

Summary of Education Code Changes Approved Within House Bill 7087 (A++)

A++ Reading Initiatives:

JUST READ, FLORIDA! OFFICE

Creates the Just Read, Florida! (JRF) Office in statute within DOE and provides that the office is fully accountable to the Commissioner.

Responsibilities of the Office include:

- Training reading coaches.
- Training of K-12 teachers and principals on effective content-area-specific reading strategies.
- Providing information and strategies to parents in reading in the content area.
- Providing technical assistance to districts in developing and implementing district plans using the reading allocation in the FEFP as well as annually reviewing and approving each plan.
- Periodically reviewing the Sunshine State Standards for reading at all grade levels.
- Periodically reviewing teacher certification examinations for alignment with scientifically based reading research.
- Working with teacher preparation programs to ensure alignment with research-based reading instructional strategies, including content area reading.

FLORIDA CENTER FOR READING RESEARCH in STATUTE

Codifies into statute the Florida Center for Reading Research (FCRR) at Florida State University. The FCRR must establish two outreach centers; one at a central Florida community college and one at a south Florida state university. The FCRR's responsibilities include:

- Providing technical assistance and support to all schools regarding research-based reading.
- Conducting applied research to inform Florida policy and practice.
- Conducting basic research on reading, reading growth, reading assessment, and reading instruction.
- Disseminating information about research-based practices for programs for students in preschool through grade 12.
- Collecting, managing, and reporting on assessment information from screening, progress monitoring, and outcome assessments through the Florida Progress Monitoring and Reporting Network (PMRN).

READING ALLOCATION IN FEFP

Creates a research-based reading instruction allocation in the FEFP. Requires districts to write plans to provide comprehensive reading instruction to students in Kindergarten through grade 12. Districts must submit plans to the JRF Office for review before May 1 annually, and requires the JRF Office to approve each district's reading plan. If a district and the JRF Office cannot agree on the contents of the reading plan, the district can appeal to the State Board of Education. DOE may withhold funds if a district is not using its allocation of reading FEFP funds to implement its approved plan.

READING CREDENTIAL

Requires the State Board of Education to adopt rules to give part-time and full-time non-degreed teachers of career programs the opportunity to earn a reading credential equivalent to a content-area-specific reading endorsement.

A++ Secondary School Initiatives:

MIDDLE SCHOOL PROMOTION AND REQUIREMENTS

Provides new middle school promotion requirements to include:

- 3 middle school or higher, year-long courses in English;
- 3 middle school or higher, year-long courses in Mathematics;
- 3 middle school or higher, year-long courses in science;
- 3 middle school or higher, year-long courses in social studies; and
- 1 course in career and education planning to be completed in 7th or 8th grade, which can be a stand-alone course or instruction integrated into an existing course or courses.

Requires each middle school to offer at least one high-school-level mathematics course for which students may earn high school credit.

These new requirements will take effect for students entering 6th grade in 2006-07. The bill further requires middle schools to hold a parent meeting in the evening or weekend to inform parents about the school's curriculum and activities. Requires middle school students who score at Level 1 on FCAT Reading to be enrolled in and complete an intensive reading course the following year, and provides that placement of Level 2 readers in either an intensive reading course or a content area course in which reading strategies are delivered shall be determined by diagnosis of reading needs. Requires the department to provide guidance on appropriate strategies for diagnosing and meeting the varying instructional needs of students reading below grade level. Reading courses shall be designed and offered pursuant to the comprehensive reading plan required by s. 1011.62(8). Also requires middle school students scoring at Level 1 or Level 2 on FCAT Mathematics to receive remediation the following year.

HISTORY INSTRUCTION

Revises certain sections of statute related to instruction in American Government and History (s. 1003.43, F.S.) to require additional components for history instruction.

STATEWIDE GRADING SCALE

Requires all public school students in grades 6-12 to use the same grading system and interpretation of letter grades that is currently in effect for high school students (A= 90-100%, B= 80-89%, C= 70-79%, D= 60-69%, F= 0-59%).

SECONDARY SCHOOL REDESIGN

Provides guiding principles to be used in the annual preparation of each secondary school's improvement plan required by s. 1001.42(16), F.S., beginning in 2007-08.

Requires districts to use the guiding principles to establish policies addressing issues such as:

- placing and promoting students from out of state or country;
- students beyond 8th grade not having developed a personalized academic and career plan;
- district based requirements;
- the provision of applied, integrated, and combined courses that provide flexibility and are creative in meeting individual learning needs;
- credit recovery courses; and
- intensive reading and mathematics intervention courses.

