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LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Senate

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House

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The Committee on Appropriations (Grall) recommended the following:

1           **Senate Substitute for Amendment (142150) (with title**  
2 **amendment)**

3  
4           Delete everything after the enacting clause  
5 and insert:

6           Section 1. Section 1004.933, Florida Statutes, is created  
7 to read:

8           1004.933 Graduation Alternative to Traditional Education  
9 (GATE) Program.—

10           (1) LEGISLATIVE INTENT.—



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11           (a) It is the intent of the Legislature to create an  
12 alternative pathway to education and workforce opportunities for  
13 students who have withdrawn from high school prior to  
14 graduation.

15           (b) It is the intent of the Legislature to affirm the  
16 unequivocal value of a standard high school diploma as the  
17 primary education credential by which students access higher  
18 education and workforce opportunities. Further, the Legislature  
19 affirms that parental consent is required for a student under 18  
20 years of age to withdraw from high school prior to graduation.

21           (c) The Legislature intends to expand opportunities for  
22 students to complete high school courses and earn a standard  
23 high school diploma.

24           (d) The Legislature recognizes that when a student  
25 withdraws from high school prior to graduation, the student has  
26 not received the full value of a taxpayer-funded pre-K-12  
27 education, and therefore lacks the education credential  
28 essential to gainful employment and future educational  
29 opportunities. Therefore, the Legislature intends to provide an  
30 alternative pathway program, waiving tuition and fees for the  
31 program for participating students who have not earned a  
32 standard high school diploma.

33           (2) PROGRAM CREATION.—The Graduation Alternative to  
34 Traditional Education (GATE) Program is created within the  
35 Department of Education.

36           (3) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section, the term:

37           (a) "Career education program" means an applied technology  
38 diploma program as defined in s. 1004.02(7) or a career  
39 certificate program as defined in s. 1004.02(20).



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40 (b) "Institution" means a school district career center  
41 established under s. 1001.44, a charter technical career center  
42 established under s. 1002.34, or a Florida College System  
43 institution identified in s. 1000.21.

44 (4) PAYMENT WAIVER; ELIGIBILITY.-

45 (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of state law, an  
46 institution shall waive 100 percent of the registration,  
47 tuition, laboratory, and examination fees for a student  
48 participating in the GATE Program. Instructional materials  
49 assigned for use under the GATE Program must be made available  
50 to GATE Program students free of charge. An institution may not  
51 require payment by students of instructional materials costs  
52 eligible for reimbursement under s. 1009.711.

53 (b) To be eligible for participation in the GATE Program, a  
54 student must:

55 1. Not have earned a standard high school diploma pursuant  
56 to s. 1003.4282 or a high school equivalency diploma pursuant to  
57 s. 1003.435 before enrolling in the GATE Program;

58 2. Have been withdrawn from high school;

59 3. Be a resident of this state as defined in s. 1009.21(1);

60 4. Be 16 to 21 years of age at the time of initial  
61 enrollment, provided that a student who is 16 or 17 years of age  
62 has withdrawn from school enrollment pursuant to the  
63 requirements and safeguards in s. 1003.21(1)(c);

64 5. Select the adult secondary education program and career  
65 education program of his or her choice at the time of admission  
66 to the GATE Program, provided that the career education program  
67 is included on the Master Credentials List under s. 445.004(4).

68 The student may not change the requested pathway after



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69 enrollment, except that, if necessary for the student, the  
70 student may enroll in an adult basic education program prior to  
71 enrolling in the adult secondary education program;

72 6. Maintain a 2.0 GPA for career and technical education  
73 coursework; and

74 7. Notwithstanding s. 1003.435(4), complete the programs  
75 under subparagraph 5. within 3 years after his or her initial  
76 enrollment unless the institution determines that an extension  
77 is warranted due to extenuating circumstances.

78 (c) Subject to the availability of funds, a student who  
79 meets the requirements of paragraph (b) and is enrolled in the  
80 GATE Program is eligible to receive the stipend specified in s.  
81 1009.895(3).

82 (d) An institution may not impose additional criteria to  
83 determine a student's eligibility to receive a waiver under this  
84 section.

85 (5) DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBILITIES.—In addition to  
86 administering the GATE Program, the Department of Education  
87 shall perform the following duties:

88 (a) Disseminate information about the GATE Program to  
89 eligible institutions, local workforce development boards, and  
90 other local, regional, or state initiatives that interact with  
91 the GATE Program's target population.

92 (b) Connect prospective students directly to eligible  
93 institutions.

94 (c) Provide access to online career planning tools.

