

# 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.*

<b>BILL #:</b> <a href="#">SB 2510</a>	<b>COMPANION BILL:</b> None
<b>TITLE:</b> Prekindergarten Through Grade 12 Education	<b>LINKED BILLS:</b> None
<b>SPONSOR(S):</b>	<b>RELATED BILLS:</b> None
<b>FINAL HOUSE FLOOR ACTION:</b> 80 Y's 24 N's	<b>GOVERNOR'S ACTION:</b> Pending

### SUMMARY

#### Effect of the Bill:

The bill conforms applicable statutes to appropriations provided for prekindergarten through grade 12 education in the conference report on the General Appropriations Act for the 2025-2026 fiscal year. Specifically, the bill:

- Provides additional opportunities for hope operators by revising provisions regarding Schools of Hope.
- Authorizes the school district reading plan to include parent resources for struggling students and information about student eligibility for the New Worlds Reading Initiative.
- Removes new student eligibility for the New Worlds Scholarship Accounts program and revises the terms of account closure from 3 years of inactivity to 1 year of inactivity.
- Modifies the CAPE Digital Tool certificates and industry certifications and establishes the CAPE Pathways industry certifications.
- Replaces the weighted full-time equivalent funding for certain acceleration options with a new Academic Acceleration Options Supplement as a categorical in the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP).
- Removes the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) Allocation Conference and requires the Department of Education (DOE) to submit recalculated FEFP data to the Legislature and Governor for written approval prior to releasing the recalculated allocations to school districts.
- Requires the DOE to make recommendations by July 1, 2028, on a Title I performance incentive program.

#### Fiscal or Economic Impact:

See FISCAL OR ECONOMIC IMPACT Section

[JUMP TO](#)

[SUMMARY](#)

[ANALYSIS](#)

[RELEVANT INFORMATION](#)

### ANALYSIS

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

The bill seeks to provide additional opportunities for [hope operators](#) by revising provisions governing [Schools of Hope](#). The bill amends the definition of [persistently low-performing school](#) by including schools that fall in the bottom 10 percent of schools for student performance on the grade 3 statewide, standardized English Language Arts (ELA) assessment or the grade 4 statewide, standardized mathematics assessment in at least 2 of the previous 3 years. The bill also allows a school of hope to be located outside a Florida Opportunity Zone or persistently low-performing school attendance zone if the school district does not have underused, vacant, or surplus property available for the hope operator within a Florida Opportunity Zone or persistently low-performing school attendance zone. The school of hope must provide an enrollment preference for students residing in such zones for the entirety of the validity period. (Section 5)

The bill authorizes that in addition to a school district, a state university or state college may serve as the sponsoring entity for a [School of Hope](#). (Section 5).

The bill authorizes a school of hope to co-locate with another public school in any [facility](#). The school district must allow the school of hope to use all or part of an underused, vacant, or surplus school district facility at no cost and receive facility-related services, pursuant to State Board of Education (SBE) rule. A school district may provide the DOE with documentation for prekindergarten students in a school district facility that are not reported for funding in the FEFP prior to the DOE's annual publication of the underused, vacant or surplus facilities list.

**STORAGE NAME:** s2510z1

**DATE:** 6/27/2025

The bill incorporates a mutual management plan into the [dispute resolution](#) provisions governing agreements between hope operators and school districts. The bill provides that students enrolled in the school of hope be included within the district's total capital outlay full-time equivalent (FTE) membership for purposes of charter school capital outlay funding and for calculating the Public Education Capital Outlay maintenance funds or any other maintenance funds for the facility.

The bill requires each school of hope to report to its sponsor the number of students served, and the percentage of overall school enrollment that reside in the attendance zone of a persistently low-performing school or a Florida Opportunity Zone and student year-to-year re-enrollment in kindergarten-5, grades 6-8, and grades 9-12. The DOE must annually report this information and the performance of schools of hope students on statewide assessments compared to students in other Title I-eligible schools in the district. (Section 5).