Requires the DOE to annually provide to the Legislature a longitudinal analysis of the success of the secondary school reform effort.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION CREDITS (Section 1003.428, F.S.)

The bill creates new general requirements for high school graduation beginning with newly enrolled 9th grade students in 2007-2008. These new high school graduation requirements are consistent with the recommendations of the High School Reform Task Force. Beginning with students entering their first year of high school in the 2007-2008 school year, a student must successfully complete at least 24 credits, an International Baccalaureate curriculum, or an Advanced International Certificate of Education curriculum to graduate.

The 24 credits must be earned as follows:

- 1) 16 core curriculum credits:
 - 4 credits in English;
 - 4 credits in mathematics, one of which must be Algebra I, its equivalent, or a course higher than Algebra I;
 - 3 credits in science, two of which must have a laboratory component;
 - 3 credits in social studies (1 credit in American history; 1 credit in world history; ½ credit in economics and ½ credit in American government);
 - 1 credit in fine arts; and
 - 1 credit in physical education & health.
- 2) 8 credits in a major, minor, or electives; selected by the student as a part of the personalized education plan:
 - 4 credits in a major area of interest. Majors, which will be developed by districts and approved by the Commissioner, can be in a career and technical program, fine and performing arts, or in an academic content area.
 - 4 credits in elective courses, which may be combined to allow for a second major area of interest, a minor area of interest (3 credits), individual elective courses, intensive reading or mathematics intervention courses, or credit recovery courses.

Requires high school students who score at Level 1 on FCAT Reading to be enrolled in and complete an intensive reading course the following year, and provides that placement of Level 2 readers in either an intensive reading course or a content area course in which reading strategies are delivered shall be determined by diagnosis of reading needs. Requires the department to provide guidance on appropriate strategies for diagnosing and meeting the varying instructional needs of students reading below grade level. Reading courses shall be designed and offered pursuant to the comprehensive reading plan required by s. 1011.62(8). Requires students who score at Level 1 or Level 2 in FCAT Mathematics to receive remediation the following year.

ACCELERATED HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Revises accelerated high school graduation options for students who enter grade 9 in the 2006-2007 school year and thereafter:

- Requires that six of the 18 credits must be earned from advanced placement, International Baccalaureate, dual enrollment, or Advanced International Certificate of Education courses. Honors courses will no longer be accepted as part of the six hours.
- Additionally, the grade point average required to participate in the 18 credit college preparatory track will be 3.5 rather than 3.0.

COURSE WEIGHTING FOR GPA CALCULATION AND DUAL ENROLLMENT

Revises GPA weighting for dual enrollment courses by requiring that all dual enrollment courses receive the same weight as advanced placement, International Baccalaureate, and Advanced International Certificate of Education courses when grade point averages are calculated. This GPA weighting for dual enrollment courses applies to students entering grade 9 in the 2006-2007 school year and thereafter.

Provides that district school boards shall consider strategies and programs to meet the demand for dual enrollment by including access to dual enrollment on the high school campus whenever possible. It also stipulates that alternative grade calculation, weighting systems, or information regarding student education options which discriminate against dual enrollment courses are prohibited.

EXIT INTERVIEWS/DROPOUT PREVENTION

Requires the student's guidance counselor or other school personnel to conduct an exit interview with the student to determine the reasons for the student's decision to drop out of school and what actions could be taken to keep the student in school. The student must be informed of opportunities to continue his or her education in a different environment, including, but not limited to, adult education and GED test preparation. Additionally, the student must complete a survey in the format prescribed by the DOE to provide data on student reasons for terminating enrollment and actions taken by schools to keep students enrolled.

A++ Principal and Teacher Initiatives:

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Requires that professional development plans established by district school boards incorporate school improvement plans and are aligned with principal leadership training as a part of the plan.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

Requires the DOE, public postsecondary educational institutions, public school districts, public schools, state education foundations, consortia, and professional organizations in Florida to work collaboratively to establish a coordinated system of professional development to, among other things, enhance classroom instructional strategies that promote rigor and relevance throughout the curriculum.

Additionally, the bill:

- Provides that activities designed for professional development systems must support and increase the success of educators through collaboratively developed school improvement plans.
- Requires the DOE to disseminate to the school community research-based professional development methods and programs that have demonstrated success in meeting identified student needs.
- Requires each school district to consult with teachers, teacher-educators in community colleges and state universities, business and community representatives, local education foundations, consortia and professional organizations in developing its professional development system.

