

1                   A bill to be entitled  
2           An act relating to postsecondary options for students  
3           with disabilities; creating s. 1004.6501, F.S.;  
4           providing a short title; providing purposes and  
5           legislative intent; defining terms; establishing the  
6           Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities;  
7           providing center duties and responsibilities;  
8           providing for Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive  
9           Transition Programs at eligible institutions;  
10          requiring the center to oversee the programs;  
11          providing for application, application submission  
12          deadlines, and approval and renewal process for the  
13          programs; requiring certain information to be included  
14          on the application; requiring the programs to provide  
15          certain notification and to submit an annual report;  
16          providing student eligibility for program admittance;  
17          requiring the center to provide a report to the  
18          Governor, Legislature, Chancellor of the State  
19          University System, and Commissioner of Education and  
20          to provide certain recommendations to the Legislature;  
21          providing for rulemaking; repealing s. 19, chapter  
22          2014-184, Laws of Florida; abrogating the scheduled  
23          repeal of s. 1003.438, F.S., relating to special high  
24          school graduation requirements for certain exceptional  
25          students; providing an effective date.  
26

27 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

28  
 29 Section 1. Section 1004.6501, Florida Statutes, is created  
 30 to read:

31 1004.6501 Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition  
 32 Program and Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities.-

33 (1) SHORT TITLE.-This section shall be known and may be  
 34 cited as the "Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition  
 35 Program Act."

36 (2) PURPOSE AND LEGISLATIVE INTENT.-The purpose of this  
 37 section is to increase independent living, inclusive and  
 38 successful experiential postsecondary education, and employment  
 39 opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities  
 40 through degree, certificate, and nondegree programs and to  
 41 establish statewide coordination of the dissemination of  
 42 information regarding programs and services for students with  
 43 disabilities. It is the intent of the Legislature that students  
 44 with intellectual disabilities and students with disabilities be  
 45 provided the opportunity to obtain important postsecondary  
 46 education credentials and participate in meaningful campus  
 47 experiences.

48 (3) DEFINITIONS.-As used in this section, the term:

49 (a) "Center" means the Florida Center for Students with  
 50 Unique Abilities.

51 (b) "Director" means the director of the center.

52 (c) "Eligible institution" means a state university, a

53 Florida College System institution, a career center, a charter  
 54 technical career center, or an independent college or university  
 55 that is eligible to participate in the William L. Boyd, IV,  
 56 Florida Resident Access Grant Program.

57 (d) "FPCTP" means a Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive  
 58 Transition Program that is approved pursuant to subsection (5)  
 59 and offered by an eligible institution.

60 (e) "Transitional student" means a student who is at least  
 61 18 but not older than 26 years of age who meets the eligibility  
 62 requirements of paragraph (5) (e).

63 (4) FLORIDA CENTER FOR STUDENTS WITH UNIQUE ABILITIES.—  
 64 There is established within the University of Central Florida  
 65 the Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities. The  
 66 center shall:

67 (a) Disseminate information to students with disabilities  
 68 and their parents, which must include, but is not limited to,  
 69 information relating to:

70 1. Education programs, services, and resources that are  
 71 available at eligible institutions.

72 2. Supports, accommodations, technical assistance, and  
 73 training programs provided by eligible institutions, the  
 74 advisory council established under s. 383.141, and regional  
 75 autism centers established under s. 1004.55.

76 3. Mentoring, networking, and employment opportunities.

77 (b) Coordinate, facilitate, and oversee the statewide  
 78 implementation of this section, including, but not limited to,

79 creating the application, deadlines for the submission of an  
 80 application, and the approval and renewal process for an FPCTP  
 81 under subsection (5).

82 (c) Consult and collaborate with the National Center for  
 83 Information and Technical Support for Postsecondary Students  
 84 with Disabilities and the coordinating center established under  
 85 20 U.S.C. s. 1140q regarding guidelines established by the  
 86 Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities for the  
 87 effective implementation of programs for students with  
 88 disabilities and for students with intellectual disabilities  
 89 that align with the federal requirements and standards, quality  
 90 indicators, and benchmarks identified by the National Center for  
 91 Information and Technical Support for Postsecondary Students  
 92 with Disabilities and the coordinating center.

93 (d) Consult and collaborate with the Higher Education  
 94 Coordinating Council to identify important credentials for  
 95 FPCTPs and to engage businesses and stakeholders in the  
 96 promotion of experiential training and employment opportunities  
 97 for students with intellectual disabilities.

98 (e) Provide information and technical assistance to  
 99 administrators, instructors, staff, and other interested parties  
 100 at an eligible institution relating to programs and services for  
 101 students with intellectual disabilities, which must include, but  
 102 are not limited to:

103 1. Holding meetings and annual workshops to share  
 104 successful practices and address issues or concerns.

