

HB 697

2011

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to disability awareness; amending s.
3 1003.4205, F.S.; requiring district school boards to
4 provide disability history and awareness instruction in
5 all K-12 public schools during the first week in October;
6 requiring certified individuals in disability awareness or
7 teachers who specialize in exceptional student education
8 to provide the disability history and awareness
9 instruction; requiring the Governor's Commission on
10 Disabilities to initiate a study on training in disability
11 awareness to be conducted by a private nonprofit entity;
12 providing requirements for the study and requiring
13 submission of findings to the commission; requiring the
14 commission to oversee a statewide program for providers of
15 training in disability awareness; providing program
16 components to include requirements for approval of
17 providers and certification of individuals who provide
18 instruction in disability awareness; providing for the
19 payment of certain fees; requiring the commission to
20 promote training in disability awareness in all public
21 entities in the state; requiring the commission to
22 encourage those public entities to participate in
23 activities that provide instruction to expand knowledge,
24 understanding, and awareness of individuals who have
25 disabilities; requiring the commission to adopt rules;
26 providing an effective date.

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28 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Page 1 of 5

CODING: Words ~~stricken~~ are deletions; words underlined are additions.

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Section 1. Section 1003.4205, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1003.4205 Disability history and awareness instruction.—

(1) Each district school board shall ~~may~~ provide disability history and awareness instruction in all K-12 public schools in the district during the first week ~~2-weeks~~ in October each year. The district school board shall designate this week ~~these 2-weeks~~ as "Disability History and Awareness Week ~~Weeks~~."

(2) (a) During this 1-week ~~2-week~~ period, students shall ~~may~~ be provided intensive instruction to expand their knowledge, understanding, and awareness of individuals with disabilities, the history of disability, and the disability rights movement. Disability history must ~~may~~ include the events and timelines of the development and evolution of services to, and the civil rights of, individuals with disabilities. Disability history must ~~may~~ also include the contributions of specific individuals with disabilities, including the contributions of acknowledged national leaders.

(b) The instruction shall ~~may~~ be integrated into the existing school curriculum in ways including, but not limited to, supplementing lesson plans, holding school assemblies, or providing other school-related activities. Beginning with the 2012-2013 school year, the instruction must ~~may~~ be delivered by individuals who are certified to provide instruction in disability awareness ~~qualified school personnel or by knowledgeable guest speakers,~~ with a particular focus on including individuals who have ~~with~~ disabilities as instructors,

57 or by teachers who are currently employed at a school and who
 58 specialize in exceptional student education at the school.

59 (3) The goals of disability history and awareness
 60 instruction include:

61 (a) Better treatment for individuals who have ~~with~~
 62 disabilities, especially for youth in school, and increased
 63 attention to preventing the bullying or harassment of students
 64 who have ~~with~~ disabilities.

65 (b) Encouragement to individuals who have ~~with~~
 66 disabilities to develop increased self-esteem, resulting in more
 67 individuals who have ~~with~~ disabilities gaining pride in being an
 68 individual with a disability, obtaining postsecondary education,
 69 entering the workforce, and contributing to their communities.

70 (c) Reaffirmation of the local, state, and federal
 71 commitment to the full inclusion in society of, and the equal
 72 opportunity for, all individuals who have ~~with~~ disabilities.

73 Section 2. Disability awareness training standards,
 74 protocol, and curriculum; certification.—

75 (1) The Governor's Commission on Disabilities shall
 76 initiate a study regarding training in disability awareness
 77 beginning July 1, 2011, to be conducted by a private nonprofit
 78 entity that promotes disability awareness in the classroom and
 79 the community at large and provides training in disability
 80 awareness. State agencies and programs shall cooperate with the
 81 private nonprofit entity as it conducts the study to establish
 82 training standards, protocol, and curriculum with regard to
 83 disability awareness. Within the study, the private nonprofit
 84 entity shall:

HB 697

2011

85 (a) Evaluate and recommend to the commission standards and
86 criteria necessary for authorizing providers to conduct training
87 in disability awareness.

88 (b) Establish guidelines and curriculum for a
89 certification program for disability awareness instructors.

90 (c) Provide to the commission a summary of the current
91 trends in training in disability awareness.

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93 The private nonprofit entity conducting the study shall submit
94 its findings to the commission by July 1, 2011.

95 (2) Beginning July 1, 2012, the commission shall oversee a
96 statewide program for providers of training and certified
97 instructors in disability awareness which includes, but is not
98 limited to, the following components:

99 (a) A training provider must meet all criteria established
100 and published by the commission in order to be approved to
101 conduct continuing education courses for certifying individuals
102 as instructors in disability awareness. A provider may charge a
103 service fee for the continuing education courses in an amount
104 that is sufficient to cover its costs in providing the courses.

105 (b) In order to be approved by the commission, a provider
106 of training in disability awareness must have a minimum of 5
107 years of experience working in the field of disabilities, submit
108 an application to the commission to provide training in
109 disability awareness, pay an application or renewal fee set by
110 the commission not to exceed \$200, and submit an annual report
111 to the commission which documents the provider's training
112 activities. An approved provider shall renew its approved status

HB 697

2011

113 with the commission every 3 years.

114 (c) An approved provider shall use the commission's
115 approved training methods and curriculum materials for
116 conducting continuing education courses.

117 (d) The commission shall publish and make available to the
118 public a list of providers approved to offer training for
119 certifying individuals as instructors in disability awareness.

120 (e) An individual seeking certification to provide
121 instruction in disability awareness shall participate in
122 continuing education courses conducted by a commission-approved
123 provider. The commission shall certify an individual as an
124 instructor who successfully completes the required continuing
125 education courses in disability awareness. This individual shall
126 pay a certification or certification renewal fee set by the
127 commission not to exceed \$100, and the certified individual
128 shall renew certification with the commission every 3 years.

129 (3) The commission shall promote the inclusion in society
130 of, and the equal opportunity for, individuals who have
131 disabilities through training in disability awareness in all
132 public entities in the state. The commission shall encourage
133 those public entities to participate in activities that provide
134 instruction to expand knowledge, understanding, and awareness of
135 individuals who have disabilities, the history of disability
136 awareness, and the disability rights movement.

137 (4) The commission shall adopt rules pursuant to ss.
138 120.536(1) and 120.54, Florida Statutes, to administer this
139 section.

140 Section 3. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.