By Senator Simmons

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A bill to be entitled An act relating to the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program; amending s. 1002.51, F.S.; defining the term "nonprofit provider"; amending s. 1002.53, F.S.; revising the prekindergarten program options available to certain parents to include a specified in-home, technology-based program; creating s. 1002.64, F.S.; authorizing each early learning coalition to administer an in-home, technology-based academic prekindergarten program as part of the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program; specifying requirements for the program; requiring the nonprofit provider to provide the early learning coalition with certain program information; requiring the early learning coalition to reimburse an approved nonprofit provider from funds allocated for the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program; amending s. 1002.67, F.S.; authorizing a nonprofit provider to select or design a developmentally appropriate curriculum that meets certain requirements; requiring the nonprofit provider to implement a pre- and postassessment under certain circumstances; requiring each early learning coalition to verify the nonprofit provider meets certain requirements; amending s. 1002.69, F.S.; requiring the Office of Early Learning to adopt certain procedures and criteria regarding a nonprofit provider's kindergarten readiness rate; amending s. 1002.71, F.S.; specifying the calculation of a full-time equivalent student in an in-home,

technology-based academic prekindergarten program; requiring the office to adopt a uniform attendance policy for special populations that participate in a specified prekindergarten program; amending s. 1002.73, F.S.; revising Department of Education duties regarding nonprofit providers; amending s. 1002.75, F.S.; requiring the office to adopt certain procedures for the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program for a nonprofit provider; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Present subsections (5) through (8) of section 1002.51, Florida Statutes, are redesignated as subsections (6) through (9), respectively, and a new subsection (5) is added to that section, to read:

1002.51 Definitions.—As used in this part, the term:

 (5) "Nonprofit provider" means a s. 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code organization that is eligible to deliver an in-home, technology-based academic prekindergarten program for special populations under s. 1002.64.

Section 2. Subsection (3), paragraph (b) of subsection (4), subsection (5), and paragraphs (a) and (c) of subsection (6) of section 1002.53, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

1002.53 Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program; eligibility and enrollment.—

(3) The parent of each child eligible under subsection (2) may enroll the child in one of the following programs:

(a) A school-year prekindergarten program delivered by a

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private prekindergarten provider under s. 1002.55_+

(b) A summer prekindergarten program delivered by a public school or private prekindergarten provider under s. 1002.61.÷

- (c) A school-year prekindergarten program delivered by a public school.
- (d) A specialized instructional services program for children who have disabilities, if the child has been evaluated and determined as eligible, has a current individual educational plan developed by the local school board, and is eligible for the program under s. 1002.66.
- (e) An in-home, technology-based academic prekindergarten program for special populations delivered by a nonprofit provider under s. 1002.64.

Except as provided in s. 1002.71(4), a child may not enroll in more than one of these programs.

(4)

- (b) The application must be submitted on forms prescribed by the Office of Early Learning and must be accompanied by a certified copy of the child's birth certificate. The forms must include a certification, in substantially the form provided in s. 1002.71(6)(b)2., that the parent chooses the private prekindergarten provider, nonprofit provider, or public school in accordance with this section and directs that payments for the program be made to the provider or school. The Office of Early Learning may authorize alternative methods for submitting proof of the child's age in lieu of a certified copy of the child's birth certificate.
 - (5) The early learning coalition shall provide each parent

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enrolling a child in the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education
Program with a profile of every private prekindergarten
provider, nonprofit provider, and public school delivering the
program within the county where the child is being enrolled. The
profiles shall be provided to parents in a format prescribed by
the Office of Early Learning. The profiles must include, at a
minimum, the following information about each provider and
school:

- (a) The provider's or school's services, curriculum, instructor credentials, and instructor-to-student ratio, as appropriate; and
- (b) The provider's or school's kindergarten readiness rate calculated in accordance with s. 1002.69, based upon the most recent available results of the statewide kindergarten screening.
- (6) (a) A parent may enroll his or her child with any private prekindergarten provider or nonprofit provider that is eligible to deliver the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program under this part; however, the provider may determine whether to admit any child. An early learning coalition may not limit the number of students admitted by any private prekindergarten provider or nonprofit provider for enrollment in the program. However, this paragraph does not authorize an early learning coalition to allow a provider to exceed any staff-to-children ratio, square footage per child, or other requirement imposed under ss. 402.301-402.319 as a result of admissions in the prekindergarten program.
- (c) Each private prekindergarten provider, nonprofit provider, and public school must comply with the

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117 antidiscrimination requirements of 42 U.S.C. s. 2000d, 118 regardless of whether the provider or school receives federal 119 financial assistance. A private prekindergarten provider, nonprofit provider, or public school may not discriminate against a parent or child, including the refusal to admit a child for enrollment in the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education 123 Program, in violation of these antidiscrimination requirements.

