

STORAGE NAME: h0259.ei

DATE: January 14, 1999

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION INNOVATION
BILL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT**

BILL #: HB 259

RELATING TO: School Readiness

SPONSOR(S): Representatives Warner and Lynn

COMPANION BILL(S):

ORIGINATING COMMITTEE(S)/COMMITTEE(S) OF REFERENCE:

- (1) EDUCATION INNOVATION
 - (2) EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS
 - (3)
 - (4)
 - (5)
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I. SUMMARY:

House Bill 259 coordinates existing child care and early education programs into a seamless, integrated system for school readiness. The bill combines funding streams for the various programs. The system is governed at the state level by a State School Readiness Governing Board and by local coalitions established at the county level.

Each coalition will have a school readiness agent to provide administration, support, funding, and monitoring services. The school readiness agent may not be a provider of early education or child care services. The school readiness program will be phased in with one time coalition initiation grants being offered for earlier approved coalitions: \$50,000 for approval by October 1, 1999; and \$25,000 for approval by March 1, 2000.

The state governing board will develop the performance standards, outcome measures, data design and review, and approve and review local school readiness coalitions and plans.

The school readiness program will operate in conjunction with the district school system but will not be part of the district school system. The program will be for children under the age of kindergarten eligibility and will use a sliding scale to help fund the local school readiness program. Each coalition will develop a reimbursement rate schedule. The bill creates a School Readiness Needs Assessment Conference to develop information on the programs, including forecast of program needs.

The funding for this program would remain no less than constant with the current funding level for early childhood education and child care programs currently in operation. The fiscal impact would come from one time coalition initiation grants and incentive bonuses. The bill also provides for a one time incentive bonus on a per-student served basis for the coalition plan's ability to clearly show enhancement in the quality and standards of the school readiness program without diminishing the number of children served. However, these bonuses are subject to an appropriation from the Legislature. Other fiscal impacts will result from hiring an executive director and staff to administer the program as well as per diem and travel expenses for the state governing board. These amounts are undetermined at this time.

II. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS:

A. PRESENT SITUATION:

Currently there are three major publicly funded early child care and education programs: the subsidized child care program, administered by the Department of Children and Families; the prekindergarten early intervention program, administered by the Department of Education; and, the Head Start program, administered through various local agencies by contract with the federal government.

The Legislature has established in section 229.591, Florida Statutes, eight education goals that the state as a whole shall work toward. Goal 1 is readiness to start school and goes on to require that communities and schools collaborate to prepare children and families for children's success in school. The Florida Commission on Education Reform and Accountability in section 229.593, Florida Statutes, which was created by the 1990 Legislature to oversee the establishment and implementation of a new system of school improvement and education accountability from preschool to grade 12, and the Commissioner of Education have set two standards to support successful outcomes associated with this goal:

- ◆ "Before entrance to Florida public schools, children have received appropriate health and social services so that optimum learning can occur."
- ◆ "At entrance to Florida public schools, children will be at a developmental level of physical, social, and intellectual readiness necessary to ensure success as a learner"

The Accountability Commission's measure for Goal 1 is the percentage of children meeting readiness expectations determined by school district assessment. The Department of Education has developed a list of readiness expectations to be used by districts for the readiness assessment. If a child meets 75% of the expectations, the child is considered to be ready for kindergarten.

Subsidized Child Care

Florida has operated a subsidized child care program for approximately 20 years. The purpose of the current subsidized child care program, administered by the Department of Children and Families, as described in s. 402.3015, F.S., is "to provide quality child care to enhance the development, including language, cognitive, motor, social, and self-help skills of children who are at risk of abuse or neglect and children of low-income families." The goal is to promote financial self-sufficiency and life skills for the families of these children.

Priority for participation in the subsidized child care program is accorded to children less than 13 years of age who are determined to be at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation and who are currently clients of the Department's Children and Families Services Program Office; children at risk of welfare dependency, including children of participants in the WAGES Program, children of migrant farm workers, children of

teen parents, and children of other families at risk of welfare dependency; and, children of working poor families. Performance measures approved for this program in fiscal year 1998-99 states that 80 percent of children age four placed with contracted providers who have been in care for nine months, will enter kindergarten ready to learn as determined through DOE or local school systems' readiness assessment.

Prekindergarten Program

The prekindergarten program is established pursuant to s. 230.2305, F.S., and is designed to serve economically disadvantaged 3- and 4-year-olds, the majority of whom shall be 4 years of age, in educational programs administered by Florida's school districts. This program is funded by a direct appropriation of lottery dollars. School districts may spend the funds they receive to implement and conduct a prekindergarten program or to contract with public or non-public entities to serve eligible children.

