

A Comparison of State of Florida Charter Technical Career Centers to District Career Centers

Introduction

This Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) report compares State of Florida charter technical career centers to public career technical centers statewide. Florida Statute Title XLVIII, Chapter 1002, Section 1002.34 authorizes the establishment of charter technical career centers. That statute requires that the applicant for charter, or sponsor, be a district school board, a community college board of trustees, or a consortium of one or more of each. The same statute requires submitting the current report annually to the Florida Legislature.

The State of Florida currently has three charter technical career centers. These centers and their sponsors are:

1. Advanced Technology College (ATC) – Daytona Beach Community College
2. First Coast Technical Institute (FCTI) – St. Johns County School Board
3. Lake Technical Center (LTC) – Lake County School Board

FCTI and LTC submit data through the Florida Department of Education’s (FLDOE) Workforce Development Information System (WDIS). Community College and Technical Center Management Information System (CCTCMIS) personnel then identify students enrolled in district-sponsored charter technical career centers. CCTCMIS identifies all other district technical career center students as public technical career center students. Daytona Beach Community College (DBCC), whose data are reported on the Community College Student Data Base, sponsors ATC. DBCC personnel extract and submit ATC data directly to FLDOE. The current report compares each of the three charter technical career centers to the aggregated thirty-eight (38) Florida public technical career centers.

Background

Section 1002.34(19), Florida Statutes, requires the Commissioner of Education to submit an annual comparative evaluation of charter technical career centers and public technical centers to the Governor, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Senate and House committees responsible for secondary and postsecondary career and technical education. The comparative evaluation must address demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the students served, types and costs of services provided and outcomes achieved.

Charter technical career centers are publicly funded schools or technical centers operated under a charter granted by a district school board or community college board of trustees or a consortium, including one or more district school boards and community college boards of trustees, that includes the district in which the facility is located, that is nonsectarian in its programs, admission policies, employment practices, and operations and is managed by a board of directors.

The 1999 Florida Legislature created charter technical career centers to promote advances and innovations in workforce preparation and economic development. The law authorized the

creation of a new school or the conversion of an existing center currently operated by school districts or community colleges. The charter must be approved by the school board and the board of trustees of the community college in whose geographic region the center is located. A charter technical career center's programs, admission policies, employment practices, operations, and all other matters of governance are managed by a board of directors. The board of directors of a career center may decide matters relating to the operation of the school, including budgeting, curriculum and operating procedures, subject to the career center's charter. The term of an initial charter may not exceed five years. Thereafter, the sponsor may renew a charter for a period up to five years.

Legislation authorizing charter technical career centers includes the centers' purposes and responsibilities. It also includes the sponsors' responsibility. Appendix A of this report is a copy of the authorizing statute. The purpose of the centers is to "develop a competitive workforce," "provide career pathways," and "enhance career and technical training." The legislative intent is to provide charter technical career centers with an environment to incorporate non-traditional teaching/learning methods, evaluate these methods, and identify which ones are successful. Methods that are proven effective can then be incorporated into public technical career centers' curricula. The legislation creates this environment by exempting career charter technical centers from nearly all statutes of the Florida K-20 Education Code (see 1002.34 (16)). This gives career technical centers more local control, reduces response time to local business/industry needs, and decreases bureaucratic involvement in areas such as decision-making, curriculum and assessment development, and instructor hiring policies. Section 2002.33 (23), Florida Statutes, requires evaluation of career technical career centers. It puts this requirement in very general terms such as "comparative evaluation of charter technical centers and public technical centers," "demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of students served," and "outcomes achieved."

The mission of Florida's charter technical centers is to provide comprehensive and innovative technical education programs, services and customized training to meet the needs of citizens, business and industry. Charter technical career centers' purpose is to develop a competitive workforce that supports local business and industry and economic development and creates a training and education model reflective of marketplace realities. The career centers offer a continuum of career educational opportunities using a school-to-work, tech-prep, technical, academy, and magnet school model to provide career pathways for lifelong learning and career mobility and enhance career and technical training.

Florida's Charter Technical Career Centers

Three charter technical career centers have been established in Florida. On July 1, 1999, the St. Augustine Technical Center, which was operated by the St. Johns County School Board, converted to become the state's first charter technical center under the name of First Coast Technical Institute. Two years later Flagler/Volusia Advanced Technology Center opened on August 20, 2001, at Daytona Beach Community College in Volusia County; it subsequently was renamed Advanced Technology College in 2007. Florida's third technical career center, Lake Technical Center, became a conversion charter technical center in July 2004. FCTI reauthorized its charter on July 1, 2004, and ATC reauthorized its charter on July 1, 2006. LTC's charter is due for reauthorization in 2009.

First Coast Technical Institute

St. Johns County School Board sponsored FCTI as Florida's first postsecondary charter school.

FCTI serves the tri-county area of St. Johns, Clay, and Putnam counties. The St. Johns School District opened a new public high school, St. Johns Technical High School on the campus of FCTI in 2004 which incorporated the model of First Coast Technical High School and First Coast Skills Academy. FCTI's mission is to "provide comprehensive, innovative technical and academic education and customized training to meet the needs of the community."¹ FCTI serves both adults and dually enrolled secondary students through joint programs with St. Johns Technical High School.