95 (6) REPORTING.—Beginning October 1, 2025, and each October  
96 1 thereafter, the Department of Education shall submit a report  
97 to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of



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98 the House of Representatives on the number and value of  
99 registration, tuition, laboratory, and examination fees and  
100 instructional materials costs waived and reimbursed, by  
101 institution; the number of students who have obtained a standard  
102 high school diploma or high school equivalency diploma while  
103 participating in the GATE Program; the number of students  
104 completing an applied technology diploma or career certificate  
105 while participating in the GATE Program; the number of students  
106 participating in the GATE Program who receive a stipend under s.  
107 1009.895(3); the number of students who have earned an industry  
108 certification on the CAPE Industry Certification Funding List  
109 while participating in the GATE Program; and the number of  
110 students who completed the GATE Program. The reporting period  
111 shall cover the previous academic year.

112 (7) RULES.—The State Board of Education may adopt rules to  
113 implement this section.

114 Section 2. Paragraph (g) of subsection (1) of section  
115 445.009, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

116 445.009 One-stop delivery system.—

117 (1) The one-stop delivery system is the state's primary  
118 customer-service strategy for offering every Floridian access,  
119 through service sites or telephone or computer networks, to the  
120 following services:

121 (g) Adult education, ~~and~~ basic skills training, integrated  
122 education and training, and the Graduation Alternative to  
123 Traditional Education Program under s. 1004.933.

124 Section 3. Paragraph (c) of subsection (1) of section  
125 1003.21, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

126 1003.21 School attendance.—



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127 (1)  
128 (c) A student who attains the age of 16 years during the  
129 school year is not subject to compulsory school attendance  
130 beyond the date upon which he or she attains that age if the  
131 student files a formal declaration of intent to terminate school  
132 enrollment with the district school board. Public school  
133 students who have attained the age of 16 years and who have not  
134 graduated are subject to compulsory school attendance until the  
135 formal declaration of intent is filed with the district school  
136 board. The declaration must acknowledge that terminating school  
137 enrollment is likely to reduce the student's earning potential  
138 and must be signed by the student and the student's parent. The  
139 school district shall notify the student's parent of receipt of  
140 the student's declaration of intent to terminate school  
141 enrollment. The student's certified school counselor or other  
142 school personnel shall conduct an exit interview with the  
143 student to determine the reasons for the student's decision to  
144 terminate school enrollment and actions that could be taken to  
145 keep the student in school. The student's certified school  
146 counselor or other school personnel shall inform the student of  
147 opportunities to continue his or her education in a different  
148 environment, including, but not limited to, adult education, and  
149 high school equivalency examination preparation, and the  
150 Graduation Alternative to Traditional Education Program under s.  
151 1004.933. Additionally, the student shall complete a survey in a  
152 format prescribed by the Department of Education to provide data  
153 on student reasons for terminating enrollment and actions taken  
154 by schools to keep students enrolled.

155 Section 4. Subsection (3) of section 1003.435, Florida



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156 Statutes, is amended to read:

157 1003.435 High school equivalency diploma program.—

158 (3) Each district school board shall:

159 (a) Offer and administer the high school equivalency  
160 diploma examinations and the subject area examinations to all  
161 candidates pursuant to rules of the State Board of Education.

162 (b) Notify each candidate of adult secondary and  
163 postsecondary education options available in or near the school  
164 district, including the Graduation Alternative to Traditional  
165 Education Program under s. 1004.933. The candidate must also be  
166 informed of the eligibility requirements and any minimum  
167 academic requirements for each available option.

168 Section 5. Section 1009.711, Florida Statutes, is created  
169 to read:

170 1009.711 GATE Scholarship Program.—

171 (1) The GATE Scholarship Program is created to financially  
172 support institutions participating in the GATE Program  
173 established pursuant to s. 1004.933.

174 (2) The Department of Education shall administer the GATE  
175 Scholarship Program in accordance with rules adopted by the  
176 State Board of Education.

177 (3) The GATE Scholarship Program shall reimburse eligible  
178 institutions for registration, tuition, laboratory, and  
179 examination fees and related instructional materials costs for  
180 students enrolled in the GATE Program. Institutions must be  
181 reimbursed at the in-state resident tuition rate established in  
182 s. 1009.22(3)(c).

183 (4) Each participating institution shall report to the  
184 department all students enrolled in the GATE Program during the



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185 fall, spring, or summer terms within 30 days after the end of  
186 regular registration. For each eligible student, the institution  
187 shall report the total reimbursable expenses by category, which  
188 the department must consider in determining an institution's  
189 award under this section. The department shall reimburse each  
190 participating institution no later than 30 days after the  
191 institution has reported enrollment for that term.

