

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to education; creating s. 413.0114,
3 F.S.; requiring certain persons and entities to
4 complete a written consumer disclosure for blind-
5 related services; providing that specified violations
6 constitute unfair or deceptive trade practices and are
7 subject to specified penalties and enforcement;
8 authorizing the State Board of Education to adopt
9 rules; amending s. 413.208, F.S.; requiring certain
10 service providers to apply to the Division of
11 Vocational Rehabilitation; requiring the division to
12 establish qualifications for certain service providers
13 and an application process and period for such service
14 providers; authorizing the division to approve or deny
15 such service providers; providing division and service
16 provider requirements relating to such process;
17 providing reporting and evaluation system requirements
18 for the division relating to service provider
19 effectiveness; providing requirements for rates for
20 vocational rehabilitation services; amending s.
21 491.005, F.S.; revising the date for a specified
22 requirement to obtain a license as a marriage and
23 family therapist; amending s. 1001.7065, F.S.;
24 requiring preeminent state research universities to
25 maintain certain enrollment ratios; providing that

26 such universities are ineligible for specified funding
27 under certain circumstances beginning on a specified
28 date; amending s. 1001.92, F.S.; revising state
29 university performance-based metrics for the award of
30 a State University System Performance-Based Incentive;
31 amending s. 1003.437, F.S.; requiring the State Board
32 of Education to establish a uniform weighted grading
33 system for specified courses and articulated
34 acceleration mechanisms; requiring district school
35 boards to use such system for specified purposes;
36 amending s. 1004.06, F.S.; revising construction for
37 the prohibition of certain expenditures; creating s.
38 1004.072, F.S.; providing limitations for student
39 enrollment in a state university; amending s.
40 1004.343, F.S.; revising the date the University of
41 South Florida Trafficking in Persons - Risk to
42 Resilience Lab must begin submitting a specified
43 report relating to human trafficking; requiring
44 consultation with the Department of Law Enforcement in
45 the submission of such report; extending the date of
46 the scheduled repeal of the Statewide Data Repository
47 for Anonymous Human Trafficking Data; amending s.
48 1004.39, F.S.; revising provisions relating to the
49 College of Law at Florida International University and
50 removing a specified association from certain

51 provisions; amending s. 1004.40, F.S.; revising
52 provisions relating to the College of Law at Florida
53 Agricultural and Mechanical University and removing a
54 specified association from certain provisions;
55 amending s. 1005.06, F.S.; revising the list of
56 institutions that are not under the jurisdiction of
57 the Commission for Independent Education; providing
58 construction; amending s. 1006.71, F.S.; deleting a
59 requirement that public postsecondary educational
60 institutions develop a gender equity plan; amending s.
61 1007.25, F.S.; revising the number of days public
62 postsecondary educational institutions have to submit
63 comments for certain proposed degrees; prohibiting
64 such institutions from imposing certain institution-
65 wide graduation requirements; amending s. 1007.271,
66 F.S.; revising postsecondary institution eligibility
67 for participation in dual enrollment programs;
68 revising provisions relating to the calculation of
69 student grade point averages; amending s. 1008.47,
70 F.S.; revising the period of time in which a public
71 postsecondary institution must seek and obtain
72 specified accreditation; revising the accrediting
73 agencies such institutions may seek accreditation
74 from; providing that certain provisions apply to
75 programmatic accreditors for postsecondary education

76 institutions; amending s. 1009.25, F.S.; revising the
77 requirements for a student to meet the definition of
78 "homeless children and youths"; providing that certain
79 distance learning students are ineligible for
80 specified fee exemptions; amending s. 1009.40, F.S.;
81 requiring a person to be a United States citizen or
82 lawfully present in the United States to receive state
83 financial aid awards and tuition assistance grants;
84 amending s. 1009.895, F.S.; conforming a cross-
85 reference to changes made by the act; amending s.
86 1009.983, F.S.; authorizing a specified designee with
87 certain credentials to serve as director of the
88 direct-support organization for the Florida Prepaid
89 College Foundation, Inc.; amending s. 1009.986, F.S.;
90 revising the membership of the board of directors of
91 Florida ABLE, Inc.; amending s. 1011.62, F.S.;
92 revising the academic acceleration options supplement
93 within the Florida Education Finance Program to
94 include a method for calculating additional full-time
95 equivalent membership based on advanced courses and
96 test scores; providing specified bonuses; providing an
97 effective date.

98
99 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:
100

101 **Section 1. Section 413.0114, Florida Statutes, is created**
102 **to read:**

103 413.0114 Consumer disclosure for blind-related services.-

104 (1) Any person, business, nonprofit, or other entity
105 offering fee-based services to persons who are blind or visually
106 impaired must, before entering into a contract or accepting
107 payment, disclose in writing if equivalent or substantially
108 similar services may be available at no cost through the
109 Division of Blind Services or another public agency.

110 (2) The written disclosure must:

111 (a) Be provided in plain language and an accessible
112 format, including, but not limited to, braille, large print, or
113 audio upon request.

114 (b) Include contact information for the Division of Blind
115 Services.