FCTI offers adult basic education programs, sixteen post-secondary career certificate programs, and an electrical apprenticeship program.² All career and technical training programs are supported by steering committees comprising members from business and industry. Career and technical training programs are competency based, with curriculum provided by the state and enhanced with input from business and industry to ensure that training meets industry standards. FCTI is accredited by the Council on Occupational Education and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. FCTI provides students with financial aid, guidance and career counseling, career assessment, accommodations for students with special needs, and placement services.

FCTI holds certification and/or approval from the following organizations: American Culinary Federation, American Medical Association, American Welding Society, Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs, Committee on Accreditation of Educational Programs for the EMS Professions, Council on Occupational Education, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation/Florida Department of Education, Florida Bureau of Fire Standards and Training, Florida Department of Children and Families, Florida Department of Health, Bureau of Emergency Medical Services, Florida State Board of Cosmetology, Florida State Board of Nursing, Florida Department of Education, National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation, Inc., National Institute of Automotive Service Excellence, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Florida Department of Veterans Affairs, U. S. Department of Education, Office of Student and Financial Aid and U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Advanced Technology College

The mission of Advanced Technology College (ATC) is to facilitate an educational program leading to a high school diploma, a certificate, an associate degree or a four-year degree in a given occupational area for students in Flagler and Volusia counties. The institution is designed primarily to serve area high school juniors and seniors who dually enroll in a program of study that awards postsecondary credit applicable toward an A.S. degree, A.A.S. degree, college credit certificate, or career certificate that is also applicable toward high school graduation. The curriculum integrates the academic and technical components of the programs of study to maximize the relevance of each student's educational experience.

Occupational specializations are in the Engineering and Manufacturing and Business and Marketing Clusters, as defined by the Volusia/Flagler Career Connection Consortium. Through ATC's academic dual enrollment options, students achieve competencies in mathematics, science and communication through an integrated, sequential, rigorous and relevant course of study. Students may choose the path of employment, entrepreneurial venture and/or postsecondary education program gaining the skills and knowledge to pursue lifelong learning.

¹ FCTI charter, page 2.

² For descriptions of the programs discussed in this report, refer to Appendix B.

ATC is designed to provide students the education and skills necessary to work in one of many technology careers and build a better workforce for area employers. Students receive high school diplomas from their home district high schools and/or receive certificates or degrees from Daytona Beach Community College. Students must meet the graduation and/or program requirements approved by the State of Florida and the individual Governing Boards.

ATC offers 32 career and technical programs: 17 college credit certificate, eight associate in science (A.S.), four associate in applied science (A.A.S.), and three career certificate programs. All programs provide extensive workplace experiences through a system of cooperative education and pre-apprenticeship programs. Instructional delivery at ATC integrates academic and occupational competency-based curriculum to produce graduates that meet or exceed business and industry workforce standards. Each occupational program includes the necessary certifications for employment and core academics that are identified as essential by education and business experts.

All of ATC's programs are accredited under Daytona Beach Community College's Southern Association of Colleges and Schools level-two accreditation, which was most recently reaffirmed in 2003.³ In addition, the automotive service technology and collision repair programs are National Automotive Technology Education Foundation (NATEF) accredited.

The computer science program curriculum is designed to prepare students for the following industry certifications through the college's onsite Comp/TIA certification center: Microsoft Certified Technology Specialist (MCTS), Microsoft Certified IT Professional (MCITP), Microsoft Certified Professional Developer (MCPD), Microsoft Certified Architect, Microsoft Certified Desktop Support Technician (MCDST), Microsoft Certified Learning Consultant (MCLC), Microsoft Certified Systems Administrator (MCSA), Microsoft Certified Systems Engineers (MCSE), Microsoft Certified Database Administrators (MCDBA), Microsoft Certified Application Developers (MCAD), Microsoft Certified Solution Developers (MCSA), and Microsoft Office Specialist (MOUS).

Lake Technical Center

Lake Technical Center's main campus is located in Eustis, Florida, and is a career-technical postsecondary institution that provides job preparatory and supplemental training. The Institute of Public Safety, located in Tavares, Florida, operates as an LTC extension campus and offers basic and continuing education programs in law enforcement, corrections, and firefighting.

LTC serves Lake County including Tavares, Eustis, Mount Dora, Leesburg, Fruitland Park, Clermont, Minneola, Groveland, Mascotte, Lady Lake, Umatilla, Dona Vista, Montverde, Howey-in-the-Hills, Paisley, Sorrento, Mount Plymouth, Astatula, Altoona, Lake Jem, Astor, Yalaha, and Okahumpka. Students from other areas of the state and nation, as well as international students, are also served. LTC offers 20 career certificate programs in addition to apprenticeship, continuing workforce education, and adult education programs. Secondary students may dually enroll in LTC's career certificate programs and earn both secondary and postsecondary credit.

LTC is accredited by the Commission of the Council on Occupational Education and by the Commission on International and Trans-Regional Accreditation. Individual programs are certified by the following accrediting bodies: Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health

³ Level-two accreditation covers programs up to the baccalaureate level.

