

**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.)

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Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Education

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BILL: SB 514

INTRODUCER: Senator Flores

SUBJECT: Gender-Specific School Pilot Project

DATE: March 17, 2014

REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>McLaughlin</u>	<u>Klebacha</u>	<u>ED</u>	<b>Favorable</b>
2.	_____	_____	<u>AED</u>	_____
3.	_____	_____	<u>AP</u>	_____

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**I. Summary:**

SB 514 establishes a pilot program for public schools meeting gender-specific requirements.

Specifically, the bill creates an unnumbered section of law that requires the Department of Education (DOE) to administer a two-year Gender-Specific School Pilot Project in five school districts with populations of more than 100,000 kindergarten through grade twelve students.

The bill requires the Office of Program Policy and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) to submit a report comparing the academic performance of students in the gender-specific school in this pilot program with the academic performance of students in other public schools in the school district by December 31, 2016.

The bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2014.

**II. Present Situation:**

Under Florida law, a district school board may establish and maintain single-gender schools as long as the district makes available a substantially equal school.<sup>1</sup> Participation in single-gender schools must be voluntary.<sup>2</sup> At least every two years, the school district must evaluate each single-gender school to ensure compliance with federal regulations.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Section 1002.311(1), F.S.

<sup>2</sup> Section 1002.311(2)(a), F.S.

<sup>3</sup> Section 1002.311(2)(b), F.S.

There are 54 single-gender schools in 33 school districts in Florida.<sup>4</sup> A variety of school models employ single-gender classes, e.g., alternative schools, charter schools, virtual schools, and traditional public schools.<sup>5</sup>

### III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill establishes a pilot program for public schools meeting gender-specific requirements. The pilot program could include a district's existing single-gender school and would include a new school meeting the definition.

Under the proposed pilot program, school districts:

- Must apply and be chosen for the pilot project;
- May operate one pilot project school which must have a minimum population of 350 students;
- Must open enrollment to all students within the school district;
- Must separate core courses into boys-only and girls-only classes; and
- Must provide and require administrators and teachers to undergo professional development in scheduling and instructional strategies.

Those districts operating single-gender schools under this pilot program would be required to comply with existing state law<sup>6</sup> and federal regulations,<sup>7</sup> as well as the additional requirements of the pilot program.

The OPPAGA is required to provide to the Governor, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives a report comparing the academic performance of students enrolled in the Gender-Specific School Pilot Project with the academic performance of students in other public elementary schools in the district. Funding for the pilot project will be appropriated by the Legislature and allocated to school districts by the DOE.

The bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2014.

### IV. Constitutional Issues:

#### A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

#### B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

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<sup>4</sup> Telephone conversation with staff, Florida Department of Education, Office of Governmental Relations (Mar. 10, 2014).

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

<sup>6</sup> Section 1002.311, F.S.

<sup>7</sup> 34 C.F.R. s.106.34.

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:**

None.

**VII. Related Issues:**

None.

**VIII. Statutes Affected:**

None.

**IX. Additional Information:**

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:

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

None.

B. Amendments:

None.