

# SENATE STAFF ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

BILL: SB 118  
 SPONSOR: Senator Sullivan  
 SUBJECT: College Fast Start Program  
 DATE: January 29, 2001      REVISED: 02/06/01 \_\_\_\_\_

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>White</u>	<u>O'Farrell</u>	<u>ED</u>	<u>Fav/4 amendments</u>
2.	_____	_____	<u>GO</u>	_____
3.	_____	_____	<u>AED</u>	_____
4.	_____	_____	<u>AP</u>	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____

## I. Summary:

Senate Bill 118 creates a program to encourage middle and high school students with disabilities to attempt postsecondary education and to improve their chances of success. It is designed after the successful College Reach-Out Program.

This bill creates a new section of the Florida Statutes, s. 239.515, F.S.

## II. Present Situation:

The following three state-level programs have demonstrated experience with assisting middle and high school students to overcome barriers of one type or another that prevent them from thinking of themselves as college material.®

### College Reach-Out Program

The College Reach-Out Program is a state-funded effort to encourage college attendance by students who, in middle school, have family history or demographic statistics that predict low rates of college attendance. It serves a similar population as does the federal TRIO program, but the law prohibits the same students from receiving services from both programs. College Reach-Out has clear goals and objectives and requires extensive data collection to evaluate its impact -- so extensive that the program has served as a model for a recent Harvard graduate's doctoral thesis.

For the past 8 years, the Postsecondary Education Planning Commission has analyzed detailed demographic information about all participants and a measurement of their attainment of the goals compared with a cohort of students who are not in the program. Even though the average expenditure per student is only \$318 per year, students in the reach-out program have fewer days absent from school, more academic promotions, and a higher high school graduation rate than

does the comparison group. Follow-up of former reach-out students reveals a higher rate of enrollment in postsecondary education and better grades. These results are remarkable because the students in reach-out have more disadvantages than the comparison group, which is selected at random.

### **The Alliance for the Employment of Disabled Citizens**

The 1990 Legislature created s. 413.615, F.S., the Able Trust, to fund programs to promote planning, research, and policy development for the employment and training of people with disabilities. In 1997, Governor Chiles designated the Able Trust to be the Florida Governor's Alliance for the Employment of Disabled Citizens. The alliance administers a national program in Florida called High School/High Tech Centers. The program works with public high schools, community colleges and local businesses to educate and train high school students with various types of disabilities in programs such as computer technology. Participating businesses may offer internships, on-the-job-training, and other outreach opportunities to students with disabilities.

The alliance also annually sponsors a Youth Leadership Forum for high school students with disabilities. The Alliance pays all expenses to bring up to 50 students with disabilities to Tallahassee for a week of vocational enrichment activities such as informational seminars, meetings with Legislators, career training, and social activities.

Governor Bush, in Executive Order 99-338, renewed the designation of the Able Trust and charged it with promoting initiatives designed to make Florida an innovative leader in employment of people with disabilities.

### **STARS**

The 1988 Legislature created s. 240.552, F.S., to provide economically disadvantaged youth with prepaid postsecondary tuition scholarships. The program is operated by the Florida Prepaid Tuition Scholarship Program and is called STARS, for Scholarship Tuition for At-Risk Students. The program identifies students as early as middle school and promises them a prepaid college tuition scholarship for meeting certain school-related requirements and remaining drug and crime free. Since 1989, the program has awarded over 13,000 scholarships.

## **III. Effect of Proposed Changes:**

The legislation under consideration creates the College Fast Start Program, modeled closely after the College Reach-Out Program, but for students with disabilities rather than economic and demographic disadvantages. The program is a competitive grant program in which participants identify the students and design activities and services to assist them. The program will be administered by the Florida Governor's Alliance for the Employment of Disabled Citizens.

### **Objective**

Its objective is to increase the number of students with disabilities in grades 6 through 12 who graduate from high school, enroll in, and complete a postsecondary education program at the certificate or associate-degree level.

**Goals**

The program has three goals:

- To motivate students to pursue a postsecondary education;
- To develop students' basic learning and leadership skills; and
- To develop collaboration with the STARS program.

**Eligible Students**

Eligible students have disabilities identified before their senior year in high school. At least 40 percent of the students participating in any year must be in grades 6 through 9. The disabilities are those listed in chapter 6A-6, F.A.C.: mentally handicapped, speech or language impaired, deaf or hard-of-hearing, visually impaired, physically impaired, emotionally handicapped, specific learning disabilities, homebound or hospitalized, profoundly handicapped, dual sensory impaired, or autistic.

A student who is in a similar program under another administration is not eligible.

**Eligible Participants**

Program participants may be a community college, public university, independent postsecondary institution, high school, or another agency serving youth with disabilities. A consortium of participants is eligible.

**Program Design**

The program must be designed to provide students with disabilities consistent contact in activities from the time of selection until enrollment in a postsecondary education institution. The types of activities encouraged are help to select courses, occupational forecasting, academic or job training activities, job profiling and career counseling, as well as opportunities for the students to interact with business leaders, employers, mentors, tutors, or role models. The participant must establish an advisory committee of high school and middle school personnel and business leaders.

**Program Proposal**

Program participants may submit a proposal to the alliance. Each proposal must contain a detailed list of information, including:

- < Identification of existing programs that provide employment training for people with disabilities.
- < A description of the proposed training and modifications needed to accommodate students who are to participate in the program.
- < A description of program activities.
- < An evaluation component that provides for the collection, maintenance, retrieval, and analysis of data from the program.