116 (c) Be signed or electronically acknowledged by the
117 consumer or his or her representative.

118 (3) A violation of this section constitutes an unfair or
119 deceptive trade practice under part II of chapter 501, and is
120 subject to penalties and enforcement as provided therein.

121 (4) The State Board of Education may adopt rules to
122 implement this section.

123 **Section 2. Subsection (1) of section 413.208, Florida**
124 **Statutes, is amended to read:**

125 413.208 Service providers; quality assurance; fitness for

126 responsibilities; background screening.—

127 (1) Service providers must apply to ~~register with~~ the
128 division. To qualify for approval, ~~a registration,~~ ~~The division~~
129 ~~must ensure that the~~ service provider must maintain ~~maintains~~ an
130 internal system of quality assurance, have ~~has~~ proven functional
131 systems, meet the minimum qualifications, and be ~~is~~ subject to a
132 due-diligence inquiry as to its fitness to undertake service
133 responsibilities.

134 (a) The division shall establish minimum qualifications
135 for service providers. The division may approve or deny any
136 service provider application. The division shall establish an
137 annual application period for service providers to submit
138 applications. Beginning January 1, 2027, only service providers
139 that meet the minimum qualifications established by the
140 division, and that have been approved to provide employment-
141 related services to individuals with disabilities, may
142 participate in the vocational rehabilitation program.

143 (b) The division shall develop and make publicly available
144 an annual report of service provider effectiveness which
145 includes an evaluation system measuring the effectiveness of all
146 service providers that are approved by the division to provide
147 employment-related services to individuals with disabilities.

148 (c) In order to maintain approved status with the
149 division, service providers must meet minimum standards of
150 effectiveness in the provision of vocational rehabilitation

151 services, including placement of individuals in competitive and
 152 integrated employment.

153 (d) Rates for vocational rehabilitation services must be
 154 allocable, reasonable, and necessary, as determined by the
 155 division.

156 **Section 3. Paragraph (c) of subsection (3) of section**
 157 **491.005, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:**

158 491.005 Licensure by examination.—

159 (3) MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY.—Upon verification of
 160 documentation and payment of a fee not to exceed \$200, as set by
 161 board rule, the department shall issue a license as a marriage
 162 and family therapist to an applicant whom the board certifies
 163 has met all of the following criteria:

164 (c)1. Attained one of the following:

165 a. A minimum of a master's degree in marriage and family
 166 therapy from a program accredited by the Commission on
 167 Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education.

168 b. A minimum of a master's degree with a major emphasis in
 169 marriage and family therapy or a closely related field from a
 170 university program accredited by the Council on Accreditation of
 171 Counseling and Related Educational Programs and graduate courses
 172 approved by the board.

173 c. A minimum of a master's degree with an emphasis in
 174 marriage and family therapy or a closely related field, with a
 175 degree conferred before September 1, 2032 ~~September 1, 2027,~~

176 | from an institutionally accredited college or university and
177 | graduate courses approved by the board.

178 | 2. If the course title that appears on the applicant's
179 | transcript does not clearly identify the content of the
180 | coursework, the applicant provided additional documentation,
181 | including, but not limited to, a syllabus or catalog description
182 | published for the course. The required master's degree must have
183 | been received in an institution of higher education that, at the
184 | time the applicant graduated, was fully accredited by an
185 | institutional accrediting body recognized by the Council for
186 | Higher Education Accreditation or its successor organization or
187 | was a member in good standing with Universities Canada, or an
188 | institution of higher education located outside the United
189 | States and Canada which, at the time the applicant was enrolled
190 | and at the time the applicant graduated, maintained a standard
191 | of training substantially equivalent to the standards of
192 | training of those institutions in the United States which are
193 | accredited by an institutional accrediting body recognized by
194 | the Council for Higher Education Accreditation or its successor
195 | organization. Such foreign education and training must have been
196 | received in an institution or program of higher education
197 | officially recognized by the government of the country in which
198 | it is located as an institution or program to train students to
199 | practice as professional marriage and family therapists or
200 | psychotherapists. The applicant has the burden of establishing

201 that the requirements of this provision have been met, and the
 202 board shall require documentation, such as an evaluation by a
 203 foreign equivalency determination service, as evidence that the
 204 applicant's graduate degree program and education were
 205 equivalent to an accredited program in this country. An
 206 applicant with a master's degree from a program that did not
 207 emphasize marriage and family therapy may complete the
 208 coursework requirement in a training institution fully
 209 accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and
 210 Family Therapy Education recognized by the United States
 211 Department of Education.

212

213 For the purposes of dual licensure, the department shall license
 214 as a marriage and family therapist any person who meets the
 215 requirements of s. 491.0057. Fees for dual licensure may not
 216 exceed those stated in this subsection.

