

**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 Appropriations Subcommittee on Education

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BILL: SB 514

INTRODUCER: Senator Flores

SUBJECT: Gender-Specific School Pilot Project

DATE: April 1, 2014

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

|    | ANALYST           | STAFF DIRECTOR  | REFERENCE  | ACTION             |
|----|-------------------|-----------------|------------|--------------------|
| 1. | <u>McLaughlin</u> | <u>Klebacha</u> | <u>ED</u>  | <b>Favorable</b>   |
| 2. | <u>Sikes</u>      | <u>Elwell</u>   | <u>AED</u> | <b>Pre-meeting</b> |
| 3. | _____             | _____           | <u>AP</u>  | _____              |

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**I. Summary:**

Senate Bill 514 establishes a gender-specific school pilot program for public schools meeting certain requirements.

Specifically, the bill creates an undesignated section of Florida law that requires the Department of Education (DOE) to administer a two-year Gender-Specific School Pilot Project in one elementary school in each of five school districts with populations of more than 100,000 kindergarten through grade 12 students.

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

The bill requires funds be appropriated by the Legislature to implement the pilot project.

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 gender-specific school pilot program for public schools meeting certain requirements. 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 at least 350 students;
- Must open enrollment to all students within the school district, and may not restrict enrollment to students residing in the school's attendance zone;
- Must separate core courses into boys-only and girls-only classes during instruction in core subject areas; and
- Must select a professional development provider to assist with scheduling and instructional strategies and require administrators and teachers to participate in the professional development.

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.

OPPAGA is required to provide a report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, comparing the academic performance of students enrolled in the pilot project with the academic performance of students in other public elementary schools in the district.

Funds to implement the pilot project are required by the bill to 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:

SB 514 requires the Legislature to appropriate funds to implement the pilot project. The DOE did not provide an analysis of this bill so specific costs for implementation of this pilot project have not been determined. The bill also requires each pilot project school's administrative and instructional personnel to participate in professional development delivered by a provider from a DOE-developed list. School districts have multiple sources of professional development funding that could be used to implement the pilot. Costs to implement this pilot project are expected to be minimal for the DOE. SB 2500, the proposed Fiscal-Year 2014-2015 Senate General Appropriations Bill, does not include an appropriation for this pilot project.

**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.

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This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.

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