192 (5) Reimbursements from the GATE Scholarship Program are  
193 contingent upon an annual appropriation in the General  
194 Appropriations Act. If the statewide reimbursement amount is  
195 greater than the appropriation, the institutional reimbursement  
196 amounts specified in subsection (3) must be prorated among the  
197 institutions that have timely reported eligible students to the  
198 department.

199 (6) The State Board of Education may adopt rules to  
200 implement this section.

201 Section 6. Subsection (10) of section 1011.80, Florida  
202 Statutes, is amended to read:

203 1011.80 Funds for operation of workforce education  
204 programs.—

205 (10) A high school student dually enrolled under s.  
206 1007.271 in a workforce education program operated by a Florida  
207 College System institution or school district career center  
208 generates the amount calculated for workforce education funding,  
209 including any payment of performance funding, and the  
210 proportional share of full-time equivalent enrollment generated  
211 through the Florida Education Finance Program for the student's  
212 enrollment in a high school. If a high school student is dually  
213 enrolled in a Florida College System institution program,





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214 including a program conducted at a high school, the Florida  
215 College System institution earns the funds generated for  
216 workforce education funding, and the school district earns the  
217 proportional share of full-time equivalent funding from the  
218 Florida Education Finance Program. If a student is dually  
219 enrolled in a career center operated by the same district as the  
220 district in which the student attends high school, that district  
221 earns the funds generated for workforce education funding and  
222 also earns the proportional share of full-time equivalent  
223 funding from the Florida Education Finance Program. If a student  
224 is dually enrolled in a workforce education program provided by  
225 a career center operated by a different school district, the  
226 funds must be divided between the two school districts  
227 proportionally from the two funding sources. A student may not  
228 be reported for funding in a dual enrollment workforce education  
229 program unless the student has completed the basic skills  
230 assessment pursuant to s. 1004.91. A student who is coenrolled  
231 in a K-12 education program and an adult education program may  
232 be reported for purposes of funding in an adult education  
233 program. If a student is coenrolled in ~~core curricula~~ courses  
234 for credit recovery or dropout prevention purposes and does not  
235 have a pattern of excessive absenteeism or habitual truancy or a  
236 history of disruptive behavior in school, the student may be  
237 reported for funding for up to four ~~two~~ courses per year. Such a  
238 student is exempt from the payment of the block tuition for  
239 adult general education programs provided in s. 1009.22(3)(c).  
240 ~~The Department of Education shall develop a list of courses to~~  
241 ~~be designated as core curricula courses for the purposes of~~  
242 ~~coenrollment.~~



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243           Section 7. Section 1011.804, Florida Statutes, is created  
244 to read:

245           1011.804 GATE Startup Grant Program.—

246           (1) The GATE Startup Grant Program is established within  
247 the Department of Education to fund and support the startup and  
248 implementation of the GATE Program, subject to legislative  
249 appropriation. The purpose of the grant program is to increase  
250 access to programs that support adult learners earning a high  
251 school credential, either a high school diploma or its  
252 equivalent, and a workforce credential aligned to statewide or  
253 regional demand. The department shall administer the grants,  
254 determine eligibility, and distribute grant awards.

255           (2) As used in this section, the term "institution" means a  
256 school district career center established under s. 1001.44, a  
257 charter technical career center established under s. 1002.34, or  
258 a Florida College System institution identified in s. 1000.21  
259 which offers the GATE Program pursuant to s. 1004.933.

260           (3) The department may solicit proposals from institutions  
261 without programs that meet the requirements of s. 1004.933(2).  
262 Such institutions must be located in or serve a rural area of  
263 opportunity as designated by the Governor.

264           (4) The department shall prioritize grant proposals that  
265 combine adult basic education, adult secondary education, and  
266 career education programs at one location or allow students to  
267 complete programs through distance learning. An applicant may  
268 not receive more than 10 percent of the total amount  
269 appropriated for the program.

270           (5) The department shall make the grant application  
271 available to potential applicants no later than August 15, 2024.



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272 A grant proposal must include:

273 (a) The institution or institutions that will provide the  
274 adult basic education, adult secondary education, and career  
275 education programs;

276 (b) The proposed adult basic education and adult secondary  
277 education program or programs the institution or institutions  
278 will provide, and the projected enrollment for such program or  
279 programs;

280 (c) The proposed career education program or programs the  
281 institution or institutions will provide and the projected  
282 enrollment for such program or programs;

283 (d) The credential or credentials associated with the  
284 career education program or programs. Such credential or  
285 credentials must be included on the Master Credentials List  
286 under s. 445.004(4);

287 (e) The cost of instruction for all programs contemplated  
288 in the proposal, including costs for tuition, fees,  
289 registration, and laboratory, examination, and instructional  
290 materials costs;

291 (f) Outreach strategies, including collaboration with local  
292 workforce development boards; and

293 (g) A plan or timeline for implementing s. 1004.933 and  
294 enrolling students.