Education Programs, Florida State Board of Nursing, Florida State Board of Massage Therapy, Bureau of Emergency Medical Services of Florida Department of Health, Florida Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission, American Culinary Federation and Florida State Board of Cosmetology.

Financial Data

This section will compare costs and revenues reported by the three charter technical career centers. Below in Table 1 are data from independent audit reports performed on each of the three charter technical centers for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2006. The first section comprises four major cost categories followed by a section that differentiates federal, state, and local revenue sources. The bottom row is the difference between costs and revenue and represents the annual reserve amount. FCTI allocated a smaller percentage of its resources to instruction and a higher percentage to student support and plant operations than its peer charter technical centers. On the revenue side, ATC collected very little local revenue because most of its students are dually enrolled and are exempt from tuition and fees. In contrast, LTC relied heavily on local revenues.

Table 1						
Charter Technical Career Center Financial Data for Fiscal Year Ending on June 30, 2006						
Cost Categories	FCTI	Percent	ATC	Percent	Lake	Percent
Instruction	\$4,685,955	41.83%	\$3,131,000	64.97%	\$5,719,535	69.61%
Instructional Support	\$1,410,624	12.59%	\$539,000	11.18%	\$632,478	7.70%
Student Support	\$2,319,171	20.70%	\$485,000	10.06%	\$757,789	9.22%
Plant and Operations	\$2,785,530	24.87%	\$664,000	13.78%	\$1,106,419	13.47%
Total	\$11,201,280	100.00%	\$4,819,000	100.00%	\$8,216,221	100.00%
Revenue	FCTI	Percent	ATC	Percent	Lake	Percent
Federal	\$902,347	7.77%	\$303,000	6.21%	\$685,591	12.12%
State	\$7,335,273	63.17%	\$4,542,000	93.13%	\$2,390,314	42.26%
Local	\$3,373,616	29.05%	\$32,000	0.66%	\$2,580,191	45.62%
Total	\$11,611,236	100.00%	\$4,877,000	100.00%	\$5,656,096	100.00%
Reserve	\$409,956	3.53%	\$58,000	1.19%	\$297,819	5.27%

Comparative Analysis of Workforce Education Productivity

Enrollment

Table 2 shows the duplicated statewide public career centers' 2006-07 student enrollment and the three charter technical career centers' unduplicated 2006-07 student enrollment in non-degree adult and career education programs. Charter technical career center enrollment represented 5.3% of the total charter and non-charter career center enrollment. Enrollment is disaggregated by instruction type, with the largest enrollment in each row highlighted. The largest program area enrollment for LTC was continuing workforce education (49.8%). FCTI's largest program area was career certificate programs (40%) while ATC's highest enrollments were in adult

general education (26.6%). ATC had the most even program distribution and is the only institution that offered associate degree programs. LTC had the most uneven program enrollment distribution with almost half of its enrollment in one area, continuing workforce education for licensure renewals and upgrades. The public career centers' largest student enrollments were in Adult General Education: secondary-level courses at or below the twelfth grade level. The charter technical career centers' largest aggregate student enrollments (34.2%) were in continuing workforce education programs, but this is largely the effect of LTC's high enrollment number and percentage in this area.

Table 2							
Enrollment at State of Florida Public Career Centers and Three Charter Technical Career Centers, 2006-07							
Instruction Type							
School	Total Enrollment	Adult General Education (AGE)	Career Certificate (PSAV)	Continuing Workforce Education (CWE)	Apprenticeship	Advanced Technical Diplomas (ATD's)	Associate's Degree Programs
Public Career Centers⁴	161,805	66,477	41,893	42,983	9691	761	N/A
	100.0%	41.1%	25.9%	26.6%	6.0%	0.5%	0%
Lake Technical Center	4,098	709	1,242	2,039	108	N/A	N/A
	100.0%	17.3%	30.3%	49.8%	2.6%	0%	0%
First Coast Technical Institute	3,509	1,172	1,405	802	128	2	N/A
	100.0%	33.4%	40.0%	22.9%	3.7%	0.1%	0%
Advanced Technology College	1,010	269	139	105	260	N/A	237
	100.0%	26.6%	13.8%	10.4%	25.7%	0%	23.5%
Charter Technical Career Center Total	8,617	2,150	2,786	2,946	496	N/A	237
	100%	25%	32.3%	34.2%	5.8%	N/A	2.8%

Performance

This section will evaluate the amount of skill attainment per student for the charter technical career centers in 2006-07 in three separate program areas: adult general education, career certificate (PSAV), and apprenticeship programs. Students' technical and literacy skills acquisition or advancement is measured by "completion points:" occupational completion points (OCPs) for technical skills and literacy completion points (LCPs) for adult general education skills. The ratio of completion points to students enrolled is a general measure of skills acquired per student. This figure is a state-designated measure of the amount of content mastered by the student. In addition, because the adult general education and career certificate categories are rather broad and include a variety of program types with different amounts of time required to

⁴ This category is an aggregation of 40 district-operated career centers. It does not include other district sites where workforce education is provided.

earn completions, the ratios are influenced by the enrollment patterns within each institution. For example, students at lower literacy levels will earn LCPs at a much slower rate than students at an adult high school, who earn an LCP with every course. Students in automotive service technology programs can earn many more OCPs in a year than web design students. Therefore, variation in adult general education and career certificate headcount-to-completion ratios can be explained in large part by variation in institutional program offerings and enrollment distribution.

