

House Bill No. 1545

An act relating to school district performance; providing a short title; amending s. 229.57, F.S.; requiring the designation and publication of district performance grades; amending s. 236.02, F.S.; revising minimum requirements of the Florida Education Finance Program to include minimum classroom expenditure requirements and associated reporting; creating s. 236.08102, F.S.; authorizing the Legislature to require a school district that fails to meet minimum academic performance standards to meet district minimum classroom expenditure requirements; providing for monitoring; requiring reports; amending s. 237.041, F.S.; requiring a district's annual budget to include provision for required minimum classroom expenditure requirements; amending s. 237.081, F.S.; requiring the advertisement of the tentative school district budget to include notice of minimum classroom expenditure requirements; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Short title.—This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Dollars to the Classroom Act of 2001."

Section 2. Subsection (16) is added to section 229.57, Florida Statutes, to read:

229.57 Student assessment program.—

(16) DISTRICT PERFORMANCE GRADE.—Beginning with the 2000-2001 school year's student and school performance data, the annual report required by subsection (6) shall include district performance grades, which shall consist of weighted district average grades, by level, for all elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools in the district. A district's weighted average grade shall be calculated by weighting individual school grades determined pursuant to subsection (7) by school enrollment.

Section 3. Subsection (8) is added to section 236.02, Florida Statutes, to read:

236.02 Minimum requirements of the Florida Education Finance Program.—Each district which participates in the state appropriations for the Florida Education Finance Program shall provide evidence of its effort to maintain an adequate school program throughout the district and shall meet at least the following requirements:

(8) MINIMUM CLASSROOM EXPENDITURE REQUIREMENTS.—Comply with the minimum classroom expenditure requirements and associated reporting pursuant to s. 236.08102.

Section 4. Section 236.08102, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

236.08102 School district minimum classroom expenditure requirements.—

(1) Beginning in fiscal year 2001-2002, the Legislature may require any school district that fails to meet minimum academic performance standards to increase emphasis on classroom instruction activities from operating funds, including, but not limited to, those provided for the operation of schools pursuant to s. 236.081.

(2) For the purpose of implementing the provisions of this section, the Legislature shall prescribe minimum academic performance standards and minimum classroom expenditure requirements for districts not meeting such minimum academic performance standards in the General Appropriations Act.

(a) Minimum academic performance standards may be based on, but are not limited to, district performance grades determined pursuant to s. 229.57(16).

(b) School district minimum classroom expenditure requirements shall be calculated pursuant to subsection (3).

(3)(a) Annually the Department of Education shall calculate for each school district:

1. Total K-12 operating expenditures, which are defined as the amount of total general fund expenditures for K-12 programs as reported in accordance with the accounts and codes prescribed in the most recent issuance of the Department of Education publication entitled "Financial and Program Cost Accounting and Reporting for Florida Schools" and as included in the annual financial report submitted to the Commissioner of Education, less the pupil transportation revenue allocation from the state appropriation for that purpose, amounts transferred to other funds, and increases to the amount of the general fund unreserved ending fund balance when the total unreserved ending fund balance is in excess of 5 percent of the total general fund revenues.

2. Expenditures for classroom instruction, which shall be the sum of the general fund expenditures for K-12 instruction and instructional staff training for basic skills.

(b) The department shall annually calculate for each district, and for the entire state, the percentage of classroom expenditures to total operating expenditures as calculated pursuant to subparagraphs (a)1. and 2.

(4) In order for the Department of Education to monitor the implementation of this section, each school district which is required to increase emphasis on classroom activities from operating funds pursuant to subsection (1) shall submit to the department the following two reports in a format determined by the department:

(a) An initial report, which shall include the proposed budget actions identified for increased classroom expenditures, a description of how such

actions are designed to improve student achievement, and a copy of the published statement required by s. 237.081(3). This report shall be submitted within 30 days after final budget approval as provided in s. 200.065.

(b) A final report, prepared at the end of each fiscal year, which shall include, but is not limited to, information that clearly indicates the degree of each district's compliance or noncompliance with the requirements of this section. If not fully compliant, the district shall include a statement which has been adopted at a public hearing and signed by the district superintendent of schools and district school board members, which explains why the requirements of this section have not been met.

The department shall provide annual summaries of these two reports to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Section 5. Section 237.041, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

237.041 Form of annual budget required.—An annual budget is required to be prepared and adopted by the school board of each district and submitted to the Department of Education for examination each year on or before the date provided in regulations of the state board. Such annual budget shall be prepared in accordance with regulations prescribed by the state board and the provisions of s. 200.065. The annual budget submitted by each school board shall be consistent with, and contribute to, the implementation of a planned long-range school program for the district and required minimum classroom expenditure requirements pursuant to s. 236.08102 and the General Appropriations Act.

Section 6. Subsections (3) and (4) of section 237.081, Florida Statutes, are renumbered as subsections (4) and (5), respectively, and a new subsection (3) is added to said section, to read:

237.081 Public hearings; budgets to be submitted to Department of Education.—

(3) The advertisement of a district that has been required by the Legislature to increase classroom expenditures pursuant to s. 236.08102 must include the following statement:

“This proposed budget reflects an increase in classroom expenditures as a percent of total current operating expenditures of XX percent over the (previous fiscal year) fiscal year. This increase in classroom expenditures is required by the Legislature because the district has performed below the required performance standard on XX of XX student performance standards for the (previous school year) school year. In order to achieve the legislatively required level of classroom expenditures as a percentage of total operating expenditures, the proposed budget includes an increase in overall classroom expenditures of \$XX,XXX,XXX above the amount spent for this same purpose during the (previous fiscal year) fiscal year. In order to achieve improved student academic performance, this proposed increase is

being budgeted for the following activities: (list activities and amount budgeted)".

Section 7. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.

Approved by the Governor June 1, 2001.

Filed in Office Secretary of State June 1, 2001.