Beginning, July 1, 2027, the bill requires the transfer of funds from the Schools of Hope Revolving Loan Program to the School of Hope Program in order to maintain a balance of \$25 million in the Schools of Hope Program. (Section 2) Additionally, the bill authorizes a school of hope to continue to receive funds from the Schools of Hope Program after its first 5 years of operation if the school meets performance metrics established by the SBE. Funds received based upon the school's performance are authorized to be used for any operational expenditures. (Section 5)

The bill clarifies that a nonprofit entity that operates more than one school of hope which is designated as a local education agency may directly report its students to the DOE. (Section 5)

The bill allows a [school district reading instruction plan](#) to notify parents of students who have difficulty in reading or who are reading below grade level about the students' eligibility for the New Worlds Reading Initiative. (Section 9)

The bill removes new student eligibility for the [New Worlds Scholarship Accounts](#) program, but allows parents to spend the remaining funds in an account on qualifying expenditures and revises the terms of account closure from 3 years of inactivity to 1 year of inactivity. (Section 7)

The bill limits the eligibility for [CAPE Digital Tool](#) certificates to students in elementary school grades, beginning with the 2025-2026 school year and removes requirements related to middle school students and CAPE Digital Tool certificates. The bill renames the "CAPE industry certifications" as the "Basic CAPE industry certifications" and establishes the CAPE Basic Non-articulated industry certifications and the CAPE Basic Articulated industry certifications. Additionally, the bill establishes the CAPE Pathways industry certifications issued to high school students who complete at least three courses and earn an industry certification within a single career and technical education program or program of study, and who exit with a standard high school diploma. Such industry certifications are eligible for additional FEFP funding. (Sections 10, 11, and 14)

The bill establishes the Academic [Acceleration Options](#) Supplement as a new categorical funded in the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) and describes the methodology for distributing the supplement funds to eligible school districts. The bill clarifies which categoricals are included in recalculating the FEFP and removes the FEFP Allocation Conference and requires the DOE to submit recalculated FEFP data to the Legislature and the Governor for written approval prior to releasing the recalculated allocations to school districts. (Sections 17 and 18)

The bill requires the DOE, by July 1, 2028, to recommend to the Legislature a Florida Title I performance incentive program to reward Title I schools that have demonstrated excellence in student achievement and learning gains. The recommendations must include a methodology to determine eligibility based on student achievement, learning gains, or comparisons to other Title I schools, the use of program funds, and projection of award amounts and overall program costs. The department must consider additional weights for student learning gains and the percentage of economically disadvantaged students at the school and any other school attributes. (Section 19) Subject to the Governor's veto powers, the effective date of this bill is July 1, 2025.

## FISCAL OR ECONOMIC IMPACT:

### STATE GOVERNMENT:

The bill conforms applicable statutes to the appropriations provided for prekindergarten through grade 12 education in the General Appropriations Act (GAA) for the 2025-2026 fiscal year, including:

- \$596.8 million for the new Academic Acceleration Options Supplement.
- \$6 million for the Schools of Hope Program.

Additionally, the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 GAA reduces the Non-FEFP budget entity by \$4 million to align to the removal of new student eligibility for a New Worlds Scholarship Account beginning with the 2025-2026 school year.

## RELEVANT INFORMATION

### SUBJECT OVERVIEW:

#### Schools of Hope

In 2017, the Legislature established the Schools of Hope Program to provide students in areas of persistently low-performing schools the opportunity to access a high-quality education designed to close the opportunity gap and increase student achievement.<sup>1</sup> A school of hope is defined as a charter school operated by a hope operator to serve students from one or more persistently low-performing schools; is located within the attendance zone of the persistently low-performing school or within a five mile radius of the school, whichever is greater; and is a Title I eligible school.<sup>2</sup>

A hope operator may also open a school of hope in a “Florida Opportunity Zone,” which is a population census tract that has been designated by the Treasury as a Qualified Opportunity Zone pursuant to the federal Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017.<sup>3</sup> In 2018, Governor Rick Scott nominated Florida’s 427 opportunity zone sites located throughout Florida’s 67 counties.<sup>4</sup> The zones were certified by the Treasury and will retain the designation for 10 years.<sup>5</sup>

A hope operator seeking to open a school of hope must submit a notice of intent to the school district that includes, among other information, an academic focus and plan, a financial plan, goals and objective for increasing student achievement for students from low-income families, and a completed or planned community outreach plan.<sup>6</sup> A school of hope must be operated under a performance-based agreement with an initial term of 5 years that meets the requirements established in statute, including, but not limited to: a delineation of the current incoming baseline standard of student academic achievement, the outcomes to be achieved, and the method of measurement that will be used; the grounds for termination, including failure to meet the requirements for student performance; and a description of the methods of involving parents and expected levels for such involvement.<sup>7</sup>

Under the Schools of Hope Program administered by the DOE, a school of hope may receive additional funding for certain expenses such as funds for initial school facility leasing, hiring instructional support personnel, or acquiring supplies and educational materials, along with other expenses specified in law.<sup>8</sup> Funds allocated which are not

