

CS/HB 1279

2026

A bill to be entitled
An act relating to education; creating s. 413.0114, F.S.; requiring certain persons and entities to complete a written consumer disclosure for blind-related services; providing that specified violations constitute unfair or deceptive trade practices and are subject to specified penalties and enforcement; authorizing the State Board of Education to adopt rules; amending s. 413.208, F.S.; requiring certain service providers to apply to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation; requiring the division to establish qualifications for certain service providers and an application process and period for such service providers; authorizing the division to approve or deny such service providers; providing division and service provider requirements relating to such process; providing reporting and evaluation system requirements for the division relating to service provider effectiveness; providing requirements for rates for vocational rehabilitation services; amending s. 1001.7065, F.S.; revising certain academic and research excellence standards for preeminent state research universities; requiring such universities to maintain certain enrollment ratios; providing that such universities are ineligible for specified funding

26 under certain circumstances beginning on a specified
27 date; amending s. 1001.92, F.S.; revising state
28 university performance-based metrics for the award of
29 a State University System Performance-Based Incentive;
30 amending s. 1003.437, F.S.; requiring the State Board
31 of Education to establish a uniform weighted grading
32 system for specified courses and articulated
33 acceleration mechanisms; requiring district school
34 boards to use such system for specified purposes;
35 amending s. 1004.06, F.S.; revising construction for
36 the prohibition of certain expenditures; creating s.
37 1004.072, F.S.; providing limitations for student
38 enrollment in a state university; amending s. 1004.39,
39 F.S.; revising provisions relating to the College of
40 Law at Florida International University and removing a
41 specified association from certain provisions;
42 amending s. 1004.40, F.S.; revising provisions
43 relating to the College of Law at Florida Agricultural
44 and Mechanical University and removing a specified
45 association from certain provisions; amending s.
46 1005.06, F.S.; prohibiting certain postsecondary
47 institutions from being exempt from the purview of the
48 Commission for Independent Education; amending s.
49 1006.71, F.S.; deleting a requirement that public
50 postsecondary educational institutions develop a

51 gender equity plan; amending s. 1007.25, F.S.;
52 revising the number of days public postsecondary
53 educational institutions have to submit comments for
54 certain proposed degrees; prohibiting such
55 institutions from imposing certain institution-wide
56 graduation requirements; amending s. 1007.271, F.S.;
57 revising postsecondary institution eligibility for
58 participation in dual enrollment programs; revising
59 provisions relating to the calculation of student
60 grade point averages; amending s. 1008.47, F.S.;
61 revising the period of time in which a public
62 postsecondary institution must seek and obtain
63 specified accreditation; revising the accrediting
64 agencies such institutions may seek accreditation
65 from; providing that certain provisions apply to
66 programmatic accreditors for postsecondary education
67 institutions; amending s. 1009.25, F.S.; revising the
68 requirements for a student to meet the definition of
69 "homeless children and youths"; amending s. 1009.40,
70 F.S.; requiring a person to be a United States citizen
71 or lawfully present in the United States to receive
72 state financial aid awards and tuition assistance
73 grants; amending s. 1009.895, F.S.; conforming a
74 cross-reference to changes made by the act; amending
75 s. 1009.983, F.S.; authorizing a specified designee

76 with certain credentials to serve as director of the
77 direct-support organization for the Florida Prepaid
78 College Foundation, Inc.; amending s. 1009.986, F.S.;
79 revising the membership of the board of directors of
80 Florida ABLE, Inc.; amending s. 1011.62, F.S.;
81 revising the academic acceleration options supplement
82 within the Florida Education Finance Program to
83 include a method for calculating additional full-time
84 equivalent membership based on advanced courses and
85 test scores; providing specified bonuses; providing an
86 effective date.

87

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

89

90 **Section 1. Section 413.0114, Florida Statutes, is created**
91 **to read:**

92 413.0114 Consumer disclosure for blind-related services.—
93 (1) Any person, business, nonprofit, or other entity
94 offering fee-based services to persons who are blind or visually
95 impaired must, before entering into a contract or accepting
96 payment, disclose in writing if equivalent or substantially
97 similar services may be available at no cost through the
98 Division of Blind Services or another public agency.

99 (2) The written disclosure must:

100 (a) Be provided in plain language and an accessible

101 format, including, but not limited to, braille, large print, or
102 audio upon request.

103 (b) Include contact information for the Division of Blind
104 Services.

105 (c) Be signed or electronically acknowledged by the
106 consumer or his or her representative.

