

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

BILL #: CS/HB 669 Educational Choice

SPONSOR(S): Choice & Innovation Subcommittee, Sprowls and others

TIED BILLS: **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:**

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR or BUDGET/POLICY CHIEF
1) Choice & Innovation Subcommittee	8 Y, 3 N, As CS	Dehmer	Healy
2) Education Appropriations Subcommittee			
3) Education Committee			

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

The bill enhances K-20 fiscal transparency and revises provisions relating to public and private educational choice options by:

- Specifying that career and professional education (CAPE) digital tools, CAPE industry certifications, and collegiate high school programs are considered public educational choice options and the Florida Personal Learning Scholarship Account Program is a private educational choice option.
- Requiring that parents be provided information about the average amount expended per student in their child's school.
- Authorizing district school board auditors to perform additional audits and reviews as directed by the school board.
- Requiring each district school board to allow parents to seek enrollment in, and transport his or her child to, any public school that has not reached capacity in the district.
- Requiring district school boards to establish a transfer process by which a parent may request that his or her child be transferred to another teacher.
- Providing that, beginning in the 2017-2018 school year, a parent may seek enrollment in, and transport his or her child to, any public school that has not reached capacity in the state.

The bill requires the Department of Education (DOE) to contract with the Center for Applied Economic Analysis at Florida Polytechnic University to determine the portability of the local portion of the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) funds when students are able to apply and enroll in any public school in the state.

The bill revises the Credit Acceleration Program (CAP) to allow students to earn high school credit in a course by passing an end-of-course assessment or an Advanced Placement (AP) Examination.

The authorization in the bill for students to enroll in any district in the state would result in redistribution of funding among the 67 school districts in the FEFP. See fiscal comments.

The bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2016.

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

Fiscal Transparency

Present Situation

Each public school must provide parents of students a school financial report as part of its annual public school accountability report.¹ The purpose of the school financial report is to better inform parents and the public concerning how funds are spent to operate the school during the prior fiscal year.²

Each school's financial report must follow a uniform, districtwide format that is easy to read and understand.³ The report must indicate revenues and their sources.⁴ In addition, the report must include expenditures per unweighted full-time equivalent student at the district and state levels for teachers, substitute teachers, other instructional personnel, contracted instructional services, school administration and support personnel, certain materials and supplies, food services, support services, operation and maintenance of the school plant, and district-level expenditures that support the school's operations.⁵

Effect of Proposed Changes

The bill requires that the school's financial report be provided to the parents and include the average amount of money expended per student in the school.

Internal Auditor

Present Situation

The district school board may employ an internal auditor to perform ongoing financial verification of the financial records of the school district. The internal auditor must report directly to the district school board or its designee.⁶

Effect of Proposed Changes

The bill authorizes the internal auditor to perform additional audits and reviews as directed by the school board for the purpose of determining:

- The adequacy of internal controls.
- Compliance with applicable laws, rules, contracts, grant agreements, district school board-approved policies and best practices.
- The efficiency of operations.
- The reliability of financial records and reports.
- The safeguarding of assets.

Public and Private Education Choice Options

¹ See ss. 1002.20(16); 1010.215(5), F.S.

² *Id.*

³ Section 1010.215(5), F.S.

⁴ See s. 1010.215(5)(a), F.S.

⁵ See s. 1010.215(5)(b) and (c), F.S.

⁶ Section 1001.42(12)(l), F. S.

Present Situation

Parents of public school students may seek school choice options such as controlled open enrollment, lab schools, virtual instruction programs, charter schools, charter technical career centers, magnet schools, alternative schools, special programs, auditory-oral education programs, advanced placement, dual enrollment, International Baccalaureate, Advanced International Certificate of Education, credit by examination or demonstration of competency, the School for Deaf and the Blind, the Florida Virtual School, and the public school options for the Opportunity Scholarship Program and the McKay Scholarships for Students with Disabilities Program (McKay Scholarship Program).⁷

Controlled Open Enrollment

Controlled open enrollment is a public education delivery system that gives school districts the option of making student school assignments using a parent's indicated preferential public school choice as a significant factor.⁸

Each district school board offering controlled open enrollment must adopt by rule a controlled open enrollment plan and post the plan on the district's website.⁹ The plan must:¹⁰

- Adhere to federal desegregation requirements.
- Include an application process required to participate in controlled open enrollment that allows parents to declare school preferences, including placement of siblings within the same school.
- Provide a lottery procedure to determine student assignment and establish an appeals process for hardship cases.
- Afford parents of students in multiple session schools preferred access to controlled open enrollment.
- Maintain socioeconomic, demographic, and racial balance.
- Address the availability of transportation.

Credit Acceleration Options

The Credit Acceleration Program (CAP) allows middle and high school students to earn high school credit in Algebra I, Algebra II, geometry, United States history, or biology if the student passes the statewide, standardized assessment. Students who are not enrolled in or who have not completed the course may take the statewide, standardized assessment during the regular administration of the assessment.¹¹

Effect of Proposed Changes

The bill requires each district school board to allow parents, as part of controlled open enrollment, to seek enrollment in, and transport his or her child to, any public school that has not reached capacity in the district. The school district may provide student transportation at their discretion.