295 (6) Grant funds may be used for planning activities and  
296 other expenses associated with the creation of the GATE Program,  
297 such as expenses related to program instruction, instructional  
298 equipment, supplies, instructional personnel, and student  
299 services. Grant funds may not be used for indirect costs. Grant  
300 recipients must submit an annual report in a format prescribed



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301 by the department. The department shall consolidate such annual  
302 reports and include the reports in the report required by s.  
303 1004.933(5).

304 (7) The State Board of Education may adopt rules to  
305 administer this section.

306 Section 8. Section 1011.8041, Florida Statutes, is created  
307 to read:

308 1011.8041 GATE Program Performance Fund.—

309 (1) The GATE Program Performance Fund is created to reward  
310 institutions for the documented success of students  
311 participating in the GATE Program established under s. 1004.933.

312 (2) As used in this section, the term "institution" means a  
313 school district career center established under s. 1001.44, a  
314 charter technical career center established under s. 1002.34, or  
315 a Florida College System institution identified in s. 1000.21  
316 which offers the GATE Program pursuant to s. 1004.933.

317 (3) Subject to legislative appropriation, each  
318 participating institution must receive \$1,000 per student who  
319 completes the GATE Program by completing the adult secondary  
320 education program and the career education program within 3  
321 years. If the student completed the adult secondary education  
322 program and the career education programs at different  
323 institutions, then each institution must receive \$500. If funds  
324 are insufficient to fully fund the calculated total award, such  
325 funds must be prorated among the institutions.

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

328 Section 9. This act shall take effect July 1, 2024.

329



330 ===== T I T L E A M E N D M E N T =====

331 And the title is amended as follows:

332 Delete everything before the enacting clause

333 and insert:

334 A bill to be entitled

335 An act relating to education; creating s. 1004.933,  
336 F.S.; providing legislative intent; establishing the  
337 Graduation Alternative to Traditional Education (GATE)  
338 Program within the Department of Education; providing  
339 definitions; requiring institutions to waive payments  
340 for specified student fees; providing eligibility  
341 requirements; providing that students participating in  
342 the program are eligible for a specified stipend under  
343 certain circumstances; prohibiting an institution from  
344 imposing additional eligibility requirements;  
345 providing department responsibilities; providing  
346 department reporting requirements; authorizing the  
347 State Board of Education to adopt rules; amending s.  
348 445.009, F.S.; revising the services to which the one-  
349 stop delivery system is intended to provide access;  
350 amending s. 1003.21, F.S.; requiring a student's  
351 certified school counselor or other school personnel  
352 to inform the student of opportunities in the GATE  
353 Program; amending s. 1003.435, F.S.; requiring  
354 district school boards to notify all candidates for  
355 the high school equivalency diploma of adult secondary  
356 and postsecondary education options, including  
357 specified eligibility requirements; creating s.  
358 1009.711, F.S.; creating the GATE Scholarship Program;



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359 requiring the department to administer the program;  
360 requiring the program to reimburse eligible  
361 institutions for specified student fees and costs;  
362 requiring participating institutions to report  
363 specified information to the department; requiring the  
364 department to reimburse participating institutions  
365 within a specified timeframe; providing that  
366 reimbursements are contingent upon legislative  
367 appropriation and must be prorated under certain  
368 circumstances; authorizing the state board to adopt  
369 rules; amending s. 1011.80, F.S.; revising the number  
370 of courses for which certain students may be reported  
371 for certain funding purposes; providing that such  
372 courses do not have to be core curricula courses;  
373 deleting a requirement that the department develop a  
374 list of courses to be designated as core curricula  
375 courses; creating s. 1011.804, F.S.; establishing the  
376 GATE Startup Grant Program within the department for a  
377 specified purpose; defining the term "institution";  
378 providing eligibility requirements; providing  
379 department duties; providing requirements for grant  
380 proposals, grant awards, and the use of grant funds;  
381 providing reporting requirements; authorizing the  
382 state board to adopt rules; creating s. 1011.8041,  
383 F.S.; creating the GATE Program Performance Fund for a  
384 specified purpose; defining the term "institution";  
385 subject to legislative appropriation, requiring each  
386 participating institution to receive a specified  
387 amount of money per student, subject to certain



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conditions; authorizing the state board to adopt  
rules; providing an effective date.