105 2. Facilitating collaboration between eligible  
 106 institutions, school districts, private schools, and the parents  
 107 of students enrolled in home education programs to better assist  
 108 students with intellectual disabilities and their parents in  
 109 planning for the transition of such students into an FPCTP or  
 110 another program at an eligible institution.

111 3. Assisting eligible institutions with FPCTP and federal  
 112 comprehensive transition and postsecondary program applications.

113 4. Assisting eligible institutions with the identification  
 114 of funding sources for an FPCTP and for student financial  
 115 assistance for students enrolled in an FPCTP.

116 5. Monitoring federal and state law relating to the  
 117 comprehensive transition program and notifying the Legislature,  
 118 the Governor, the Board of Governors, and the State Board of  
 119 Education of any change in law that may impact the  
 120 implementation of this section.

121 (f) Plan, advise, and evaluate approved degree,  
 122 certificate, and nondegree programs and evaluate the performance  
 123 of students and FPCTPs using the performance indicators included  
 124 in the application pursuant to subparagraph (5) (c) 6.

125 (5) FLORIDA POSTSECONDARY COMPREHENSIVE TRANSITION  
 126 PROGRAMS.—Any eligible institution desiring to offer an FPCTP  
 127 shall submit an application to the center in a manner prescribed  
 128 by the center. The application must be approved by the eligible  
 129 institution's governing board and be submitted by the  
 130 institution's president or director by a date established by the

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131 center.

132 (a) Notwithstanding the program approval requirements of  
133 s. 1004.03, within 30 days after receipt of an application from  
134 an eligible institution to offer an FPCTP, the director shall  
135 issue a recommendation for approval of the application to the  
136 Chancellor of the State University System, if the institution is  
137 a state university, or the Commissioner of Education, for all  
138 other eligible institutions, or give written notice to the  
139 eligible institution of any deficiencies in the application.  
140 Within 15 days after receipt of the notice of deficiencies, the  
141 eligible institution shall correct the deficiencies and return  
142 the application to the center or withdraw the application from  
143 consideration. Upon receipt of the revised application, the  
144 director shall, within 30 days, recommend approval or  
145 disapproval of the revised application to the chancellor or  
146 commissioner, as applicable. Within 15 days after receipt of the  
147 director's recommendation, the chancellor or commissioner shall  
148 approve or disapprove the eligible institution's application. If  
149 the chancellor or commissioner does not take action within the  
150 15-day period, the application shall be considered approved.

151 (b) Initial approval of an FPCTP is valid for the 3  
152 academic years immediately following the academic year in which  
153 the approval is granted. An eligible institution may submit, in  
154 the same manner as the initial application, an application for  
155 renewal of an FPCTP. The application for renewal must be  
156 submitted before the end of the initial 3-year period. If the

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CODING: Words ~~stricken~~ are deletions; words underlined are additions.

157 eligible institution and the FPCTP continue to meet the  
158 requirements of this section, a renewal shall be granted for an  
159 additional 5 academic years. The renewal period shall begin at  
160 the end of the original approval period.

161 (c) The application developed by the center must:

162 1. Address the requirements of the federal comprehensive  
163 transition and postsecondary program in 20 U.S.C. s. 1140 and  
164 this section.

165 2. Identify the credential awarded to a student with an  
166 intellectual disability upon completion of an FPCTP if he or she  
167 meets the eligibility requirements of paragraph (e).

168 3. Outline the length and design of an FPCTP, including,  
169 but not limited to, inclusive and successful experiential  
170 postsecondary education practices relating to curricular,  
171 assessment, and advising structure and internship and employment  
172 opportunities that support a student with an intellectual  
173 disability who is seeking to continue academic, career,  
174 technical, and independent living instruction at an eligible  
175 institution, including, but not limited to, opportunities to  
176 earn industry certifications, to prepare such student for  
177 gainful employment. If an eligible institution offers a credit-  
178 bearing degree program, the institution is responsible for  
179 maintaining the rigor and effectiveness of a comprehensive  
180 transition degree program at the same level as other comparable  
181 degree programs offered by the institution pursuant to  
182 applicable accreditation standards.

183        4. Address the ways in which students with intellectual  
 184 disabilities will be socially and academically integrated, to  
 185 the maximum extent possible, with nondisabled students, which  
 186 must be on at least a half-time basis. Such integration must  
 187 include one or more of the following for such students:

188            a. Regular enrollment in credit-bearing courses at an  
 189 eligible institution.

190            b. Audit of or participation in noncredit-bearing courses  
 191 at an eligible institution.

192            c. Enrollment in noncredit-bearing, nondegree courses at  
 193 an eligible institution.

194            d. Participation in internships or employment training  
 195 programs.