The bill requires each district school board to annually post on its website the application process required to participate in controlled open enrollment. The process must:

⁷ Section 1002.20(6), F.S.

⁸ Section 1002.31(1), F.S.; Implementation of the plan by a district school board is optional. Section 1002.31(2), F.S.

⁹ Section 1002.31(3), F.S.

¹⁰ Section 1002.31(3), F.S.

¹¹ Section 1003.4295(3), F.S.

- Identify schools that have not reached capacity as defined by the school district. The determination of capacity considers the specifications, plans, elements, and commitments contained in the school district's educational facilities plan and long-term work programs.
- Provide priority preference for the placement of siblings and students residing in the district.
- Ensure that a resident of a district cannot be displaced by a student transferring in from outside the district.
- Allow the student to attend the chosen school of enrollment until the student completes the highest grade offered.

Beginning in the 2017-2018 school year, a parent may seek enrollment in, and transport his or her child to, any public school that has not reached capacity in the state. If the parent seeks enrollment for his or her student in a different school district, the parent must notify the district of residence at the time of application or by February 15 of the preceeding school year, whichever occurs later.

The bill requires DOE to contract with the Center for Applied Economic Analysis at Florida Polytechnic University to determine the portability of the local portion of FEFP funds when students are able to apply and enroll in any public school in the state. The research results must be reported to the Legislature no later than November 1, 2017.

The bill requires each district school board to establish a transfer process for a parent to request his or her child be transferred to another classroom teacher. A school must grant or deny the transfer within 2 weeks after receiving a request. If a request for transfer is denied, the school must notify the parent and specify the reasons for a denial. An explanation of the transfer process must be made available in the parent guide or a similar publication.

The bill clarifies language for the acceleration options and allows passage of an end-of-course assessment or an AP Examination to qualify for high school course credits. The bill also clarifies that a district shall allow any public or home education student not enrolled in the corresponding course to take an end-of-course assessment or AP Examination during the regular administration of the examination or assessment.

The bill specifies that CAPE digital tool certificates, CAPE industry certifications, and collegiate high school programs are public educational choices.

The bill includes the Florida Personal Learning Scholarship Accounts Program as a private educational choice.

B. SECTION DIRECTORY:

Section 1. Amends s. 1001.42, F.S., relating to the powers and duties of district school boards.

Section 2. Amends s. 1002.20, F.S.; including certain public and private education options.

Section 3. Amends s. 1002.31, F.S.; requiring districts to publish a process for controlled open enrollment; defining capacity; requiring a district school board to annually report the number of students exercising school choice; allowing a parent to enroll his or her child in a public school in the state that has not reached capacity; requiring districts to establish a process for a parent to request his or her child to be transferred to another teacher and providing requirements for the process.

Section 4. Amends s. 1003.4295, F. S. relating to acceleration options.

Section 5. Requires the DOE to contract with the Center for Applied Economic Research at Florida Polytechnic University to determine the portability of the local portion of the FEFP funds and report to the Legislature by November 1, 2017.

Section 6. Provides an effective date of July 1, 2016.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

None.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

The bill requires each district school board to allow a parent to seek enrollment in and transport his or her child to any public school that has not reached capacity in the district. Further, the bill provides that, beginning in the 2017-2018 school year, a parent may seek enrollment in and transport his or her child to any public school, including charter schools, that has not reached capacity in any school district in the state. The school district must accept the student and report the student for purposes of the district's funding pursuant to the FEFP.

The authorization in the bill for students to enroll in any district in the state would result in a redistribution of funding among the 67 school districts in the FEFP. The bill could result in increased state funding needs in the FEFP depending on the choices of parents to enroll in neighboring districts. If students choice into a district where the millage produces more than 90 percent of a district's total FEFP entitlement, the FEFP formula will require more state funding to cover the cost of the student as there would be a corresponding increase in local millage rate as the 90 percent gap decreases. The bill could also result in significant losses of funding in districts where large numbers of parents and students choice into another district creating a financial hardship in the home district as the funding will be reduced after budget planning has taken place.

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

Not applicable. The bill does not appear to affect municipal or local governments.

2. Other:

None.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

None.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

None.

IV. AMENDMENTS/ COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES

On January 20, 2016, the Choice and Innovation Subcommittee adopted three amendments and reported the bill favorably as a committee substitute. The amendments:

- Require that the school's financial report be provided to the parents and include the average amount of money expended per student.
- Authorize the internal auditor to perform additional audits and reviews as directed by the district school board.
- Correct the name of the department at Florida Polytechnic University that will be conducting the research from the Economic Analysis Program to the Center for Applied Economic Analysis.
- Clarify the application process for parents seeking to enroll their child in another public school in their district and outside their district.
- Outline preferences that a school district must include in its controlled open enrollment application process.
- Ensure a resident of a district cannot be displaced by a student transferring from outside the district.

This bill analysis reflects the bill as amended by the Choice and Innovation Subcommittee.