217 **Section 4. Paragraph (c) of subsection (5) of section**
 218 **1001.7065, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:**

219 1001.7065 Preeminent state research universities program.—

220 (5) PREEMINENT STATE RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES PROGRAM
 221 SUPPORT.—

222 (c) The award of funds under this subsection is contingent
 223 upon funding provided by the Legislature to support the
 224 preeminent state research universities program created under
 225 this section. Funding increases appropriated beyond the amounts

226 funded in the previous fiscal year shall be distributed to each
227 designated preeminent state research university that meets the
228 criteria in paragraph (a). Each designated preeminent state
229 research university shall receive an equal amount of funding.
230 Each preeminent state research university must maintain a fall
231 full-time, first-time-in-college enrollment ratio comprised of
232 at least 95 percent Florida residents based on a 3-year average.
233 Beginning July 1, 2030, a preeminent state research university
234 that fails to meet this requirement is ineligible for funding
235 under this section.

236 **Section 5. Paragraphs (a) and (h) of subsection (1) of**
237 **section 1001.92, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:**

238 1001.92 State University System Performance-Based
239 Incentive.—

240 (1) A State University System Performance-Based Incentive
241 shall be awarded to state universities using performance-based
242 metrics adopted by the Board of Governors of the State
243 University System. Beginning with the Board of Governors'
244 determination of each university's performance improvement and
245 achievement ratings, and the related distribution of annual
246 fiscal year appropriation, the performance-based metrics must
247 include:

248 (a) The 4-year graduation rate and adjusted cohort
249 graduation rate for engineering programs for first-time-in-
250 college students;

251 (h) Access rate, based on the percentage of first-year
252 undergraduate students enrolled during the fall term who
253 received a Pell Grant during the fall term; and
254

255 The Board of Governors may approve other metrics in a publicly
256 noticed meeting. The board shall adopt benchmarks to evaluate
257 each state university's performance on the metrics to measure
258 the state university's achievement of institutional excellence
259 or need for improvement and minimum requirements for eligibility
260 to receive performance funding. Benchmarks and metrics may not
261 be adjusted after university performance data has been received
262 by the Board of Governors.

263 **Section 6. Section 1003.437, Florida Statutes, is amended**
264 **to read:**

265 1003.437 Middle and high school grading system.—The
266 grading system and interpretation of letter grades used to
267 measure student success in grade 6 through grade 12 courses for
268 students in public schools shall be as follows:

269 (1) Grade "A" equals 90 percent through 100 percent, has a
270 grade point average value of 4, and is defined as "outstanding
271 progress."

272 (2) Grade "B" equals 80 percent through 89 percent, has a
273 grade point average value of 3, and is defined as "above average
274 progress."

275 (3) Grade "C" equals 70 percent through 79 percent, has a

276 grade point average value of 2, and is defined as "average
277 progress."

278 (4) Grade "D" equals 60 percent through 69 percent, has a
279 grade point average value of 1, and is defined as "lowest
280 acceptable progress."

281 (5) Grade "F" equals zero percent through 59 percent, has
282 a grade point average value of zero, and is defined as
283 "failure."

284 (6) Grade "I" equals zero percent, has a grade point
285 average value of zero, and is defined as "incomplete."

286

287 The State Board of Education must establish a statewide uniform
288 weighted grading system for honors courses and articulated
289 acceleration mechanisms identified in s. 1007.27. ~~For the~~
290 purposes of class ranking, District school boards shall use the
291 may exercise a weighted grading system to calculate weighted
292 high school grade point averages pursuant to s. 1007.271.

293 **Section 7. Subsection (3) of section 1004.06, Florida**
294 **Statutes, is amended to read:**

295 1004.06 Prohibited expenditures.—

296 (3) Subsection (2) does not prohibit programs, campus
297 activities, or functions required for compliance with general or
298 federal laws or regulations; ~~for obtaining or retaining~~
299 ~~institutional or discipline-specific accreditation with the~~
300 ~~approval of either the State Board of Education or the Board of~~

301 ~~Governors,~~ or for access programs for military veterans, Pell
302 Grant recipients, first generation college students,
303 nontraditional students, "2+2" transfer students from the
304 Florida College System, students from low-income families, or
305 students with unique abilities.

306 **Section 8. Section 1004.072, Florida Statutes, is created**
307 **to read:**

308 1004.072 Enrollment of noncitizen and nonresident students
309 at state universities.—Based on the limitation on systemwide
310 enrollment of nonresident degree-seeking students established by
311 regulation of the Board of Governors, a state university must
312 limit, within its enrollment of nonresident students, the number
313 of enrolled nonresident degree-seeking students who are
314 noncitizens and who are not permanent residents of the United
315 States to no more than 5 percent from any specific country.

316 **Section 9. Subsections (5) and (6) of section 1004.343,**
317 **Florida Statutes, are amended to read:**

318 1004.343 Statewide Data Repository for Anonymous Human
319 Trafficking Data.—

320 (5) Beginning January 31, 2027 ~~July 1, 2025~~, and annually
321 thereafter, the University of South Florida Trafficking in
322 Persons - Risk to Resilience Lab, in consultation with the
323 Department of Law Enforcement, shall submit an annual report and
324 analysis on its findings to the Governor, the Attorney General,
325 the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of

326 Representatives.

327 (6) This section is repealed July 1, 2027 ~~July 1, 2026~~,
328 unless reviewed and reenacted by the Legislature before that
329 date.

