

Committee Substitute for  
Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 1906

An act relating to alternative high school courses and programs; creating s. 1002.375, F.S.; establishing a pilot project for awarding high school credit to students enrolled in industry certification programs; requiring the Commissioner of Education to establish criteria for program participation; requiring that a school district submit a letter of interest by a specified date in order to participate in the pilot project; requiring that the Commissioner of Education submit a report to the Governor and the Legislature; providing for specified courses to be included as alternative credit courses; exempting alternative credit courses from certain requirements; authorizing the Department of Education to approve certain courses for credit by examination; requiring the Department of Education to adopt passing minimum scores on approved assessments and maintain a course directory; requiring the State Board of Education to adopt rules; amending s. 1011.61, F.S., relating to definitions for the Florida Education Finance Program; providing for an alternate method of reporting full-time equivalent membership for credit earned in alternative high school credit courses for the pilot project created under s. 1002.375, F.S.; encouraging school districts to enter into partnerships with local businesses for certain purposes; authorizing the Palm Beach County school district to recognize its business partners by displaying such business partners' names on school district property in unincorporated areas if displayed in a manner consistent with certain standards; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Section 1002.375, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

1002.375 Alternative credit for high school courses; pilot project.—

(1) The Commissioner of Education shall implement a pilot project in up to three school districts beginning in the 2008-2009 school year which allows school districts to award alternative course credit for students enrolled in nationally or state-recognized industry certification programs, as defined by the Agency for Workforce Innovation in accordance with the criteria described in s. 1003.492(2). The Commissioner of Education shall establish criteria for districts that participate in the pilot program. School districts interested in participating in the program must submit a letter of interest by July 15, 2008, to the Commissioner of Education identifying up to five nationally or state-recognized industry certification programs, as defined by the Agency for Workforce Innovation in accordance with the criteria described in s. 1003.492(2), under which the district would like to award alternative credit for the eligible courses identified in subsection (2). The Commissioner of Education shall select up to three participating school districts by July 30, 2008. The Commissioner of Education shall submit a report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the

House of Representatives identifying the number of students choosing to earn alternative credit, the number of students that received alternative credit, and legislative recommendations for expanding the use of alternative credit for core academic courses required for high school graduation. The report shall be submitted by January 1, 2010.

(2) For purposes of designing and implementing a successful pilot project, eligible alternative credit courses include Algebra 1a, Algebra 1b, Algebra 1, Geometry, and Biology. Alternative credits shall be awarded for courses in which a student is not enrolled, but for which the student may earn academic credit by enrolling in another course or sequence of courses required to earn a nationally or state-recognized industry certificate, as defined by the Agency for Workforce Innovation in accordance with the criteria described in s. 1003.492(2), of which the majority of the standards-based content in the course description is consistent with the alternative credit course description approved by the Department of Education.

(3) An alternative credit course is not subject to:

(a) The definition of credit under s. 1003.436;

(b) The time requirements of s. 1011.60(2); or

(c) The net hours of instruction requirements for purposes of determining full-time equivalency pursuant to s. 1011.61(1)(a)1. under the Florida Education Finance Program.

(4) The Department of Education may approve a course as an alternative credit course pursuant to this section. In order to earn credit, each participating student must pass an end-of-course assessment that measures proficiency in the Sunshine State Standards addressed by the course. The Department of Education shall approve each end-of-course assessment and the minimum passing score for each assessment. Approved assessments shall be limited to assessments for Algebra 1a, Algebra 1b, Algebra 1, Geometry, and Biology developed by the Florida Virtual School, or end-of-course state-wide standardized assessments for these courses which may be adopted or developed by the department. The department shall approve the method of administering end-of-course assessments for alternative credit courses in each participating school district in order to ensure the validity of the assessment results.

(5) School districts shall report all enrollments and credits awarded for alternative education courses pursuant to this section under procedures prescribed by the Department of Education.

(6) The Department of Education shall maintain a list of approved assessments and minimum passing scores for each approved course. The approved list must be incorporated into the Course Code Directory. The department shall prescribe the information a district must provide in order to have a course considered for inclusion in the directory listing for the approved courses used in the pilot program. A properly completed request by a district to have a course included in the directory must be approved or denied by the department within 30 days after receipt. When a request is denied, the

department must provide the district with its reason for denial in writing within 10 days after the denial.

(7) The State Board of Education shall adopt rules pursuant to ss. 120.536(1) and 120.54 to implement the pilot program created in this section.

Section 2. Paragraph (c) of subsection (1) of section 1011.61, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1011.61 Definitions.—Notwithstanding the provisions of s. 1000.21, the following terms are defined as follows for the purposes of the Florida Education Finance Program:

(1) A “full-time equivalent student” in each program of the district is defined in terms of full-time students and part-time students as follows:

(c)1. A “full-time equivalent student” is:

a. A full-time student in any one of the programs listed in s. 1011.62(1)(c); or

b. A combination of full-time or part-time students in any one of the programs listed in s. 1011.62(1)(c) which is the equivalent of one full-time student based on the following calculations:

(I) A full-time student, except a postsecondary or adult student or a senior high school student enrolled in adult education when such courses are required for high school graduation, in a combination of programs listed in s. 1011.62(1)(c) shall be a fraction of a full-time equivalent membership in each special program equal to the number of net hours per school year for which he or she is a member, divided by the appropriate number of hours set forth in subparagraph (a)1. or subparagraph (a)2. The difference between that fraction or sum of fractions and the maximum value as set forth in subsection (4) for each full-time student is presumed to be the balance of the student’s time not spent in such special education programs and shall be recorded as time in the appropriate basic program.

(II) A prekindergarten handicapped student shall meet the requirements specified for kindergarten students.

(III) A Florida Virtual School full-time equivalent student shall consist of six full credit completions in the programs listed in s. 1011.62(1)(c)1. and 4. Credit completions can be a combination of either full credits or half credits.

(IV) Each successfully completed credit earned under the alternative high school course credit requirements authorized in s. 1002.375, which is not reported as a portion of the 900 net hours of instruction pursuant to subparagraph (1)(a)1., shall be calculated as  $\frac{1}{6}$  FTE.

2. A student in membership in a program scheduled for more or less than 180 school days is a fraction of a full-time equivalent membership equal to the number of instructional hours in membership divided by the appropriate

number of hours set forth in subparagraph (a)1.; however, for the purposes of this subparagraph, membership in programs scheduled for more than 180 days is limited to students enrolled in juvenile justice education programs and the Florida Virtual School.

The department shall determine and implement an equitable method of equivalent funding for experimental schools and for schools operating under emergency conditions, which schools have been approved by the department to operate for less than the minimum school day.

Section 3. (1) School districts are encouraged to enter into partnerships with local businesses for purposes of mentorship opportunities, the development of employment options and additional funding sources, and other mutual benefits.

(2) As a pilot program through June 30, 2011, the Palm Beach County school district may recognize its business partners by publicly displaying such business partners' names on school district property in the unincorporated areas. "Project Graduation" and athletic sponsorships are examples of appropriate recognition. The district shall make every effort to display its business partners' names in a manner that is consistent with the county standards for uniformity in size, color, and placement of signs. If the provisions of this section are inconsistent with the county ordinances or regulations relating to signs in the unincorporated areas or inconsistent with chapter 125, chapter 166, or chapter 479, Florida Statutes, the provisions of this section prevail.

Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2008.

Approved by the Governor June 17, 2008.

Filed in Office Secretary of State June 17, 2008.