Each school district's prekindergarten plan is developed by the school board in coordination with the local interagency coordinating council on early childhood services. Each coordinating council must include private and subsidized child care program representatives as well as representatives from the federally funded Head Start program.

Head Start

Head Start is a federally funded comprehensive program serving three, four and five year olds. The funds come directly from the federal government to the local grantee, usually private non-profits or local governmental agencies. Though the federal government does provide stringent performance standards which each local grantee must meet, each local grantee is given some autonomy in planning its curriculum.

Head Start focuses on the entire child and the entire family's well-being. Included in services are health (medical, dental and mental health services are provided), parent involvement, social services, education, and community volunteerism components. Services are also provided for children with disabilities.

The Head Start program contains a strong parental involvement element; 51 percent of the membership of the local Head Start Policy Council must be parents of an enrolled child. The remaining members are community members.

In the belief that the earlier the services, the better for the child, Congress has authorized an Early Head Start program, including five grantees in Florida, serving several hundred expectant families with children below the age of four.

Coordination across these and other early education programs and services at the local level is reportedly varied.

The following chart shows requirements, funding levels, and eligibility for the three programs.

Major Early Care and Education Programs For Children Under The Age of Five

	Child Care	Pre-K Early Intervention	Head Start
Total Funding	\$353.6 million	\$97.1 million	\$144.7 million
Avg. Expenditure Per Child Per Year	\$3,750	\$3,200	\$4,968 (for comprehensive services)
Hours of Service	10 hours per day, 249 days per year	6 hours per day, 180 days per year	6-12 hours per day, 180-260 days per year
Avg. Expenditure Per Child Per Hour	\$1.19	\$2.96	\$2.56
Children Served	111,150 (under age 5)	10,014	29,523
Maximum Family Income	150% of federal poverty level	130% of federal poverty level	100% of federal poverty level
Parent Fees Charged	Yes; sliding scale	No	No
Staff Requirements	Centers have 1 CDA or equivalent per 20 children Family day care homes complete 3-hour course. No requirements for informal providers.	DOE-certified teacher or CDA with supervision from certified teacher; others complete a 30-hour training	Teacher must have CDA or equivalent. Aide must have diploma and be enrolled in CDA program.
Staff: Child Ratios			
Birth-12 Months	1:4		Birth through 3 1:4
12-24 Months	1:6		
Two-year-olds	1:11		
Three-year-olds	1:15	1:10	1:7.5
Four-year-olds	1:20	1:10	1:10

* Information in the chart is from OPPAGA's 1998 Follow-Up Review of Early Education and Child Care Programs and the Florida House of Representatives Committee on Children and Family Empowerment Interim Project: "School Readiness and Developmental Assessment in Child Care Arrangements", Fall 1998.

Child Care Licensing

The Department of Children and Families Services (CFS) licenses child care facilities and some family day care homes and maintains a registry of other family day care homes that are not subject to licensure. All child care facilities must have their licenses renewed annually and must meet specified licensing standards delineated in s. 402.305, F.S., including minimum staff credentials, sanitation and safety, and child discipline. Child care

centers and certain homes are subject to periodic inspections to ensure compliance with state requirements.

Chapter 411 and The State Coordinating Council for Early Childhood Services

Chapter 411, F.S., requires collaboration between DOE and CFS to provide early assistance to children who are handicapped or at risk of developmental delay in order to help the children achieve optimum growth and development. This chapter creates the State Coordinating Council for Early Childhood Services which advises the Governor, the Legislature, and state agencies regarding the coordination of the various programs serving preschool children. The council members represent the various public and private programs and services for preschool children and their families. The council is not assigned to a single agency, but rather floats back and forth between DOE and CFS in alternate years. In some years the council was without support staff in its assigned agency, a situation which contributed to an unevenness in the council's effectiveness.

The Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA)

The Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) conducted a study in 1995 and a follow up to that study in 1998. Their recommendations were that the Legislature make changes to the current early childhood education and child care system that will:

- ◆ ensure that an entity is vested with sufficient authority to oversee the system and ensure that the state will meet its school readiness goals;
- ◆ facilitate the development of uniform program outcomes and standards across all early education and child care programs; and
- ◆ maintain local discretion, but improve coordination among programs at the local level by providing clear guidance and tools that would build upon the success of the current system.