330 **Section 10. Subsections (3), (4), and (5) of section**
331 **1004.39, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:**

332 1004.39 College of law at Florida International
333 University.—

334 (3) The college of law at Florida International
335 University, to the extent consistent with the standards required
336 by a ~~the American Bar Association or any other~~ nationally
337 recognized association for the accreditation of colleges of law,
338 shall develop a law library collection utilizing electronic
339 formats and mediums.

340 (4) The college of law at Florida International University
341 shall develop and institute a program that is consistent with
342 sound legal education principles as determined by a ~~the American~~
343 ~~Bar Association or any other~~ nationally recognized association
344 for the accreditation of colleges of law and that, to the extent
345 consistent with such sound legal education principles, is
346 structured to serve the legal needs of traditionally underserved
347 portions of the population by providing an opportunity for
348 participation in a legal clinic program or pro bono legal
349 service.

350 (5) The Florida International University Board of Trustees

351 and the Board of Governors may accept grants, donations, gifts,
352 and moneys available for this purpose, including moneys for
353 planning and constructing the college. The Florida International
354 University Board of Trustees may procure and accept any federal
355 funds that are available for the planning, creation, and
356 establishment of the college of law. If a ~~the American Bar~~
357 ~~Association or any other~~ nationally recognized association for
358 the accreditation of colleges of law issues a third disapproval
359 of an application for provisional approval or for full approval
360 or fails to grant, within 5 years following the graduation of
361 the first class, a provisional approval, to the college of law
362 at Florida International University, the Board of Governors
363 shall make recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature
364 as to whether the college of law will cease operations at the
365 end of the full academic year subsequent to the receipt by the
366 college of law of any such third disapproval, or whether the
367 college of law will continue operations and any conditions for
368 continued operations. If the college of law ceases operations
369 pursuant to this section, the following conditions apply:

370 (a) The authority for the college of law at Florida
371 International University and the authority of the Florida
372 International University Board of Trustees and the Board of
373 Governors provided in this section shall terminate upon the
374 cessation of operations of the college of law at Florida
375 International University. The college of law at Florida

376 International University shall receive no moneys allocated for
 377 the planning, construction, or operation of the college of law
 378 after its cessation of operations other than moneys to be
 379 expended for the cessation of operations of the college of law.
 380 Any moneys allocated to the college of law at Florida
 381 International University not expended prior to or scheduled to
 382 be expended after the date of the cessation of the college of
 383 law shall be appropriated for other use by the Legislature of
 384 the State of Florida.

385 (b) Any buildings of the college of law at Florida
 386 International University constructed from the expenditure of
 387 capital outlay funds appropriated by the Legislature shall be
 388 owned by the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust
 389 Fund and managed by the Florida International University Board
 390 of Trustees upon the cessation of the college of law.

391 **Section 11. Subsections (3), (4), and (5) of section**
 392 **1004.40, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:**

393 1004.40 College of law at Florida Agricultural and
 394 Mechanical University.—

395 (3) The college of law at Florida Agricultural and
 396 Mechanical University, to the extent consistent with the
 397 standards required by a ~~the American Bar Association or any~~
 398 ~~other~~ nationally recognized association for the accreditation of
 399 colleges of law, shall develop a law library collection
 400 utilizing electronic formats and mediums.

401 (4) The college of law at Florida Agricultural and
402 Mechanical University shall develop and institute a program that
403 is consistent with sound legal education principles as
404 determined by a ~~the American Bar Association or any other~~
405 nationally recognized association for the accreditation of
406 colleges of law and that, to the extent consistent with such
407 sound legal education principles, is structured to serve the
408 legal needs of traditionally underserved portions of the
409 population by providing an opportunity for participation in a
410 legal clinic program or pro bono legal service.

411 (5) The Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University
412 Board of Trustees and the Board of Governors may accept grants,
413 donations, gifts, and moneys available for this purpose,
414 including moneys for planning and constructing the college. The
415 Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University Board of Trustees
416 may procure and accept any federal funds that are available for
417 the planning, creation, and establishment of the college of law.
418 If a ~~the American Bar Association or any other~~ nationally
419 recognized association for the accreditation of colleges of law
420 issues a third disapproval of an application for provisional
421 approval or for full approval or fails to grant, within 5 years
422 following the graduation of the first class, a provisional
423 approval, to the college of law at Florida Agricultural and
424 Mechanical University, the Board of Governors shall make
425 recommendations to the Governor and Legislature as to whether

426 | the college of law will cease operations at the end of the full
427 | academic year subsequent to the receipt by the college of law of
428 | any such third disapproval, or whether the college of law will
429 | continue operations and any conditions for continued operations.
430 | If the college of law ceases operations of the college of law
431 | pursuant to this section, the following conditions apply:

432 | (a) The authority for the college of law at Florida
433 | Agricultural and Mechanical University and the authority of the
434 | Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University Board of Trustees
435 | and the Board of Governors provided in this section shall
436 | terminate upon the cessation of operations of the college of law
437 | at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University. The college
438 | of law at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University shall
439 | receive no moneys allocated for the planning, construction, or
440 | operation of the college of law after its cessation of
441 | operations other than moneys to be expended for the cessation of
442 | operations of the college of law. Any moneys allocated to the
443 | college of law at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University
444 | not expended prior to or scheduled to be expended after the date
445 | of the cessation of the college of law shall be appropriated for
446 | other use by the Legislature of the State of Florida.

