

By Senator Holzendorf

2-1093A-98

1                                   A bill to be entitled  
2           An act relating to education; creating the  
3           School Readiness Commission to serve as an  
4           advisory body to the State Board of Education  
5           and other state agencies on matters that relate  
6           to school readiness; providing for the  
7           commission to be assigned to the Executive  
8           Office of the Governor for administrative  
9           purposes; providing for the Governor to appoint  
10          the members of the commission; providing for  
11          the members to be approved by the State Board  
12          of Education and confirmed by the Senate;  
13          requiring the commission to appoint an  
14          executive director; providing for payment of  
15          per diem and travel expenses of commission  
16          members; establishing duties of the commission;  
17          requiring the commission to prepare a system  
18          for measuring school readiness; specifying  
19          objectives to be measured by such system;  
20          requiring the commission to contract with an  
21          independent entity to evaluate the measurement  
22          system; requiring the commission to make  
23          recommendations to the Governor and the State  
24          Board of Education; providing an effective  
25          date.

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

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29           Section 1. School Readiness Commission.--  
30           (1) The School Readiness Commission is established and  
31 assigned to the Executive Office of the Governor for

1 administrative purposes. The commission shall carry out the  
2 duties and responsibilities provided in this section and  
3 delegated by the State Board of Education and is not subject  
4 to control, supervision, or direction by the Executive Office  
5 of the Governor or the State Board of Education. The  
6 commission shall serve as an advisory body to the State Board  
7 of Education and other appropriate state agencies and entities  
8 on all matters relating to school readiness. In addition, the  
9 commission's reports and recommendations shall be made  
10 available to the Governor, the Legislature, the State Board of  
11 Education, other appropriate state agencies and entities,  
12 district school boards, central agencies for child care, and  
13 county public health units.

14 (2) The commission shall be composed of 12 members of  
15 the public who represent the various geographic regions of the  
16 state. Each member shall be appointed by the Governor, subject  
17 to approval by three members of the State Board of Education  
18 other than the Governor and subject to confirmation by the  
19 Senate. Members shall be appointed to 4-year terms of office.  
20 However, of the initial appointees, three shall be appointed  
21 to 1-year terms, three shall be appointed to 2-year terms,  
22 three shall be appointed to 3-year terms, and three shall be  
23 appointed to 4-year terms. The members of the commission shall  
24 elect a chairperson annually. Any vacancy on the commission  
25 shall be filled in the same manner as the original  
26 appointment.

27 (3) The commission shall meet as often as it deems  
28 necessary to carry out its duties and responsibilities.

29 (4) The commission shall appoint an executive director  
30 to serve at its pleasure, who shall perform the duties  
31 assigned to him or her by the commission. The executive

1 director shall be the chief administrative officer of the  
2 commission and shall be responsible for appointing all  
3 employees and staff members of the commission, who shall serve  
4 under his or her direction and control.

5 (5) Members of the commission shall serve without  
6 compensation, but are entitled to reimbursement for per diem  
7 and travel expenses incurred in the performance of their  
8 duties as provided in section 112.061, Florida Statutes.

9 (6) The commission shall:

10 (a) Serve as a citizen board to coordinate the efforts  
11 toward school readiness in this state and provide independent  
12 policy analyses and recommendations to the Governor, the State  
13 Board of Education, and the Legislature.

14 (b) Prepare and submit to the State Board of Education  
15 a system for measuring school readiness. The system must  
16 include a screening instrument, or instruments, which shall  
17 provide objective data regarding the following expectations  
18 for school readiness:

19 1. The child's immunizations.

20 2. The child's display of physical development  
21 appropriate for kindergarten.

22 3. The child's compliance with rules, limitations, and  
23 routines.

24 4. The child's successful engagement in kindergarten  
25 tasks.

26 5. The child's demonstration of appropriate  
27 interactions with adults.

28 6. The child's demonstration of appropriate  
29 interactions with peers.

30 7. The child's effective coping with challenges and  
31 frustrations.

1           8. The child's demonstration of appropriate self-help  
2 skills.

3           9. The child's ability to express his needs  
4 appropriately.

5           10. The child's demonstration of verbal communication  
6 skills necessary to succeed in kindergarten.

7           11. The child's demonstration of problem-solving  
8 skills necessary to succeed in kindergarten.

9           12. The child's following of verbal directions.

10           13. The child's demonstration of curiosity,  
11 persistence, and exploratory behavior.

12           14. The child's demonstration of an interest in books  
13 and other printed materials.

14           15. The child's paying attention to stories.

15           16. The child's participation in art and music  
16 activities.

17           (c) Prepare a plan for implementing the system for  
18 measuring school readiness in such a way that all children in  
19 this state have the opportunity to undergo the screening in  
20 the year prior to their entry into kindergarten. The plan must  
21 include a way to make the screening instrument and the  
22 training required to administer it available to public and  
23 private providers of preschool and child care programs, and a  
24 way to make the screening available to children who do not  
25 participate in such programs.

26           (d) Establish a method for collecting data from the  
27 screening instrument and establish guidelines for using the  
28 data so that the measurement, the data collection, and the use  
29 of the data serve the statewide goal that all children will be  
30 ready for school. The criteria for determining which data to  
31 collect should be the usefulness of the data to state

1 policymakers and program administrators in administering  
2 programs and allocating state funds.

3 (e) Contract with an independent entity for an  
4 evaluation of the measurement system. The evaluation must  
5 provide the information that local and state agencies, the  
6 Governor, and the Legislature need to provide for the  
7 effective administration of programs that serve preschool  
8 children. The evaluation must provide information that will  
9 assist providers of private preschool and child care programs  
10 in assessing the success of preschool and child care programs  
11 and making decisions about improving program services to  
12 prepare children for school.

13 (f) Recommend to the Governor and the State Board of  
14 Education rules, and revisions or repeal of rules, which would  
15 increase the effectiveness of programs that prepare children  
16 for school.

17 (g) Conduct studies and planning activities related to  
18 the overall improvement and effectiveness of school-readiness  
19 measures.

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21 To ensure that the system for measuring school readiness is  
22 comprehensive and appropriate statewide, as the system is  
23 developed and implemented, the commission must consult with  
24 representatives of district school systems, providers of  
25 public and private child care, health care providers, large  
26 and small employers, and experts in child development.

27 Section 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a  
28 law.

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SENATE SUMMARY

Establishes the School Readiness Commission to act as an advisory body on matters that relate to programs that prepare children for school. Requires that the Governor appoint 12 members of the public to serve on the commission. Requires that the appointees be subject to approval by the State Board of Education and confirmation by the Senate. Requires the commission to prepare a system for measuring school readiness and a plan for implementing the system. Requires that the system be evaluated by an independent entity. Requires the commission to recommend rules or revisions to rules in order to increase the effectiveness of programs that prepare children for school.