The Readiness Committee Recommendations

The Governor's Commission on Education was created by executive order on September 20, 1996, to conduct a review of Florida's public schools from prekindergarten through college. The commission was specifically asked to address the objective of improving readiness for school, and an appointed Readiness Committee made recommendations that were published by the commission in their November 1998 report "Fixing Florida Schools: Mission Incomplete." The recommendations are:

- ◆ First, state policy makers should act in 1999 to make the state's first education goal a reality, not merely an attractive platitude. Assisting communities and schools in collaborations to prepare children and families for success in school, as Goal 1 states, requires action. Florida should become the national leader in addressing early childhood services and school readiness in a coherent, coordinated fashion. It should do so in part by elevating the condition of children 0-5 to the top of Florida's agenda, statewide and in every county.

- ◆ Second, a new system of early childhood services must achieve improved collaboration and coordination, at both the state and local levels. A new state governing or administrative structure for early childhood should be created. At the local level, the new system should build upon, and not uproot, the service delivery capacity already in place. Community-based efforts, granted flexibility to address local problems with localized solutions, within the boundaries of appropriate state standards, hold the most promise for significant improvements in the state of readiness of Florida's children.
- ◆ Third, state policy and community collaborations must recognize that every program, service and activity before kindergarten--including health care, child care and formal preschool--either contributes to or detracts from school readiness. All must be considered part of a coherent approach to early childhood services, and all state and local government services in these areas should be linked to a new early childhood organizational structure.
- ◆ Fourth, quality is essential. Quality includes the education and training of care givers, the number of children for which each care giver is responsible, and curriculum. Quality in existing programs must not be diluted, and poor quality programs must be improved. Specifically, there is no-good reason to abandon the Prekindergarten Early Intervention Program, to raise its student-teacher ratios, or to otherwise retreat from the quality assurances built into the program.
- ◆ Fifth, increased investment will be necessary to make a reality of Goal 1. That investment will take the form of additional faith-based, charitable, private-sector and other community-based resources, as well as additional funds from federal, state and local governments.

B. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

The intent of House Bill 259 is to coordinate existing early education programs and to create a seamless programmatic funding stream to assure enhanced funding and fiscal responsibility. The school readiness program would work to assure that all early education programs:

- ◆ are developmentally appropriate;
- ◆ involve parents;
- ◆ serve as preventive measures for children at risk of future school failure;
- ◆ enhance the educational readiness of all children;
- ◆ support family education;
- ◆ provide health screening and referral; and
- ◆ operate on a full-day year round basis when needed.

School readiness programs are not to exist as isolated programs. Implementation on a county by county basis assures integration of all programs operating within that county.

Funding streams are combined for various existing early education programs. The funding will not be less than existing funding for fiscal year 1999-2000. The readiness programs are to operate in conjunction with district school systems but are not to be constructed as part of the system of free public schools. A sliding fee scale is made uniform. All participants make co-payments. It is the intent of the Legislature to preserve the federal child care income tax credit for all school readiness programs.

Governance

The bill creates the State School Readiness Governing Board as the state level governing entity. Local School Readiness Coalitions are established on a county-by-county basis. The Local School Readiness Coalition submits a school readiness implementation plan for the state governing board's approval.

State School Readiness Governing Board

The State School Readiness Governing Board is established in the Executive Office of The Governor. Membership of the board consists of:

- ◆ the Lieutenant Governor, or his or her designee;
- ◆ the Secretary of the Department of Children and Family Services;
- ◆ the Commissioner of Education, or his or her designee;
- ◆ the chair of the WAGES program State Board of Directors;
- ◆ the chair of the State Workforce Development Board; and
- ◆ six members appointed by the Governor.

Four of the Governor's appointees shall be appointed from a list of six nominees, of which three have been submitted by the President of the Senate, and three have been submitted by the Speaker of the House of Representatives. The appointed members are to be business, community, and civic leaders in the state who are not elected to public office and do not earn their income in the early education and child care industry. The members are also to be geographically and demographically representative of the state. The duties of the governing board are:

- ◆ to be responsible for the prudent use of public and private funds;
- ◆ to provide final approval and periodic review of local coalitions and plans;
- ◆ to provide leadership for enhancement of school readiness in this state by aggressively establishing a unified approach to the state's efforts toward enhancement of school readiness;
- ◆ to safeguard the effective use of federal, state, local, and private resources;
- ◆ to adopt a system for measuring school readiness;

- ◆ to develop a method for collecting data and establish guidelines for using data so that the measurement, data collection, and use of the data serve the statewide goal that all children will be ready for school; and

to develop and adopt performance standards and outcome measures.

Additionally, the board may develop and implement strategies that address the state's readiness programs; make recommendations to move agency staff from the Department of Education, the Department of Health and/or the Department of Children and Family Services; and adopt rules necessary to administer this program.

