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****FINAL ACTION****
****SEE FINAL ACTION STATUS SECTION****

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
AS REVISED BY THE COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION INNOVATION
FINAL ANALYSIS**

BILL #: CS/HB 259 (Passed as CS/CS/SB 366 & 382 and SB 708)

RELATING TO: School Readiness

SPONSOR(S): Committee on Education Innovation and Representatives Warner, Lynn, Murman, Chestnut, Melvin and others

COMPANION BILL(S): HB 233 (C); CS/SB 366 & 382 (C) and SB 708 (C)

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

- (1) EDUCATION INNOVATION YEAS 7 NAYS 1
- (2) EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS YEAS 10 NAYS 0
- (3)
- (4)
- (5)

I. FINAL ACTION STATUS:

PASSED BY THE LEGISLATURE -- CHAPTER 99-357, LAWS OF FLORIDA

CS/CS/SB 366 was ordered enrolled on April 28, 1999, and was approved by the Governor on June 15, 1999.

II. SUMMARY:

The bill establishes a statewide school readiness program for the state's at-risk birth-to-kindergarten population. The program consists of an integrated seamless service delivery system for all publicly funded early education and child care programs including: First Start, Even Start, pre-k, Head Start, migrant pre-k, Title I, subsidized child care, and teen parent.

Legislative intent for the program is:

- Developmentally appropriate, research-based, parental/family involvement, enhancement of educational readiness and provision of necessary elements to prepare at-risk children for school.
- Accommodation of parents' work schedules and endeavors to become financially self-sufficient.
- Coordinated/funding integrated for full effectiveness, and cooperation with other programs for young children.
- Local design, operation, and management, with the state board approving and periodically reviewing local coalitions/plans, and establishing performance standards/outcome measures.
- Operation *in conjunction with* but not *as part of* the public school system--a separate program, separately funded, utilizing a mandatory sliding fee scale, and retaining the federal child care income tax credit.

The Florida Partnership for School Readiness (16 members: 6 named, 10 appointed from the private sector) is created as the state governing board, responsible for adopting and maintaining coordinated programmatic, administrative, and fiscal policies and standards. The partnership must aggressively establish a unified approach/strategies to enhance school readiness and a uniform system for objective measurement of school readiness, as well as a plan for combining funding streams.

Local school readiness coalitions (18 to 25 members, more than 1/3 from the private sector) and implementation plans will be phased in and are subject to the partnership's approval. Counties serving less than 400 children must join in a coalition with another county, share a fiscal agent, or demonstrate efficiency and effective plan implementation. Each coalition must implement a plan that includes a comprehensive program of school readiness services that enhance the cognitive, social, and physical development of children to achieve the performance standards and outcome measures specified by the partnership. The program must include: developmentally appropriate curriculum, character development, age-appropriate assessment of each child's development, pretest upon entering and posttest upon leaving each program, appropriate staff-to-child ratio, healthful and safe environment, and a resource and referral network to assist informed parental choice. Additionally, each plan must provide: parental co-payment through a sliding fee scale, parental choice of settings and locations, trained instructional staff, eligibility priority for at-risk and economically disadvantaged children (*once in the program, the child may remain until kindergarten*), reimbursement rates developed by the coalition, systems support and direct enhancement services, a business plan, strategies to meet the needs of unique populations, and a fiscal agent who acts on policy direction from the coalition.

Funding: Coalition initiation grants are provided for the phase-in period. Incentive bonuses for outstanding plans are anticipated subject to appropriation. Total administrative expenditures are capped at 5%. All eligible funds (from the coalition's early education/child care programs funded with state, federal, lottery, or local funds) are to be annually distributed by the partnership as block grants to each coalition. An *estimating conference* is created.

Appropriations: Partnership, \$915,000, \$330,000; Evaluations, \$125,000; Coordinating Council, \$35,000; Coalition Incentive Funds, \$2,085,000.

III. 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 established in s. 229.591, F.S., eight education goals. Goal one is readiness to start school and requires that communities and schools collaborate to prepare children and families for children's success in school. The Florida Commission on Education Reform and Accountability (Accountability Commission), and the Commissioner of Education 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 check 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. There is no uniformity among districts or even among schools within a district in administering the check list.

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 state 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. Kindergarten readiness assessments utilizing the Department of Education check list indicate that currently 80% of all children enter school ready to learn.