Section 3. Section 1002.64, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

1002.64 Prekindergarten program delivered by nonprofit providers.-

- (1) Each early learning coalition may administer the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program at the county or regional level for special populations enrolled under s. 1002.53(3)(e) in an in-home, technology-based academic prekindergarten program delivered by a nonprofit provider. The early learning coalition shall determine the special populations for its area, which may include low-income families, rural parts of the state, or high concentrations of English language learners.
- (2) Each in-home, technology-based academic prekindergarten program provided by a nonprofit provider must include at least 45 instructional hours.
- (3) Each in-home, technology-based academic prekindergarten program must contain all of the following elements:
- (a) Be designed to improve a child's transition into elementary education and include content in reading, mathematics, and science.
 - (b) Be aligned with early learning standards, such as "12

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Practice" by the National Association for the Education of Young Children and "Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework." (c) Be administered by a s. 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code organization and be provided to an eligible student in the student's home. (d) Provide for the installation of a computer and Internet access in the homes of low-income families, as defined by the early learning coalition, who do not otherwise have access to such equipment or service. (e) Demonstrate a record of past success through results on independent, valid, and reliable evaluations, such as a randomized controlled trial or a longitudinal study. (f) Include a parental engagement and involvement component, with support models provided in English, Spanish, and other languages, as needed. (4) The nonprofit provider shall provide the early learning coalition with all of the following information regarding its program: (a) The number of families who are:

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- 3. Requesting computers; and
- 4. Furnished computers.
- (b) The frequency of use of the instructional software.

1. Volunteering to participate in the program;

2. Selected to participate in the program;

- (c) Obstacles encountered with hardware, software usage, or providing technical assistance to families.
 - (d) Parental feedback on the program.
 - (e) Student growth on assessments over the course of the

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program, including interim outcomes.

(5) The early learning coalition shall reimburse an approved nonprofit provider for authorized services provided to an eligible child; however, the cumulative total reimbursement for a child may not exceed the base student allocation provided for the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program in the General Appropriations Act. Providers shall be reimbursed from funds allocated to the early learning coalition for the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program.

Section 4. Subsection (2), paragraph (a) of subsection (3), and subsection (4) of section 1002.67, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

1002.67 Performance standards; curricula and accountability.—

- (2) (a) Each private prekindergarten provider, nonprofit provider, and public school may select or design the curriculum that the provider or school uses to implement the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program, except as otherwise required for a provider or school that is placed on probation under paragraph (4)(c).
- (b) Each private prekindergarten provider's, nonprofit provider's, and public school's curriculum must be developmentally appropriate and must:
 - 1. Be designed to prepare a student for early literacy;
- 2. Enhance the age-appropriate progress of students in attaining the performance standards adopted by the department under subsection (1); and
- 3. Prepare students to be ready for kindergarten based upon the statewide kindergarten screening administered under s.

1002.69.

(c) The office shall review and approve curricula for use by private prekindergarten providers and public schools that are placed on probation under paragraph (4)(c). The office shall maintain a list of the curricula approved under this paragraph. Each approved curriculum must meet the requirements of paragraph (b).

