certificate Subjects*, <https://www.fldoe.org/teaching/certification/certificate-subjects/> (last visited May 16, 2025)

Florida law required the DOE to adopt one or more statewide, competency-based pathways by the beginning of the 2022-2023 school year for instructional personnel to earn a reading endorsement. As part of the development the DOE was required to review the competencies for alignment with the science of reading.<sup>166</sup>

**RECENT LEGISLATION:**

YEAR	BILL #	HOUSE SPONSOR(S)	SENATE SPONSOR	OTHER INFORMATION
2024	<a href="#">HB 523</a>	Canady, Black	Perry	Took effect on July 1, 2024.
2024	<a href="#">CS/CS/HB 917</a>	Snyder	Simon	Took effect on July 1, 2024.
2023	<a href="#">CS/CS/SB 240</a>	Melo	Hutson	Took effect on July 1, 2023.
2023	<a href="#">CS/HB 379</a>	Yeager	Burgess	Took effect on July 1, 2023.
2022	<a href="#">CS/HB 461</a>	Melo, Valdés	Hutson	Became law on June 27, 2022 and took effect on that date.

**OTHER RESOURCES:**

Education & Employment Committee: [Charter School Background Fact Sheet](#)  
Education & Employment Committee: [K-12 Career and Technical Education](#)  
Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program: [Florida's Bright Futures Scholarship Program](#)

<sup>166</sup> Section [1012.586\(2\), F.S.](#)