Prekindergarten Early Intervention Program

The prekindergarten program is established pursuant to s. 230.2305, F.S., and is designed to serve economically disadvantaged three and four-year-olds, the majority of whom must be four years old, 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 provides performance standards which each local grantee must meet, each local grantee is given some autonomy in planning its curriculum.

Head Start focuses on the child's 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 are reportedly varied.

Comparison of Three Programs

Major differences among the three primary child care and early childhood education programs for children under the age of five are described in the table below:

	Subsidized Child Care	Pre-K Early Intervention	Head Start
Total Funding	\$332 million	\$97 million	\$145 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	\$1.50	\$2.96	\$1.97 -- \$4.54
Children Served	88,600 (under age 5)	30,014	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 course.	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.

Other programs

Even Start Program

This is a federally funded family-focused program designed to provide and coordinate family literacy service to at-risk families or low-income families. It is authorized under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Title I, Part B.

Florida First Start

Pursuant to s. 230.2303, F.S., this program is designed to be a home-school partnership for disabled or at risk children from birth to 3. Each school district administers the program. The plan is developed by the district in cooperation with the district interagency coordinating council on early childhood services (which, under the bill, will be replaced by the local school readiness coalition) and the Interagency Prekindergarten Council for Children with Disabilities.

Prekindergarten Disabilities Program

Pursuant to s. 232.01(e), F.S., children with disabilities who are at least 3 years old are eligible for admission to public special education programs. Children with disabilities and below 3 years of age may also be eligible for the program or supplemental instruction.

Migrant Prekindergarten Programs

The Commissioner is authorized in s. 228.062, F.S., to administer education programs for migrant children beginning at age 3. Furthermore, the prekindergarten early intervention programs coordinate with the programs for migrant children and migrant children who meet federal and state requirements for eligibility for the migrant preschool program are served by the prekindergarten early intervention programs.

Title I Programs

Federal Title 1 funds are to benefit poor and disadvantaged children and for programs focused on improved teaching and learning to help at-risk students, including extended day care and transitions from preschool to elementary school. In Florida, s. 236.69, F.S., specifies that these funds support the state education goals, and specifically the first state education goal, readiness to start school.

Teen Parent Programs

Pursuant to s. 230.23166, F.S., teen parent programs are established and implemented by each district school board, to provide a specialized curriculum and other services to meet the needs of students who are pregnant or teen parents. Necessary child care is a required ancillary service component of teenage parent programs.

Child Care Licensing

There are also programs offered by public and private providers of child care. 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 whom each care giver is responsible, and curriculum. Quality in existing programs must not be diluted, and poor quality programs must be improved.
- ◆ 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 the Legislature is that school readiness programs:

- ◆ Be developmentally appropriate, research-based, involve parents as their child's first teacher, serve as preventive measures for children at risk of future school failure, enhance the educational readiness of eligible children, and support family education.
- ◆ Provide the elements necessary to prepare at-risk children for school, including health screening and referral and an appropriate educational program.
- ◆ Be operated on a full-day, year-round basis to the maximum extent possible to enable parents to work and become financially self-sufficient.
- ◆ Not exist as isolated programs, but build upon existing services and work in cooperation with other programs for young children.

- ◆ Be coordinated and funding integrated to achieve full effectiveness.
- ◆ Be locally designed, operated, and managed, with the partnership adopting a system for measuring school readiness; developing school readiness program performance standards, outcome measurements, and data design and review; and approving and reviewing local school readiness coalitions and plans.
- ◆ Have combined appropriations that are not less than the programs would receive in any fiscal year on an uncombined basis.
- ◆ Coordinate and operate in conjunction with the district school systems, but not construed as part of the system of free public schools but as a separate program for children under the age of kindergarten eligibility, funded separately from the public school system, utilizing a mandatory sliding fee scale, and providing an integrated and seamless system of school readiness services for the state's birth-to-kindergarten population.
- ◆ Have the federal child care income tax credit preserved for school readiness programs.