107 (3) A violation of this section constitutes an unfair or
108 deceptive trade practice under part II of chapter 501, and is
109 subject to penalties and enforcement as provided therein.

110 (4) The State Board of Education may adopt rules to
111 implement this section.

112 **Section 2. Subsection (1) of section 413.208, Florida**
113 **Statutes, is amended to read:**

114 413.208 Service providers; quality assurance; fitness for
115 responsibilities; background screening.—

116 (1) Service providers must apply to register with the
117 division. To qualify for approval, a registration, The division
118 must ensure that the service provider must maintain maintains an
119 internal system of quality assurance, have has proven functional
120 systems, meet the minimum qualifications, and be is subject to a
121 due-diligence inquiry as to its fitness to undertake service
122 responsibilities.

123 (a) The division shall establish minimum qualifications
124 for service providers. The division may approve or deny any
125 service provider application. The division shall establish an

126 annual application period for service providers to submit
127 applications. Beginning January 1, 2027, only service providers
128 that meet the minimum qualifications established by the
129 division, and that have been approved to provide employment-
130 related services to individuals with disabilities, may
131 participate in the vocational rehabilitation program.

132 (b) The division shall develop and make publicly available
133 an annual report of service provider effectiveness which
134 includes an evaluation system measuring the effectiveness of all
135 service providers that are approved by the division to provide
136 employment-related services to individuals with disabilities.

137 (c) In order to maintain approved status with the
138 division, service providers must meet minimum standards of
139 effectiveness in the provision of vocational rehabilitation
140 services, including placement of individuals in competitive and
141 integrated employment.

142 (d) Rates for vocational rehabilitation services must be
143 allocable, reasonable, and necessary, as determined by the
144 division.

145 **Section 3. Paragraph (d) of subsection (2) and paragraph**
146 **(c) of subsection (5) of section 1001.7065, Florida Statutes,**
147 **are amended to read:**

148 1001.7065 Preeminent state research universities program.—

149 (2) ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH EXCELLENCE STANDARDS.—The
150 following academic and research excellence standards are

151 established for the preeminent state research universities
152 program and shall be reported annually in the Board of Governors
153 Accountability Plan:

154 (d) A 4-year graduation rate of 60 percent or higher for
155 full-time, first-time-in-college students, excluding those
156 enrolled in baccalaureate degree programs in engineering that
157 require more than 120 semester hours.

158 (5) PREEMINENT STATE RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES PROGRAM
159 SUPPORT.—

160 (c) The award of funds under this subsection is contingent
161 upon funding provided by the Legislature to support the
162 preeminent state research universities program created under
163 this section. Funding increases appropriated beyond the amounts
164 funded in the previous fiscal year shall be distributed to each
165 designated preeminent state research university that meets the
166 criteria in paragraph (a). Each designated preeminent state
167 research university shall receive an equal amount of funding.
168 Each preeminent state research university must maintain a fall
169 full-time, first-time-in-college enrollment ratio comprised of
170 at least 95 percent Florida residents based on a 3-year average.
171 Beginning July 1, 2030, a preeminent state research university
172 that fails to meet this requirement is ineligible for funding
173 under this section.

174 **Section 4. Paragraph (a) of subsection (1) of section
175 1001.92, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:**

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176 1001.92 State University System Performance-Based
177 Incentive.—

178 (1) A State University System Performance-Based Incentive
179 shall be awarded to state universities using performance-based
180 metrics adopted by the Board of Governors of the State
181 University System. Beginning with the Board of Governors'
182 determination of each university's performance improvement and
183 achievement ratings, and the related distribution of annual
184 fiscal year appropriation, the performance-based metrics must
185 include:

186 (a) The 4-year graduation rate for first-time-in-college
187 students, excluding those enrolled in baccalaureate degree
188 programs in engineering that require more than 120 semester
189 hours;

190

191 The Board of Governors may approve other metrics in a publicly
192 noticed meeting. The board shall adopt benchmarks to evaluate
193 each state university's performance on the metrics to measure
194 the state university's achievement of institutional excellence
195 or need for improvement and minimum requirements for eligibility
196 to receive performance funding. Benchmarks and metrics may not
197 be adjusted after university performance data has been received
198 by the Board of Governors.

199 **Section 5. Section 1003.437, Florida Statutes, is amended**
200 **to read:**

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201 1003.437 Middle and high school grading system.—The
202 grading system and interpretation of letter grades used to
203 measure student success in grade 6 through grade 12 courses for
204 students in public schools shall be as follows:

205 (1) Grade "A" equals 90 percent through 100 percent, has a
206 grade point average value of 4, and is defined as "outstanding
207 progress."