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<sup>1</sup> Section 43, ch. 2017-116, L.O.F., codified at [s. 1002.333, F.S.](#)

<sup>2</sup> Section [1002.333\(1\)\(c\)1, F.S.](#)

<sup>3</sup> Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, Pub. L. No.115-97, H.R. 1, 115th Cong. (Dec. 22, 2017)

<sup>4</sup> Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Florida’s Certified Opportunity Zones (2018), *available at* <http://www.floridajobs.org/docs/default-source/communicationsfiles/fl-opportunity-zones-county-summary.pdf>; *See also* Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research, *Opportunity Zones by Media Markets*, *available at* <https://deolmsgis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=4e768ad410c84a32ac9aa91035cc2375> (providing a map of each identified opportunity zone (FOZ)).

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of Treasury, Press Releases: Treasury, *IRS Announce Final Round of Opportunity Zone Designations* (June 14, 2018), <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sm0414> (last visited June 23, 2025).

<sup>6</sup> Section [1002.333\(4\)\(a\), F.S.](#)

<sup>7</sup> Section [1002.333\(5\), F.S.](#)

<sup>8</sup> Section [1002.333\(10\), F.S.](#)

disbursed by June 30 of the fiscal year in which the funds are allocated may be carried forward for up to 5 years.<sup>9</sup> The DOE also operates the Schools of Hope Revolving Loan program to provide assistance to schools of hope with building construction needs and expenses related to startup of new schools of hope.<sup>10</sup> To date, the DOE has released \$100 million for the revolving loan fund of which \$98,930,008 has been loaned to hope operators.<sup>11</sup>

A school of hope or a nonprofit entity that operates more than one school of hope may request that the SBE designate the school as a local education agency (LEA) for the purposes of receiving federal funds. As a LEA, the school accepts the full responsibility for all LEA requirements and the schools for which it will perform local education agency responsibilities.<sup>12</sup> Students enrolled in a school established by a hope operator designated as a LEA are not eligible students for purposes of calculating a district's school grade.<sup>13</sup>

A school of hope that has not been designated as an LEA must report its students to the school district for purposes of determining the school district's full-time equivalent FTE membership in calculating the FEFP.<sup>14</sup>

### Persistently Low-Performing Schools

A persistently low-performing school is a school that has earned three grades lower than a "C" in at least 3 of the previous 5 school years that the school received a grade and has not earned a grade of "B" or higher in the most recent 2 school years. A school is also a persistently low-performing school if it was closed pursuant to the school's turnaround option plan within 2 years after the submission of a notice of intent.<sup>15</sup> The SBE must publish annually a list of persistently low-performing schools and must provide students in persistently low-performing schools with a public school that meets accountability standards.<sup>16</sup> For the 2023-2024 school year, the SBE's published list includes 51 persistently low-performing schools.<sup>17</sup>

### Hope Operators

A hope operator is a tax-exempt, nonprofit organization that operates three or more charter schools that serve students in grades K-12 in Florida or other states with a record of serving students from low-income families and is designated by the SBE as a hope operator.<sup>18</sup> The SBE rule designates an entity as a hope operator if it submits a complete application and meets at least one of the following criteria:

- Was awarded a United States Department of Education Charter School Program grant for the Replication and Expansion of High-Quality Charter Schools pursuant to Title IV, Part C of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act within the preceding 3 years from the date the entity submits an application to the DOE;
- Has a current and active grant award for funding through the National Fund of the Charter School Growth Fund; or
- Is a non-profit charter school that is selected by a district school board to turnaround the performance of a low-performing public school.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Section [1002.333\(10\)\(b\), F.S.](#)

<sup>10</sup> Section [1001.292, F.S.](#)

<sup>11</sup> Florida Department of Education, *School of Hope: Revolving Loan Fund*, <https://www.fldoe.org/schools/school-choice/other-school-choice-options/schools-of-hope/loan-fund.stml> (last visited June 23, 2025).

<sup>12</sup> Section [1002.333\(6\)\(a\), F.S.](#)

<sup>13</sup> *Id.*

<sup>14</sup> *Id.* at (6)(g).

<sup>15</sup> Section [1002.333\(1\)\(c\), F.S.](#)

<sup>16</sup> Section [1002.333\(11\)\(d\), F.S.](#)

<sup>17</sup> Florida Department of Education, Florida School Accountability Reports, *Persistently Low-Performing Schools* (2024), available at <https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/18534/urlt/PLP24.xlsx>.