School Readiness Program

The "School Readiness Act" establishes the school readiness program through school readiness coalitions established by a county or a multi-county combination, and the program is phased in on a coalition-by-coalition basis. Each coalition's school readiness program will have funding from all of the coalition's early education and child care programs that are funded with state, federal, lottery, or local funds, including but not limited to Florida First Start programs, Even-Start literacy programs, prekindergarten early intervention programs, Head Start programs, programs offered by public and private providers of child care, migrant prekindergarten programs, Title I programs, subsidized child care programs, and teen parent programs, together with any additional funds appropriated or obtained for purposes of this act. These programs and their funding streams will be components of the coalition's integrated school readiness program, with the goal of preparing children for success in school.

Florida Partnership for School Readiness

The Florida Partnership for School Readiness, assigned to the Executive Office of the Governor for administrative purposes, is created as the state-level governing board with responsibility for adopting and maintaining coordinated programmatic, administrative, and fiscal policies and standards for all school readiness programs, while allowing a wide range of programmatic flexibility and differentiation. Membership includes the Lieutenant Governor or his or her designee, the Commissioner of Education, the Secretary of Children and Family Services, the Secretary of Health, the chairperson of the Child Care Executive Partnership Board, and the chairperson of the WAGES Program State Board of Directors, and 10 members of the public appointed by the Governor who are business, community, and civic leaders in the state but are not elected to public office. These 10 Governor-appointed members and their families must not be providers in the early education and child care industry, and must be geographically and demographically representative of the state. Eight of the Governor's appointees will be from a list of 10 nominees: five from the Senate President and five from the Speaker of the House. Appointed members will be appointed to staggered 4-year terms of office. Initially, two appointees will have 1-year terms, two will have 2-year terms, three will have 3-year terms, and three will have 4-year terms. The members of the partnership will elect a chairperson annually from the nongovernmental members of the partnership. Any vacancy on the partnership will be filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

The partnership must meet at least quarterly but may meet as often as it deems necessary to carry out its duties and responsibilities. Members of the partnership must participate without proxy at the quarterly meetings. The partnership may take official action by a majority vote of the members present at any meeting at which a quorum is present and must hold its first meeting by October 1, 1999.

Members of the partnership serve without compensation but are entitled to reimbursement for per diem and travel expenses and for other reasonable, necessary, and actual expenses; are subject to the ethics provisions in part III of chapter 112, F.S.; and may not derive any financial benefit

from the funds administered by the Florida Partnership for School Readiness. For the purposes of tort liability, the members of the partnership and its employees are governed by s. 768.28, F.S.

The partnership appoints an executive director who is responsible for hiring, subject to the approval of the partnership, all employees and staff members, who will serve under his or her direction and control.

For purposes of administration of the Federal Child Care and Development Fund, 45 C.F.R. Parts 98 and 99, the partnership may be designated by the Governor as the Lead Agency, and if so designated must comply with the Lead Agency responsibilities pursuant to federal law.

As the principal organization responsible for enhancement of school readiness, the partnership has the following duties:

- ◆ Be responsible for the prudent use of all public and private funds in accordance with all legal and contractual requirements.
- ◆ Provide final approval and periodic review of coalitions and plans.
- ◆ Provide leadership for enhancement of school readiness by aggressively establishing a unified approach to the state's efforts toward enhancement of school readiness. In support of this effort, the partnership may develop and implement specific strategies that address the state's school readiness programs.
- ◆ Safeguard the effective use of federal, state, local, and private resources to achieve the highest possible level of school readiness for the state's children.
- ◆ Provide technical assistance to coalitions.
- ◆ Assess gaps in service.
- ◆ Provide technical assistance to counties that form a multi county coalition.
- ◆ Adopt a system, by July 1, 2000, for measuring school readiness that provides objective data regarding the expectations for school readiness, and establish a method for collecting the data and guidelines for using the data. The measurement, the data collection, and the use of the data must serve the statewide school readiness goal. The criteria for determining which data to collect should be the usefulness of the data to state policy makers and local program administrators in administering programs and allocating state funds, and must include the tracking of school readiness system information back to individual school readiness programs to assist in determining program effectiveness.
- ◆ Adopt a system, by December 31, 2000, for evaluating the performance of students through the third grade to compare the performance of those who participated in school readiness programs with the performance of students who did not participate in school readiness programs in order to identify strategies for continued successful student performance.
- ◆ Develop and adopt performance standards and outcome measures by June 1, 2000.
- ◆ Assess the expertise of public and private Florida postsecondary institutions in the areas of infant and toddler developmental research; the related curriculum of training, career, and academic programs; and the status of articulation among those programs. Based on this assessment, which will be done in consultation with the Postsecondary Education Planning Commission and the Education Standards Commission, the partnership must provide recommendations to the Governor and Legislature for postsecondary program improvements to enhance school readiness initiatives.
- ◆ Coordinate the efforts toward school readiness and provide independent policy analyses and recommendations to the Governor, the State Board of Education, and the Legislature.