DIFFERENTIATED PAY

Requires that, beginning with the 2007-2008 school year, each district school board shall adopt a salary schedule with a differentiated pay policy for both instructional personnel and school-based administrators. Provides that the salary schedule is subject to collective bargaining and must allow differentiated pay based upon factors determined by the school district, including, but not limited to, additional responsibilities, school demographics, critical shortage areas, and level of job performance difficulties. Provides that a district school board may not sign a collective bargaining agreement that precludes the school district from providing sufficient incentives to meet this requirement.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Requires DOE to annually post links to each school district's collective bargaining contracts and the salary and benefits of the personnel or officers of any educator association that were paid by the school district. Requires school districts to submit this information to DOE in a manner prescribed by the department.

PAPER REDUCTION

Implements initiatives designed to reduce the paperwork burden on the state's teachers and other school-based and district-based employees. The initiatives are consistent with the recommendations of the Paper Reduction Task Force. The initiatives include:

- Requiring each district to appoint a classroom teacher as a district representative to speak on behalf of teachers regarding paperwork reduction. Each district representative must report district findings annually to the State Board of Education. The State Board will compile responses and annually provide recommendations to the Governor and Legislature.
- Streamlining information that districts are required to include in school improvement plans.
- Replacing academic improvement plans with progress monitoring plans.
- Repealing the Middle Grades Reform Act to eliminate paperwork required by the Rigorous Reading Requirement and the Personalized Middle School Success Plan.

TEAM TEACHING (CO-TEACHING)

The bill provides that each teacher assigned to a classroom must be used in the calculation for compliance with the constitutional class size requirements and provides criteria for which team-teaching is allowable in individual classrooms.

Restrictions on the use of team-teaching strategies implemented on or after July 1, 2005, include:

- Requiring reasonable limits on the number of students in a classroom;
- Requiring at least one member of the team to have at least 3 years of teaching experience;
- Requiring at least one member of the team to be teaching in their field; and
- Requiring teachers who are team-teaching to be trained in team-teaching methods within 1 year after assignment.

WILLIAM CECIL GOLDEN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

Establishes the William Cecil Golden Professional Development Program for School Leaders to provide high standards and sustained support for principals as instructional leaders. The program will consist of a collaborative network of state and national leadership organizations that shall support the human-resource development needs of principals, principal leadership teams, and candidates for principal leadership positions using the framework of leadership standards adopted by the State Board of Education, the Southern Regional Education Board, and the National Staff Development Council.

TEACHER ASSIGNMENTS (s. 1012.2315, F.S.)

Provides that school districts may not assign a higher percentage than the school district average of first-time teachers, temporarily certified teachers, teachers in need of improvement, or out-of-field teachers to schools with above the district average of minority and economically disadvantaged students or schools that are graded D or F. District school boards are authorized to provide salary incentives to meet this requirement and may not sign a collective bargaining agreement that precludes sufficient incentives to meet the requirement.

Schools graded D or F must annually report their teacher retention rates, including the reasons for leaving listed by each teacher who left the school.

A++ Workforce/Career Initiatives:

CAREER AND PROFESSIONAL ACADEMIES

Creates career and professional academies as research-based programs that integrate a rigorous academic curriculum with an industry-driven career curriculum. Defines the allowable types of career and professional academies as a school-within-a-school model or a total school configuration model. Each career and professional academy must:

- Provide a rigorous standards-based academic curriculum integrated with a career curriculum;
- Include one or more partnerships with postsecondary institutions, businesses, industry, employers, economic development organizations, or other partners;
- Provide student advisement, including parent participation and coordination with middle schools to provide career exploration and education planning;
- Provide career education certification on the high school diploma;
- Provide instruction in high growth, high demand, and high paying careers;
- Deliver academic content including intensive reading and math as required; and
- Provide instruction in workplace readiness skills and provide opportunities for students to obtain the Florida Ready to Work Certification.

READY TO WORK CERTIFICATION

Creates the Florida Ready to Work Certification Program to enhance the workplace skills of Florida's students to better prepare them for successful employment in a specific occupation. The program may be conducted in public middle and high schools, community colleges, technical centers, one-stop career centers, vocational rehabilitation centers, and Department of Juvenile Justice facilities. The program is composed of:

- A comprehensive identification of workplace skills for each occupation identified for inclusion by the Agency for Workforce Innovation and DOE;
- A pre-assessment of the students on the specific workplace skills identified for that occupation;
- A web-based, customized instructional program limited to those skills in which the student is not proficient; and
- A certificate and portfolio to students upon successful completion.

A++ Curriculum and Instruction Initiatives:

SUNSHINE STATE STANDARDS REVISIONS

Requires the State Board of Education to establish a schedule to facilitate the periodic review of the standards to ensure adequate rigor, relevance, logical student progression, and integration of reading, writing, and mathematics across all subject areas. It also requires public input and participation. A report, including the proposed revisions, must be annually submitted no later than January 1, to the Governor, President of the Senate, and Speaker of the House.