447 | (b) Any buildings of the college of law at Florida
448 | Agricultural and Mechanical University constructed from the
449 | expenditure of capital outlay funds appropriated by the
450 | Legislature shall be owned by the Board of Trustees of the

451 Internal Improvement Trust Fund and managed by the Florida
452 Agricultural and Mechanical University Board of Trustees upon
453 the cessation of the college of law.

454 **Section 12. Paragraph (b) of subsection (1) of section**
455 **1005.06, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:**

456 1005.06 Institutions not under the jurisdiction or purview
457 of the commission.—

458 (1) Except as otherwise provided in law, the following
459 institutions are not under the jurisdiction or purview of the
460 commission and are not required to obtain licensure:

461 (b) Any college or, school, ~~or course~~ licensed or approved
462 as an institution for establishment and operation by another
463 state agency. A college or school, or any of its programs or
464 courses, does not qualify for exemption from the commission's
465 jurisdiction under this paragraph solely because another state
466 agency licenses or approves one or more of its programs or
467 courses. Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to limit
468 or affect the exemptions for contract training, continuing
469 education, or professional development programs or courses under
470 paragraph (d), even if such programs or courses are approved
471 under part I of chapter 464, chapter 466, or chapter 475, or any
472 other chapter of the Florida Statutes requiring licensing or
473 approval as defined in this chapter.

474 **Section 13. Subsection (1) of section 1006.71, Florida**
475 **Statutes, is amended to read:**

476 1006.71 Gender equity in intercollegiate athletics.—

477 (1) PENALTIES FOR FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH TITLE IX AND THE
478 FLORIDA EDUCATIONAL EQUITY ACT ~~GENDER EQUITY PLAN.~~—

479 ~~(a) Each Florida College System institution and state~~
480 ~~university shall develop a gender equity plan pursuant to s.~~
481 ~~1000.05.~~

482 ~~(b) The plan shall include consideration of equity in~~
483 ~~sports offerings, participation, availability of facilities,~~
484 ~~scholarship offerings, and funds allocated for administration,~~
485 ~~recruitment, comparable coaching, publicity and promotion, and~~
486 ~~other support costs.~~

487 ~~(c) The Commissioner of Education shall annually assess~~
488 ~~the progress of each Florida College System institution's plan~~
489 ~~and advise the State Board of Education and the Legislature~~
490 ~~regarding compliance.~~

491 ~~(d) The Chancellor of the State University System shall~~
492 ~~annually assess the progress of each state university's plan and~~
493 ~~advise the Board of Governors and the Legislature regarding~~
494 ~~compliance.~~

495 ~~(e) Each board of trustees of a Florida College System~~
496 ~~institution or state university shall annually evaluate the~~
497 ~~presidents on the extent to which the gender equity goals have~~
498 ~~been achieved.~~

499 ~~(f) To determine the proper level of support for women's~~
500 ~~athletic scholarships, an equity plan may determine, where~~

501 ~~appropriate, that support for women's scholarships may be~~
 502 ~~disproportionate to the support of scholarships for men.~~

503 (a)~~(g)~~1. If a Florida College System institution is not in
 504 compliance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and
 505 the Florida Educational Equity Act, the State Board of Education
 506 shall:

507 1.a. Declare the Florida College System institution
 508 ineligible for competitive state grants.

509 2.b. Withhold funds sufficient to obtain compliance.

510
 511 The Florida College System institution shall remain ineligible
 512 and the funds shall not be paid until the Florida College System
 513 institution comes into compliance or the Commissioner of
 514 Education approves a plan for compliance.

515 (b)~~2.~~ If a state university is not in compliance with
 516 Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and the Florida
 517 Educational Equity Act, the Board of Governors shall:

518 1.a. Declare the state university ineligible for
 519 competitive state grants.

520 2.b. Withhold funds sufficient to obtain compliance.

521
 522 The state university shall remain ineligible and the funds shall
 523 not be paid until the state university comes into compliance or
 524 the Board of Governors approves a plan for compliance.

525 **Section 14. Paragraph (b) of subsection (9) of section**

526 **1007.25, Florida Statutes, is amended, and subsection (15) is**
 527 **added to that section, to read:**

528 1007.25 General education courses; common prerequisites;
 529 other degree requirements.—

530 (9)

531 (b) An associate in arts specialized transfer degree must
 532 include 36 semester hours of general education coursework and
 533 require 60 semester hours or more of college credit. Specialized
 534 transfer degrees are designed for Florida College System
 535 institution students who need supplemental lower-level
 536 coursework in preparation for transfer to another institution.
 537 The State Board of Education shall establish criteria for the
 538 review and approval of new specialized transfer degrees. The
 539 approval process must require:

540 1. A Florida College System institution to submit a notice
 541 of its intent to propose a new associate in arts specialized
 542 degree program to the Division of Florida Colleges. The notice
 543 must include the recommended credit hours, the rationale for the
 544 specialization, the demand for students entering the field, and
 545 the coursework being proposed to be included beyond the 60
 546 semester hours required for the general transfer degree, if
 547 applicable. Notices of intent may be submitted by a Florida
 548 College System institution at any time.