- ◆ Prepare and submit to the State Board of Education a system for measuring school readiness by July 1, 2000, which includes a uniform screening, that will provide objective data regarding expectations for school readiness including, at a minimum, the child's:
 - immunizations and other health requirements as necessary, including appropriate vision and hearing screening and examinations;
 - physical development;
 - compliance with rules, limitations, and routines;
 - ability to perform tasks;
 - interactions with adults;
 - interactions with peers;
 - ability to cope with challenges;
 - self-help skills;
 - ability to express his or her needs;
 - verbal communication skills;
 - problem-solving skills;
 - following of verbal directions;
 - demonstration of curiosity, persistence, and exploratory behavior;
 - interest in books and other printed materials;
 - paying attention to stories;
 - participation in art and music activities; and
 - ability to identify colors, geometric shapes, letters of the alphabet, numbers, and spatial and temporal relationships.

- ◆ Prepare a plan for implementing the system for measuring school readiness so all children will undergo the uniform screening established by the partnership when they enter kindergarten. Children who enter public school for the first time in first grade must undergo a uniform screening approved by the partnership for use in first grade. Because children with disabilities may not be able to meet all of the identified expectations for school readiness, the plan must incorporate mechanisms for recognizing the potential variations in expectations for school readiness when serving children with disabilities and must provide for communities to serve children with disabilities.

- ◆ Recommend to the Governor, the Commissioner of Education, and the State Board of Education rules, and revisions or repeal of rules, which would increase the effectiveness of programs that prepare children for school.

- ◆ Conduct studies and planning activities related to the overall improvement and effectiveness of school-readiness measures.

- ◆ Work with the Office of the Comptroller for electronic funds transfer by February 1, 2000.

- ◆ Present a plan for combining funding streams into a School Readiness Trust Fund by February 1, 2000.

- ◆ Establish procedures for performance-based budgeting in school readiness programs.

- ◆ Submit an annual report of activities to the Governor, the executive director of the Florida Healthy Kids Corporation, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the minority leaders of both houses of the Legislature. In addition, the partnership's reports and recommendations must be made available to the State Board of Education, other appropriate state agencies and entities, district school boards, central agencies for child care, and county health departments. The annual report must provide an analysis of the coalition annual reports including school readiness activities across the state, the number of children who were served in the programs, and the number of children who were ready for school.

- ◆ Work with school readiness coalitions to increase parents' training for and involvement in their children's preschool education and to provide family literacy activities and programs. To ensure that the system for measuring school readiness is comprehensive and appropriate statewide, as the system is developed and implemented, the partnership must consult with representatives of district school systems, providers of public and private child care, health

care providers, large and small employers, experts in education for children with disabilities, and experts in child development.

Additionally, the partnership may adopt rules necessary to prepare and implement the school readiness system, including those pertaining to collecting data, approving local readiness coalitions and plans, providing for coalitions to serve two or more counties, awarding incentives to coalitions and issuing waivers. The partnership is given all power necessary to carry out the purposes of the school readiness program, including receiving and accepting grants, loans or funding advances from public or private agencies and any source contributions of money, property, labor, or any other thing of value, to be held, used, and applied.

The partnership is an independent, nonpartisan body and may not be identified or affiliated with any one agency, program, or group. Its budget is funded annually through the GAA and is subject to compliance audits and annual financial audits by the Auditor General.

School Readiness Coalitions

Local school readiness coalitions must consist of at least 18 but not more than 25 members, including the following:

- ◆ A Department of Children and Family Services (CFS) district administrator.
- ◆ A district superintendent of schools.
- ◆ A regional workforce development board chair or director, where applicable.
- ◆ A county health department director or his or her designee.
- ◆ A children's services council or juvenile welfare board chair or executive director, if applicable.
- ◆ A child care licensing agency head.
- ◆ One member appointed by a CFS district administrator.
- ◆ One member appointed by a board of county commissioners.
- ◆ One member appointed by a district school board.
- ◆ A central child care agency administrator.
- ◆ A Head Start director.
- ◆ A representative of private child care providers.
- ◆ A representative of faith-based child care providers.