Tables 3A through 3C show these ratios for three types of instruction: adult general education, career certificate, and apprenticeship. Applied technology diploma enrollments are not compared because FCTI is the only charter technical career center with enrollment in this program, and the enrollment was extremely small (two students). ATC’s associate’s degree programs are not included because it is the only career center that offers degree programs (through Daytona Beach Community College). Occupational completion points, and their use as performance measures, are not applicable to continuing workforce education.

Table 3A (below) shows the ratio of adult general education student LCPs earned to enrollment at the public career centers (0.80) and at the three charter technical career centers (0.95, 0.27, and 1.19). FCTI’s and LTC’s completion-to-headcount ratios were both higher than that of the average public career centers. ATC’s ratio (0.27) was almost three times lower than the next lowest ratio (0.77). The charter technical career centers’ higher ratio indicates that their adult education students typically earn more LCPs in one year than the average public career center student.

Table 3A			
Adult General Education (AGE)			
	Unduplicated Headcount	Literacy Completion Points	LCP/UH* Ratio
Public Career Centers (n=40)	66,477	53,484	0.80
First Coast Technical Institute	1,114	1,172	0.95
Advanced Technology College	269	73	0.27
Lake Technical Center	709	847	1.19
Charter Technical Career Center Total	2,092	2,092	1.00

* Unduplicated Headcount

Table 3B (below) shows career certificate students' completion point to enrollment ratios at the public career technical centers and the three charter technical career centers. Charter technical centers' total ratio (1.37) was higher than that of public technical centers (1.19). ATC had a significantly lower ratio (0.35) than that of its peer institutions, and the enrollment numbers were much smaller.

Table 3B			
Career Certificate (PSAV)			
	Unduplicated Headcount	Occupational Completion Points	OCP/UH * Ratio*
Public Career Center (n=40)	41,893	50,061	1.19
First Coast Technical Institute	1,405	2,214	1.58
Advanced Technology College	139	49	0.35
Lake Technical Center	1,242	1,565	1.26
Charter Technical Career Center Total	2,786	3,828	1.37

* Unduplicated Headcount

Table 3C (below) shows public and charter technical career centers' apprentice student OCP-to-enrollment ratios. Apprenticeship students who complete a full year of instruction earn one OCP. Apprenticeship students leaving before one full year decrease this ratio. Overall, charter technical centers' ratio (0.41) was lower than that of public technical centers (0.57), largely the result of ATC's extremely low ratio. If ATC's enrollment and completions are removed, the charter technical center ratio rises to 0.72, which is higher than that of its non-charter peer institutions.

Table 3C			
Apprenticeship			
	Unduplicated Headcount	Occupational Completion Points	OCP/UH* Ratio
Public Career Centers (n=40)	9,691	5,515	0.57
First Coast Technical Institute	128	97	0.76
Advanced Technology College	260	33	0.13
Lake Technical Center	108	74	0.69
Charter Technical Career Center Total	496	204	0.41

* Unduplicated Headcount

Gender Distribution

The statewide public technical center female/male ratio was fairly well balanced: 49.5% female and 50.5% male (see Table 4 below). FCTI had slightly higher percentage of female students (54.9%) than male students (45.1%). ATC had a much higher proportion of male students (86.5%) than female students (12.3%).⁵ ATC's predominately male student population is due to the school's limited program offering. ATC offers three career certificate programs, all three of which the Department of Education recognizes as non-traditional for females: Computer Support Specialist; Air Conditioning, Refrigeration, and Heating Technician; and Automotive Collision Repair and Refinishing. Lake Technical Institute's male/female proportions were almost the same as those of public career technical centers statewide.

Table 4		
Gender Distribution		
	Female	Male
Public Career Centers	49.5%	50.5%
First Coast Technical Institute	54.9%	45.1%
Advanced Technology College	12.3%	86.5%
Lake Technical Center	49.1%	50.9%

⁵ Nine ATC students had unreported gender.

Racial/Ethnic Distribution

Racial/ethnic distribution at the public career technical centers and charter technical career centers are more likely reflective of the centers' locations than the centers' recruiting efforts. Specifically, the large Hispanic population in South Florida influences the statewide numbers. The charter technical career centers' mid-Florida location results in a smaller percentage of Hispanic students and an increase in other ethnic groups' percentages. The current report compares the technical career centers' racial/ethnic distributions to the corresponding K-12 racial/ethnic distributions in each center's service area to make valid comparisons.

The first comparison was between the statewide public technical career center racial/ethnic distribution and that of public technical career centers statewide. Table 5A shows that statewide, White (non-Hispanic) students were a slightly smaller proportion of the public career technical centers' student populations (41%) than that of the public K-12 schools (47%). There were corresponding larger percentages of Black (non-Hispanic) and Hispanic students. This suggests that statewide, Black and Hispanic students were more likely than White students to enroll in career technical schools.