- (3) (a) Contingent upon legislative appropriation, each private prekindergarten provider, nonprofit provider, and public school in the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program must implement an evidence-based pre- and post-assessment that has been approved by rule of the State Board of Education.
- (4) (a) Each early learning coalition shall verify that each private prekindergarten provider and nonprofit provider delivering the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program within the coalition's county or multicounty region complies with this part. Each district school board shall verify that each public school delivering the program within the school district complies with this part.
- (b) If a private prekindergarten provider, nonprofit provider, or public school fails or refuses to comply with this part, or if a provider or school engages in misconduct, the office shall require the early learning coalition to remove the provider and require the school district to remove the school from eligibility to deliver the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program and receive state funds under this part for a period of 5 years.
- (c)1. If the kindergarten readiness rate of a private prekindergarten provider, nonprofit provider, or public school

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falls below the minimum rate adopted by the office as satisfactory under s. 1002.69(6), the early learning coalition or school district, as applicable, shall require the provider or school to submit an improvement plan for approval by the coalition or school district, as applicable, and to implement the plan; shall place the provider or school on probation; and shall require the provider or school to take certain corrective actions, including the use of a curriculum approved by the office under paragraph (2)(c) or a staff development plan to strengthen instruction in language development and phonological awareness approved by the office.

- 2. A private prekindergarten provider, nonprofit provider, or public school that is placed on probation must continue the corrective actions required under subparagraph 1., including the use of a curriculum or a staff development plan to strengthen instruction in language development and phonological awareness approved by the office, until the provider or school meets the minimum rate adopted by the office as satisfactory under s. 1002.69(6). Failure to implement an approved improvement plan or staff development plan shall result in the termination of the provider's contract to deliver the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program for a period of 5 years.
- 3. If a private prekindergarten provider, nonprofit provider, or public school remains on probation for 2 consecutive years and fails to meet the minimum rate adopted by the office as satisfactory under s. 1002.69(6) and is not granted a good cause exemption by the office pursuant to s. 1002.69(7), the office shall require the early learning coalition or the school district to remove, as applicable, the

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provider or school from eligibility to deliver the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program and receive state funds for the program for a period of 5 years.

(d) Each early learning coalition and the office shall coordinate with the Child Care Services Program Office of the Department of Children and Families to minimize interagency duplication of activities for monitoring private prekindergarten providers and nonprofit providers for compliance with requirements of the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program under this part, the school readiness program under part VI of this chapter, and the licensing of providers under ss. 402.301-402.319.

Section 5. Subsections (5), (6), and (7) of section 1002.69, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

1002.69 Statewide kindergarten screening; kindergarten readiness rates; state-approved prekindergarten enrollment screening; good cause exemption.—

(5) The office shall adopt procedures to annually calculate each private prekindergarten provider's, nonprofit provider's, and public school's kindergarten readiness rate, which must be expressed as the percentage of the provider's or school's students who are assessed as ready for kindergarten. The methodology for calculating each provider's kindergarten readiness rate must include student learning gains when available and the percentage of students who meet all state readiness measures. The rates must not include students who are not administered the statewide kindergarten screening. The office shall determine learning gains using a value-added measure based on growth demonstrated by the results of the

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preassessment and postassessment from at least 2 successive years of administration of the preassessment and postassessment.

- (6) The office shall periodically adopt a minimum kindergarten readiness rate that, if achieved by a private prekindergarten provider, nonprofit provider, or public school, would demonstrate the provider's or school's satisfactory delivery of the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program.
- (7) (a) Notwithstanding s. 1002.67(4)(c)3., the office, upon the request of a private prekindergarten provider, nonprofit provider, or public school that remains on probation for 2 consecutive years or more and subsequently fails to meet the minimum rate adopted under subsection (6) and for good cause shown, may grant to the provider or school an exemption from being determined ineligible to deliver the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program and receive state funds for the program. Such exemption is valid for 1 year and, upon the request of the private prekindergarten provider, nonprofit provider, or public school and for good cause shown, may be renewed.
- (b) A private prekindergarten provider's, nonprofit provider's, or public school's request for a good cause exemption, or renewal of such an exemption, must be submitted to the office in the manner and within the timeframes prescribed by the office and must include the following:
- 1. Submission of data by the private prekindergarten provider, nonprofit provider, or public school which documents the achievement and progress of the children served as measured by the state-approved prekindergarten enrollment screening and the standardized postassessment approved by the office pursuant

to subparagraph (c) 1.

