

Committee on Appropriations

HB 5101 — Education

by PreK-12 Appropriations Subcommittee and Rep. Tomkow (SB 2516 by Appropriations Committee)

The bill conforms law to the appropriations provided in HB 5001, the General Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2024-2025, for prekindergarten through grade 12 education. Specifically, the bill provides for the following:

Section 1 amends s. 110.123, F.S., to revise definitions to include Florida College System (FCS) institutions in the State Group Health Insurance (SGHI) Program. The initial enrollment period is required to begin as soon as practicable with coverage beginning in the 2025 plan year by July 31, 2025. FCS institutions are required to participate for at least 3 plan years.

Section 2 amends s.1002.31, F.S., to create a transportation stipend from an eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organization, contingent upon a legislative appropriation, for public school students enrolled in kindergarten through grade 8 for transportation to a Florida public school that is different from the school to which the student is assigned or to a developmental research (laboratory) school. The bill specifies the scholarship is on a first-come, first-served basis, and provides priority for awards.

Section 3 amends s. 1002.32, F.S., to modify exceptions on the limitations of one developmental research (laboratory) school (lab school) per university by adding the Florida State University Charter Lab K-12 School in Leon County and removing the Florida Atlantic University Charter Lab K-12 School in St. Lucie County. The Lab School Educational Trust Fund is removed along with a provision that allowed charter lab schools to receive funding for charter school capital outlay.

Section 4 amends s. 1002.33, F.S., to remove a provision to hold harmless a charter school sponsor for full-time equivalent (FTE) students not included in projections due to approval of a charter school application and a reporting requirement of charter school applications. The bill modifies reporting requirements for charter schools from student membership to FTE. The bill also modifies the methodology to calculate state funds and capital outlay funds for charter schools sponsored by a state university or FCS institution, and designates that the university or FCS institution is the fiscal agent for sponsored charter schools.

Section 5 amends s. 1002.391, F.S., to create the Bridge to Speech Program to fund auditory-oral education programs required in law.

Section 6 amends s. 1002.394, F.S., to eliminate transportation to a public school as an eligible use of funds under the Family Empowerment Scholarship Program. The bill also eliminates reference to an award amount.

Section 7 amends s. 1002.395, F.S., to eliminate transportation to a public school as an eligible use of funds under the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program. The bill also eliminates reference to an award amount.

Section 8 amends s. 1002.68, F.S., to designate that the methodology for calculating the Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) performance metric is required in the 2023-2024 program year and issuance of the VPK performance metric to VPK programs is required in the 2024-2025 program year. The bill retains a provision relating to loss of VPK eligibility due to program assessment that was removed in the 2023 Implementing Bill.

Section 9 amends s. 1002.71, F.S., to increase the percentage of funds from the Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) program that each early learning coalition may retain for administrative expenses from 4.0 percent to 5.0 percent.

Section 10 amends s. 1002.82, F.S., to require the Department of Education (DOE) to annually collect cost data from school readiness programs that includes federal salary information for child care personnel and certain data from child care providers. The DOE is required to provide certain school readiness cost data to the Legislature by November 1, 2024, and annually thereafter.

Section 11 amends s. 1002.84, F.S., requiring each early learning coalition to implement a parent sliding fee scale that increases in relation to family income adopted in rule by the DOE for the school readiness program. The existing methodology for distribution of school readiness funding is removed and provides that all instructions for the distribution of funds will be provided by the policies of the Legislature.

Section 12 amends s. 1002.89, F.S., to modify the school readiness program allocation to use unweighted full-time equivalent children instead of eligible population, and use of a “rate index” to account for differences in geographic location. A provision regarding local ordinances relating to staff-to-children ratio that were passed prior to January 1, 2022, is removed.

Section 13 amends s. 1002.895, F.S., to modify elements of the market rate schedule for the school readiness program to remove provisions related to providers with a Gold Seal Quality Care designation and large family child care homes. The market rate schedule is required to differentiate school readiness program rates only by care levels driven by age or whether care is full-time or part-time. The elements related to the annual collection of data by the DOE and subsequent reporting of data to the Early Learning Programs Conference are removed.

Section 14 repeals s. 1002.90, F.S., relating to school readiness cost-of-care information.

Section 15 amends s. 1002.92, F.S., to remove an obsolete reference.

Section 16 creates s. 1003.4206, F.S., to establish the Charity for Change program, subject to funding appropriated in the General Appropriations Act (GAA), to implement the character

education standards required in law and authorize the program to use third-party providers to deliver after-school and summer services that empower students with an evidence-based curriculum.

Section 17 creates s. 1006.042, F.S., to establish the AMIkids, Inc., program, subject to funding appropriated in the GAA, to provide alternatives to institutionalization or commitment for youth by providing services, such as, education, behavior modification, skills development, mental health, workforce development, family functioning, and advocacy.

Section 18 modifies s. 1006.07, F.S., to require each district school board to establish a threat management coordinator to serve as the primary point of contact regarding the district's coordination, communication, and implementation of the threat management program and to report quantitative data on its activities to the Office of Safe Schools.

Section 19 amends s. 1006.27, F.S., to repeal the Driving Choice Grant Program.

Section 20 amends s. 1008.25, F.S., to modify provisions for VPK students demonstrating a substantial deficiency on the coordinated screening and progress monitoring system, which requires students to be referred to a local school district and specifies that such students are eligible for participation in a 100-hour summer bridge program consisting of 4 hours of daily instruction to be provided by the school district.

Section 21 revises s. 1009.896, F.S., to expand the Florida Law Enforcement Academy Scholarship Program to include emergency medical technicians, paramedics, and firefighters, and specify eligibility criteria and authorized uses of funds. Accordingly, the bill changes the name to the Florida First Responder Scholarship Program.

Section 22 modifies s. 1009.90, F.S., to require the DOE to have a database system to track all school bond referendums and debt incurred by a school district via referendum for capital outlay or operational purposes.

Section 23 modifies s. 1011.62, F.S., to authorize charter schools sponsored by a state university or FCS institution to receive the state-funded discretionary contribution. The bill also requires an annual appropriation to the educational enrollment stabilization program to maintain a minimum balance of \$250 million, funds from which may be carried forward for up to 10 years.

Section 24 modifies s. 1011.765, F.S., to specify that, for purposes of providing matching grants through the Florida Academic Improvement Trust Fund, a public school district education foundation includes each district school board direct-support organization and the education foundation established by the Florida Virtual School.

Section 25 amends s. 1012.56, F.S., to eliminate the requirement that applicants for a temporary apprenticeship certificate must first complete the subject area content requirements established by the State Board of Education or the demonstration of mastery of subject area knowledge.

Section 26 modifies s. 1013.62, F.S., to specify that a charter school not eligible to receive capital outlay funds includes a charter school sponsored by a state university or an FCS institution that receives state funding for capital improvement purposes as specified in law.

Section 27 requires the taxable value for Wakulla County School District that was provided by the Department of Revenue to the DOE to be used for the remaining calculations of the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 FEFP and for use in the Prior Period Adjustment Millage calculation. This section is effective until July 1, 2025.

Section 28 provides an effective date of upon becoming law, except as otherwise provided.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2024.

Vote: Senate 9-0; House 108-1