

1 A bill to be entitled

2 An act relating to improving graduation rates; amending s.  
 3 1003.21, F.S.; revising provisions relating to school  
 4 district responsibilities on exit interviews when  
 5 terminating school enrollment; creating s. 1003.4935,  
 6 F.S.; establishing the Transition Success Program;  
 7 providing requirements and suggested practices; requiring  
 8 the Department of Education to develop criteria and  
 9 standards for Transition Success Programs; amending s.  
 10 1008.34, F.S.; adding graduation rate and dropout rate to  
 11 the evaluation criteria for school grades for certain  
 12 schools; amending s. 1008.36, F.S.; including Transition  
 13 Success Programs as potential recipients of such awards;  
 14 providing an effective date.

15  
 16 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

17  
 18 Section 1. Paragraph (c) of subsection (1) of section  
 19 1003.21, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

20 1003.21 School attendance.--

21 (1)

22 (c) A student who attains the age of 16 years during the  
 23 school year is not subject to compulsory school attendance beyond  
 24 the date upon which he or she attains that age if the student  
 25 files a formal declaration of intent to terminate school  
 26 enrollment with the district school board. Public school students  
 27 who have attained the age of 16 years and who have not graduated  
 28 are subject to compulsory school attendance until the formal  
 29 declaration of intent is filed with the district school board.

30 The declaration must acknowledge that terminating school  
 31 enrollment is likely to reduce the student's earning potential  
 32 and must be signed by the student and the student's parent. The  
 33 school district must notify the student's parent of receipt of  
 34 the student's declaration of intent to terminate school  
 35 enrollment. The student's guidance counselor or other school  
 36 personnel must conduct an exit interview with the student to  
 37 determine the reasons for the student's decision to terminate  
 38 school enrollment and actions that could be taken to keep the  
 39 student in school. The student must be informed of opportunities  
 40 to continue his or her education in a different environment,  
 41 including, but not limited to, participation in a vocational  
 42 program, job training program, ready to work certification  
 43 program under s. 1004.99, adult education, or ~~and~~ GED test  
 44 preparation. The school district shall maintain records on the  
 45 exit interview, including the specific recommendations made for  
 46 participation in available educational programs and the student's  
 47 actions in response to the recommendations. Additionally, the  
 48 student must complete a survey in a format prescribed by the  
 49 Department of Education to provide data on student reasons for  
 50 seeking to terminate ~~terminating~~ enrollment and actions taken by  
 51 schools to keep students enrolled.

52 Section 2. Section 1003.4935, Florida Statutes, is created  
 53 to read:

54 1003.4935 Transition Success Program.--

55 (1) The Transition Success Program is created to ease the  
 56 transition from elementary school to middle school and middle  
 57 school to high school, to reduce dropout rates caused by the  
 58 difficulty in transition, and to provide students with extensive

59 self-awareness opportunities concerning career goals and  
 60 interests.

61 (2) A Transition Success Program may be a school-within-a-  
 62 school, pursuant to 1003.02(4), that is organized to have small  
 63 teams of interdisciplinary teachers who share the same group of  
 64 students, have flexible scheduling with common planning time, and  
 65 use team planning concepts and curricular and instructional  
 66 innovation working with groups of students in grades 6-9.

67 (3) Each Transition Success Program must:

68 (a) Require close monitoring of student attendance and  
 69 behavior and provide early intervention and support for students  
 70 at risk of dropping out.

71 (b) Require that each student receive intensive career  
 72 exploration and counseling.

73 (c) Provide detailed information to students regarding the  
 74 opportunities available in the district for major areas of  
 75 interest and career academies.

76 (4) By the 2008-2009 school year, the department shall  
 77 develop criteria and standards for the establishment of  
 78 Transition Success Programs in public schools where appropriate,  
 79 design model programs, and provide technical assistance to school  
 80 districts and public schools establishing Transition Success  
 81 Programs.

82 Section 3. Paragraph (a) of subsection (3) of section  
 83 1008.34, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

84 1008.34 School grading system; school report cards;  
 85 district grade.--

86 (3) DESIGNATION OF SCHOOL GRADES.--Each school that has  
 87 students who are tested and included in the school grading

88 system, except an alternative school that receives a school  
89 improvement rating pursuant to s. 1008.341, shall receive a  
90 school grade; however, an alternative school may choose to  
91 receive a school grade under this section in lieu of a school  
92 improvement rating. Additionally, a school that serves any  
93 combination of students in kindergarten through grade 3 which  
94 does not receive a school grade because its students are not  
95 tested and included in the school grading system shall receive  
96 the school grade designation of a K-3 feeder pattern school  
97 identified by the Department of Education and verified by the  
98 school district. A school feeder pattern exists if at least 60  
99 percent of the students in the school serving a combination of  
100 students in kindergarten through grade 3 are scheduled to be  
101 assigned to the graded school. School grades itemized in  
102 subsection (2) shall be based on the following:

103 (a) Criteria.--A school's grade shall be based on a  
104 combination of:

105 1. Student achievement scores, including achievement scores  
106 for students seeking a special diploma.

107 2. Student learning gains as measured by annual FCAT  
108 assessments in grades 3 through 10; learning gains for students  
109 seeking a special diploma, as measured by an alternate assessment  
110 tool, shall be included not later than the 2009-2010 school year.

111 3. Improvement of the lowest 25th percentile of students in  
112 the school in reading, math, or writing on the FCAT, unless these  
113 students are exhibiting satisfactory performance.

114 4. For schools that include grade 9 or higher, a  
115 satisfactory or measured rising graduation rate and a

116 satisfactory or measured decreasing dropout rate as defined by  
 117 State Board of Education rule.

118  
 119 The State Board of Education shall adopt appropriate criteria for  
 120 each school grade. The criteria must also give added weight to  
 121 student achievement in reading. Schools designated with a grade  
 122 of "C," making satisfactory progress, shall be required to  
 123 demonstrate that adequate progress has been made by students in  
 124 the school who are in the lowest 25th percentile in reading,  
 125 math, or writing on the FCAT, including Florida Writes, unless  
 126 these students are exhibiting satisfactory performance.

127 Section 4. Subsection (3) of section 1008.36, Florida  
 128 Statutes is amended to read:

129 1008.36 Florida School Recognition Program.--

130 (3) All public schools, including charter schools, that  
 131 receive a school grade pursuant to s. 1008.34 are eligible to  
 132 participate in the program. Additionally, a Transition Success  
 133 Program that operates as a school-within-a-school and meets the  
 134 requirements of this section may be eligible for an award even if  
 135 the school within which the program is operated does not qualify  
 136 for an award.

137  
 138 Notwithstanding statutory provisions to the contrary, incentive  
 139 awards are not subject to collective bargaining.

140 Section 5. This act shall take effect July 1, 2007.