549 2. The Division of Florida Colleges to forward the notice
 550 of intent within 10 business days after receipt to all Florida

551 College System institutions and to the Chancellor of the State
552 University System, who shall forward the notice to all state
553 universities. State universities and Florida College System
554 institutions shall have 30 ~~60~~ days after receipt of the notice
555 to submit comments to the proposed associate in arts specialized
556 transfer degree.

557 3. After the submission of comments pursuant to
558 subparagraph 2., the requesting Florida College System
559 institution to submit a proposal that, at a minimum, includes:

560 a. Evidence that the coursework for the associate in arts
561 specialized transfer degree includes demonstration of competency
562 in a foreign language pursuant to s. 1007.262 and demonstration
563 of civic literacy competency as provided in subsection (5).

564 b. Demonstration that all required coursework will count
565 toward the associate in arts degree or the baccalaureate degree.

566 c. An analysis of demand and unmet need for students
567 entering the specialized field of study at the baccalaureate
568 level.

569 d. Justification for the program length if it exceeds 60
570 credit hours, including references to the common prerequisite
571 manual or other requirements for the baccalaureate degree. This
572 includes documentation of alignment between the exit
573 requirements of a Florida College System institution and the
574 admissions requirements of a baccalaureate program at a state
575 university to which students would typically transfer.

576 e. Articulation agreements for graduates of the associate
577 in arts specialized transfer degree.

578 f. Responses to the comments received under subparagraph
579 2.

580 (15) A Florida College System institution or state
581 university may not impose an institution-wide graduation
582 requirement that includes a course that is in conflict with
583 paragraph (3)(c).

584 **Section 15. Subsections (1), (16), and (18) of section**
585 **1007.271, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:**

586 1007.271 Dual enrollment programs.—

587 (1) The dual enrollment program is the enrollment of an
588 eligible secondary student in this state or home education
589 student in this state in a postsecondary course creditable
590 toward high school completion and a career certificate or an
591 associate or baccalaureate degree. Postsecondary institutions
592 eligible to participate in the dual enrollment program are
593 Florida public postsecondary institutions and eligible not-for-
594 profit, independent colleges and universities pursuant to s.
595 1011.62(1)(i). A student who is enrolled in postsecondary
596 instruction that is not creditable toward a high school diploma
597 may not be classified as a dual enrollment student.

598 (16) Students who ~~meet the eligibility requirements of~~
599 ~~this section and who choose to~~ participate in dual enrollment
600 programs are exempt from the payment of registration, tuition,

601 and laboratory fees.

602 (18) School districts and postsecondary ~~Florida College~~
 603 ~~System~~ institutions must weigh dual enrollment courses pursuant
 604 to s. 1003.437 ~~the same as advanced placement, International~~
 605 ~~Baccalaureate, and Advanced International Certificate of~~
 606 ~~Education courses~~ when grade point averages are calculated. High
 607 school grade point averages must be calculated based on the high
 608 school credit earned by the student in each course. Alternative
 609 grade calculation systems, alternative grade weighting systems,
 610 and information regarding student education options that
 611 discriminate against dual enrollment courses are prohibited.

612 **Section 16. Paragraphs (a) and (b) of subsection (2) and**
 613 **subsection (3) of section 1008.47, Florida Statutes, are amended**
 614 **to read:**

615 1008.47 Postsecondary education institution
 616 accreditation.—

617 (2) ACCREDITATION.—

618 (a) ~~By September 1, 2022,~~ The Board of Governors or the
 619 State Board of Education, as applicable, shall identify and
 620 determine the accrediting agencies or associations best suited
 621 to serve as an accreditor for public postsecondary institutions.
 622 Such accrediting agencies or associations must be recognized by
 623 the database created and maintained by the United States
 624 Department of Education. Within 3 years ~~In the year~~ following
 625 reaffirmation or fifth-year review by its accrediting agencies

626 or associations, each public postsecondary institution must seek
627 and obtain accreditation from an accrediting agency or
628 association identified by the Board of Governors or State Board
629 of Education, respectively, before its next reaffirmation or
630 fifth-year review date. The requirements in this section are
631 limited to a one-time change in accreditation. The requirements
632 of this subsection are not applicable to those professional,
633 graduate, departmental, or certificate programs at public
634 postsecondary institutions that have specific accreditation
635 requirements or best practices, including, but not limited to,
636 law, pharmacy, engineering, or other similarly situated
637 educational programs.

638 (b) Once a public postsecondary institution is required to
639 seek and obtain accreditation from an agency or association
640 identified pursuant to paragraph (a), the institution shall seek
641 accreditation from an ~~a regional~~ accrediting agency or
642 association and provide quarterly reports of its progress to the
643 Board of Governors or State Board of Education, as applicable.
644 If each ~~regional~~ accreditation agency or association identified
645 pursuant to paragraph (a) has refused to grant candidacy status
646 to an institution, the institution must seek and obtain
647 accreditation from any accrediting agency or association that is
648 different from its current accrediting agency or association and
649 is recognized by the database created and maintained by the
650 United States Department of Education. If a public postsecondary

651 institution is not granted candidacy status before its next
 652 reaffirmation or fifth-year review date, the institution may
 653 remain with its current accrediting agency or association.