Eligibility

The school readiness program will be established for children from birth to kindergarten. It is funded through existing programs and any additional funds appropriated for this purpose. The existing programs are:

- ◆ Florida First Start programs;
- ◆ Even-Start programs;
- ◆ prekindergarten early intervention programs;
- ◆ Head Start programs;
- ◆ programs offered by public and private providers of child care;
- ◆ preschool programs for children with disabilities;
- ◆ programs for migrant children;
- ◆ Title I programs;
- ◆ subsidized child care programs;
- ◆ teen parent programs; and
- ◆ other services.

The bill gives priority to participants in the school readiness program who fit one or more of the following criteria: to children who are determined to be at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation and who are clients of the Department of Children and Family Services, children at risk of welfare dependency, including the economically disadvantaged, children of participants in the WAGES program, children of migrant farm workers, children of teen parents, and children in a family whose income is at or below poverty level, children in families between 100 percent and 150 percent of poverty level, three and four year old children who are students with disabilities in a part-time exceptional student education program funded through the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP), children served through a home visitor program, and intensive parent education programs. A child who is described as "economically disadvantaged" is defined by this bill as a child whose family income is below 150 percent of the federal poverty level.

Standards and Outcome Measures

All publicly funded school readiness programs will be required to meet the performance standards and outcome measures developed and approved by the governing board. These performance standards and outcome measures will be applicable on a state-wide basis and must:

- ◆ help prepare preschool children to enter kindergarten ready to learn, as measured by a methodology adopted by the governing board with input from the Department of Education;
- ◆ provide extended-day services and extended-year services when needed;
- ◆ include a staff development plan to ensure that the program has qualified professionals;
- ◆ provide for expanded access to community services and resources, including adult literacy assistance, to help families achieve economic self-sufficiency;
- ◆ provide for a simplified point of entry and unified waiting list;
- ◆ serve at least as many children as were served prior to implementation of the program;
- ◆ establish a community plan to increase the number of accredited centers; and
- ◆ meet all state licensing guidelines where applicable.

The school readiness agent shall be responsible to its coalition for monitoring to ensure the achievement of these performance standards and outcome measures. It is the responsibility of the governing board to develop a phase-in schedule through which all publicly funded school readiness programs will be measured by the standards and outcomes.

In addition to adhering to standards and outcome measures, all publicly funded school readiness programs are required to implement a comprehensive program of children and family services that will enhance the cognitive, social, and physical development of children.

Local School Readiness Coalitions

Members of the Local Readiness Coalition are:

- ◆ the Department of Children and Family Services district administrator;
- ◆ the district superintendent of schools;

- ◆ the regional workforce development board or chair;
- ◆ the county health department director or his or her designee;
- ◆ the Children's Services Council chair or executive director;
- ◆ the child care licensing agency head;
- ◆ two members appointed by the Department of Children and Family Services district administrator;
- ◆ two members appointed by the board of county commissioners;
- ◆ two members appointed by the district school board;
- ◆ the central child care agency administrator; and
- ◆ the Head Start director or directors.

All members are voting members with the exception, due to funding differences, of central child care agency administrators and the Head Start director(s). No member may appoint a designee to act in his or her place. (They may send a representative to the meeting but that representative cannot vote on their behalf.)

Implementation

The county will continue to receive funds in the current manner until a coalition is established and the coalition's plans are approved by the governing board. The plan must address eligibility requirements, performance standards and outcome measures, and reimbursement rates. The coalition has two waiver opportunities:

- ◆ The coalition may request the Governor to apply for a waiver, on their behalf, to allow the county to administer the Head Start Program to accomplish the purposes of the school readiness program.
- ◆ If any school readiness plan can demonstrate that specific statutory goals can be achieved more effectively by using procedures that require modification of existing rules, policies, or procedures, a request for a waiver to the governing board may be made as part of the coalition's readiness plan.

Once the plan is approved by the governing board, services are provided through the coalition and its school readiness agent. Any provisions approved by the governing board in a coalition's plan supersede and prevail over statutory provisions in:

- ◆ section, 230.2303, F.S., the Florida First Start Program;
- ◆ section, 230.2305, F.S., the prekindergarten early intervention program;
- ◆ section, 230.2306, F.S., the prekindergarten children service needs assessments;

- ◆ section, 383.011, F.S., the administration of maternal and child care health programs;
- ◆ section, 402.3015, F.S., the subsidized child care programs;
- ◆ section, 409.153, F.S., the implementation of Healthy Families Florida program;
- ◆ section, 411.204, F.S., the program evaluation design and conduct and independent third-party evaluation provision;
- ◆ section, 411.221, F.S., the prevention and early assistance strategic plan;
- ◆ section, 411.222, F.S., the intra-agency and interagency coordination responsibilities and provisions;
- ◆ section, 411.223, F.S., uniform standards for early childhood services; and
- ◆ section, 411.232, F.S., the Children's Early Investment Program.

