

COUNCIL FOR EDUCATION POLICY, RESEARCH AND IMPROVEMENT

Workforce Education Funding

Work Plan

Background Information

Chapter 97-307, Laws of Florida (SB 1688), created the Workforce Development Education Fund to provide a new way of funding for Workforce Development Programs (adult vocational and adult general education) and to provide a “level playing field” between the school district and community college in terms of funding and delivering workforce development training. The new formula had its basis in performance. This act also required the following for workforce development programs: common definitions, standard program lengths, a common database, common cost calculations, and a common fee structure. Fifteen percent of funding for workforce programs is based on the performance of school districts and community colleges in producing high numbers of program completers and job placements through the workforce formula. The formula currently weights completions based on program length (PSAV) or completion (AS) and whether or not a program completer is from a specified targeted population (e.g., disabled). Placements are weighted based on the level of employment derived from a high wage/high skill list created by the Workforce Estimating Conference.

Since its initiation, this innovative approach to funding has been subject to continuing concern by the Legislature which led to a number of studies by the Council and its predecessor organization, the Postsecondary Education Planning Commission (PEPC):

- **Evaluation of the Role of Community Colleges and School Districts in Apprenticeship Programs** (February 2002)
- **Workforce Development Education Cost/Reimbursement Analysis** (December 2001)
- **Workforce Development Funding Issues** (December 2000)

In a March 25, 2003 letter, Senator Jim King, President of the Florida Senate, requested the Council to conduct the fourth study in four years. Included in the letter were the following concerns:

Workforce Development funding has reached a crucial point. Apprenticeship Programs and the Technical Center have funding disparities and other programs are in danger of being eliminated. I am directing the Council for Education Policy, Research and Improvement to develop a funding methodology for workforce/career education that provides for long term stability, accommodates growth, and rewards program performance. Recommendations shall be developed in consultation with community colleges, vocational centers, school districts, the Department of Education, and others involved in public vocational education.

Major Issues to be Addressed

- 1) What funding disparities exist? What is the cause of these disparities (performance or base funding)?
- 2) What has been the impact of the current funding formula? What programs have been eliminated or are in danger of being eliminated? What programs have expanded under the new formula?
- 3) What are the weaknesses of the current formula in providing for long-term stability and the accommodation of growth?
- 4) How should growth be incorporated into Workforce Development Education funding?
- 5) How should performance be funded?
- 6) How should apprenticeship be funded?
- 7) Should the existing formula be modified or replaced?
- 8) How responsive are workforce education programs to the needs of employers? How can this responsiveness be improved?

Methodology

The study will begin by clarifying legislative intent and concerns and the intent and concerns of interested parties in the workforce education community. Frequent communication will be maintained with staff in the Legislature, Governor's office, State Board of Education, community colleges and public schools.

The Funding Committee survey will be evaluated to determine the opinions of leaders in the workforce education community in terms of the formula's strengths and weaknesses, and to assess alternative funding approaches suggested by the survey respondents. Data will be analyzed to determine the programmatic impact of the formula and the cause of any funding disparities. Literature reviews and panel discussions will be conducted to seek "outside the box" strategies for workforce funding.

Alternative recommendations will be developed in a draft report, and the draft will be circulated to elicit input from affected parties. The final report will be completed for adoption at the December Council meeting.

Project Outline/Timeline

August/September

“Overview of Current and Future State Needs for a Skilled Workforce”

- A. Supply: Demographic projections
- B. Demand: Occupational projections by training requirements and identification of targeted occupations

“Current Funding Formula”

- A. Review of existing workforce development funding formula
- B. Examination of recent funding issues and formula recommendations from prior studies

“Current Status of Workforce Education Funding in Meeting the Needs of the State”

- A. Five-year analysis of enrollment and program completions in workforce education programs
- B. Examination of current program inventory and distribution of enrollments/completers since the adoption of the Workforce Development Education Fund.
- C. Review of issues important to adult education programs

October

“Review of Workforce Funding Mechanisms”

- A. Examination of apprenticeship programs and their role in the Workforce Development Education Fund.
- B. Evaluation of responses to funding committee survey
- C. Review of funding approaches in other states
- D. “Lessons Learned” from the funding formula

“Panel Discussion”

Invited participation of state stakeholders in workforce education

November

“Draft Report” -- Examination of approaches to providing for long-term stability, growth, and program performance

December

“Final Report”