208 (2) Grade "B" equals 80 percent through 89 percent, has a
209 grade point average value of 3, and is defined as "above average
210 progress."

211 (3) Grade "C" equals 70 percent through 79 percent, has a
212 grade point average value of 2, and is defined as "average
213 progress."

214 (4) Grade "D" equals 60 percent through 69 percent, has a
215 grade point average value of 1, and is defined as "lowest
216 acceptable progress."

217 (5) Grade "F" equals zero percent through 59 percent, has
218 a grade point average value of zero, and is defined as
219 "failure."

220 (6) Grade "I" equals zero percent, has a grade point
221 average value of zero, and is defined as "incomplete."

222
223 The State Board of Education must establish a statewide uniform
224 weighted grading system for honors courses and articulated
225 acceleration mechanisms identified in s. 1007.27. For the

226 ~~purposes of class ranking, District school boards shall use the~~
227 ~~may exercise a weighted grading system to calculate weighted~~
228 ~~high school grade point averages pursuant to s. 1007.271.~~

229 **Section 6. Subsection (3) of section 1004.06, Florida**
230 **Statutes, is amended to read:**

231 1004.06 Prohibited expenditures.—

232 (3) Subsection (2) does not prohibit programs, campus
233 activities, or functions required for compliance with general or
234 federal laws or regulations; ~~for obtaining or retaining~~
235 ~~institutional or discipline specific accreditation with the~~
236 ~~approval of either the State Board of Education or the Board of~~
237 ~~Governors;~~ or for access programs for military veterans, Pell
238 Grant recipients, first generation college students,
239 nontraditional students, "2+2" transfer students from the
240 Florida College System, students from low-income families, or
241 students with unique abilities.

242 **Section 7. Section 1004.072, Florida Statutes, is created**
243 **to read:**

244 1004.072 Enrollment of noncitizen and nonresident students
245 at state universities.—Based on the limitation on systemwide
246 enrollment of nonresident degree-seeking students established by
247 regulation of the Board of Governors, a state university must
248 limit, within its enrollment of nonresident students, the number
249 of enrolled nonresident degree-seeking students who are
250 noncitizens and who are not permanent residents of the United

251 States to no more than 5 percent from any specific country.

252 **Section 8. Subsections (3), (4), and (5) of section**

253 **1004.39, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:**

254 1004.39 College of law at Florida International
255 University.—

256 (3) The college of law at Florida International
257 University, to the extent consistent with the standards required
258 by a ~~the American Bar Association or any other~~ nationally
259 recognized association for the accreditation of colleges of law,
260 shall develop a law library collection utilizing electronic
261 formats and mediums.

262 (4) The college of law at Florida International University
263 shall develop and institute a program that is consistent with
264 sound legal education principles as determined by a ~~the American~~
265 ~~Bar Association or any other~~ nationally recognized association
266 for the accreditation of colleges of law and that, to the extent
267 consistent with such sound legal education principles, is
268 structured to serve the legal needs of traditionally underserved
269 portions of the population by providing an opportunity for
270 participation in a legal clinic program or pro bono legal
271 service.

272 (5) The Florida International University Board of Trustees
273 and the Board of Governors may accept grants, donations, gifts,
274 and moneys available for this purpose, including moneys for
275 planning and constructing the college. The Florida International

276 University Board of Trustees may procure and accept any federal
277 funds that are available for the planning, creation, and
278 establishment of the college of law. If a ~~the American Bar~~
279 ~~Association or any other~~ nationally recognized association for
280 the accreditation of colleges of law issues a third disapproval
281 of an application for provisional approval or for full approval
282 or fails to grant, within 5 years following the graduation of
283 the first class, a provisional approval, to the college of law
284 at Florida International University, the Board of Governors
285 shall make recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature
286 as to whether the college of law will cease operations at the
287 end of the full academic year subsequent to the receipt by the
288 college of law of any such third disapproval, or whether the
289 college of law will continue operations and any conditions for
290 continued operations. If the college of law ceases operations
291 pursuant to this section, the following conditions apply:

292 (a) The authority for the college of law at Florida
293 International University and the authority of the Florida
294 International University Board of Trustees and the Board of
295 Governors provided in this section shall terminate upon the
296 cessation of operations of the college of law at Florida
297 International University. The college of law at Florida
298 International University shall receive no moneys allocated for
299 the planning, construction, or operation of the college of law
300 after its cessation of operations other than moneys to be

301 expended for the cessation of operations of the college of law.
302 Any moneys allocated to the college of law at Florida
303 International University not expended prior to or scheduled to
304 be expended after the date of the cessation of the college of
305 law shall be appropriated for other use by the Legislature of
306 the State of Florida.

