A bill to be entitled
An act relating to the high school equivalency diploma
program; amending s. 1003.435, F.S.; providing for the
award of a high school equivalency diploma to students
who meet specified criteria relating to high school
graduation requirements; conforming provisions to
changes made by the act; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Section 1003.435, Florida Statutes, is amended
to read:

1003.435 High school equivalency diploma program.—
(1) The State Board of Education shall adopt rules that
prescribe performance standards and provide for comprehensive
examinations to be administered to candidates for high school
equivalency diplomas. Such rules shall include, but are not
limited to, provisions for fees, frequency of examinations, and
procedures for retaking an examination upon unsatisfactory
performance.

(2) The department may award high school equivalency
diplomas to candidates who meet the performance standards
prescribed by the State Board of Education through the high
school equivalency diploma examinations and the subject area
examinations or, for those candidates who failed to pass the
assessments required under s. 1008.22(3), through:

(a) Earning the 24 credits required under s. 1003.4282, or
the required 18 credits under s. 1002.3105(5), for a standard
high school diploma and achieving a 2.5 GPA while enrolled in
high school; or

(b) Earning the 24 credits required under s. 1003.4282, or
the required 18 credits under s. 1002.3105(5), achieving a 2.0
GPA, and earning an industry certification while enrolled in
high school.

(3) Each district school board shall offer and administer
the high school equivalency diploma examinations and the subject
area examinations to all candidates pursuant to rules of the
State Board of Education.

(4) A candidate for a high school equivalency diploma
shall be at least 18 years of age on the date of the examination
or, for those candidates seeking a diploma under paragraph
(2)(a) or paragraph (2)(b), 17 years of age, except that in
extraordinary circumstances, as provided for in rules of the
district school board of the district in which the candidate
resides or attends school, a candidate may take the examination
after reaching the age of 16.

(5) Each district school board shall develop, in
cooperation with the area Florida College System institution
board of trustees, a plan for the provision of advanced
instruction for those students who meet the requirements of
paragraph (2)(a) or paragraph (2)(b), attain satisfactory performance on the high school equivalency examination or the subject area examinations, or who demonstrate through other means a readiness to engage in postsecondary-level academic work. The plan shall include provisions for the equitable distribution of generated funds to cover personnel, maintenance, and other costs of offering the advanced instruction. Priority shall be given to programs of advanced instruction offered in high school facilities.

(6) All high school equivalency diplomas issued under the provisions of this section shall have equal status with other high school diplomas for all state purposes, including admission to any state university or Florida College System institution.

Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2019.