- 2. Submission and review of data available from the respective early learning coalition or district school board, the Department of Children and Families, local licensing authority, or an accrediting association, as applicable, relating to the private prekindergarten provider's or public school's compliance with state and local health and safety standards, as appropriate.
- 3. Submission and review of data available to the office on the performance of the children served and the calculation of the private prekindergarten provider's or public school's kindergarten readiness rate.
- (c) The office shall adopt criteria for granting good cause exemptions. Such criteria shall include, but are not limited to:
- 1. Learning gains of children served in the Voluntary
 Prekindergarten Education Program by the private prekindergarten
 provider, nonprofit provider, or public school.
- 2. Verification that local and state health and safety requirements are met.
- (d) A good cause exemption may not be granted to any private prekindergarten provider that has any class I violations or two or more class II violations within the 2 years preceding the provider's or school's request for the exemption. For purposes of this paragraph, class I and class II violations have the same meaning as provided in s. 402.281(4).
- (e) A private prekindergarten provider, nonprofit provider, or public school granted a good cause exemption shall continue to implement its improvement plan and continue the corrective actions required under s. 1002.67(4)(c)1., including the use of

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a curriculum approved by the office, until the provider or school meets the minimum rate adopted under subsection (6).

- (f) If a good cause exemption is granted to a private prekindergarten provider or nonprofit provider who remains on probation for 2 consecutive years, the office shall notify the early learning coalition of the good cause exemption and direct that the coalition, notwithstanding s. 1002.67(4)(c)3., not remove the provider from eligibility to deliver the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program or to receive state funds for the program, if the provider meets all other applicable requirements of this part.
- Section 6. Paragraph (b) of subsection (3) and subsections (6) and (8) of section 1002.71, Florida Statutes, are amended, and paragraph (d) is added to subsection (2) of that section, to read:
 - 1002.71 Funding; financial and attendance reporting.-
- (2) A full-time equivalent student in the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program shall be calculated as follows:
- (d) For a special population student in an in-home, technology-based academic prekindergarten program delivered by a nonprofit provider: 45 instructional hours.
- Except as provided in subsection (4), a student may not be reported for funding purposes as more than one full-time equivalent student.
 - (3)
- (b) Each county's allocation per full-time equivalent student in the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program shall

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be calculated annually by multiplying the base student allocation provided in the General Appropriations Act by the county's district cost differential provided in s. 1011.62(2). Each private prekindergarten provider, nonprofit provider, and public school shall be paid in accordance with the county's allocation per full-time equivalent student.

- (6) (a) Each parent enrolling his or her child in the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program must agree to comply with the attendance policy of the private prekindergarten provider, nonprofit provider, or district school board, as applicable. Upon enrollment of the child, the private prekindergarten provider, nonprofit provider, or public school, as applicable, must provide the child's parent with a copy of the provider's or school district's attendance policy, as applicable.
- (b)1. Each private prekindergarten provider's, nonprofit provider's, and district school board's attendance policy must require the parent of each student in the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program to verify, each month, the student's attendance on the prior month's certified student attendance.
- 2. The parent must submit the verification of the student's attendance to the private prekindergarten provider, nonprofit provider, or public school on forms prescribed by the Office of Early Learning. The forms must include, in addition to the verification of the student's attendance, a certification, in substantially the following form, that the parent continues to choose the private prekindergarten provider, nonprofit provider, or public school in accordance with s. 1002.53 and directs that

payments for the program be made to the provider or school:

VERIFICATION OF STUDENT'S ATTENDANCE AND CERTIFICATION OF PARENTAL CHOICE

- I, ...(Name of Parent)..., swear (or affirm) that my child, ...(Name of Student)..., attended the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program on the days listed above and certify that I continue to choose ...(Name of Provider or School)... to deliver the program for my child and direct that program funds be paid to the provider or school for my child.
 - ...(Signature of Parent)...
 ...(Date)...

- 3. The private prekindergarten provider, nonprofit provider, or public school must keep each original signed form for at least 2 years. Each private prekindergarten provider must permit the early learning coalition, and each public school must permit the school district, to inspect the original signed forms during normal business hours. The Office of Early Learning shall adopt procedures for early learning coalitions and school districts to review the original signed forms against the certified student attendance. The review procedures shall provide for the use of selective inspection techniques, including, but not limited to, random sampling. Each early learning coalition and the school districts must comply with the review procedures.
- (c) A private prekindergarten provider, nonprofit provider, or school district, as applicable, may dismiss a student who

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does not comply with the provider's or district's attendance policy. A student dismissed under this paragraph is not removed from the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program and may continue in the program through reenrollment with another private prekindergarten provider, nonprofit provider, or public school. Notwithstanding s. 1002.53(6)(b), a school district is not required to provide for the admission of a student dismissed under this paragraph.