307 (b) Any buildings of the college of law at Florida
308 International University constructed from the expenditure of
309 capital outlay funds appropriated by the Legislature shall be
310 owned by the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust
311 Fund and managed by the Florida International University Board
312 of Trustees upon the cessation of the college of law.

313 **Section 9. Subsections (3), (4), and (5) of section
314 1004.40, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:**

315 1004.40 College of law at Florida Agricultural and
316 Mechanical University.—

317 (3) The college of law at Florida Agricultural and
318 Mechanical University, to the extent consistent with the
319 standards required by a the American Bar Association or any
320 ~~ether~~ nationally recognized association for the accreditation of
321 colleges of law, shall develop a law library collection
322 utilizing electronic formats and mediums.

323 (4) The college of law at Florida Agricultural and
324 Mechanical University shall develop and institute a program that
325 is consistent with sound legal education principles as

326 determined by a ~~the American Bar Association or any other~~
327 nationally recognized association for the accreditation of
328 colleges of law and that, to the extent consistent with such
329 sound legal education principles, is structured to serve the
330 legal needs of traditionally underserved portions of the
331 population by providing an opportunity for participation in a
332 legal clinic program or pro bono legal service.

333 (5) The Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University
334 Board of Trustees and the Board of Governors may accept grants,
335 donations, gifts, and moneys available for this purpose,
336 including moneys for planning and constructing the college. The
337 Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University Board of Trustees
338 may procure and accept any federal funds that are available for
339 the planning, creation, and establishment of the college of law.
340 If a ~~the American Bar Association or any other~~ nationally
341 recognized association for the accreditation of colleges of law
342 issues a third disapproval of an application for provisional
343 approval or for full approval or fails to grant, within 5 years
344 following the graduation of the first class, a provisional
345 approval, to the college of law at Florida Agricultural and
346 Mechanical University, the Board of Governors shall make
347 recommendations to the Governor and Legislature as to whether
348 the college of law will cease operations at the end of the full
349 academic year subsequent to the receipt by the college of law of
350 any such third disapproval, or whether the college of law will

351 continue operations and any conditions for continued operations.
352 If the college of law ceases operations of the college of law
353 pursuant to this section, the following conditions apply:

354 (a) The authority for the college of law at Florida
355 Agricultural and Mechanical University and the authority of the
356 Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University Board of Trustees
357 and the Board of Governors provided in this section shall
358 terminate upon the cessation of operations of the college of law
359 at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University. The college
360 of law at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University shall
361 receive no moneys allocated for the planning, construction, or
362 operation of the college of law after its cessation of
363 operations other than moneys to be expended for the cessation of
364 operations of the college of law. Any moneys allocated to the
365 college of law at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University
366 not expended prior to or scheduled to be expended after the date
367 of the cessation of the college of law shall be appropriated for
368 other use by the Legislature of the State of Florida.

369 (b) Any buildings of the college of law at Florida
370 Agricultural and Mechanical University constructed from the
371 expenditure of capital outlay funds appropriated by the
372 Legislature shall be owned by the Board of Trustees of the
373 Internal Improvement Trust Fund and managed by the Florida
374 Agricultural and Mechanical University Board of Trustees upon
375 the cessation of the college of law.

376 **Section 10. Paragraph (b) of subsection (1) of section**
377 **1005.06, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:**

378 1005.06 Institutions not under the jurisdiction or purview
379 of the commission.—

380 (1) Except as otherwise provided in law, the following
381 institutions are not under the jurisdiction or purview of the
382 commission and are not required to obtain licensure:

383 (b) Any college or school, or course licensed or approved
384 for establishment and operation by another agency of the state.
385 Colleges or schools approved by another state agency to offer
386 one or more courses or programs under part I of chapter 464,
387 chapter 466, or chapter 475, or any other chapter of the Florida
388 Statutes may not qualify for an exemption from the commission's
389 jurisdiction under this subsection requiring licensing or
390 approval as defined in this chapter.

