

CHAPTER 2024-119

Senate Bill No. 1688

An act relating to career-themed courses; amending s. 1003.491, F.S.; revising the requirements for a specified school district strategic plan to include certain information; amending s. 1003.492, F.S.; requiring the Department of Education to include specified data in an annual review of K-12 and postsecondary career and technical education offerings; amending s. 1003.4935, F.S.; requiring school districts to provide specified information to students and parents during middle school course selection; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Subsection (3) of section 1003.491, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1003.491 Florida Career and Professional Education Act.—The Florida Career and Professional Education Act is created to provide a statewide planning partnership between the business and education communities in order to attract, expand, and retain targeted, high-value industry and to sustain a strong, knowledge-based economy.

(3) The strategic 3-year plan developed jointly by the local school district, local workforce development boards, economic development agencies, and state-approved postsecondary institutions must be constructed and based on:

(a) Research conducted to objectively determine local and regional workforce needs for the ensuing 3 years, using labor projections as identified by the Labor Market Statistics Center within the Department of Economic Opportunity and the Labor Market Estimating Conference as factors in the criteria for the plan;

(b) Strategies to develop and implement career academies or career-themed courses based on occupations identified by the Labor Market Statistics Center within the Department of Economic Opportunity and the Labor Market Estimating Conference;

(c) Strategies to provide shared, maximum use of private sector facilities and personnel;

(d) Strategies to ensure instruction by industry-certified faculty and standards and strategies to maintain current industry credentials and for recruiting and retaining faculty to meet those standards;

(e) Strategies to provide personalized student advisement, including a parent-participation component, and coordination with middle grades to promote and support career-themed courses and education planning;

(f) Alignment of requirements for middle school career planning, middle and high school career and professional academies or career-themed courses leading to industry certification or postsecondary credit, and high school graduation requirements;

(g) Provisions to ensure that career-themed courses and courses offered through career and professional academies are academically rigorous, meet or exceed appropriate state-adopted subject area standards, result in attainment of industry certification, and, when appropriate, result in postsecondary credit;

(h) Plans to sustain and improve career-themed courses and career and professional academies;

(i) Strategies to improve the passage rate for industry certification examinations if the rate falls below 50 percent;

(j) Strategies to recruit students into career-themed courses and career and professional academies which include opportunities for students who have been unsuccessful in traditional classrooms but who are interested in enrolling in career-themed courses or a career and professional academy. School boards shall provide opportunities for students who may be deemed as potential dropouts or whose cumulative grade point average drops below a 2.0 to enroll in career-themed courses or participate in career and professional academies. Such students must be provided in-person academic advising that includes information on career education programs by a certified school counselor or the school principal or his or her designee during any semester the students are at risk of dropping out or have a cumulative grade point average below a 2.0;

(k) Strategies to provide sufficient space within academies to meet workforce needs and to provide access to all interested and qualified students;

(l) Strategies to implement career-themed courses or career and professional academy training that lead to industry certification in juvenile justice education programs;

(m) Opportunities for high school students to earn weighted or dual enrollment credit for higher-level career and technical courses;

(n) Promotion of the benefits of the Gold Seal Bright Futures Scholarship;

(o) Strategies to ensure the review of district pupil-progression plans and to amend such plans to include career-themed courses and career and professional academy courses and to include courses that may qualify as substitute courses for core graduation requirements and those that may be counted as elective courses;

(p) Strategies to provide professional development for secondary certified school counselors on the benefits of career and professional academies and career-themed courses that lead to industry certification; and

(q) Strategies to redirect appropriated career funding in secondary and postsecondary institutions to support career academies and career-themed courses that lead to industry certification; and

(r) Strategies to inform and promote the career and technical education opportunities available in the district to students, parents, the community, and stakeholders.

Section 2. Subsection (3) of section 1003.492, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1003.492 Industry-certified career education programs.—

(3) The Department of Education shall collect student achievement and performance data in industry-certified career education programs and career-themed courses as part of the annual review required under s. 1003.491(5) that includes, but need not be limited to, graduation rates, retention rates, Florida Bright Futures Scholarship awards, additional educational attainment, employment records, earnings, industry certification, return on investment, and employer satisfaction.

Section 3. Subsection (1) of section 1003.4935, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1003.4935 Middle grades career and professional academy courses and career-themed courses.—

(1) ~~Beginning with the 2011-2012 school year,~~ Each district school board, in collaboration with local workforce development boards, economic development agencies, and state-approved postsecondary institutions, shall include plans to implement a career and professional academy or a career-themed course, as defined in s. 1003.493(1)(b), in at least one middle school in the district as part of the strategic 3-year plan pursuant to s. 1003.491(2). The strategic plan must provide students the opportunity to transfer from a middle school career and professional academy or a career-themed course to a high school career and professional academy or a career-themed course currently operating within the school district. Students who complete a middle school career and professional academy or a career-themed course must have the opportunity to earn an industry certificate and high school credit and participate in career planning, job shadowing, and business leadership development activities. The district shall inform students and parents during course selection for middle school of the career and professional academy or career-themed course available within the district.

Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2024.

Approved by the Governor April 26, 2024.

Filed in Office Secretary of State April 26, 2024.