

By Senator Rouson

19-01012A-19

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to the high school equivalency diploma
3 program; amending s. 1003.435, F.S.; providing
4 additional qualifications for the award of a high
5 school equivalency diploma to students who meet
6 specified criteria relating to high school graduation
7 requirements; conforming provisions to changes made by
8 the act; providing an effective date.

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

11
12 Section 1. Section 1003.435, Florida Statutes, is amended
13 to read:

14 1003.435 High school equivalency diploma program.—

15 (1) The State Board of Education shall adopt rules that
16 prescribe performance standards and provide for comprehensive
17 examinations to be administered to candidates for high school
18 equivalency diplomas. Such rules shall include, but are not
19 limited to, provisions for fees, frequency of examinations, and
20 procedures for retaking an examination upon unsatisfactory
21 performance.

22 (2) The department may award high school equivalency
23 diplomas to candidates who meet the performance standards
24 prescribed by the State Board of Education by passing the high
25 school equivalency diploma examinations and the subject area
26 examinations or, for those candidates who failed to pass the
27 assessments required under s. 1008.22(3), by:

28 (a) Earning the 24 credits required under s. 1003.4282, or
29 the 18 credits required under s. 1002.3105(5), for a standard

19-01012A-19

2019506__

30 high school diploma, and achieving a 2.5 grade point average
31 while enrolled in high school; or

32 (b) Earning the 24 credits required under s. 1003.4282, or
33 the 18 credits required under s. 1002.3105(5), for a standard
34 high school diploma, achieving a 2.0 grade point average, and
35 earning an industry certification while enrolled in high school.

36 (3) Each district school board shall offer and administer
37 the high school equivalency diploma examinations and the subject
38 area examinations to all candidates pursuant to rules of the
39 State Board of Education.

40 (4) A candidate for a high school equivalency diploma shall
41 be at least 18 years of age on the date of the examination or,
42 for those candidates seeking a diploma under paragraph (2) (a) or
43 paragraph (2) (b), 17 years of age, except that in extraordinary
44 circumstances, as provided for in rules of the district school
45 board of the district in which the candidate resides or attends
46 school, a candidate may take the examination after reaching the
47 age of 16.

48 (5) Each district school board shall develop, in
49 cooperation with the area Florida College System institution
50 board of trustees, a plan for the provision of advanced
51 instruction for those students who meet the requirements of
52 paragraph (2) (a) or paragraph (2) (b), who attain satisfactory
53 performance on the high school equivalency examination or the
54 subject area examinations, or who demonstrate through other
55 means a readiness to engage in postsecondary-level academic
56 work. The plan shall include provisions for the equitable
57 distribution of generated funds to cover personnel, maintenance,
58 and other costs of offering the advanced instruction. Priority

19-01012A-19

2019506__

59 shall be given to programs of advanced instruction offered in
60 high school facilities.

61 (6) All high school equivalency diplomas issued under the
62 provisions of this section shall have equal status with other
63 high school diplomas for all state purposes, including admission
64 to any state university or Florida College System institution.

65 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2019.