391 **Section 11. Subsection (1) of section 1006.71, Florida**
392 **Statutes, is amended to read:**

393 1006.71 Gender equity in intercollegiate athletics.—

394 (1) PENALTIES FOR FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH TITLE IX AND THE
395 FLORIDA EDUCATIONAL EQUITY ACT GENDER EQUITY PLAN.—

396 (a) Each Florida College System institution and state
397 university shall develop a gender equity plan pursuant to s.
398 1000.05.

399 (b) The plan shall include consideration of equity in
400 sports offerings, participation, availability of facilities,

401 scholarship offerings, and funds allocated for administration,
402 recruitment, comparable coaching, publicity and promotion, and
403 other support costs.

404 (e) The Commissioner of Education shall annually assess
405 the progress of each Florida College System institution's plan
406 and advise the State Board of Education and the Legislature
407 regarding compliance.

408 (d) The Chancellor of the State University System shall
409 annually assess the progress of each state university's plan and
410 advise the Board of Governors and the Legislature regarding
411 compliance.

412 (e) Each board of trustees of a Florida College System
413 institution or state university shall annually evaluate the
414 presidents on the extent to which the gender equity goals have
415 been achieved.

416 (f) To determine the proper level of support for women's
417 athletic scholarships, an equity plan may determine, where
418 appropriate, that support for women's scholarships may be
419 disproportionate to the support of scholarships for men.

420 (a) (g)1. If a Florida College System institution is not in
421 compliance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and
422 the Florida Educational Equity Act, the State Board of Education
423 shall:

424 1.a. Declare the Florida College System institution
425 ineligible for competitive state grants.

426 2.b. Withhold funds sufficient to obtain compliance.

427

428 The Florida College System institution shall remain ineligible
429 and the funds shall not be paid until the Florida College System
430 institution comes into compliance or the Commissioner of
431 Education approves a plan for compliance.

432 (b)2. If a state university is not in compliance with
433 Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and the Florida
434 Educational Equity Act, the Board of Governors shall:

435 1.a. Declare the state university ineligible for
436 competitive state grants.

437 2.b. Withhold funds sufficient to obtain compliance.

438

439 The state university shall remain ineligible and the funds shall
440 not be paid until the state university comes into compliance or
441 the Board of Governors approves a plan for compliance.

442 **Section 12. Paragraph (b) of subsection (9) of section
443 1007.25, Florida Statutes, is amended, and subsection (15) is
444 added to that section, to read:**

445 1007.25 General education courses; common prerequisites;
446 other degree requirements.—

447 (9)

448 (b) An associate in arts specialized transfer degree must
449 include 36 semester hours of general education coursework and
450 require 60 semester hours or more of college credit. Specialized

451 transfer degrees are designed for Florida College System
452 institution students who need supplemental lower-level
453 coursework in preparation for transfer to another institution.
454 The State Board of Education shall establish criteria for the
455 review and approval of new specialized transfer degrees. The
456 approval process must require:

457 1. A Florida College System institution to submit a notice
458 of its intent to propose a new associate in arts specialized
459 degree program to the Division of Florida Colleges. The notice
460 must include the recommended credit hours, the rationale for the
461 specialization, the demand for students entering the field, and
462 the coursework being proposed to be included beyond the 60
463 semester hours required for the general transfer degree, if
464 applicable. Notices of intent may be submitted by a Florida
465 College System institution at any time.

466 2. The Division of Florida Colleges to forward the notice
467 of intent within 10 business days after receipt to all Florida
468 College System institutions and to the Chancellor of the State
469 University System, who shall forward the notice to all state
470 universities. State universities and Florida College System
471 institutions shall have 30 60 days after receipt of the notice
472 to submit comments to the proposed associate in arts specialized
473 transfer degree.

474 3. After the submission of comments pursuant to
475 subparagraph 2., the requesting Florida College System

476 institution to submit a proposal that, at a minimum, includes:

477 a. Evidence that the coursework for the associate in arts
478 specialized transfer degree includes demonstration of competency
479 in a foreign language pursuant to s. 1007.262 and demonstration
480 of civic literacy competency as provided in subsection (5).

481 b. Demonstration that all required coursework will count
482 toward the associate in arts degree or the baccalaureate degree.

483 c. An analysis of demand and unmet need for students
484 entering the specialized field of study at the baccalaureate
485 level.

486 d. Justification for the program length if it exceeds 60
487 credit hours, including references to the common prerequisite
488 manual or other requirements for the baccalaureate degree. This
489 includes documentation of alignment between the exit
490 requirements of a Florida College System institution and the
491 admissions requirements of a baccalaureate program at a state
492 university to which students would typically transfer.