<sup>18</sup> Section [1002.333\(2\), F.S.](#)

<sup>19</sup> Rule 6A-1.0998271(2)(b), F.A.C.

Designation as a hope operator is valid for 5 years from the opening of a school of hope.<sup>20</sup> Presently, Florida has designated seven hope operators<sup>21</sup> that are running 12 schools of hope.<sup>22</sup>

### **Facilities**

A school of hope must use facilities that comply with the Florida Building Code, except for the State Requirements for Educational Facilities (SREF).<sup>23</sup> A school of hope that uses school district facilities must comply with SREF only if the school district and the hope operator have entered into a mutual management plan for the reasonable maintenance of such facilities, as specified in law.<sup>24</sup>

No later than January 1, the DOE must annually provide to school districts a list of all underused, vacant, or surplus facilities owned or operated by the school district as reported in the Florida Inventory of School Houses.<sup>25</sup> By each April 1, the DOE must update and publish a final list of all underused, vacant, or surplus facilities owned or operated by each school district, based upon updated information provided by each school district. A hope operator establishing a school of hope may use an educational facility identified by a school district at no cost or at a mutually agreeable cost not to exceed \$600 per student. A hope operator that uses a facility owned or operated by a school district may not sell or dispose of the facility without the written permission of the school district.<sup>26</sup>

### **Dispute Resolution for Hope Operators**

The SBE is responsible for overseeing the resolution of disputes between a hope operator and a school district arising from a performance-based agreement or a contract between a charter operator and a school district. The Commissioner must appoint a special magistrate who must hold hearings to determine facts relating to the dispute and to render a recommended decision for resolution to the SBE. The recommendation may not alter in any way the provisions of the performance-based agreement. Within 15 calendar days after the close of the final hearing, the special magistrate must transmit a recommended decision to the SBE and to the representatives of both parties.

The SBE must approve or reject the recommended decision at its next regularly scheduled meeting that is more than 7 calendar days and no more than 30 days after the date the recommended decision is transmitted. The decision by the SBE is a final agency action that may be appealed. A charter school may recover attorney fees and costs if the SBE determines that the school district unlawfully implemented or otherwise impeded implementation of the performance-based agreement.

### **Comprehensive System of Reading Intervention**

Each school district is required to implement a system of comprehensive reading instruction for students enrolled in prekindergarten through grade 12 and certain students who exhibit a substantial deficiency in early literacy.<sup>27</sup>

The comprehensive reading instruction plan may include all district schools, including charter schools, unless a charter school elects to submit a plan independently from the school district.<sup>28</sup> The plan may include the following components:<sup>29</sup>

- Additional time per day of evidence-based intensive reading instruction for kindergarten through grade 12 students, which may be delivered during or outside of the regular school day.

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<sup>20</sup> Section [1002.333\(3\), F.S.](#)

<sup>21</sup> Democracy Prep Public Schools, Inc., Individuals Dedicated to Excellence and Achievement (IDEA) Public Schools, the Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) New Jersey, Mater Academy, Renaissance/Warrington Preparatory Academy, Success Academy, and RCMA. See Florida Department of Education, *Schools of Hope*, <http://www.fldoe.org/schools/school-choice/other-school-choice-options/schools-of-hope/> (last visited June 23, 2025).

<sup>22</sup> Email, Florida Department of Education, *RE: Schools of Hope Data* (March 24, 2025), on file with the Education Administration Subcommittee.

<sup>23</sup> Section [1002.333\(7\)\(a\), F.S.](#)

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

<sup>25</sup> Florida Department of Education, *Educational Facilities: Florida Inventory of School Houses*, <https://www.fldoe.org/finance/educ-facilities/fl-inventory-of-school-houses-fish.stml> (last visited June 23, 2025).

<sup>26</sup> Section [1002.333\(7\)\(d\), F.S.](#)

<sup>27</sup> Section [1003.4201, F.S.](#)

<sup>28</sup> Section [1003.4201\(1\), F.S.](#)

<sup>29</sup> Section [1003.4201\(2\), F.S.](#)



- Highly qualified reading coaches, who must be endorsed in reading, to specifically support classroom teachers in making instructional decisions based on progress monitoring data and improve classroom teacher delivery of effective reading instruction, reading intervention, and reading in the content areas based on student need.
- Professional learning to help instructional personnel and certified prekindergarten teachers funded in the Florida Education Finance Program earn a certification, a credential, an endorsement, or an advanced degree in scientifically researched and evidence-based reading instruction.
- Summer reading camps, using only classroom teachers or other district personnel who possess a micro-credential<sup>30</sup> in reading or are certified or endorsed in reading consistent for all students in kindergarten through grade 5 exhibiting a reading deficiency as determined by district and state assessments.
- Incentives for instructional personnel and certified prekindergarten teachers funded in the Florida Education Finance Program who possess a reading certification or endorsement or micro-credential and provide educational support to improve student literacy.
- Tutoring in reading.