More than one-third of the coalition members must be from the private sector, and neither they nor their families may earn an income from the early education and child care industry. To meet this requirement a coalition must appoint additional members from a list of nominees presented to the coalition by a chamber of commerce or economic development council within the geographic area of the coalition.

No member of a coalition may appoint a designee to act in his or her place. A member may send a representative to coalition meetings, but that representative will have no voting privileges.

The school readiness coalition replaces the district interagency coordinating council required under s. 230.2305, F.S. Members of the coalition are subject to the ethics provisions in part III of chapter 112, F.S. Multi county coalitions must include representation from each county and the terms of all appointed members of the coalition must be staggered.

If a coalition would serve less than 400 birth-to-kindergarten age children, the coalition must either join with another county to form a multi-county coalition, enter an agreement with a fiscal agent to serve more than one coalition, or demonstrate to the partnership its ability to effectively and efficiently implement its plan as a single-county coalition and meet all required performance standards and outcome measures. Based on projections indicating 21 counties that currently serve less than 400 children, the Governor's Office of Planning and Budgeting estimates the likelihood of 10 multi-county coalitions.

Program Participation

The school readiness program is to be established for children from birth to five years of age or until the child enters kindergarten and must be administered by the school readiness coalition. Within funding limitations, the school readiness coalition, along with all providers, is required to make reasonable efforts to accommodate the needs of children for extended-day and extended-year services without compromising the quality of the program.

Program Expectations

The school readiness program must meet the following expectations:

- ◆ Prepare preschool children to enter kindergarten ready to learn, as measured by criteria established by the Florida Partnership for School Readiness.
- ◆ Provide extended-day and extended-year services to the maximum extent possible to meet the needs of parents who work.
- ◆ Coordinate staff development and teaching opportunities.
- ◆ Expand access to community services and resources for families to help achieve economic self-sufficiency.
- ◆ Provide a single point of entry and unified waiting list.
- ◆ As long as funding or eligible populations do not decrease, serve at least as many children as were served prior to implementation of the program.
- ◆ Establish a community plan to address the needs of all eligible children.
- ◆ Meet all state licensing guidelines, where applicable.

The coalition must implement a comprehensive program of readiness services that enhance the cognitive, social, and physical development of children to achieve the performance standards and outcome measures specified by the partnership. At a minimum, these programs must contain the following elements:

- ◆ Developmentally appropriate curriculum.
- ◆ A character development program to develop basic values.
- ◆ An age-appropriate assessment of each child's development.
- ◆ A pretest administered to children when they enter a program and a posttest administered to children when they leave the program.
- ◆ An appropriate staff-to-child ratio.
- ◆ A healthful and safe environment.
- ◆ A resource and referral network to assist parents in making an informed choice.

Implementation

The school readiness program is to be phased in. Until the coalition implements its plan, the county will continue to receive the services through the various agencies that would be responsible for delivering those services under current law. Each school readiness coalition must develop a plan for implementing the school readiness program to meet the requirements of this act and the performance standards and outcome measures established by the partnership. The plan must include a written description of the role of the program in the coalition's effort to meet the first state education goal, readiness to start school, including a description of the plan to involve the prekindergarten early intervention programs, Head Start programs, programs offered by public or private providers of child care, preschool programs for children with disabilities, programs for migrant children, Title I programs, subsidized child care programs, and teen parent programs. The plan must also demonstrate how the program will ensure that each 3-year-old and 4-year-old child in a publicly funded school readiness program receives scheduled activities and instruction designed to prepare children to enter kindergarten ready to learn. Prior to implementation of the program, the school readiness coalition must submit the plan to the partnership for approval. The partnership may approve the plan, reject the plan, or approve the plan with conditions.

The plan for the school readiness program must include the following minimum standards and provisions:

- ◆ A sliding fee scale establishing a co-payment for parents based upon their ability to pay, which is the same for all program providers, to be implemented and reflected in each program's budget.
- ◆ A choice of settings and locations in licensed, registered, religious-exempt, or school-based programs to be provided to parents.
- ◆ Instructional staff who have completed the training course as required in s. 402.305(2)(d)1, F.S., as well as staff who have additional training or credentials as required by the respective program provider. The plan must provide a method for assuring the qualifications of all personnel in all program settings.
- ◆ Specific eligibility priorities for children within the coalition's county.