Table 5A				
Racial/Ethnic Distribution Among Public Technical Centers				
	African-American	Hispanic	Other	White
Public Career Centers	26%	29%	4%	41%
Florida K-12 Students	23%	24%	6%	47%

Table 5B (below) reveals that FCTI’s racial/ethnic distribution was very similar to that of the districts that institution serves. The White students represented 72% of FCTI’s enrollment and 76% of the K-12 students at the districts which FCTI serves. The largest percentage difference was in Black students, which was six percentage points higher at FCTI (19%) than at the K-12 districts (13%) that FCTI serves. The Hispanic proportion was 6% for both FCTI’s students and K-12 students in FCTI’s service area.

Table 5B				
Racial/Ethnic Distribution at First Coast Technical Institute				
	African-American	Hispanic	Other	White
First Coast Technical Institute	19%	6%	3%	72%
Clay, Putnam, & St. John’s K-12 Students	13%	6%	5%	76%

Table 5C (below) show the percentage of ATC students who were White is larger (76%) than among Flagler and Volusia public schools (65%).

Table 5C				
Racial/Ethnic Distribution at Advanced Technology College				
	African-American	Hispanic	Other	White
Advanced Technology College	9%	11%	4%	76%
Flagler & Volusia County K-12 Students	15%	14%	6%	65%

Table 5D (below) reveals that LTC’s racial/ethnic distribution is relatively close to that of Lake County schools. LTC’s Hispanic enrollment (11%) lagged five points behind that of Lake County’s K-12 population (16%).

Table 5D				
Racial/Ethnic Distribution at Lake Technical Center				
	African-American	Hispanic	Other	White
Lake Technical Center	16%	11%	3%	70%
Lake County K-12 Students	16%	16%	5%	63%

Financial Need

Pell grants are a federal need-based grant program available to students enrolled in career certificate programs of 600 hours or more. The percentage of postsecondary students receiving Pell grants reflects both the students' socio-economic status and the schools' program lengths: a higher proportion of students enrolled in programs over 600 hours results in a higher proportion of students who are eligible for Pell grants based on program length alone. LTC's percentage (12%) was close to the public career technical centers' percentage (13.3%), reflecting their relative wide range of programs offered (see Table 6 below). FCTI and ATC had a higher percentage of Pell Grant students than public technical centers.

Table 6 Florida Public Career Centers and Charter Technical Career Centers Career Certificate Program (PSAV) Headcount with Number and Percent of Students Receiving Pell Grant, 2006-07				
	Public Career Centers	First Coast Technical Institute	Lake Technical Center	Advanced Technology College
Career Certificate Headcount	41,893	1,405	1,242	139
Number Received Pell Grant	5,559	252	149	24
Percent Received Pell Grant	13.3%	17.9%	12%	17.2%

Summary

In 2006-07, there was a smaller proportion of students in charter technical career center adult education programs than in the average public career center, but the adult education students that were enrolled in charter technical career centers accumulated more LCPs on average than their public career center counterparts. FCTI was more effective with respect to its career certificate completion ratios than the average public career center. FCTI and LTC had higher apprenticeship completion rates than that of the average public career center. ATC's adult education, career certificate, and apprenticeship completion ratios were lower than those of its peer institutions. Geography and program offerings appear to explain the variation in ethnic and gender distributions found in the charter technical career centers. Regarding socio-economic status, ATC and FCTI had a higher percentage of students with demonstrated need than LTC and the average public career center.

APPENDIX A

Authorizing Statute

1002.34 Charter technical career centers.--

(1) **AUTHORIZATION.**--The Legislature finds that the establishment of charter technical career centers can assist in promoting advances and innovations in workforce preparation and economic development. A charter technical career center may provide a learning environment that better serves the needs of a specific population group or a group of occupations, thus promoting diversity and choices within the public education and public postsecondary technical education community in this state. Therefore, the creation of such centers is authorized as part of the state's program of public education. A charter technical career center may be formed by creating a new school or converting an existing school district or community college program to charter technical status.

(2) **PURPOSE.**--The purpose of a charter technical career center is to:

(a) Develop a competitive workforce to support local business and industry and economic development.

(b) Create a training and education model that is reflective of marketplace realities.

(c) Offer a continuum of career educational opportunities using a school-to-work, tech-prep, technical, academy, and magnet school model.

(d) Provide career pathways for lifelong learning and career mobility.

(e) Enhance career and technical training.

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

(a) "Charter technical career center" or "center" means a public school or a public technical center operated under a charter granted by a district school board or community college board of trustees or a consortium, including one or more district school boards and community college boards of trustees, that includes the district in which the facility is located, that is nonsectarian in its programs, admission policies, employment practices, and operations, and is managed by a board of directors.

(b) "Sponsor" means a district school board, a community college board of trustees, or a consortium of one or more of each.

