



## **FLORIDA DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL, INC.**

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### **Support Inclusive Postsecondary Education**

**The Council supports inclusive postsecondary education opportunities through degree, certificate, or non-degree programs for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities and urges the legislature to establish statewide implementation of comprehensive transition programs.**

Last year, under the leadership of Senate President Gardiner, SB 7030 established mechanisms for unique postsecondary education programs tailored to meet the needs of students with intellectual disabilities and establish a statewide coordination of information. The Council supported this bill because it contained language to promote inclusive postsecondary education programs in Florida. This has been an important goal for the Council for many years. Unfortunately this bill died before passage. This year the Council will support this initiative once again.

Specifically, the proposed legislation includes two key components that are important to the Council;

- A process through which postsecondary institutions in Florida can voluntarily seek approval to offer a Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Program (FPCTP) for students with intellectual disabilities; and
- A Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities (statewide coordinating center) for statewide coordination of information regarding programs and services for students with disabilities and their families.

This proposed legislation implements the amended federal Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 by complying with new provisions including, but not limited to, supporting programs that provide students with disabilities with a quality higher education. One of these provisions is the Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary programs for students with intellectual disabilities. A Comprehensive Transition Postsecondary program means a degree, certificate, or non-degree postsecondary program that meets the following criteria:

- Are offered by a college or career school and approved by the U.S. Department of Education;
- Are designed to support students with intellectual disabilities who want to continue academic, career, and independent living instruction to prepare for gainful employment;
- Offers academic advising and a structured curriculum; and
- Requires students with intellectual disabilities to participate, for at least half of the program, in:
  - Regular enrollment in credit-bearing courses with students who do not have disabilities.
  - Auditing or participating in courses for which the student does not receive regular academic credit,
  - Enrollment in noncredit-bearing, non-degree courses with students who do not have disabilities.
  - Internships or work-based training with people who do not have disabilities.

The Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Programs will increase the number of students with intellectual and developmental disabilities attaining college experience certificates, industry certification, and occupational completion points which will result in higher levels of meaningful employment and life outcomes.