- ◆ Performance standards and outcome measures established by the partnership or alternatively, standards and outcome measures to be used until such time as the partnership adopts such standards and outcome measures.
- ◆ Reimbursement rates that have been developed by the coalition.
- ◆ Systems support services, including a central agency, child care resource and referral, eligibility determinations, training of providers, and parent support and involvement.
- ◆ Direct enhancement services to families and children. System support and direct enhancement services must be in addition to payments for the placement of children in school readiness programs.
- ◆ A business plan, which must include the contract with a school readiness agent if the coalition is not a legally established corporate entity. Coalitions may contract with other coalitions to achieve efficiency in multiple-county services, and such contracts may be part of the coalition's business plan.
- ◆ Strategies to meet the needs of unique populations, such as migrant workers.

As part of the plan, the coalition may request the Governor to apply for a waiver to allow the coalition 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 partnership may be made as part of the plan. Upon review, the partnership may grant the proposed modification.

Once the plan has been approved, the plan and the services provided under the plan must be controlled by the coalition rather than by the state agencies or departments. The plan must be reviewed and revised as necessary, but at least biennially.

The following statutes will not apply to local coalitions with approved plans:

- ◆ s. 125.901(2)(a)3., F.S., allocation of funds to other agencies providing services to children besides the public school system;
- ◆ s. 228.061(1) and (2), F.S., other preschool programs;
- ◆ s. 230.2306, F.S., prekindergarten children service needs assessments;
- ◆ s. 411.204, F.S., program evaluation design and independent third-party evaluation;
- ◆ s. 411.221, F.S., prevention and early assistance strategic plan;
- ◆ s. 411.222, F.S., intra-agency and interagency coordination responsibilities; and
- ◆ s. 411.232, F.S., the Children's Early Investment Program.

To facilitate innovative practices and to allow local establishment of school readiness programs, a school readiness coalition may apply to the Governor and Cabinet for a waiver of, and the Governor and Cabinet may waive, any of the following provisions if the waiver is necessary for implementation of the coalition's school readiness plan:

- ◆ s. 230.2303, F.S., Florida First Start Program;
- ◆ s. 230.2305, F.S., prekindergarten early intervention program;
- ◆ s. 230.23166, F.S., teenage parent programs;
- ◆ s. 402.3015, F.S., subsidized child care programs;
- ◆ s. 411.223, F.S., uniform standards for early childhood services; and
- ◆ s. 411.232, F.S., the Children's Early Investment Program. *(Note: it would not be necessary to seek a waiver for this section, as it is also in the list of nonapplicable statutes.)*

Coalitions are authorized to enter into multiparty contracts with multi-county service providers in order to meet the needs of unique populations such as migrant workers.

Persons with an early childhood teaching certificate may provide support and supervision to other staff in the school readiness program.

Reimbursement Rate

Each coalition must develop a reimbursement rate schedule that encompasses all programs funded by that coalition. The reimbursement rate schedule must take into consideration the relevant market rate, and the projected number of children to be served, and must be submitted to the partnership for information. Informal child care arrangements must be reimbursed at not more than 50 percent of the rate developed for family child care.

Requirements Relating to Fiscal Agents

If the coalition is not a legally established corporate entity, the coalition must designate a fiscal agent. The fiscal agent may be a public entity or a private nonprofit organization and is required to provide financial and administrative services pursuant to a contract or agreement with the coalition. The fiscal agent may not provide direct early education or child care services; however, a fiscal agent may provide such services upon written request and approval of the coalition to the partnership. The cost of the financial and administrative services must be negotiated between the fiscal agent and the coalition. If the fiscal agent is a provider of early education and care programs, the contract must specify that the fiscal agent will act on policy direction from the coalition and will not receive policy direction from its own corporate board regarding disbursement of coalition funds. The fiscal agent must disburse funds in accordance with the approved coalition school readiness plan and based on billing and disbursement procedures approved by the partnership and must conform to all data-reporting requirements established by the partnership.

Coalition Initiation Grants and Incentive Bonuses

The bill establishes initiation grants for early development of coalition plans; those approved by January 1, 2000, are eligible for \$50,000; those approved by March 1, 2000, are eligible for \$25,000. The bill also establishes an incentive bonus, subject to appropriation, for any approved plan that clearly shows enhancement in the quality and standards of the school readiness program without diminishing the number of children served in the program.

