

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

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

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Education Pre-K - 12 Committee

BILL: SB 292

INTRODUCER: Senator Wilson

SUBJECT: School Grading System

DATE: December 10, 2007 REVISED: _____

| | ANALYST | STAFF DIRECTOR | REFERENCE | ACTION |
|----|-----------------|----------------|-----------|--------------------|
| 1. | deMarsh-Mathues | Matthews | ED | Unfavorable |
| 2. | _____ | _____ | EA | _____ |
| 3. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 4. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 5. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 6. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

I. Summary:

The bill removes the letter grades used to describe school performance under Florida’s system of school improvement and accountability.

This bill substantially amends the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 1001.42, 1002.33, 1002.38, 1002.415, 1003.62, 1008.33, 1008.34, 1008.345, 1008.36, and 1011.62.

II. Present Situation:

Student achievement data from the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) in grades 3-10 are used to establish both proficiency levels and annual progress for individual students, schools, districts, and the state.¹ Results are also used as the primary criteria in calculating school performance grades, school rewards and recognition, and performance-based funding.² The results of the statewide assessment program must be annually reported by the Commissioner of Education.

The following letter grades are used to designate school performance:

- “A,” for schools making excellent progress;
- "B," for schools making above average progress;
- "C," for schools making satisfactory progress;
- “D,” for schools making less than satisfactory progress; and

¹ s. 1008.34, F.S.

² Rule 6A-1.09981, F.A.C.

- "F," for schools failing to make adequate progress.³

The criteria for designating school performance grades are based on a combination of the following:⁴

- Student achievement scores, including achievement scores for students seeking a special diploma;
- Student learning gains as measured by annual FCAT assessments in grades 3 through 10; and
- Improvement of the lowest 25th percentile of students in the school in reading, math, or writing on the FCAT, unless these students are exhibiting satisfactory performance.

Student assessment data used in determining school grades includes:⁵

- Aggregate scores of all eligible students enrolled in the school who have been:
 - Assessed on the FCAT; and
 - Assessed on the FCAT, including Florida Writes, with scores at or in the lowest 25th percentile of students in the school in reading, math, or writing, unless these students are exhibiting satisfactory performance; and
- Achievement scores and learning gains of eligible students attending alternative schools that provide dropout prevention and academic intervention services pursuant to s. 1003.53, F.S.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill revises current law to remove the letter grades used to describe school performance under Florida's system of school improvement and accountability. Schools will continue to be designated on the basis of achieving different levels of progress:

- Excellent;
- Above average;
- Satisfactory;
- Less than satisfactory; and
- Failing.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2008.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

³ s. 1008.34, F.S.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *Id.*

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

None.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

Section 1003.621, F.S., relating to academically high performing school districts, also contains references to letter grades. However, it is not amended by the bill.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Additional Information:

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.