493 e. Articulation agreements for graduates of the associate
494 in arts specialized transfer degree.

495 f. Responses to the comments received under subparagraph
496 2.

497 (15) A Florida College System institution or state
498 university may not impose an institution-wide graduation
499 requirement that includes a course that is in conflict with
500 paragraph (3) (c) .

501 **Section 13. Subsections (1), (16), and (18) of section**
502 **1007.271, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:**

503 1007.271 Dual enrollment programs.—

504 (1) The dual enrollment program is the enrollment of an
505 eligible Florida secondary student or Florida home education
506 student in a postsecondary course creditable toward high school
507 completion and a career certificate or an associate or
508 baccalaureate degree. Postsecondary institutions eligible to
509 participate in the dual enrollment program are Florida College
510 System institutions, state universities, and eligible not-for-
511 profit, independent colleges and universities pursuant to s.

512 1011.62(1)(i). A student who is enrolled in postsecondary
513 instruction that is not creditable toward a high school diploma
514 may not be classified as a dual enrollment student.

515 (16) Students who ~~meet the eligibility requirements of~~
516 ~~this section and who choose to~~ participate in dual enrollment
517 programs are exempt from the payment of registration, tuition,
518 and laboratory fees.

519 (18) School districts and postsecondary Florida College
520 System institutions must weigh dual enrollment courses pursuant
521 to s. 1003.437 the same as advanced placement, International
522 Baccalaureate, and Advanced International Certificate of
523 Education courses when grade point averages are calculated. High
524 school grade point averages must be calculated based on the high
525 school credit earned by the student in each course. Alternative

526 grade calculation systems, alternative grade weighting systems,
527 and information regarding student education options that
528 discriminate against dual enrollment courses are prohibited.

529 **Section 14. Paragraphs (a) and (b) of subsection (2) and**
530 **subsection (3) of section 1008.47, Florida Statutes, are amended**
531 **to read:**

532 1008.47 Postsecondary education institution
533 accreditation.—

534 (2) ACCREDITATION.—

535 (a) ~~By September 1, 2022, The Board of Governors or the~~
536 State Board of Education, as applicable, shall identify and
537 determine the accrediting agencies or associations best suited
538 to serve as an accreditor for public postsecondary institutions.
539 Such accrediting agencies or associations must be recognized by
540 the database created and maintained by the United States
541 Department of Education. Within 3 years ~~In the~~ year following
542 reaffirmation or fifth-year review by its accrediting agencies
543 or associations, each public postsecondary institution must seek
544 and obtain accreditation from an accrediting agency or
545 association identified by the Board of Governors or State Board
546 of Education, respectively, before its next reaffirmation or
547 fifth-year review date. The requirements in this section are
548 limited to a one-time change in accreditation. The requirements
549 of this subsection are not applicable to those professional,
550 graduate, departmental, or certificate programs at public

551 postsecondary institutions that have specific accreditation
552 requirements or best practices, including, but not limited to,
553 law, pharmacy, engineering, or other similarly situated
554 educational programs.

555 (b) Once a public postsecondary institution is required to
556 seek and obtain accreditation from an agency or association
557 identified pursuant to paragraph (a), the institution shall seek
558 accreditation from an a~~regional~~ accrediting agency or
559 association and provide quarterly reports of its progress to the
560 Board of Governors or State Board of Education, as applicable.
561 If each ~~regional~~ accreditation agency or association identified
562 pursuant to paragraph (a) has refused to grant candidacy status
563 to an institution, the institution must seek and obtain
564 accreditation from any accrediting agency or association that is
565 different from its current accrediting agency or association and
566 is recognized by the database created and maintained by the
567 United States Department of Education. If a public postsecondary
568 institution is not granted candidacy status before its next
569 reaffirmation or fifth-year review date, the institution may
570 remain with its current accrediting agency or association.

571 (3) PROHIBITION.—Notwithstanding any other provision of
572 law, an accrediting agency or association, including
573 programmatic accreditors, may not compel any public
574 postsecondary institution to violate state law, and any adverse
575 action upon the institution based upon the institution's

576 compliance with state law constitutes a violation of this
577 section that may be enforced through subsection (4), except to
578 the extent that state law is preempted by a federal law that
579 recognizes the necessity of the accreditation standard or
580 requirement.

