

Committee on Education Pre-K -12

CS/HB 1361 — Education

by Education & Employment Committee and Rep. Temple and others (CS/SB 7038 by Appropriations Committee; Education Pre-K -12 Committee; and Senator Yarborough)

The bill enhances supports for students in the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program (VPK) through grade 12 by:

- Designating the University of Florida Lastinger Center for Learning (Lastinger Center) as the administrator of the New Worlds Reading Initiative and New Worlds Scholarship programs.
- Codifying the Lastinger Center in law and establishing duties for the center.
- Establishing the New Worlds Tutoring Program to be administered by the Lastinger Center to support school districts and schools in improving student achievement in reading and mathematics, including grants for automated tutoring for students in kindergarten through grade 5 and for in-person tutoring for, at a minimum, students in grades kindergarten through 5.
- Expanding the eligibility for the New Worlds Scholarship Accounts to include VPK students.
- Expands the minimum qualifications to offer tutoring under the New Worlds Scholarship Accounts to include a person with a specified microcredential or specified VPK credential.
- Clarifying student eligibility for supports under the New Worlds Reading Initiative as identified by student progress monitoring.
- Providing for a mechanism for parents to use the New Worlds Scholarship Account to make direct purchases of qualifying expenditures.
- Establishing a grant program for artificial intelligence learning platforms in order to improve outcomes and reduce teacher workload. The bill provides a recurring appropriation of \$2 million for the Lastinger Center to administer the grants for subscription fees and professional learning to support and accelerate learning for students in grades 6 through 12 during the school day.

The provisions of the bill implementing the New Worlds Reading Initiative are subject to legislative appropriation.

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

Vote: Senate 38-0; House 113-0