

**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 856

INTRODUCER: Senator Fasano

SUBJECT: Disability History and Awareness Pilot Project

DATE: February 18, 2008      REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Harkey	Matthews	ED	<b>Favorable</b>
2.			CF	
3.			EA	
4.				
5.				
6.				

**I. Summary:**

This bill creates a pilot project for disability history and awareness to be administered by the district school boards in Hillsborough, Leon, Pasco, and Pinellas Counties. The bill directs the University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service (UCEDD) at the University of South Florida, in collaboration with the Florida Youth Council, to provide technical assistance to the participants in the pilot project and to submit a report to the education committees of the Senate and House of Representatives and the Commissioner of Education by January 30, 2009.

The bill appropriates a total of \$40,000 from the General Revenue Fund to provide \$10,000 to each of the four school boards that will implement the pilot program.

This bill creates two unnumbered sections of law.

**II. Present Situation:**

According to the Department of Education (DOE), some Florida school districts have implemented disability awareness activities as part of staff development and some have implemented disability awareness activities with their students as part of ongoing instruction. Instructional materials are available. The DOE gives as an example, "More Alike than Different," a specially designed curriculum used by some school districts in professional development activities. The purpose of the curriculum, developed by a team of parents and school district staff, is to increase sensitivity toward people with disabilities so that students and adults can recognize that all children can learn, although their methods or styles may differ.

The Florida Youth Council is supported by a partnership between the Florida Agency for Persons with Disabilities and the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council. The council is part of the National Consortium on Leadership and Disability for Youth. The council is comprised of youth ages 15-17, and emerging leaders ages 18-30.

The University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service (UCEDD) is located at the Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute at the University of South Florida. The center is one of 67 in universities in the United States and its territories that facilitate the communication of disability-related information among universities, community providers, and government agencies.

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

This bill creates a pilot project for disability history and awareness to be administered by the district school boards in Hillsborough, Leon, Pasco, and Pinellas Counties. Disability history must include the development and evolution of services to people with disabilities, and their civil rights, and must include information about state and national leaders in the history. According to the bill, disability awareness means a level of competence in living near, working, and interacting with people with different types of disabilities.

The bill requires the instruction to emphasize a “people first” or socio-civil-rights model approach. The instruction must be integrated into the existing school curriculum. The desired outcomes for the pilot program include better treatment for people with disabilities in school and in society; a goal that students exposed to the instruction will be more likely in the future to hire persons with disabilities; and increased self-esteem for persons with disabilities. Schools are encouraged to collaborate with community-based organizations in implementing the pilot project.

The bill encourages state institutions of higher education to conduct and promote educational activities concerning disability awareness and history. The bill directs the University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service (UCEDD) at the University of South Florida, in collaboration with the Florida Youth Council, to provide technical assistance to the participants in the pilot project. By January 30, 2009, UCEDD, in collaboration with the Florida Youth Council, must submit a report to the education committees of the Senate and House of Representatives and to the Commissioner of Education concerning the implementation of the pilot program and the outcomes achieved.

According to the DOE, implementing the pilot project would require instructional resources for elementary, middle school, and high school teachers; the provision of staff development to address instructional strategies and curriculum materials; and the creation or expansion of collaborative efforts among the schools, businesses, and community-based organizations.

The bill appropriates \$10,000 from the General Revenue Fund to each of the four school boards of the districts where the pilot projects will be conducted.

The bill will take effect July 1, 2008.

**IV. Constitutional Issues:**

## A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

## B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

## C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

**V. Fiscal Impact Statement:**

## A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

## B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

## C. Government Sector Impact:

The bill appropriates a total of \$40,000 from the General Revenue Fund, appropriating \$10,000 for each of the four pilot sites.

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

**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.