Upon approval of the local coalition's plan, the school readiness agency will then utilize the plan and issue a request for proposals for:

- ◆ System support services, including a central agency, child care resources and referral, eligibility determinations, and training of providers; and
- ◆ direct enhancement services to families and children.

Both of the above services are in addition to payments for the placement of children in school readiness programs.

Two or more counties may join for the purpose of planning and implementing a school readiness program.

Coalition Initiation Grants

One time coalition initiation grants are provided in amounts of \$50,000 to coalitions approved by the governing board by October 1, 1999, and \$25,000 to coalitions approved by the governing board by March 1, 2000. They are to support the coalition in developing its plan. Coalitions that have their plan approved by March 1, 2000, shall receive their funding through the governing board in fiscal year 2000-2001 and each year after. Each year thereafter any increases for school readiness are administered through the coalition. If a county does not have a coalition by March 1, 2001, the governing board will request proposals.

A one time incentive bonus is available on a per-student served basis for the coalition plan's ability to clearly show enhancement in the quality and standards of the school readiness program without diminishing the number of children served. The incentive bonus is subject to an appropriation by the Legislature.

Funding

The legislative intent is to establish an integrated and quality seamless service delivery system for all publicly funded early childhood education and child care programs operating in this state. All funds designated for the services specified shall be transferred to the school readiness agent. Guidelines are established for investment and distribution of funds. State funds appropriated for school readiness may not be used for construction of new facilities or to purchase school busses. The governing board distributes all funds as block grants. Each coalition is required to create a reimbursement rate schedule that encompasses all programs funded by that coalition. The reimbursement rate must include the projected number of children and be approved by the board.

School Readiness Agent

The school readiness agent may be a public entity, a private nonprofit organization, or a partnership between the two; however, the agent may not provide direct early education or child care services. A children's services council or juvenile welfare board will be allowed to act as the school readiness agent and contract for services or programs under the exclusive jurisdiction of the public school system if they are selected as the school readiness agent; the provisions relating to children's services and independent special districts in section 125.901(2)(a)3., F.S., will not prohibit these entities from doing so. The school readiness agent is required to provide, through a request for proposal process, all administrative, system support, direct enhancement, and direct funding services as determined by the coalition. The school readiness agent is required to monitor the providers, and the providers must allow the school readiness agent access to fulfill its monitoring responsibilities in order to be paid any public funds.

Parental Choice

The school readiness program provides parental choice pursuant to a purchase service order that ensures flexibility in school readiness programs and payment agreements. Funds are disseminated through an electronic transfer system established by DOE and the Office of the Comptroller. The Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) will provide fiscal oversight for accountability purposes. A parent may choose an informal child care arrangement according to federal regulations. The guidelines governing the use of purchase orders are:

- ◆ the purchase order must bear the name of the beneficiary and the program provider;
- ◆ when redeemed the purchase order must bear the signature of both the beneficiary and an authorized representative of the provider;
- ◆ if it is determined that a provider has provided any cash to the beneficiary in return for receiving the purchase order, the school readiness agent has the responsibility of referring the matter to the Division of Public Assistance Fraud for investigation.

Evaluation

Each coalition shall conduct an evaluation of the effectiveness of its school readiness program including performance standards and outcome measure, and shall provide an annual report to the governing board.

Conflict Provisions

In the event of a conflict between the provisions of this section and federal requirements, the federal requirements shall control.

School Readiness Screening Instrument

The school readiness screening instrument(s) adopted by the State School Readiness Governing Board must be uniformly utilized by all school districts as the kindergarten screening instrument administered to each kindergarten student in the district school system.

School Readiness Needs Assessment Conference

The School Readiness Needs Assessment Conference will develop official information relating to the state's system of school readiness programs including forecasts of school readiness program needs in, but not limited to, the following areas, subsidized child care, Head Start, prekindergarten early intervention, prekindergarten disabilities, Even-Start literacy, Florida First Start, migrant prekindergarten, and Title 1 prekindergarten. The conference will also estimate the unduplicated count of children who are eligible for services. The principals of the School Readiness Program Needs Assessment Conference will be representatives from:

- ◆ the Executive Office of the Governor (this representative will preside over conference sessions);
- ◆ the Director of Economic and Demographic Research; and
- ◆ professional staff who have forecasting expertise from the State School Readiness Governing Board, the Department of Education, the Senate, and the House of Representatives, or their designees.