- (d) The Office of Early Learning shall adopt, for funding purposes, a uniform attendance policy for the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program. The attendance policy must apply statewide and apply equally to all private prekindergarten providers and public schools. The attendance policy must include at least the following provisions:
- 1. A student's attendance may be reported on a pro rata basis as a fractional part of a full-time equivalent student.
- 2. At a maximum, 20 percent of the total payment made on behalf of a student to a private prekindergarten provider or a public school may be for hours a student is absent.
- 3. A private prekindergarten provider or public school may not receive payment for absences that occur before a student's first day of attendance or after a student's last day of attendance.

The uniform attendance policy shall be used only for funding purposes and does not prohibit a private prekindergarten provider or public school from adopting and enforcing its attendance policy under paragraphs (a) and (c).

(e) Notwithstanding paragraph (d), the Office of Early

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Learning shall adopt, for funding purposes, a uniform attendance policy for special population students who participate in an inhome, technology-based academic prekindergarten program under s.

1002.64.

- (8) Except as otherwise expressly authorized by law, a private prekindergarten provider, nonprofit provider, or public school may not:
- (a) Require payment of a fee or charge for services provided for a child enrolled in the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program during a period reported for funding purposes; or
- (b) Require a child to enroll for, or require the payment of any fee or charge for, supplemental services as a condition of admitting a child for enrollment in the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program.
- Section 7. Paragraph (g) of subsection (2) and subsection (3) of section 1002.73, Florida Statutes, are amended to read: 1002.73 Department of Education; powers and duties;
 - (2) The department shall adopt procedures for its:

accountability requirements.-

- (g) Granting of a private prekindergarten provider's, nonprofit provider's, or public school's request for a good cause exemption under s. 1002.69(7).
- (3) Except as provided by law, the department may not impose requirements on a private prekindergarten provider or nonprofit provider that does not deliver the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program or receive state funds under this part.
 - Section 8. Paragraphs (b) through (i) of subsection (2),

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paragraphs (b) and (c) of subsection (3), and subsection (5) of section 1002.75, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

1002.75 Office of Early Learning; powers and duties.-

- (2) The Office of Early Learning shall adopt procedures governing the administration of the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program by the early learning coalitions and school districts for:
- (b) Providing parents with profiles of private prekindergarten providers, nonprofit providers, and public schools under s. 1002.53.
- (c) Registering private prekindergarten providers, nonprofit providers, and public schools to deliver the program under ss. 1002.55, 1002.61, and 1002.63, and 1002.64.
- (d) Determining the eligibility of private prekindergarten providers and nonprofit providers to deliver the program under ss. 1002.55, and 1002.61, and 1002.64 and streamlining the process of provider eligibility whenever possible.
- (e) Verifying the compliance of private prekindergarten providers, nonprofit providers, and public schools and removing providers or schools from eligibility to deliver the program due to noncompliance or misconduct as provided in s. 1002.67.
- (f) Paying private prekindergarten providers, nonprofit providers, and public schools under s. 1002.71.
- (g) Documenting and certifying student enrollment and student attendance under s. 1002.71.
- (h) Reconciling advance payments in accordance with the uniform attendance policy under s. 1002.71.
- (i) Reenrolling students dismissed by a private prekindergarten provider, nonprofit provider, or public school

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for noncompliance with the provider's or school district's attendance policy under s. 1002.71.

- (3) The Office of Early Learning shall adopt, in consultation with and subject to approval by the department, procedures governing the administration of the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program by the early learning coalitions and school districts for:
- (b) Placing private prekindergarten providers, nonprofit providers, and public schools on probation and requiring corrective actions under s. 1002.67.
- (c) Removing a private prekindergarten provider, nonprofit provider, or public school from eligibility to deliver the program due to the provider's or school's remaining on probation beyond the time permitted under s. 1002.67.
- (5) Except as provided by law, the Office of Early Learning may not impose requirements on a private prekindergarten provider, nonprofit provider, or public school that does not deliver the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program or receive state funds under this part.
 - Section 9. This act shall take effect July 1, 2018.