### **New Worlds Reading Initiative**

The New Worlds Reading Initiative (NWRI), Florida's first statewide book distribution program, provides at-home literacy supports for students identified with a substantial reading deficiency<sup>31</sup> or students who scored below a Level 3 on the preceding year's statewide, standardized ELA assessment.<sup>32</sup> To improve the literacy skills of students in prekindergarten through grade 12, the NWRI provides home delivery of high-quality, hardcopy free books on a monthly basis to eligible public and charter school students in prekindergarten through grade 5. The program is available to students who are reading below grade level.<sup>33</sup> School districts must notify parents of eligible students that their student can receive free, high-quality books mailed to their home on a monthly basis during the school year and provide parents with an application. Students remain in the NWRI until they are promoted to grade 6 or their parent opts out.<sup>34</sup> Parents are provided resources to help improve their student's reading skills and instill a love of reading.<sup>35</sup>

### **New Worlds Scholarship Accounts**

The New Worlds Scholarship Accounts program provides educational options for students enrolled in a Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program, pursuant to s. 1002.53, F.S., or a Florida public school in kindergarten through grade 5 who have a substantial deficiency in reading or mathematics or exhibit characteristics of dyslexia or dyscalculia, as assessed by the coordinated screening and progress monitoring, or who scored below a Level three on the statewide, standardized ELA or mathematics assessment in the prior school year.<sup>36</sup> An eligible student who is classified as an English Language Learner and is enrolled in a program or receives services that are specifically designed to meet the instructional needs of such students is given priority for the scholarship.<sup>37</sup> For the 2024-2025 school year, the amount of the scholarship was \$1,200 per eligible student and was awarded on a first-come, first-served basis.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>30</sup> To earn an early literacy micro-credential a teacher must demonstrate competency in diagnosing literacy difficulties and determining the appropriate range of literacy interventions based upon the age and literacy deficiency of the student and how use evidence-based instructional and intervention practices grounded in the science of reading, including strategies identified by the Just Read, Florida! Office.

<sup>31</sup> See [s. 1008.25\(5\)\(a\), F.S.](#)

<sup>32</sup> Sections [1003.485\(2\)](#) and [1008.22, F.S.](#)

<sup>33</sup> Section [1003.485\(2\), F.S.](#)

<sup>34</sup> Section [1003.485\(6\)\(e\), F.S.](#)

<sup>35</sup> Section [1003.485\(4\)\(e\), F.S.](#)

<sup>36</sup> Section [1002.411\(1\)\(a\), F.S.](#)

<sup>37</sup> Section [1002.411\(2\), F.S.](#)

<sup>38</sup> Florida Department of Education, *New Worlds Reading Scholarship Accounts*, <https://www.fldoe.org/schools/school-choice/k-12-scholarship-programs/reading/index.stml> (last visited June 23, 2025).

An eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organization (SFO) participating in the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program<sup>39</sup> may establish scholarship accounts for eligible students.<sup>40</sup> For an eligible student to receive a scholarship account, the student's parent must:

- Submit an application to an eligible SFO by the deadline established by the SFO; and
- Submit eligible expenses to the SFO for reimbursement of qualifying expenditures.

Qualifying expenditures include:

- Instructional materials.
- Curriculum.
- Tuition and fees for part-time tutoring services provided by a person who holds a valid Florida educator's certificate, a person who holds a baccalaureate or graduate degree in the subject area, a person who holds an adjunct teaching certificate, or a person who has demonstrated mastery of subject area knowledge.
- Fees for summer education programs designed to improve reading, literacy, or mathematics skills.
- Fees for after-school education programs designed to improve reading, literacy, or mathematics skills.<sup>41</sup>

Each year, the school district and private prekindergarten provider is required to notify the parent of each eligible student of the process to request and receive a scholarship.<sup>42</sup>

In the 2023-2024 school year, 31,764 students were funded and of that:

- 2,376 students spent all their scholarship funds,
- 10,335 students spent a partial amount of their funds, and
- 19,053 students did not spend any of their scholarship funds.<sup>43</sup>

### Acceleration Programs

The base student allocation, or BSA, for the FEFP for kindergarten through grade 12 is annually determined by the Legislature and is prescribed in the GAA. The school district's FTE membership must be computed and maintained in accordance with the regulations of the Commissioner of Education.<sup>44</sup>

Florida schools offer high school articulated acceleration programs.<sup>45</sup> These programs are offered to shorten the time necessary for a student to earn a high school diploma and postsecondary degree, broaden the scope of curriculum options available and increase the depth of study available for a particular subject. Additional value per FTE student is provided for the following acceleration options:

- Advanced Placement (AP),
- Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE),
- Dual Enrollment,
- International Baccalaureate (IB), and
- Career and Professional Education (CAPE) industry certifications.

Current law provides specific requirements to qualify for additional FTE under each of these programs. Each program has a prescribed weighted value of FTE students, which ranges from 0.0025 to 1.0, depending on the program.<sup>46</sup>

The additional FTE generated from these programs is added to the school district's weighted FTE when calculating the base FEFP funding. The base FEFP funding is derived from the product of the weighted FTE, multiplied by the BSA, and if applicable, the comparable wage factor and the small district factor.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Section [1002.395, F.S.](#)

<sup>40</sup> Section [1002.411\(4\), F.S.](#)

<sup>41</sup> Section [1002.411\(3\), F.S.](#)

<sup>42</sup> Section [1002.411\(6\)\(a\), F.S.](#)

<sup>43</sup> Email, Step Up for Students, (April 7, 2025).

<sup>44</sup> Section [1011.62\(1\), F.S.](#)

<sup>45</sup> Section [1007.27\(1\), F.S.](#)

<sup>46</sup> Section [1011.62\(1\), F.S.](#)

<sup>47</sup> Florida Department of Education, *Funding for Florida School Districts 2024-25*, available at <https://www.fldoe.org/core/filesparse.php/7507/urlt/fefpdist.pdf> page 17 (last visited June 23, 2025).

Current law also specifies the allowable uses of the funds to include training, professional development, bonuses for instructional personnel, examination fees, and diploma fees. Teachers earn a bonus for each student meeting certain requirements for AP, AICE, CAPE, and IB courses. A teacher who taught in a school designated with a grade of “D” or “F” with at least one student attaining the milestone earns another bonus of \$250 or \$500, depending on the program.<sup>48</sup>

### **Career and Professional Education (CAPE) Digital Tools**

Each district school board is required to make available digital materials, CAPE Digital Tool certificates, and CAPE industry certifications for students in prekindergarten through grade 12 in order to enable students to attain digital skills.<sup>49</sup> The DOE is required to identify CAPE Digital Tool certificates in the CAPE Industry Certification Funding List that indicate a student’s digital skills and notify each school district when the certificates are available. The DOE must make the certificates available to all public elementary and middle grades students, but the Commissioner of Education may limit CAPE industry certifications and CAPE Digital Tool certificates to students in certain grades based on formal recommendations by providers of CAPE industry certifications and CAPE Digital Tool certificates.<sup>50</sup>

Each district school board is also required to make available digital and instructional materials, including software applications, to students with disabilities who are in prekindergarten through grade 12. Digital materials may include CAPE Digital Tool certificates, workplace industry certifications, and OSHA industry certifications for students with disabilities. In addition, each student’s individual educational plan for students with disabilities must identify the CAPE Digital Tool certificates and CAPE industry certifications the student seeks to attain before high school graduation.<sup>51</sup>

It is the goal that at least 75 percent of public middle grades students earn at least one CAPE Digital Tool certificate.<sup>52</sup> Each district school board, in collaboration with local workforce development boards, economic development agencies, and state-approved postsecondary institutions, must include plans to implement a career and professional academy or a career-themed course in at least one middle school in the district. CAPE Digital Tool certificates and CAPE industry certifications offered in middle grades are to be included on the CAPE Industry Certification Funding List.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Section [1011.62\(1\), F.S.](#)

<sup>49</sup> Section [1003.4203\(1\), F.S.](#)

<sup>50</sup> Section [1008.44\(4\)\(b\), F.S.](#)

<sup>51</sup> Section [1003.4203\(2\), F.S.](#)

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

<sup>53</sup> Section [1003.4395, F.S.](#)