The state governing board will provide information on needs and waiting lists for school readiness program services.

C. APPLICATION OF PRINCIPLES:

1. Less Government:

- a. Does the bill create, increase or reduce, either directly or indirectly:

- (1) any authority to make rules or adjudicate disputes?

Yes, authorizes the School Readiness Governing Board to make rules.

- (2) any new responsibilities, obligations or work for other governmental or private organizations or individuals?

Yes, the bill establishes the School Readiness Governing Board to implement a cohesive school readiness statewide program for at-risk children from birth to kindergarten, and calls for local School Readiness Coalitions to implement local school readiness plans.

- (3) any entitlement to a government service or benefit?

No; however, it will expand existing subsidized child care entitlement if successfully implemented.

- b. If an agency or program is eliminated or reduced:

- (1) what responsibilities, costs and powers are passed on to another program, agency, level of government, or private entity?

The district interagency councils and their duties are replaced by the Local School Readiness Coalitions. The State Coordinating Council for Early Childhood Education is phased out.

- (2) what is the cost of such responsibility at the new level/agency?

Anticipated costs are: per diem for governing board members, salaries and operating expenses of an Executive Director and Staff for the governing board, funds for advertising publication campaign for readiness, coalition incentive grants for new local coalitions established and approved within the specified deadlines.

- (3) how is the new agency accountable to the people governed?

The local coalitions include representatives of the people governed and the coalitions operate in their behalf. The State Governing Board facilitates the local coalitions.

2. Lower Taxes:

- a. Does the bill increase anyone's taxes?

No

b. Does the bill require or authorize an increase in any fees?

No

c. Does the bill reduce total taxes, both rates and revenues?

No

d. Does the bill reduce total fees, both rates and revenues?

No

e. Does the bill authorize any fee or tax increase by any local government?

No

3. Personal Responsibility:

a. Does the bill reduce or eliminate an entitlement to government services or subsidy?

No

b. Do the beneficiaries of the legislation directly pay any portion of the cost of implementation and operation?

Yes, the school readiness program features a sliding fee scale pursuant to which all beneficiaries pay a co-payment for services.

4. Individual Freedom:

a. Does the bill increase the allowable options of individuals or private organizations/associations to conduct their own affairs?

Yes, local coalitions will expand services to enable parents to place their children in the programs the parents choose to best suit their needs.

b. Does the bill prohibit, or create new government interference with, any presently lawful activity?

No

5. Family Empowerment:

a. If the bill purports to provide services to families or children:

(1) Who evaluates the family's needs?

The provider contracted by the Local School Readiness Coalition evaluates the family's needs.

(2) Who makes the decisions?

The State Governing Board establishes policies. The local coalitions work out local plans. The providers contracted by the Local School Readiness Coalition work directly with children and families.

(3) Are private alternatives permitted?

Yes

(4) Are families required to participate in a program?

No

(5) Are families penalized for not participating in a program?

No

b. Does the bill directly affect the legal rights and obligations between family members?

No

c. If the bill creates or changes a program providing services to families or children, in which of the following does the bill vest control of the program, either through direct participation or appointment authority:

(1) parents and guardians?

Yes, in the power to select the program they find best for their child.

(2) service providers?

Yes, as partners with the local coalitions.

(3) government employees/agencies?

Yes, the control of the statewide program will be by the State School Readiness Governing Board through its approval and periodic review of local coalitions and plans.

D. STATUTE(S) AFFECTED:

Creates sections 411.01 and 229.567, Florida Statutes

E. SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS:

Section 1

Intent--Establishes legislative intent to: create school readiness programs that are developmentally appropriate, involve parents, serve as preventive measures for children at risk of future school failure, enhance the educational readiness of all children, support family education, provide health screening and referral, operate on a full-day year round basis; and become financially self-sufficient; establish school readiness programs that do not exist as isolated programs; implement on a county by county basis to assure integration of all programs operating within that county; combine funding streams for various existing early education programs; establish funding that not be less than existing funding for fiscal year 1999-2000; establish readiness programs to operate in conjunction with district school systems but not constructed as part of the system of free public schools; continue utilization of sliding fee scale to determine eligibility; to preserve the federal child care income tax credit.

Definitions--Defines governing board as the State School Readiness Governing Board, Coalition as the Local School Readiness Coalition, Plan as a coalition's school readiness program implementation plan.

State School Readiness Governing Board--established in the Executive Office of The Governor; defines membership of board; defines duties of the board to be: development and adoption of performance standards and outcome measures, adoption of rules necessary to administer the program.