581 **Section 15. Paragraph (e) of subsection (1) of section
582 1009.25, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:**

583 1009.25 Fee exemptions.—

584 (1) The following students are exempt from the payment of
585 tuition and fees, including lab fees, at a school district that
586 provides workforce education programs, Florida College System
587 institution, or state university:

588 (e) A student who meets the definition of homeless
589 children and youths in s. 725 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless
590 Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. s. 11434a(2), as previously determined
591 by a public school in the state, and whose physical presence is
592 in the state for the duration of the tuition and fee exemption.

593 This includes a student who would otherwise meet the
594 requirements of this paragraph, as determined by a college or
595 university, but for his or her residence in college or
596 university dormitory housing. The State Board of Education may
597 adopt rules and the Board of Governors may adopt regulations
598 regarding documentation and procedures to implement this
599 paragraph. Such rules and regulations must consider
600 documentation of a student's circumstance to be adequate if such

601 documentation meets the standards under 20 U.S.C. s. 1087uu-
602 2(a). Any student who is determined to be a homeless child or
603 youth for a preceding award year is presumed to be a homeless
604 child or youth for each subsequent year unless the student
605 informs the institution that the student's circumstances have
606 changed or the institution has specific conflicting information
607 about the student's independence, and has informed the student
608 of this information.

609 **Section 16. Paragraph (a) of subsection (1) of section
610 1009.40, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:**

611 1009.40 General requirements for student eligibility for
612 state financial aid awards and tuition assistance grants.—

613 (1) (a) The general requirements for eligibility of
614 students for state financial aid awards and tuition assistance
615 grants consist of the following:

616 1. United States citizenship or lawful presence in the
617 United States.

618 2.1. Achievement of the academic requirements of and
619 acceptance at a state university or Florida College System
620 institution; a nursing diploma school approved by the Florida
621 Board of Nursing; a Florida college or university which is
622 accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the State
623 Board of Education; a Florida institution the credits of which
624 are acceptable for transfer to state universities; a career
625 center; or a private career institution accredited by an

626 accrediting agency recognized by the State Board of Education.

627 3.2. Residency in this state for no less than 1 year
628 preceding the award of aid or a tuition assistance grant for a
629 program established pursuant to s. 1009.50, s. 1009.505, s.
630 1009.51, s. 1009.52, s. 1009.521, s. 1009.53, s. 1009.60, s.
631 1009.62, s. 1009.72, s. 1009.73, s. 1009.75, s. 1009.77, s.
632 1009.89, or s. 1009.894. Residency in this state must be for
633 purposes other than to obtain an education. Resident status for
634 purposes of receiving state financial aid awards shall be
635 determined in the same manner as resident status for tuition
636 purposes pursuant to s. 1009.21.

637 4.3. Submission of certification attesting to the
638 accuracy, completeness, and correctness of information provided
639 to demonstrate a student's eligibility to receive state
640 financial aid awards or tuition assistance grants. Falsification
641 of such information shall result in the denial of a pending
642 application and revocation of an award or grant currently held
643 to the extent that no further payments shall be made.
644 Additionally, students who knowingly make false statements in
645 order to receive state financial aid awards or tuition
646 assistance grants commit a misdemeanor of the second degree
647 subject to the provisions of s. 837.06 and shall be required to
648 return all state financial aid awards or tuition assistance
649 grants wrongfully obtained.

650 **Section 17. Paragraph (a) of subsection (2) of section**

651 **1009.895, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:**

652 1009.895 Open Door Grant Program.—

653 (2) ELIGIBILITY.—In order to be eligible for the program,
654 a student must:

655 (a) Meet the requirements under s. 1009.40(1)(a)3. and 4.

656 ~~s. 1009.40(1)(a)2. and 3.;~~

657
658 An institution may not impose additional criteria to determine a
659 student's eligibility to receive a grant under this section.

660 **Section 18. Subsection (5) of section 1009.983, Florida
661 Statutes, is amended to read:**

662 1009.983 Direct-support organization; authority.—

663 (5) The chair of the board or a designee who possesses
664 knowledge, skill, and experience in the areas of accounting,
665 risk management, or investment management shall serve as a
666 director of the direct-support organization. The chair and the
667 executive director of the board shall jointly name, at a
668 minimum, four other individuals to serve as directors of the
669 organization.

670 **Section 19. Paragraph (d) of subsection (3) of section
671 1009.986, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:**

672 1009.986 Florida ABLE program.—

673 (3) DIRECT-SUPPORT ORGANIZATION; FLORIDA ABLE, INC.—

674 (d)1. The board of directors of Florida ABLE, Inc., shall
675 consist of:

676 a. The chair of the Florida Prepaid College Board, or a
677 ~~his or her~~ designee who possesses knowledge, skill, and
678 experience in the areas of accounting, risk management, or
679 investment management.

