

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to career and professional academies;
3 creating s. 1003.493, F.S.; defining "career and
4 professional academy"; providing academy goals and duties;
5 authorizing an academy to be offered as a described small
6 learning community; creating s. 1003.494, F.S.; requiring
7 the Department of Education to establish a Career High-
8 Skill Occupational Initiative for Career Education
9 (CHOICE) project as a competitive process for the
10 designation of school district participants and CHOICE
11 academies; defining "CHOICE academy" and providing
12 purposes thereof; providing eligibility criteria for such
13 designation and duties of participating school districts
14 and the department; providing for the award to school
15 district participants in the CHOICE project of startup
16 funds for the development of CHOICE academies; amending
17 ss. 288.9015 and 445.004, F.S.; providing duties of
18 Enterprise Florida, Inc., and Workforce Florida, Inc., to
19 conform; providing an effective date.
20

21 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:
22

23 Section 1. Section 1003.493, Florida Statutes, is created
24 to read:

25 1003.493 Career and professional academies.--

26 (1) A "career and professional academy" is a research-
27 based program that integrates a rigorous academic curriculum

28 with an industry-driven career curriculum. Career and
29 professional academies may be offered by public schools, school
30 districts, or the Florida Virtual School. Students completing
31 career and professional academy programs receive a standard high
32 school diploma, the highest available industry certification,
33 and postsecondary credit if the academy partners with a
34 postsecondary institution.

35 (2) The goals of a career and professional academy are to:

36 (a) Increase student academic achievement and graduation
37 rates through integrated academic and career curricula.

38 (b) Focus on career preparation through rigorous academics
39 and industry certification.

40 (c) Raise student aspiration and commitment to academic
41 achievement and work ethics.

42 (d) Support graduation requirements by providing creative,
43 applied majors as provided by law.

44 (e) Promote acceleration mechanisms, such as dual
45 enrollment, articulated credit, or occupational completion
46 points, so that students may earn postsecondary credit while in
47 high school.

48 (f) Support the state's economy by meeting industry needs
49 for skilled employees in high-demand occupations.

50 (3) A career and professional academy may be offered as
51 one of the following small learning communities:

52 (a) A school-within-a-school career academy, as part of an
53 existing high school, that provides courses in one occupational

54 cluster. Students in the high school are not required to be
55 students in the academy.

56 (b) A total school configuration providing multiple
57 academies, each structured around an occupational cluster. Every
58 student in the school is in an academy.

59 (4) Each career and professional academy must:

60 (a) Provide a rigorous standards-based academic curriculum
61 integrated with a career curriculum. The curriculum must take
62 into consideration multiple styles of student learning; promote
63 learning by doing through application and adaptation; maximize
64 relevance of the subject matter; enhance each student's capacity
65 to excel; and include an emphasis on work habits and work
66 ethics.

67 (b) Include one or more partnerships with postsecondary
68 institutions, businesses, industry, employers, economic
69 development organizations, or other appropriate partners from
70 the local community. Such partnerships must provide
71 opportunities for:

- 72 1. Instruction from highly skilled professionals.
- 73 2. Internships, externships, and on-the-job training.
- 74 3. A postsecondary degree, diploma, or certificate.
- 75 4. The highest available level of industry certification.

76 Where no national or state certification exists, school
77 districts may establish a local certification in conjunction
78 with the local workforce development board, the chamber of
79 commerce, or the Agency for Workforce Innovation.

80 5. Maximum articulation of credits pursuant to s. 1007.23
81 upon program completion.

82 (c) Provide creative and tailored student advisement,
83 including parent participation and coordination with middle
84 schools to provide career exploration and education planning.
85 Coordination with middle schools must provide information to
86 middle school students about secondary and postsecondary career
87 education programs and academies.

88 (d) Provide a career education certification on the high
89 school diploma pursuant to s. 1003.431.

90 (e) Provide instruction in careers designated as high
91 growth, high demand, and high pay by the local workforce
92 development board, the chamber of commerce, or the Agency for
93 Workforce Innovation.