Program Eligibility--Establishes for children under the age of kindergarten eligibility funded through existing programs and any additional funds appropriated for this purpose. Priority of participation in the readiness program will be given to participants who meet one or more of the following criteria: to children who are determined to be at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation and who are clients of the Department of Children and Family Services, children at risk of welfare dependency, including the economically disadvantaged, children of participants in the WAGES program, children of migrant farm workers, children of teen parents, and children in a family whose income is at or below poverty level, children in families between 100 percent and 150 percent of poverty level, three and four year old children who are students with disabilities, children served through a home visitor program, and intensive parent education programs. Defines "economically disadvantaged" as a child whose family income is below 150 percent of the federal poverty level.

Standards and Outcome Measures--Establishes criteria for the creation of standards and outcome measures including reporting requirements.

Local School Readiness Coalitions--Defines membership. Members of the Local Readiness Coalition are:

- ◆ the Department of Children and Family Services district administrator;
- ◆ the district superintendent of schools;
- ◆ the regional workforce development board or chair;
- ◆ the county health department director or his or her designee;
- ◆ the Children's Services Council chair or executive director;
- ◆ two members appointed by the Department of Children and Family Services district administrator;
- ◆ two members appointed by the board of county commissioners;
- ◆ two members appointed by the district school board;
- ◆ the central child care agency administrator; and
- ◆ the Head Start director or directors.

All said members are voting members with the exception, due to funding differences, of central child care agency administrators and the Head Start director(s). No member may appoint a designee to act in his or her place. However, they may send a representative to meeting but the representative cannot vote on their behalf.

Implementation, Phasing in of Program--States the county will continue to receive funds in the current manner until plans are approved by the governing board. Specifies requirements of the plan to address eligibility requirements, performance standards and outcome measures, and reimbursement rates. Provides opportunity for application for a waiver to allow the county to administer the Head Start program and to modify existing rules, policies, or procedures that impede statutory goals as stated in the plan. Establishes provisions for development of support systems and direct enhancement services and for two or more counties to join for the purpose of planning and implementing a school readiness program.

Coalition Initiation Grants and Incentive Bonuses--Provides one time awards in the amounts of \$50,000 to coalitions approved by the governing board by October 1, 1999, and \$25,000 to coalitions approved by the governing board by March 1, 2000, to support the coalition in developing its plan. Provides that coalitions that have their plan approved by March 1, 2000, shall receive their funding through the governing board in fiscal year 2000-2001 and each year after. Provides for a one time incentive bonus on a per-student served basis for

coalition's plan's ability to clearly show enhancement in the quality and standards of the school readiness program without diminishing the number of children served. Incentive bonuses are subject to appropriation.

Funding; School Readiness Program--Establishes an integrated and quality seamless service delivery system for all publicly funded early childhood education and child care programs operating in this state. States all funds designated for the services specified shall be transferred to the school readiness agent. Establishes guidelines for investment and distribution of funds. Provides that state funds appropriated for school readiness may not be used for construction of new facilities or purchase of school buses. Requires each coalition to create a reimbursement rate schedule that encompasses all programs funded by that coalition.

Requirements Relating to School Readiness Agents--Establishes criteria for the school readiness agent. Requires the school readiness agent to provide, through a request for proposal process, all administrative, system support, direct enhancement, and direct funding services as determined by the coalition. Stipulates that no public funds shall be paid to a provider unless the provider agrees to allow the school readiness agent access to fulfill its monitoring responsibilities.

Parental Choice--Provides parental choice pursuant to a purchase service order that ensures flexibility in school readiness programs and payment agreements. Establishes rules for use of said purchase order.

Evaluation and Annual Report--States each coalition shall conduct an evaluation of the effectiveness of its school readiness program including performance standards and outcome measures, and shall provide an annual report to the governing board.

Conflicting Provisions--Dictates in the event of a conflict between the provisions of this section and federal requirements, the federal requirements shall control.

Section 2

School Readiness Screening Instruments--Requires that the school readiness screening instrument(s) adopted by the State School Readiness Governing Board be uniformly utilized by all school districts as the kindergarten screening instrument administered to each kindergarten student in the district school system.