The alliance must give priority to proposals that:

- < Are submitted by a postsecondary institution and a business.
- < Supplement state funds with institutional, federal or private resources.
- < Agree to match grant funds equally in cash or services.
- < Demonstrate interest in cultural diversity.
- < Identify students not already enrolled in similar programs; and

- < Include a parental involvement component.

### **Advisory Council**

The bill requires a 10-member advisory council to review program participant proposal applications. Members will serve three year, staggered terms and may serve for no more than two consecutive terms. The council includes:

- < Three members with disabilities, appointed by the Governor.
- < Two representatives of private or community organizations, one each appointed by the Speaker of the House and President of the Senate.
- < A representative of each of the following: the State University System, the Community College System, the Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida, a public school district, and the Postsecondary Education Planning Commission.

### **Funding**

Approved programs must be funded competitively according to the following methodology:

- < Eighty percent of the annual funds appropriated must be distributed as grants to projects that include summer business internships and a minimum number of hours of academic instructional and developmental activities, career counseling, and personal counseling.
- < Twenty percent of the annual funds appropriated may be used for college preparatory leadership training programs.
- < Subject to legislative appropriations, funds for the continuation of projects that satisfy the minimum requirements must increase each year by the same percentage as the rate of inflation. Projects that have been funded for three consecutive years must have an institutional cash match of at least 50 percent of the total cost of the project over the three-year period; otherwise, funding will cease.

### **Reports**

The bill requires interim reports to the alliance by February 15 of each year and final reports by October 15. The Postsecondary Education Planning Commission is responsible for developing specifications and procedures for collecting and transmitting data. End-of-the-year reports must include the same type of data as required by the reach-out program:

- < A list of program expenditure;
- < The number of students participating by grade level, gender, race, and disability;
- < The student identification number, social security number, the name of the school attended, the gender, ethnicity, grade level, and GPA of each student participant at the time of entry into the program;
- < The grade point average, grade, and promotion status of each student participant at the end of the academic year and notification of any suspension or expulsion;
- < The number and percentage of high school participants who satisfactorily complete 2 sequential years of foreign language and Levels 2 and 3 of mathematics and science courses;
- < The number and percentage of participants eligible for high school graduation who receive a standard high school diploma or a high school equivalency diploma;
- < The number and percentage of 12th grade participants who are accepted for enrollment and who enroll in a postsecondary institution and the program in which they are enrolled;
- < The number of student participants who receive scholarships, grant aid, and work-study awards;

- < The number and percentage of participants who enroll in a public postsecondary institution and fail college placement tests;
- < The number and percentage of participants who enroll in a postsecondary institution and have a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale, or its equivalent, by the end of the second semester;
- < A statement of how the program met the goals;
- < An analysis of program characteristics and activities critical to program success;
- < A description of the cooperation received from other units, organizations, businesses, or agencies; and
- < An explanation of the program's outcomes.

Finally, the bill requires the alliance to submit an annual report to the Governor, President of the Senate, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Commissioner of Education. The report is based upon information provided by program participants, the Board of Regents, the State Board of Community Colleges, and the Division of Workforce Development. To the extent feasible, the performance of Fast Start participants must be compared to the performance of non-participating students in public schools and postsecondary institutions.

#### **IV. Constitutional Issues:**

##### **A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:**

None.

##### **B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:**

None.

##### **C. Trust Funds Restrictions:**

None.

#### **V. Economic Impact and Fiscal Note:**

##### **A. Tax/Fee Issues:**

None.

##### **B. Private Sector Impact:**

Depending upon funding, a number of middle school and high school students with disabilities may benefit from services provided by the program. Under the College Reach-Out Program, about \$400 is expended on each student annually.

**C. Government Sector Impact:**

The Florida Department of Education estimates that the state will need to provide the administrating entity with the following recurring cost amounts for salaries and administration during the first three years of the program:

<u>2001-2002</u>	<u>2002-2003</u>	<u>2003-2004</u>
\$80,524	\$80,940	\$83,368

After the program is fully carried out, its cost should be comparable to that of the College Reach-Out Program, \$3 million annually, with \$2.86 million for program grants and \$136,000 for administration and evaluation.

According to staff of the Department of Education, it is not possible to perfectly predict the number of students who might be eligible for the College Fast Start Program. Some students within some of the major categories of disability, such as “autistic” or “specific learning disabled,” either are not appropriate candidates for college or would be better served by a program such as College Reach-Out or STARS. Approximately 294,000 or 12.6 percent of the students enrolled in Florida public schools are classified as students with a disability. Over half of those are classified as “specific learning disabled.”

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

Chapter 2000-321, L.O.F., relating to governance, repeals the Postsecondary Education Planning Commission, the Board of Regents and the State Board of Community Colleges, effective January 7, 2003. The bill gives additional duties to those boards or their chairpersons. To avoid requiring a statutory revision in 2002, the bill could add the phrase, “or the person who holds the responsibility previously assigned to the chairperson” [or “to the board”] on page 5, lines 28 and 30-31, on page.6, line 7, and on page 9, line 7.

**VII. Related Issues:**

None.

**VIII. Amendments:**

#1 by Education:

Adds public technical centers to the list of postsecondary education opportunities for which an eligible student might not qualify without help from the program.

#2 by Education:

Adds public technical centers to the institutions that may cooperate in providing the program.

#3 by Education:

Adds public technical centers to the institutions that may be a program participant.

#4 by Education:

Requires two members of the advisory council to represent school districts. One of the school district members must represent a public technical center.

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This Senate staff analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's sponsor or the Florida Senate.

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