

Committee on Education Pre-K - 12

CS/HB 837 — Education Programs for Individuals with Disabilities

by Education Committee; and Reps. Bileca, Cortes, B., and others (CS/SB 1088 by Education Pre-K – 12 Committee; and Senators Stargel and Garcia)

The bill modifies educational programs for individuals with disabilities and expands options for home education and dual enrollment students, including students with disabilities.

Regarding the John M. McKay Scholarship for Students with Disabilities Program (McKay), the bill exempts foster children from the prior school year attendance requirement for determining student eligibility, authorizes a private school to establish a transition-to-work program for McKay students, and enables McKay students to take virtual courses without reducing the scholarship amount.

The bill expands services provided to home education program students, including students with disabilities:

- Requires the Department of Education (department) to make testing and evaluation diagnostic services available to home education program students at diagnostic and resource centers.
- Authorizes school districts to provide exceptional student education-related services to home education program students with disabilities eligible for the services who enroll in a public school solely for the purpose of receiving such services, and requires the districts to report such students for full-time equivalent funding.

The bill modifies dual enrollment articulation agreement provisions:

- Establishes August 1 as the annual deadline by which dual enrollment articulation agreements with home education program students, private schools, and state universities or eligible private colleges and universities must be submitted to the department.
- Specifies responsibilities for private school students similar to home education program students, and provisions that must be included in the private school dual enrollment articulation agreements.
- Requires eligible postsecondary institutions to include in their dual enrollment articulation agreements, services and resources available to students with disabilities, and provide such information to the Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities (center); requires the department to provide the center a link to dual enrollment articulation agreements that apply to students with disabilities; and requires the center to disseminate dual enrollment information to students with disabilities and their parents.

Additionally, the bill saves from repeal the Adults with Disabilities Workforce Education Pilot Program, and renames the program as the “Adults with Disabilities Workforce Education Program.”

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2016.

Vote: Senate 39-0; House 114-0