94 (f) Deliver academic content through instruction relevant
95 to the career, including intensive reading and mathematics
96 intervention, with an emphasis on strengthening reading for
97 information skills.

98 (g) Offer applied courses that combine academic content
99 with technical skills. Such courses must be submitted to the
100 Department of Education no later than 5 months before the
101 beginning of the school term in which such courses are planned
102 to be offered. The State Board of Education must approve or
103 disapprove courses no later than 3 months before the beginning
104 of the school term in which such courses are planned to be
105 offered. The department shall present new courses to the state
106 board for approval a minimum of three times annually.

107 (h) Provide instruction resulting in competency,
108 certification, or credentials in workplace skills, including,
109 but not limited to, communication skills, interpersonal skills,
110 decisionmaking skills, the importance of attendance and
111 timeliness in the work environment, and work ethics.

112 (i) Provide opportunities for students to obtain the
113 Florida Ready to Work Certification as provided by law.

114 (j) Include an evaluation plan developed jointly with the
115 Department of Education. The evaluation plan must include a
116 self-assessment tool based on standards, such as the Career
117 Academy National Standards of Practice, and outcome measures
118 including, but not limited to, graduation rates, enrollment in
119 postsecondary education, business and industry satisfaction,
120 employment and earnings, achievement of industry certification,
121 awards of postsecondary credit, and FCAT achievement levels and
122 learning gains.

123 Section 2. Section 1003.494, Florida Statutes, is created
124 to read:

125 1003.494 Career High-Skill Occupational Initiative for
126 Career Education (CHOICE) academies.--

127 (1) The Department of Education shall establish a Career
128 High-Skill Occupational Initiative for Career Education (CHOICE)
129 project. The project shall consist of a competitive process for
130 selecting and designating school districts as participants in
131 the project and designating CHOICE academies within
132 participating school districts.

133 (2) A "CHOICE academy" is a career and professional
134 academy that meets the goals and requirements specified in s.
135 1003.493 and offers a rigorous and relevant academic curriculum
136 leading to industry-recognized certification, college credit,
137 and credit toward a high school diploma. Existing career
138 education courses may serve as a foundation for the creation of
139 a CHOICE academy.

140 (3) The purposes of a CHOICE academy are to:

141 (a) Draw upon ongoing partnerships between education and
142 workforce development or economic development organizations to
143 enhance the quality and opportunities for career education for
144 high school students by exposure to in-demand career education
145 as identified by such organizations in the local community.

146 (b) Build upon the state system of school improvement and
147 education accountability by providing students with a solid
148 academic foundation, opportunities to obtain industry-recognized
149 certification or credentials, and preparation for postsecondary
150 educational experiences in related fields.

151 (c) Prepare graduating high school students to make
152 appropriate choices relative to employment and future
153 educational experiences.

154 (4) The Department of Education may establish application
155 guidelines for an annual competitive process and eligibility
156 criteria for school district participation. A school district
157 may apply to the department for designation as a CHOICE project
158 participating district, and the department, in consultation with
159 Workforce Florida, Inc., and Enterprise Florida, Inc., may

160 designate as many school districts as it deems advisable each
161 year. Eligibility criteria for designation of a school district
162 as a CHOICE project participant shall include, but not be
163 limited to:

164 (a) The willingness and ability of associated businesses
165 or industries to form partnerships with and support CHOICE
166 academies.

167 (b) The dedication of school district resources to CHOICE
168 academies.

169 (5) The Department of Education, in consultation with
170 Workforce Florida, Inc., shall establish standards for
171 designating specific CHOICE academies in each participating
172 school district. A participating school district may apply to
173 the department for designation of a CHOICE academy within the
174 district. Eligibility criteria for such designation shall
175 include, but not be limited to:

176 (a) Partnerships with an associated business or industry
177 and a regional workforce board or the primary local economic
178 development organization in the county as recognized by
179 Enterprise Florida, Inc. The partnership of the business or
180 industry with the CHOICE academy must be based on the connection
181 of the business or industry with the academy's career theme and
182 must involve future plans for improving the local economy. The
183 business or industry partner must be consulted during the
184 planning stages of a CHOICE academy and provide business or
185 industry support and resources devoted to the CHOICE academy.
186 The Consortium of Florida Education Foundations or a designee

187 must also be consulted during the planning stages of a CHOICE
188 academy and may provide support and resources devoted to the
189 CHOICE academy.