School readiness coalitions that have their plans approved by July 1, 2000, must receive funding from the partnership in fiscal year 2000-2001, and each year thereafter. In and after fiscal year 2000-2001, any increases in funding for school readiness programs must be administered through school readiness coalitions. Also, in the 2000-2001 fiscal year, the partnership must request proposals from government agencies and nonprofit corporations for the development and operation of a school readiness coalition in each county that does not have an approved coalition by March 1, 2001.

Evaluation and Annual Report

Each school readiness coalition must conduct an evaluation of the effectiveness of the school readiness program, including performance standards and outcome measures, and must provide an annual report and fiscal statement to the Florida Partnership for School Readiness. This report must conform to the content and format specifications set by the Florida Partnership for School Readiness.

Program Eligibility

The school readiness program is established for children under the age of kindergarten eligibility. Priority for participation in the school readiness program must be given to children who meet one or more of the following criteria:

- ◆ Children under the age of kindergarten eligibility who are:
 - children determined to be at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation and who are currently clients of the Children and Family Services Program Office of the Department of Children and Family Services;

- children at risk of welfare dependency, including economically disadvantaged children, children of participants in the WAGES program, children of migrant farm workers, and children of teen parents; and
 - children of working families whose family income does not exceed 150 percent of the federal poverty level.
- ◆ Three-year-old children and 4-year-old children who may not be economically disadvantaged but who have disabilities, have been served in a specific part-time or combination of part-time exceptional education programs with required special services, aids, or equipment, and were previously reported for funding part time with the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) as exceptional students.
 - ◆ Economically disadvantaged children, children with disabilities, and children at risk of future school failure, from birth to four years of age, who are served at home through home visitor programs and intensive parent education programs such as the Florida First Start Program.
 - ◆ Children who meet federal and state requirements for eligibility for the migrant preschool program but who do not meet the criteria of economically disadvantaged.

An "economically disadvantaged" child means a child whose family income is below 150 percent of the federal poverty level. Notwithstanding any change in a family's economic status, but subject to additional family contributions in accordance with the sliding fee scale, a child who meets the eligibility requirements upon initial registration for the program must be considered eligible until the child reaches kindergarten age.

Parental Choice

The school readiness program must provide parental choice pursuant to a purchase service order that ensures, to the maximum extent possible, flexibility in school readiness programs and payment arrangements. According to federal regulations requiring parental choice, a parent may choose an informal child-care arrangement. The purchase order must bear the name of the beneficiary and the program provider and, when redeemed, 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 coalition or its fiscal agent must refer the matter to the Division of Public Assistance Fraud for investigation.

The Office of the Comptroller must establish an electronic transfer system for the disbursement of funds. School readiness coalitions must fully implement the electronic funds transfer system within two years after plan approval unless a waiver is obtained from the partnership.

Standards and Outcome Measures

All publicly funded school readiness programs are required to meet the performance standards and outcome measures developed and approved by the partnership. The Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) must provide consultation to the partnership in the development of the measures and standards. These performance standards and outcome measures must be adopted by June 1, 2000, and must be applicable on a state wide basis.

Funding

A coalition's school readiness program will have available to it funding from all the coalition's early education and child care programs that are funded with state, federal, lottery or local funds, including Florida First Start programs, Even-Start literacy programs, prekindergarten early intervention programs, Head Start Programs, programs offered by public and private providers of child care, migrant prekindergarten programs, Title I programs, subsidized child care programs and teen parent programs, together with any additional funds appropriated or obtained for the coalition's program. These funds must be transferred for the benefit of the coalition for implementation of its plan, including the hiring of staff to effectively operate the coalition's school readiness program.

Administrative costs must be kept to the minimum necessary for efficient and effective administration of the plan, but total administrative expenditures must not exceed 5 percent unless specifically waived by the partnership. The partnership must annually report to the Legislature any problems relating to administrative costs.

By February 15, 2000, the partnership will present to the Legislature recommendations for combining funding streams for school readiness programs into a School Readiness Trust Fund. These recommendations must include recommendations for the inclusion or noninclusion of prekindergarten disabilities programs and funding.

