

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: CS/SB 2170

SPONSOR: Education Committee and Senator Posey

SUBJECT: Charter School Districts

DATE: April 10, 2003 REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Woodruff	O'Farrell	ED	Fav/CS
2.	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____

I. Summary:

The bill provides an alternative method for a school district to become a charter school district. If a district has a minimum of 50 percent of its graded schools receive a grade of "A" or "B" and has no school receive a grade of "D" or "F", then the district is eligible to become a charter school district for one full school year. If, in the next year, the district maintains 50 percent of its graded schools as "A" and "B" schools and again does not have any "D" or "F" schools, its status as a charter school district shall be renewed for another full school year.

The bill clarifies language relating to the renewal criteria for a charter school district that receives its charter through a performance contract with the State Board of Education. The State Board shall base its renewal decision on the criteria approved in the district's charter application.

This bill substantially amends section 1003.62 of the Florida Statutes:

II. Present Situation:

The State Board of Education is authorized to enter into a performance contract with up to six district school boards for the purpose of establishing them as charter school districts. A district may submit a charter proposal that exchanges statutory and rule exemption for agreement to meet performance goals. Should a charter be granted it is valid for three full school years. At the end of the charter, the district's performance is to be evaluated. The charter may be renewed upon action by the State Board of Education.

The district school board may in turn establish performance-based contractual relationships with its public schools for the purpose of giving them greater autonomy with accountability for performance.

The State Board of Education shall annually report to the Legislature on the implementation of the charter school district pilot program. Upon completion of the first three year term, the State Board of Education, through the Commissioner of Education, shall submit a full evaluation of the effectiveness of the program.

At the present time, the State Board of Education has awarded “charter” status to four districts. The first was Volusia County in 1999. The district’s charter has been extended through 2008. Hillsborough School District received its charter status in 2000, Orange in 2002, and Palm Beach in January of 2003.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The effect of the proposed changes would allow a school district to both earn and maintain “charter” status based on the district’s performance. A district with at least 50 percent of its schools earning grades of “A” or “B”, and no schools with grades of “D” or “F” would be eligible for charter school district status for one year. The district could maintain charter status on an annual basis as long as at least one-half of its schools earned grades of “A” or “B”, and no school earned a grade of “D” or “F”. The district would not have to apply for charter school district status and be approved by the State Board of Education.

Based on information collected by the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Education from the Department of Education for school years 2000 and 2001, several school districts would have earned charter school district status through the change proposed in the bill. (See “pages 11 and 12; A Statistical Review of Education in Florida, 2001-2002 Edition; Enrollment, Funding and Selected Topics; A Senate Appropriations Committee Report.”)

Based on the state’s year 2000 test results, seven districts had at least 50 percent of their schools graded as “A” or “B” and had no “D” or “F” schools. The districts were Calhoun, Flagler, Hardee, Okaloosa, St. Johns, Santa Rosa, and Wakulla.

Based on the state’s year 2001 test results, 14 districts would have qualified for charter school district status. Four of the districts that would have qualified in 2000 continued to have at least 50 percent of their schools graded as “A” or “B” and no “D” or “F” schools: Calhoun, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, and Wakulla. Ten additional districts would also have met the qualifications in 2001: Charlotte, Clay, Gilchrist, Indian River, Lake, Levy, Liberty, Monroe, Sarasota, and Walton.

Based on information from the Department of Education web site “Florida School Grades 2001-2002, School Accountability Report” by county and school, 20 districts would have qualified for charter school status. The following 12 districts would have continued to meet the requirements to be a charter school district: Calhoun, Charlotte, Clay, Gilchrist, Indian River, Lake, Monroe, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, Sarasota, Wakulla, and Walton. Eight new districts would also have qualified: Citrus, DeSoto, Flagler, Glades, Gulf, Lafayette, Nassau, and Okeechobee.

The bill also clarifies language relating to the renewal criteria for a charter school district created through a performance contract with the State Board of Education. The State Board shall make its decision on whether to renew the charter based on how well the district has met the criteria approved in the district's charter application.

The effective date of the bill is July 1, 2003.

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:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

None.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Amendments:

None.