(4) **CHARTER.**--A sponsor may designate centers as provided in this section. An application to establish a center may be submitted by a sponsor or another organization that is determined, by rule of the State Board of Education, to be appropriate. However, an independent school is not eligible for status as a center. The charter must be signed by the governing body of the center and the sponsor, and must be approved by the district school board and community college board of trustees in whose geographic region the facility is located. If a charter technical career center is established by the conversion to charter status of a public technical center formerly governed by a district school board, the charter status of that center takes precedence in any question of governance. The governance of the center or of any program within the center remains with its

board of directors unless the board agrees to a change in governance or its charter is revoked as provided in subsection (15). Such a conversion charter technical career center is not affected by a change in the governance of public technical centers or of programs within other centers that are or have been governed by district school boards. A charter technical career center, or any program within such a center, that was governed by a district school board and transferred to a community college prior to the effective date of this act is not affected by this provision. An applicant who wishes to establish a center must submit to the district school board or community college board of trustees, or a consortium of one or more of each, an application that includes:

- (a) The name of the proposed center.
- (b) The proposed structure of the center, including a list of proposed members of the board of directors or a description of the qualifications for and method of their appointment or election.
- (c) The workforce development goals of the center, the curriculum to be offered, and the outcomes and the methods of assessing the extent to which the outcomes are met.
- (d) The admissions policy and criteria for evaluating the admission of students.
- (e) A description of the staff responsibilities and the proposed qualifications of the teaching staff.
- (f) A description of the procedures to be implemented to ensure significant involvement of representatives of business and industry in the operation of the center.
- (g) A method for determining whether a student has satisfied the requirements for graduation specified in s. 1003.43 and for completion of a postsecondary certificate or degree.
- (h) A method for granting secondary and postsecondary diplomas, certificates, and degrees.
- (i) A description of and address for the physical facility in which the center will be located.
- (j) A method of resolving conflicts between the governing body of the center and the sponsor and between consortium members, if applicable.
- (k) A method for reporting student data as required by law and rule.
- (l) Other information required by the district school board or community college board of trustees.

Students at a center must meet the same testing and academic performance standards as those established by law and rule for students at public schools and public technical centers. The students must also meet any additional assessment indicators that are included within the charter approved by the district school board or community college board of trustees.

(5) APPLICATION.--An application to establish a center must be submitted by February 1 of the year preceding the school year in which the center will begin operation. The sponsor must review the application and make a final decision on whether to approve the application and grant the charter by March 1, and may condition the granting of a charter on the center's taking certain actions or maintaining certain conditions. Such actions and conditions must be provided to the

applicant in writing. The district school board or community college board of trustees is not required to issue a charter to any person.

(6) SPONSOR.--A district school board or community college board of trustees or a consortium of one or more of each may sponsor a center in the county in which the board has jurisdiction.

(a) A sponsor must review all applications for centers received through at least February 1 of each calendar year for centers to be opened at the beginning of the sponsor's next school year. A sponsor may receive applications later than this date if it so chooses. To facilitate an accurate budget projection process, a sponsor shall be held harmless for FTE students who are not included in the FTE projection due to approval of applications after the FTE projection deadline. A sponsor must, by a majority vote, approve or deny an application no later than 60 days after the application is received. If an application is denied, the sponsor must, within 10 days, notify the applicant in writing of the specific reasons for denial, which must be based upon good cause. Upon approval of a charter application, the initial startup must be consistent with the beginning of the public school or community college calendar for the district in which the charter is granted, unless the sponsor allows a waiver of this provision for good cause.

(b) An applicant may appeal any denial of its application to the State Board of Education within 30 days after the sponsor's denial and shall notify the sponsor of its appeal. Any response of the sponsor must be submitted to the state board within 30 days after notification of the appeal. The State Board of Education must, by majority vote, accept or reject the decision of the sponsor no later than 60 days after an appeal is filed, pursuant to State Board of Education rule. The State Board of Education may reject an appeal for failure to comply with procedural rules governing the appeals process, and the rejection must describe the submission errors. The appellant may have up to 15 days after notice of rejection to resubmit an appeal. An application for appeal submitted after a rejection is timely if the original appeal was filed within 30 days after the sponsor's denial. The State Board of Education shall remand the application to the sponsor with a written recommendation that the sponsor approve or deny the application, consistent with the state board's decision. The decision of the State Board of Education is not subject to the provisions of chapter 120.

(c) The sponsor must act upon the recommendation of the State Board of Education within 30 days after it is received, unless the sponsor determines by competent substantial evidence that approving the state board's recommendation would be contrary to law or the best interests of the students or the community. The sponsor must notify the applicant in writing concerning the specific reasons for its failure to follow the state board's recommendation. The sponsor's action on the state board's recommendation is a final action, subject to judicial review.

(d) The Department of Education may provide technical assistance to an applicant upon written request.

(e) The terms and conditions for the operation of a center must be agreed to by the sponsor and the applicant in a written contract. The sponsor may not impose unreasonable requirements that violate the intent of giving centers greater flexibility to meet educational goals. The applicant and sponsor must reach an agreement on the provisions of the contract or the application is deemed denied.

(f) The sponsor shall monitor and review the center's progress toward charter goals and shall monitor the center's revenues and expenditures.

(7) **LEGAL ENTITY.**--A center must organize as a nonprofit organization and adopt a name and corporate seal. A center is a body corporate and politic, with all powers to implement its charter program. The center may:

(a) Be a private or a public employer.

(b) Sue and be sued, but only to the same extent and upon the same conditions that a public entity can be sued.

(c) Acquire real property by purchase, lease, lease with an option to purchase, or gift, to use as a center facility.

(d) Receive and disburse funds.

(e) Enter into contracts or leases for services, equipment, or supplies.

(f) Incur temporary debts in anticipation of the receipt of funds.

