

CHAPTER 97-21

Committee Substitute for House Bill No. 197

An act relating to education; creating s. 232.2451, F.S., relating to student readiness for postsecondary education and the workplace; providing legislative intent; providing for end-of-high-school destinations; providing for student progression toward a chosen destination; providing Department of Education duties; providing course requirements; providing duties of school principals; amending s. 232.2462, F.S.; revising provisions relating to definition of high school credit; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Section 232.2451, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

232.2451 Readiness for postsecondary education and the workplace.—

(1) It is the intent of the Legislature that students and parents or guardians set early achievement and career goals for the student's post-high-school experience. This section sets forth a model which schools, through their school advisory councils, may choose to implement to ensure that students are ready for postsecondary education and the workplace. If such a program is adopted, students and their parents or guardians shall have the option of participating in this model to plan the student's secondary-level course of study. Parents or guardians and students are to become partners with school personnel in educational choice. Clear academic course expectations shall be made available to all students by allowing both student and parent or guardian choice.

(2)(a) Students entering the ninth grade and their parents or guardians shall be active participants in choosing an end-of-high-school student destination based upon both student and parent or guardian goals. Four or more destinations should be available with bridges between destinations to enable students to shift destinations should they choose to change goals. The destinations shall accommodate the needs of students served in exceptional education programs to the extent appropriate for individual students. Exceptional education students may continue to follow the courses outlined in the school district pupil progression plan. Participating students and their parents or guardians shall choose among destinations, which must include:

1. Four-year university, community college plus university, or military academy.
2. Two-year postsecondary degree.
3. Postsecondary vocational-technical certificate.
4. Immediate employment or entry-level military.

(b) The student progression model toward a chosen destination shall include:

1. A “path” of core courses leading to each of the destinations provided in paragraph (a).

2. A recommended group of electives which shall help define each path.

3. Provisions for a teacher, school administrator, other school staff member, or community volunteer to be assigned to a student as an “academic advocate” if parental or guardian involvement is lacking.

(c) The common placement test authorized in s. 240.117 or a similar test may be administered to all high school second semester sophomores who have chosen one of the four destinations. The results of the placement test shall be used to target additional instructional needs in reading, writing, and mathematics prior to graduation.

(d) Ample opportunity shall be provided for students to move from one destination to another, and some latitude shall exist within each destination, to meet the individual needs of students.

(e) Destinations specified in subparagraphs (a)1., 2., and 3. shall support the goals of the Tech Prep program. Students participating in Tech Prep shall be enrolled in articulated, sequential programs of study which include a technical component and at least a minimum of a postsecondary certificate or 2-year degree.

(f) In order for these destinations to be attainable, the business community shall be encouraged to support real-world internships and apprenticeships.

(g) All students shall be encouraged to take part in service learning opportunities.

(h) High school equivalency diploma preparation programs shall not be a choice for high school students leading to any of the four destinations provided in paragraph (a) since the appropriate coursework, counseling component, and career preparation cannot be ensured.

(i) Schools shall ensure that students and parents or guardians are made aware of the destinations available and provide the necessary coursework to assist the student in reaching the chosen destination. Students and parents or guardians shall be made aware of the student’s progress toward the chosen destination.

(j) The Department of Education shall offer technical assistance to school districts to ensure that the destinations offered also meet the academic standards adopted by the state.

(3)(a) Access to Level I courses for graduation credit and for pursuit of a declared destination shall be limited to only those students for whom assessment indicates a more rigorous course of study would be inappropriate.

(b) The school principal shall:

1. Designate a member of the existing instructional or administrative staff to serve as a specialist to help coordinate the use of student achievement strategies to help students succeed in their coursework. The specialist shall also assist teachers in integrating the academic and vocational curricula, utilizing technology, providing feedback regarding student achievement, and implementing the Blueprint for Career Preparation and Tech Prep programs.

2. Institute strategies to eliminate reading, writing, and mathematics deficiencies of secondary students.

(4) This section shall take effect for those students entering the ninth grade in 1997 and each year thereafter.

Section 2. Paragraph (a) of subsection (1) of section 232.2462, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

232.2462 Attendance requirement for receipt of high school credit; definition of "credit".—

(1)(a) For the purposes of requirements for high school graduation, one full credit means a minimum of 150 hours of bona fide instruction in a designated course of study which contains student performance standards as provided for in s. 232.2454. Six semester credit hours of instruction which are earned through enrollment pursuant to s. 240.116 and which satisfy the requirements of a district's interinstitutional articulation agreement according to s. 240.1161 shall also equal one full credit.

Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 1997.

Approved by the Governor April 22, 1997.

Filed in Office Secretary of State April 22, 1997.