654 (3) PROHIBITION.—Notwithstanding any other provision of
 655 law, an accrediting agency or association, including
 656 programmatically accreditors, may not compel any public
 657 postsecondary institution to violate state law, and any adverse
 658 action upon the institution based upon the institution's
 659 compliance with state law constitutes a violation of this
 660 section that may be enforced through subsection (4), except to
 661 the extent that state law is preempted by a federal law that
 662 recognizes the necessity of the accreditation standard or
 663 requirement.

664 **Section 17. Paragraph (e) of subsection (1) of section**
 665 **1009.25, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:**

666 1009.25 Fee exemptions.—

667 (1) The following students are exempt from the payment of
 668 tuition and fees, including lab fees, at a school district that
 669 provides workforce education programs, Florida College System
 670 institution, or state university:

671 (e) A student who meets the definition of homeless
 672 children and youths in s. 725 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless
 673 Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. s. 11434a(2), as previously determined
 674 by a public school in the state. This includes a student who
 675 would otherwise meet the requirements of this paragraph, as

676 determined by a college or university, but for his or her
677 residence in college or university dormitory housing. The State
678 Board of Education may adopt rules and the Board of Governors
679 may adopt regulations regarding documentation and procedures to
680 implement this paragraph. Such rules and regulations must
681 consider documentation of a student's circumstance to be
682 adequate if such documentation meets the standards under 20
683 U.S.C. s. 1087uu-2(a). Any student who is determined to be a
684 homeless child or youth for a preceding award year is presumed
685 to be a homeless child or youth for each subsequent year unless
686 the student informs the institution that the student's
687 circumstances have changed or the institution has specific
688 conflicting information about the student's independence, and
689 has informed the student of this information. A distance
690 learning student residing out-of-state is ineligible for the
691 exemption in this paragraph.

692 **Section 18. Paragraph (a) of subsection (1) of section**
693 **1009.40, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:**

694 1009.40 General requirements for student eligibility for
695 state financial aid awards and tuition assistance grants.—

696 (1) (a) The general requirements for eligibility of
697 students for state financial aid awards and tuition assistance
698 grants consist of the following:

699 1. United States citizenship or lawful presence in the
700 United States.

701 ~~2.1.~~ Achievement of the academic requirements of and
702 acceptance at a state university or Florida College System
703 institution; a nursing diploma school approved by the Florida
704 Board of Nursing; a Florida college or university which is
705 accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the State
706 Board of Education; a Florida institution the credits of which
707 are acceptable for transfer to state universities; a career
708 center; or a private career institution accredited by an
709 accrediting agency recognized by the State Board of Education.

710 ~~3.2.~~ Residency in this state for no less than 1 year
711 preceding the award of aid or a tuition assistance grant for a
712 program established pursuant to s. 1009.50, s. 1009.505, s.
713 1009.51, s. 1009.52, s. 1009.521, s. 1009.53, s. 1009.60, s.
714 1009.62, s. 1009.72, s. 1009.73, s. 1009.75, s. 1009.77, s.
715 1009.89, or s. 1009.894. Residency in this state must be for
716 purposes other than to obtain an education. Resident status for
717 purposes of receiving state financial aid awards shall be
718 determined in the same manner as resident status for tuition
719 purposes pursuant to s. 1009.21.

720 ~~4.3.~~ Submission of certification attesting to the
721 accuracy, completeness, and correctness of information provided
722 to demonstrate a student's eligibility to receive state
723 financial aid awards or tuition assistance grants. Falsification
724 of such information shall result in the denial of a pending
725 application and revocation of an award or grant currently held

726 to the extent that no further payments shall be made.
 727 Additionally, students who knowingly make false statements in
 728 order to receive state financial aid awards or tuition
 729 assistance grants commit a misdemeanor of the second degree
 730 subject to the provisions of s. 837.06 and shall be required to
 731 return all state financial aid awards or tuition assistance
 732 grants wrongfully obtained.

733 **Section 19. Paragraph (a) of subsection (2) of section**
 734 **1009.895, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:**

735 1009.895 Open Door Grant Program.—

736 (2) ELIGIBILITY.—In order to be eligible for the program,
 737 a student must:

738 (a) Meet the requirements under s. 1009.40(1)(a)3. and 4.
 739 ~~s. 1009.40(1)(a)2. and 3.~~;

741 An institution may not impose additional criteria to determine a
 742 student's eligibility to receive a grant under this section.

743 **Section 20. Subsection (5) of section 1009.983, Florida**
 744 **Statutes, is amended to read:**

745 1009.983 Direct-support organization; authority.—

746 (5) The chair of the board or a designee who possesses
 747 knowledge, skill, and experience in the areas of accounting,
 748 risk management, or investment management shall serve as a
 749 director of the direct-support organization. The chair and the
 750 executive director of the board shall jointly name, at a

751 minimum, four other individuals to serve as directors of the
752 organization.

