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Proposal calls for science school

Students would live on Kennedy Space Center campus

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It wouldn't be as gyrating as Space Camp.

But lawmakers with an affinity for Florida's space program are pushing legislation to create a new high-school residence program tied to the Kennedy Space Center.

The proposal to create the Governor's School for Science and Technology cleared its first House committee Tuesday despite uncertainty over how it would be funded. The bill devotes \$1 million over two years to get the school launched in Brevard County. It would be operated under the Florida Virtual School program and could be housed at the Kennedy Space Center or nearby.

Theoretically, the school would offer advanced courses in math, science and technology to students physically housed in residence at the school.

The bill calls for the classes to start in the 2009-10 school year and would fund the school through the state's school-finance program. But a House staff analysis doesn't indicate how many students could attend, how much money the state would have to spend to operate it, or how students would be screened for admittance.

And with overall state revenues nearly \$1 billion short, there is a backlog of education proposals looking for cash.

"Our eyes are bigger than our stomachs," said Sen. Steve Wise, the Jacksonville Republican carrying the Senate bill.

Wise leads the Senate's K-12 grade appropriations committee, meaning the bill has a better-than-average chance of getting its startup dollars this year.

It also bypasses a central complaint from school districts in past years by tying its funding to a direct appropriation from the Legislature instead of coming from individual district budgets.

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