(g) Solicit and accept gifts or grants for career center purposes.

(h) Take any other action that is not inconsistent with this section and rules adopted under this section.

(8) **ELIGIBLE STUDENTS.**--A center must be open to all students as space is available and may not discriminate in admissions policies or practices on the basis of an individual's physical disability or proficiency in English or on any other basis that would be unlawful if practiced by a public school or a community college. A center may establish reasonable criteria by which to evaluate prospective students, which criteria must be outlined in the charter.

(9) **FACILITIES.**--A center may be located in any suitable location, including part of an existing public school or community college building, space provided on a public worksite, or a public building. A center's facilities must comply with the State Uniform Building Code for Public Educational Facilities Construction adopted pursuant to s. 1013.37, F.S., or with applicable state minimum building codes pursuant to chapter 553, and state minimum fire protection codes pursuant to s. 633.025, F.S., adopted by the authority in whose jurisdiction the facility is located. If K-12 public school funds are used for construction, the facility must remain on the local school district's Florida Inventory of School Houses (FISH) school building inventory of the district school board and must revert to the district school board if the consortium dissolves and the program is discontinued. If community college public school funds are used for construction, the facility must remain on the local community college's facilities inventory and must revert to the local community college board of trustees if the consortium dissolves and the program is discontinued. The additional student capacity created by the addition of the center to the local school district's FISH may not be calculated in the permanent student capacity for the purpose of determining need or eligibility for state capital outlay funds while the facility is used as a center. If the construction of the center is funded jointly by K-12 public school funds and community

college funds, the sponsoring entities must agree, before granting the charter, on the appropriate owner and terms of transfer of the facility if the charter is dissolved.

(10) EXEMPTION FROM STATUTES.--

(a) A center must operate pursuant to its charter and is exempt from all statutes of the Florida School Code except provisions pertaining to civil rights and to student health, safety, and welfare, or as otherwise required by law.

(b) A center must comply with the Florida K-20 Education Code with respect to providing services to students with disabilities.

(c) A center must comply with the antidiscrimination provisions of s. 1000.05, F.S.

(11) FUNDING.--

(a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a charter technical career center's student membership enrollment must be calculated pursuant to this section.

(b) Each district school board and community college that sponsors a charter technical career center shall pay directly to the center an amount stated in the charter. State funding shall be generated for the center for its student enrollment and program outcomes as provided in law. A center is eligible for funding from workforce education funds, the Florida Education Finance Program, and the Community College Program Fund, depending upon the programs conducted by the center.

(c) A center may receive other state and federal aid, grants, and revenue through the district school board or community college board of trustees.

(d) A center may receive gifts and grants from private sources.

(e) A center may not levy taxes or issue bonds, but it may charge a student tuition fee consistent with authority granted in its charter and permitted by law.

(f) A center shall provide for an annual financial audit in accordance with s. 218.39, F.S.

(g) A center must define in the charter agreement the delivery system in which the instructional offering of educational services will be placed. The rules governing this delivery system must be applied to all of the center's students and must authorize all other sponsoring educational systems to report required enrollment and student data based solely on the rules of the offering institution. Each sponsor shall earn full-time equivalent membership for each student for funding and reporting purposes.

(12) EMPLOYEES OF A CENTER.--

(a) A center may select its own employees.

(b) A center may contract for services with an individual, partnership, or a cooperative. Such persons contracted with are not public employees.

(c) If a center contracts with a public educational agency for services, the terms of employment must follow existing state law and rule and local policies and procedures.

(d) The employees of a center may bargain collectively, as a separate unit or as part of the existing district collective bargaining unit, as determined by the structure of the center.

(e) As a public employer, a center may participate in:

1. The Florida Retirement System upon application and approval as a "covered group" under s. 121.021(34), F.S. If a center participates in the Florida Retirement System, its employees are compulsory members of the Florida Retirement System.

2. The State Community College System Optional Retirement Program pursuant to s. 1012.875(2), F.S., if the charter is granted by a community college that participates in the optional retirement program and meets the eligibility criteria of s. 121.051(2)(c), F.S.

(f) Teachers who are considered qualified by the career center are exempt from state certification requirements.

(g) A public school or community college teacher or administrator may take a leave of absence to accept employment in a charter technical career center upon the approval of the school district or community college.

(h) An employee who is on a leave of absence under this section may retain seniority accrued in that school district or community college and may continue to be covered by the benefit programs of that district or community college if the center and the district school board or community college board of trustees agree to this arrangement and its financing.

(13) **BOARD OF DIRECTORS AUTHORITY.**--The board of directors of a center may decide matters relating to the operation of the school, including budgeting, curriculum, and operating procedures, subject to the center's charter.

(14) **ACCOUNTABILITY.**--Each center must submit a report to the participating district school board or community college board of trustees by August 1 of each year. The report must be in such form as the sponsor prescribes and must include:

(a) A discussion of progress made toward the achievement of the goals outlined in the center's charter.

(b) A financial statement setting forth by appropriate categories the revenue and expenditures for the previous school year.