196        5. Identify a plan for partnerships with businesses to  
 197 promote experiential training and employment opportunities for a  
 198 student with an intellectual disability.

199        6. Identify, after collaboration with the Board of  
 200 Governors and the State Board of Education, performance  
 201 indicators for the satisfactory progress of a student with an  
 202 intellectual disability in an FPCTP and for the performance of  
 203 an FPCTP and any other requirements specified by the center.  
 204 Each eligible institution must address the performance  
 205 indicators identified by the center in its application for the  
 206 approval and renewal of a proposed FPCTP and in the annual  
 207 report that the institution submits to the center.

208        7. Outline a 5-year plan incorporating enrollment and



209 operational expectations for an FPCTP.

210 8. Include documented evidence of a federally approved  
211 comprehensive transition and postsecondary program that is  
212 determined to be an eligible program for the federal student aid  
213 programs and is currently offered at the institution, documented  
214 evidence of the submission of an application for such federal  
215 approval of a comprehensive transition and postsecondary program  
216 proposed by the institution, or documentation demonstrating the  
217 commitment of the institution's governing board to submit an  
218 application within the subsequent academic year for federal  
219 approval of a comprehensive transition and postsecondary program  
220 proposed by the institution pursuant to 20 U.S.C. s. 1140.

221 (d) Upon approval of an application, an eligible  
222 institution must notify students with intellectual disabilities  
223 and their parents of the FPCTP and student eligibility  
224 requirements for participation in the FPCTP.

225 (e) To be eligible to enroll in an FPCTP at an eligible  
226 institution, a student must, as determined by the institution  
227 and based on guidelines established by the center:

228 1. Be a student with an intellectual disability as defined  
229 in 20 U.S.C. s. 1140(2), including, but not limited to, a  
230 transitional student.

231 2. Physically attend the eligible institution.

232 3. Submit to the eligible institution documentation  
233 regarding his or her intellectual disability. Such documentation  
234 may include, but not be limited to, a current individualized

235 plan for employment associated with a review completed pursuant  
 236 to s. 413.20(3) or a diagnosis from a physician licensed under  
 237 chapter 458 or chapter 459 or a psychologist licensed under  
 238 chapter 490.

239 (f) By August 1 of each year, an eligible institution with  
 240 an FPCTP shall submit an annual report to the center that, at a  
 241 minimum, addresses the following performance indicators for the  
 242 previous academic year:

243 1. Efforts to recruit students to enroll in the FPCTP and  
 244 the number of students enrolled in the FPCTP.

245 2. Efforts to retain student enrollment in the FPCTP and  
 246 the retention rate of students in the FPCTP.

247 3. The completion rate of students enrolled in the FPCTP  
 248 and related courses, as applicable.

249 4. Transition success of students who complete the FPCTP,  
 250 as measured by employment rates and salary levels at 1 year and  
 251 5 years after completion, as available.

252 5. Other performance indicators identified by the center  
 253 under subparagraph (c)6.

254 (6) ACCOUNTABILITY.—

255 (a) By October 1 of each year, the center shall provide to  
 256 the Governor, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the  
 257 House of Representatives, the Chancellor of the State University  
 258 System, and the Commissioner of Education a report that  
 259 includes, but is not limited to:

260 1. The status of the statewide coordination of FPCTPs and

261 the implementation of FPCTPs at eligible institutions including,  
262 but not limited to, the number of applications approved or  
263 disapproved, the reasons for each disapproval, and the number of  
264 applications on which no action was taken by the chancellor or  
265 the commissioner, as applicable.

266 2. Performance indicators identified by the center under  
267 subparagraph (5)(c)6. and the performance of each eligible  
268 institution based on such indicators.

269 3. The projected number of students with intellectual  
270 disabilities who may be eligible to enroll in the FPCTPs within  
271 the next academic year.

272 4. Education programs and services for students with  
273 intellectual disabilities that are available at an eligible  
274 institution.

275 (b) Beginning December 1, 2015, and annually thereafter,  
276 the center, in collaboration with the Board of Governors, the  
277 State Board of Education, the Higher Education Coordinating  
278 Council, and other stakeholders, shall submit to the Governor,  
279 the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of  
280 Representatives statutory and budget recommendations for  
281 improving the implementation and delivery of FPCTPs and other  
282 education programs and services for students with disabilities.

283 (7) RULES.—The Board of Governors and the State Board of  
284 Education, in consultation with the center, shall expeditiously  
285 adopt the necessary regulations and rules, as applicable, to  
286 allow the center to perform its responsibilities pursuant to

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287 this section beginning in the 2015-2016 fiscal year.

288 Section 2. Section 19 of chapter 2014-184, Laws of  
289 Florida, is repealed.

290 Section 3. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.