753 **Section 21. Paragraph (d) of subsection (3) of section**
754 **1009.986, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:**

755 1009.986 Florida ABLE program.—

756 (3) DIRECT-SUPPORT ORGANIZATION; FLORIDA ABLE, INC.—

757 (d)1. The board of directors of Florida ABLE, Inc., shall
758 consist of:

759 a. The chair of the Florida Prepaid College Board, or a
760 his or her designee who possesses knowledge, skill, and
761 experience in the areas of accounting, risk management, or
762 investment management.

763 b. Up to three individuals who possess knowledge, skill,
764 and experience in the areas of accounting, risk management, or
765 investment management, one of whom may be a current member of
766 the Florida Prepaid College Board, who shall be appointed by the
767 Florida Prepaid College Board.

768 c. One individual who possesses knowledge, skill, and
769 experience in the areas of accounting, risk management, or
770 investment management, who shall be appointed by the Governor.

771 d. Two individuals who are advocates of persons with
772 disabilities, one of whom shall be appointed by the President of
773 the Senate and one of whom shall be appointed by the Speaker of
774 the House of Representatives. At least one of the individuals
775 appointed under this sub-subparagraph must be an advocate of

776 persons with developmental disabilities, as that term is defined
777 in s. 393.063.

778 2.a. The term of the appointees under sub-subparagraph
779 1.b. shall be up to 3 years as determined by the Florida Prepaid
780 College Board. Such appointees may be reappointed.

781 b. The term of the appointees under sub-subparagraphs 1.c.
782 and d. shall be 3 years. Such appointees may be reappointed.

783 3. Unless authorized by the board of directors of Florida
784 ABLE, Inc., an individual director has no authority to control
785 or direct the operations of Florida ABLE, Inc., or the actions
786 of its officers and employees.

787 4. The board of directors of Florida ABLE, Inc.:

788 a. Shall meet at least quarterly and at other times upon
789 the call of the chair.

790 b. May use any method of telecommunications to conduct, or
791 establish a quorum at, its meetings or the meetings of a
792 subcommittee or other subdivision if the public is given proper
793 notice of the telecommunications meeting and provided reasonable
794 access to observe and, if appropriate, to participate.

795 c. Shall annually elect a board member to serve as chair.

796 5. A majority of the total current membership of the board
797 of directors of Florida ABLE, Inc., constitutes a quorum of the
798 board.

799 6. Members of the board of directors of Florida ABLE,
800 Inc., and the board's subcommittees or other subdivisions shall

801 | serve without compensation; however, the members may be
 802 | reimbursed for reasonable, necessary, and actual travel expenses
 803 | pursuant to s. 112.061.

804 | **Section 22. Paragraphs (h) and (i) of subsection (17) of**
 805 | **section 1011.62, Florida Statutes, are redesignated as**
 806 | **paragraphs (i) and (j), respectively, and a new paragraph (h) is**
 807 | **added to that subsection, to read:**

808 | 1011.62 Funds for operation of schools.—If the annual
 809 | allocation from the Florida Education Finance Program to each
 810 | district for operation of schools is not determined in the
 811 | annual appropriations act or the substantive bill implementing
 812 | the annual appropriations act, it shall be determined as
 813 | follows:

814 | (17) ACADEMIC ACCELERATION OPTIONS SUPPLEMENT.—The
 815 | academic acceleration options supplement is created to assist
 816 | school districts in providing academic acceleration options,
 817 | career-themed courses, and courses that lead to digital tool
 818 | certificates and industry certifications for prekindergarten
 819 | through grade 12 students and shall be allocated annually in the
 820 | General Appropriations Act.

821 | (h) Calculation of additional full-time equivalent
 822 | membership based on Florida advanced courses and tests scores of
 823 | students.—A value of 0.16 full-time equivalent student
 824 | membership shall be calculated for each student in a Florida
 825 | advanced course who achieves a minimum score on an assessment

826 identified by the Department of Education pursuant to s.
827 1007.27(2) and added to the total full-time equivalent student
828 membership in basic programs for grades 9 through 12 in the
829 subsequent fiscal year. Each district shall allocate at least 80
830 percent of the funds provided to the district for advanced
831 course instruction, in accordance with this paragraph, to the
832 high school that generates the funds. The school district shall
833 distribute to each classroom teacher who provided advanced
834 course instruction:

835 1. A bonus in the amount of \$50 for each student taught by
836 the Florida advanced course teacher in each Florida advanced
837 course who achieves a minimum score on an assessment identified
838 by the Department of Education pursuant to s. 1007.27(2).

839 2. An additional bonus of \$500 to each Florida advanced
840 course teacher in a school designated with a grade of "D" or "F"
841 who has at least one student who achieves a minimum score on an
842 assessment identified by the Department of Education pursuant to
843 s. 1007.27(2), regardless of the number of classes taught or of
844 the number of students who achieve a minimum score on an
845 assessment identified by the Department of Education pursuant to
846 s. 1007.27(2).

847 **Section 23.** This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.