190 (b) At least one established partnership and an
191 articulation agreement for credit with a postsecondary
192 institution.

193 (c) A plan for sustaining the CHOICE academy.
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195 The Okaloosa County School District and other school districts
196 that have received funding from Workforce Florida, Inc., for the
197 establishment of CHOICE academies prior to July 1, 2006, shall
198 receive an expedited review for CHOICE academy designation by
199 the department.

200 (6) A participating school district shall:

201 (a) Identify an appropriate location for classes.

202 (b) Ensure that a CHOICE academy is flexible enough to
203 respond both to the needs and abilities of students and to the
204 needs of associated businesses or industries.

205 (c) Redirect appropriated funding from ongoing activities
206 to a CHOICE academy.

207 (d) Plan for sustaining a CHOICE academy as an ongoing
208 program without additional funding.

209 (7) The Department of Education shall:

210 (a) With assistance from Workforce Florida, Inc., provide
211 technical assistance to participating school districts in
212 submitting applications for designation of specific CHOICE
213 academies located in specific schools in the school district,

214 reorganizing career education opportunities, developing CHOICE
215 academies with career themes in areas deemed appropriate by
216 Workforce Florida, Inc., or local economic development
217 organizations, and developing funding plans.

218 (b) Jointly with Workforce Florida, Inc., and in
219 consultation with school districts, develop evaluation criteria
220 for CHOICE academies. Such criteria shall include increased
221 academic performance of students and schools using school-level
222 accountability data.

223 (c) Report to the State Board of Education, the Governor,
224 the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of
225 Representatives by July 1 of each year on school district
226 participation in the CHOICE project, designated CHOICE academies
227 with enrollment and completion data for such academies, and
228 appropriate outcomes for students who have completed a CHOICE
229 academy program. Such outcomes may include continuing
230 educational experiences of CHOICE academy graduates, business or
231 industry satisfaction with the CHOICE academies, placement of
232 CHOICE academy graduates in employment, and earnings of such
233 graduates.

234 (d) Promote CHOICE academies and provide planning and
235 startup resources as available.

236 (8) As provided in the General Appropriations Act, the
237 Department of Education shall award one-time startup funds to
238 school districts designated as participants in the CHOICE
239 project for the development of CHOICE academies. All school

240 districts designated by the department are authorized to
 241 establish one or more CHOICE academies without incentive funds.

242 Section 3. Subsection (7) is added to section 288.9015,
 243 Florida Statutes, to read:

244 288.9015 Enterprise Florida, Inc.; purpose; duties.--

245 (7) Enterprise Florida, Inc., shall work with the
 246 Department of Education and Workforce Florida, Inc., in the
 247 designation of school districts as participants in the CHOICE
 248 project pursuant to s. 1003.494.

249 Section 4. Paragraph (i) is added to subsection (5) of
 250 section 445.004, Florida Statutes, to read:

251 445.004 Workforce Florida, Inc.; creation; purpose;
 252 membership; duties and powers.--

253 (5) Workforce Florida, Inc., shall have all the powers and
 254 authority, not explicitly prohibited by statute, necessary or
 255 convenient to carry out and effectuate the purposes as
 256 determined by statute, Pub. L. No. 105-220, and the Governor, as
 257 well as its functions, duties, and responsibilities, including,
 258 but not limited to, the following:

259 (i) Working with the Department of Education and
 260 Enterprise Florida, Inc., in the implementation of the CHOICE
 261 project pursuant to s. 1003.494.

262 Section 5. This act shall take effect July 1, 2006.