(15) **TERMS OF THE CHARTER.**--The term of an initial charter may not exceed 5 years. Thereafter, the sponsor may renew a charter for a period up to 5 years. The sponsor may refuse to renew a charter or may revoke a charter if the center has not fulfilled a condition imposed under the charter or if the center has violated any provision of the charter. The sponsor may place the center on probationary status to allow the implementation of a remedial plan, after which, if the plan is unsuccessful, the charter may be summarily revoked. The sponsor shall develop procedures and guidelines for the revocation and renewal of a center's charter. The sponsor must give written notice of its intent not to renew the charter at least 12 months before the charter

expires. If the sponsor revokes a charter before the scheduled expiration date, the sponsor must provide written notice to the governing board of the center at least 60 days before the date of termination, stating the grounds for the proposed revocation. The governing board of the center may request in writing an informal hearing before the sponsor within 14 days after receiving the notice of revocation. A revocation takes effect at the conclusion of a school year, unless the sponsor determines that earlier revocation is necessary to protect the health, safety, and welfare of students. The sponsor shall monitor and review the center in its progress toward the goals established in the charter and shall monitor the revenues and expenditures of the center.

(16) **TRANSPORTATION.**--The center may provide transportation, pursuant to chapter 1006, through a contract with the district school board or the community college board of trustees, a private provider, or parents of students. The center must ensure that transportation is not a barrier to equal access for all students in grades K-12 residing within a reasonable distance of the facility.

(17) **IMMUNITY.**--For the purposes of tort liability, the governing body and employees of a center are governed by s. 768.28, F.S.

(18) **RULES.**--The State Board of Education shall adopt rules, pursuant to chapter 120, relating to the implementation of charter technical career centers.

(19) **EVALUATION; REPORT.**--The Commissioner of Education shall provide for an annual comparative evaluation of charter technical career centers and public technical centers. The evaluation may be conducted in cooperation with the sponsor, through private contracts, or by department staff. At a minimum, the comparative evaluation must address the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the students served, the types and costs of services provided, and the outcomes achieved. By December 30 of each year, the Commissioner of Education shall submit to the Governor, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the Senate and House committees that have responsibility for secondary and postsecondary career and technical education a report of the comparative evaluation completed for the previous school year.

History.--s. 99, ch. 2002-387; s. 1, ch. 2004-357.

APPENDIX B

Program Glossary

Adult General Education

Instructional programs that target the employability of the state's workforce through the following: adult basic education, adult secondary education, vocational-preparatory instruction, instruction for adults with disabilities and English for speakers of other languages. These programs assist adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency and in the completion of a secondary education diploma (Adult High School or GED diploma).

Applied Technology Diploma Program

The applied technology diploma program is considered part of a technical degree program, has a length of less than 60 credit hours, and leads to employment in a specific occupation. The program may include either technical credit or college credit. It may be offered by a public school district only as technical credit, with college credit being awarded upon articulation to a community college. Statewide articulation is guaranteed by s.1007.23, F.S., in addition to guidelines issued by the State Board of Education as found in ss. 1007.24 and 1007.25, F.S.

Apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship program

An apprenticeship program is a course of instruction with an industry sponsor and program standards approved and registered with the Department of Education's Office of Apprenticeship. The registered program standards contain all the terms and conditions for the qualifications, recruitment, selection, employment, salary, and training of apprentices. In addition, it includes the requirements for a written apprenticeship agreement. The program must include on-the-job training and classroom instruction components. Sponsors can elect to provide classroom instruction privately or enter into agreements with state-funded community colleges or school districts. Apprentices enrolled at public institutions are exempt from paying registration, matriculation, and lab fees. Apprentices who complete registered apprenticeship programs are accepted by the industry as journeymen. Certifications earned through registered apprenticeship programs are recognized nationwide.

A pre-apprenticeship program is a course of instruction designed to prepare a person 16 years of age or older to become an apprentice. Courses are approved by and registered with the Department and sponsored by a registered apprenticeship program.

Associate in Applied Science (AAS)

The Associate in Applied Science (AAS) is a two-year technical degree indicating that a student has trained in a particular field and is prepared for employment.

Associate in Science (AS)

The Associate in Science is a two-year technical degree that contains 15-18 credit hours of transferable general education.

Career Certificate Program (Postsecondary Adult Vocational Certificate Program or PSAV program)

Career certificate program means a course of study that leads to at least one occupational completion point. "Occupational completion point" is defined as the "occupational competencies that qualify a person to enter an occupation that is linked to a career and technical program." Full program completions may be issued to students who complete all the occupational completion points for a program. This program is also known as Postsecondary Adult Vocational (PSAV).

College credit may be awarded in such programs through local and statewide articulation agreements if authorized by the rules and regulations of the State Board of Education. The state currently has 37 statewide articulation agreements between Career Certificate/PSAV and Associate in Science/Associate in Applied Science.

Continuing Workforce Education

Continuing workforce education programs are for the following:

- Individuals requiring training for licensure or certification renewal by a regulatory agency or credentialing body;
- New or expanding businesses;
- Business, industry, and government agencies requiring retraining of employees due to changes in products or services or to increase efficiency and productivity; and
- Individuals enhancing occupational skills to maintain current employment, cross-train, or upgrade employment.

This instruction does not result in a technical certificate, diploma, associate in science degree, or associate in applied science degree.