COMPLETE EDUCATION

Requires the district school board to prescribe and adopt standards and policies to provide each student with a complete education program, including language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, health, physical education, foreign languages, and the arts, as defined by the Sunshine State Standards. The standards and policies must emphasize integration and reinforcement of reading, writing, and mathematics skills across all subjects, including career awareness, career exploration, and career and technical education.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS – STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Requires each superintendent to annually certify by July 1 to the Commissioner, prior to release of instructional materials funds, that the district school board has approved a comprehensive staff

development plan and verify that training was provided and instructional materials are being implemented as designed.

A++ School Improvement Initiatives:

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANS

Makes changes to the statutory requirements for school improvement plans, particularly related to those schools that earn a school grade of “C” or below. Replaces the list of plan components to focus the plan on student achievement and academic-related matters. For schools that earn a grade of “C” or below, or are required to have a school improvement plan under federal law, the plan must also include professional development, continuous use of disaggregated data, ongoing progress monitoring, and alternative instructional delivery methods.

PROGRESS MONITORING PLANS

Requires schools to develop and implement a progress monitoring plan for each student that fails to meet certain performance levels, including scoring below Level 3 in FCAT Reading or Mathematics. The school must develop the plan in consultation with the student’s parents. A progress monitoring plan is intended to provide flexibility for school districts and the school in meeting the academic needs of the student and to reduce paperwork. A student who is not meeting the school district or state requirements for proficiency in reading and math shall be covered by one of the following plans to target instruction and identify ways to improve his or her academic achievement:

- A federally required student plan such as an individual education plan (IEP);
- A school wide system of progress monitoring for all students; or
- An individual progress monitoring plan.

The plan chosen must be designed to assist the student or the school in meeting the state and district expectations for proficiency. The progress monitoring plan replaces the student academic improvement plan (AIP).

REQUIREMENT FOR REMEDIATION PROGRAMS

Permits district school boards to require low-performing students to attend remediation programs held before or after regular school hours or during the summer if transportation is provided.

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT TEAMS

Requires the Commissioner to assign a community assessment team to every school district or governing board with a school graded “F,” to review the school’s performance data and determine causes for the low performance. Requires that representatives of local governments be appointed to each community assessment team.

A++ Exceptional Student Education Initiatives:

SPEECH LANGUAGE AS A RELATED SERVICE

Codifies in law that speech and language pathology services are included as a related service available for exceptional students.

AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE

Extends the date for American Sign Language teachers to be certified by the DOE from January 1, 2008 to July 1, 2009. Also removes the incorrect reference to the Florida American Sign Language Teachers’ Association (FASLTA).

CLASSROOM ACCOMMODATIONS AND FCAT WAIVER

Provides that accommodations that are not allowable on the FCAT may be used in the classroom if

included on the student's IEP. Allows that students using instructional accommodations in the classroom that are not allowable on the FCAT may have the FCAT requirement waived for graduation.

ESE RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES

Prohibits non-Florida-resident ESE students with disabilities from being reported for FTE funding through the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP). Provides that the cost of instruction, facilities, and services for non-Florida-resident ESE students shall be provided by the placing authority in the student's state of residence (e.g., public school entity, parent, other placing authority). Provides that the residential facility in which the student is placed in Florida, not the school district, is responsible for billing and collecting payment from the placing authority in the home state. Requires DOE to develop a process for districts to determine residency of students with disabilities in residential facilities and a mechanism for billing and collecting. This is effective for the 2006-07 school year.

A++ School Grading Initiatives:

SCHOOL REPORT CARDS

Requires that DOE develop a school report card to be delivered to parents, including those whose students are enrolled in an alternative school. The report card must include the school grade, information regarding school improvement, an explanation of school improvement as measured under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), and indicators on return on investment.

SCHOOL GRADES

The bill requires that learning gains for students seeking a special diploma, as measured by an alternate assessment tool, must be included in calculating school grades not later than the 2009-2010 school year.

The bill requires that, beginning with the 2005-2006 school year, the achievement scores and learning gains of certain students attending alternative schools that provide dropout-prevention and academic-intervention services shall be included in student assessment data used in the calculation of the home school's grade. The bill defines "home school" as the school the student was attending when assigned to an alternative school.

The bill also changes statutory terminology to reflect current usage by replacing the term "performance grade category" with "school grades."