680 b. Up to three individuals who possess knowledge, skill,
681 and experience in the areas of accounting, risk management, or
682 investment management, one of whom may be a current member of
683 the Florida Prepaid College Board, who shall be appointed by the
684 Florida Prepaid College Board.

685 c. One individual who possesses knowledge, skill, and
686 experience in the areas of accounting, risk management, or
687 investment management, who shall be appointed by the Governor.

688 d. Two individuals who are advocates of persons with
689 disabilities, one of whom shall be appointed by the President of
690 the Senate and one of whom shall be appointed by the Speaker of
691 the House of Representatives. At least one of the individuals
692 appointed under this sub subparagraph must be an advocate of
693 persons with developmental disabilities, as that term is defined
694 in s. 393.063.

695 2.a. The term of the appointees under sub subparagraph
696 1.b. shall be up to 3 years as determined by the Florida Prepaid
697 College Board. Such appointees may be reappointed.

698 b. The term of the appointees under sub subparagraphs 1.c.
699 and d. shall be 3 years. Such appointees may be reappointed.

700 3. Unless authorized by the board of directors of Florida

701 ABLE, Inc., an individual director has no authority to control
702 or direct the operations of Florida ABLE, Inc., or the actions
703 of its officers and employees.

704 4. The board of directors of Florida ABLE, Inc.:

705 a. Shall meet at least quarterly and at other times upon
706 the call of the chair.

707 b. May use any method of telecommunications to conduct, or
708 establish a quorum at, its meetings or the meetings of a
709 subcommittee or other subdivision if the public is given proper
710 notice of the telecommunications meeting and provided reasonable
711 access to observe and, if appropriate, to participate.

712 c. Shall annually elect a board member to serve as chair.

713 5. A majority of the total current membership of the board
714 of directors of Florida ABLE, Inc., constitutes a quorum of the
715 board.

716 6. Members of the board of directors of Florida ABLE,
717 Inc., and the board's subcommittees or other subdivisions shall
718 serve without compensation; however, the members may be
719 reimbursed for reasonable, necessary, and actual travel expenses
720 pursuant to s. 112.061.

721 **Section 20. Paragraphs (h) and (i) of subsection (17) of**
722 **section 1011.62, Florida Statutes, are redesignated as**
723 **paragraphs (i) and (j), respectively, and a new paragraph (h) is**
724 **added to that subsection, to read:**

725 1011.62 Funds for operation of schools.—If the annual

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726 allocation from the Florida Education Finance Program to each
727 district for operation of schools is not determined in the
728 annual appropriations act or the substantive bill implementing
729 the annual appropriations act, it shall be determined as
730 follows:

731 (17) ACADEMIC ACCELERATION OPTIONS SUPPLEMENT.—The
732 academic acceleration options supplement is created to assist
733 school districts in providing academic acceleration options,
734 career-themed courses, and courses that lead to digital tool
735 certificates and industry certifications for prekindergarten
736 through grade 12 students and shall be allocated annually in the
737 General Appropriations Act.

738 (h) Calculation of additional full-time equivalent
739 membership based on Florida advanced courses and tests scores of
740 students.—A value of 0.16 full-time equivalent student
741 membership shall be calculated for each student in a Florida
742 advanced course who achieves a minimum score on an assessment
743 identified by the Department of Education pursuant to s.
744 1007.27(2) and added to the total full-time equivalent student
745 membership in basic programs for grades 9 through 12 in the
746 subsequent fiscal year. Each district shall allocate at least 80
747 percent of the funds provided to the district for advanced
748 course instruction, in accordance with this paragraph, to the
749 high school that generates the funds. The school district shall
750 distribute to each classroom teacher who provided advanced

751 course instruction:

752 1. A bonus in the amount of \$50 for each student taught by
753 the Florida advanced course teacher in each Florida advanced
754 course who achieves a minimum score on an assessment identified
755 by the Department of Education pursuant to s. 1007.27(2).

756 2. An additional bonus of \$500 to each Florida advanced
757 course teacher in a school designated with a grade of "D" or "F"
758 who has at least one student who achieves a minimum score on an
759 assessment identified by the Department of Education pursuant to
760 s. 1007.27(2), regardless of the number of classes taught or of
761 the number of students who achieve a minimum score on an
762 assessment identified by the Department of Education pursuant to
763 s. 1007.27(2).

764 **Section 21.** This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.