Section 3

School Readiness Program Needs Assessment Conference--Establishes duties of the School Readiness Needs Assessment Conference as the development of official information relating to the state's system of school readiness programs including forecasts of school readiness program needs in but not limited to the following areas, subsidized child care, Head Start, prekindergarten early intervention, prekindergarten disabilities, Even-Start literacy, Florida First Start, migrant prekindergarten, and Title 1 prekindergarten. Estimates the unduplicated count of children who are eligible for services. Information on needs and waiting lists for school readiness program services is provided by the

state governing board. Establishes the principals of the School Readiness Program Needs Assessment Conference. The principals of the School Readiness Program Needs Assessment Conference will be representatives from:

- ◆ the Executive Office of the Governor;
- ◆ the Director of Economic and Demographic Research; and
- ◆ professional staff who have forecasting expertise from the State School Readiness Governing Board, the Department of Education, the Senate, and the House of Representatives, or their designees.

Section 4

Provides for an effective date upon becoming a law.

III. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT:

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE AGENCIES/STATE FUNDS:

1. Non-recurring Effects:

One time coalition initiation grants and incentive bonuses--Provides \$50,000 to coalitions approved by the governing board by October 1, 1999, and \$25,000 to coalitions approved by the governing board by March 1, 2000, to support the coalition in developing its plan. Coalitions that have their plan approved by March 1, 2000, shall receive their funding through the governing board in fiscal year 2000-2001 and each year after. Provides for a one time incentive bonus on a per-student served basis for coalition's plan's ability to clearly show enhancement in the quality and standards of the school readiness program without diminishing the number of children served. Incentive bonuses are subject to appropriation.

2. Recurring Effects:

Program funding will continue at no less than current levels.

Funding will be needed for Executive Director, staff and per diem of State Governing Board.

Coalitions that have their plan approved by March 1, 2000, shall receive their funding through the governing board in fiscal year 2000-2001 and each year after.

3. Long Run Effects Other Than Normal Growth:

Indeterminate, but if the program is successful in enhancing statewide school readiness, the long term effects could significantly reduce statewide education costs.

4. Total Revenues and Expenditures:

The funding for this program would remain constant with the current funding level for early childhood education and child care programs currently in operation. The fiscal impact would come from one time coalition initiation grants and incentive bonuses. One time coalition initiation grants and incentive bonuses provide \$50,000 to coalitions approved by the governing board by October 1, 1999, and \$25,000 to coalitions approved by the governing board by March 1, 2000, to support the coalition in developing its plan.

Coalitions that have their plan approved by March 1, 2000, shall receive their funding through the governing board in fiscal year 2000-2001 and each year after. A one time incentive bonus is provided on a per-student served basis for coalition plan's ability to clearly show enhancement in the quality and standards of the school readiness program without diminishing the number of children served. Incentive bonuses are subject to an appropriation by the Legislature. Other fiscal impacts would result from hiring an executive director and staff to administer the program as well as per diem and travel expenses for the State Governing Board.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AS A WHOLE:

1. Non-recurring Effects:

One time coalition initiation grants and incentive bonuses--Provides \$50,000 to coalitions approved by the governing board by October 1, 1999, and \$25,000 to coalitions approved by the governing board by March 1, 2000, to support the coalition in developing its plan. Coalitions that have their plan approved by March 1, 2000, shall receive their funding through the governing board in fiscal year 2000-2001 and each year after. Provides for a one time incentive bonus on a per-student served basis for coalition's plan's ability to clearly show enhancement in the quality and standards of the school readiness program without diminishing the number of children served. Incentive bonuses are subject to appropriation.

2. Recurring Effects:

An increase in funds is possible through block grant funding to the local school readiness agent.

3. Long Run Effects Other Than Normal Growth:

Indeterminate, but if program is successful, it could significantly reduce school district education costs.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

1. Direct Private Sector Costs:

All participants pay a co-payment on a sliding fee scale.

2. Direct Private Sector Benefits:

Improvements in school readiness could ultimately result in a better-prepared group of employees for the job market.

3. Effects on Competition, Private Enterprise and Employment Markets:

Increased options for parental choice could result in increased competition and better services.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

N/A

IV. CONSEQUENCES OF ARTICLE VII, SECTION 18 OF THE FLORIDA CONSTITUTION:

A. APPLICABILITY OF THE MANDATES PROVISION:

This bill does not require counties or municipalities to expend funds.

B. REDUCTION OF REVENUE RAISING AUTHORITY:

This bill does not reduce the authority of counties or municipalities to raise revenue.

C. REDUCTION OF STATE TAX SHARED WITH COUNTIES AND MUNICIPALITIES:

This bill does not reduce the percentage of state tax shared with counties and municipalities.

V. COMMENTS:

VI. AMENDMENTS OR COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES:

N/A

STORAGE NAME: h0259.ei

DATE: January 14, 1999

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VII. SIGNATURES:

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION INNOVATION:

Prepared by:

Staff Director:

Pamela M. Allen

Ouida J. Ashworth