SCHOOL GRADES - FEEDER PATTERNS

The bill provides that a school that serves any combination of students in grades K-3 which does not receive a school grade because its students are not tested and included in the school grading system, will receive the school grade designation of the school feeder pattern identified by the DOE and verified by the school district. A school feeder pattern exists if at least 60 percent of the students in the school are scheduled to be assigned to the graded school.

ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS - SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT RATING

Requires alternative schools that provide dropout-prevention and academic intervention services to receive one of the following school-improvement ratings:

- "Improving" means schools with students making more academic progress than when the students were served in their home schools.
- "Maintaining" means schools with students making progress equivalent to the progress made when the students were served in their home schools.

- "Declining" means schools with students making less academic progress than when the students were served in their home schools.

The school-improvement rating must be based on a comparison of student performance data for the current year and previous year. Provides that schools that improve at least one level or maintain an "improving" rating are eligible for school recognition awards. Requires the Commissioner to prepare an annual report on the performance of each school receiving a school-improvement rating.

The bill also provides that alternative schools may choose to receive a school grade in lieu of a school-improvement rating. If an alternative school chooses to receive a school grade rather than a school improvement rating, the alternative school's performance data will not be included in the home school's school grade calculation. For 2005-06, school districts can apply for these ratings from the DOE. However, the DOE will develop rules for the 2006-07 school year.

SECONDARY SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT AWARD PROGRAM

Requires the Commissioner to create and implement the Secondary School Improvement Award Program to reward secondary schools that demonstrate continuous student academic improvement and show the greatest gains in student academic achievement in reading and math.

LONGITUDINAL STUDENT LEARNING DATA

Requires DOE to annually provide to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives a report regarding longitudinal studies of student learning. The report will include specified longitudinal data relating to student performance on the FCAT, efforts to close the achievement gap, and performance on the norm-referenced component of the FCAT.

A++ Quality Improvement Initiatives:

DOE STRUCTURE

Creates the Division of Accountability, Research, and Measurement in statute within DOE.

CONCORDANT FCAT SCORES

Requires the State Board of Education to analyze widely used high school achievement tests and conduct concordance studies to determine scores that are equivalent to those required on the FCAT for high school graduation. Tests to be analyzed for concordance include, but are not limited to, the Preliminary SAT, the pre-ACT, the SAT, and the ACT. Authorizes additional uses for high school achievement test scores if found to be concordant, including college placement and the award of Bright Futures Scholarships.

ALTERNATE ASSESSMENTS

Requires district school boards to assess students following enrollment in summer academies. The State Board of Education must approve the alternative standardized assessment to be used.

Requires the Department of Education to develop or select and implement an alternate assessment tool that accurately measures the skills and competencies in the Sunshine State Standards for students with disabilities.

FCAT RETAKES

Requires the Commissioner to document the procedures used to ensure that the versions of FCAT that are taken by students retaking the grade 10 FCAT are equally as challenging and difficult as the tests taken by students in grade 10 which contain performance tasks.

END-OF-COURSE ASSESSMENTS

Requires the Commissioner to study the cost and student-achievement impact of establishing secondary school end-of-course assessments and to report the findings to the Legislature prior to implementation.

ELECTRONIC INDIVIDUAL EDUCATIONAL PLANS (IEPs) FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Requires DOE to develop and have an operating electronic IEP system in place for potential statewide use no later than July 1, 2007. The statewide system must be developed collaboratively with districts, particularly those districts currently developing or operating an electronic IEP system.

DATA QUALITY

Specifies certain requirements to improve the quality of data used to measure student performance.

- Authorizes the Commissioner to initiate and maintain strategies to improve data quality and timeliness.
- Requires that all data collected by state universities be integrated into the K-20 Data Warehouse.
- Requires DOE to establish a uniform format for reporting public school student progression data, and to compile the data into an annual report.
- Provides that the Commissioner is the sole custodian of the K-20 Data Warehouse.

PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

Requires annual public disclosure by school districts of the high school graduation rate calculated without GED tests and disaggregated by student ethnicity.

NOMINATIONS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL PERSONNEL

Extends the time for districts to act on nominations to fill vacancies within the district to three weeks after the receipt of FCAT scores and data, including school grades, or June 30, whichever comes later.

A++ School Calendar Initiatives:

SCHOOL START DATE

Beginning with the 2007-2008 school year and each year thereafter, the opening date for schools may not be earlier than 14 days before Labor Day.

A++ Federal Plans:

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND REAUTHORIZATION PLAN

Requires the Commissioner to submit the proposed state plan for compliance with the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 to the Legislature prior to submission to the U.S. Department of Education when the Act is reauthorized in 2007. Legislative leaders will appoint a select committee to review the proposed plan.