Funding will be distributed as block grants to assist coalitions in integrating services and funding to develop a quality service delivery system. Subject to appropriation, the partnership may also provide financial awards to coalitions demonstrating success in merging and integrating funding streams to serve children and school readiness programs.

State funds appropriated for the school readiness program may not be used for the construction of new facilities or the purchase of buses. By February 15, 2000, the partnership must present to the Legislature recommendations for providing necessary transportation services for school readiness programs.

All cost savings and all revenues received through a mandatory sliding fee scale must be used to help fund the local school readiness program.

Reports

OPPAGA must assess the implementation, efficiency, and outcomes of the school readiness program and report its findings to the Legislature by January 1, 2002. Subsequent reviews must be conducted at the direction of the Joint Legislative Auditing Committee.

Conflicting Provisions

In the event of a conflict between the provisions of this act and federal requirements, the federal requirements will control.

School Readiness Uniform Screening

The DOE must adopt the school readiness uniform screening developed by the partnership, and must require that all school districts administer the kindergarten uniform screening to each child entering kindergarten. Children who enter public school for the first time in first grade must undergo a uniform screening approved by the partnership for use in first grade.

School Readiness Program Estimating Conference

The School Readiness Program Estimating Conference must develop such estimates and forecasts of the number of individuals eligible for school readiness programs in accordance with the standards of eligibility established by state or federal statute or administrative rule as the conference determines are needed to support the state planning, budgeting, and appropriations processes. In addition, the School Readiness Program Estimating Conference is required to estimate the unduplicated count of children who are eligible for services under the school readiness program.

The partnership must provide information on needs and waiting lists for school readiness program services requested by the estimating conference or individual conference principals in a timely manner.

The Executive Office of the Governor, the Director of Economic and Demographic Research, and professional staff who have forecasting expertise from the Florida Partnership for School Readiness, the Department of Children and Family Services, the Department of Education, the Senate, and the House of Representatives, or their designees, are the principals of the School Readiness Program Estimating Conference. The principal representing the Executive Office of the Governor must preside over sessions of the conference.

WAGES/The Florida Healthy Kids Corporation Act

The chairperson of the partnership is added to the WAGES state board of directors. The Florida Healthy Kids Corporation is encouraged to work cooperatively with the Florida Partnership for School Readiness.

State Coordinating Council for School Readiness Programs

The State Coordinating Council for School Readiness Programs is established to ensure coordination among the programs that serve preschool children in order to support the first state education goal, readiness to start school; to facilitate communication, cooperation, and the maximum use of resources; and to promote high standards for all programs that serve preschool children in this state. It is the intent of the Legislature that the coordinating council be an independent nonpartisan body and not be identified or affiliated with any one agency, program, or group.

The membership is:

- ◆ The seven current members of the 1998-1999 State Coordinating Council for Early Childhood Services Executive Committee.
- ◆ Eight additional members, appointed by the executive committee, including a representative of each of the following: subsidized child care programs; prekindergarten early intervention programs; Head Start programs; health care programs; private providers; faith-based providers; programs for children with disabilities; and parents of preschool children.

The council is to adopt internal organizational procedures or bylaws necessary for the efficient operation of the council. The council may establish committees that are responsible for conducting specific council programs and activities.

The council has a budget and is financed through an annual appropriation made for this purpose in the General Appropriations Act. Council members are entitled to reimbursement for per diem and travel expenses while carrying out official business of the council. When appropriate, parent representatives must receive a stipend for child care costs incurred while attending council meetings. For administrative purposes only, the council is assigned to the Florida Partnership for School Readiness.

The coordinating council must hold quarterly meetings that are open to the public, and the public must be given the opportunity to comment at each meeting. The coordinating council must notify persons of the date, time, and place of each quarterly meeting upon request.

The coordinating council must recommend to the partnership methods for coordinating public and private school readiness programs and procedures to facilitate communication, cooperation, and the maximum use of resources to achieve the first state education goal, readiness to start school. In addition, the council must:

- ◆ Advise the partnership concerning criteria for grant proposal guidelines, the review of plans and proposals, and eligibility for services of school readiness programs.
- ◆ Recommend to the partnership methods to increase the involvement of public and private partnerships in school readiness programs to maximize the availability of federal funds and to effectively use available resources through cooperative funding and coordinated services.
- ◆ Submit its final report to the Florida Partnership for School Readiness by July 1, 2002.
- ◆ Be repealed on July 1, 2002.

Career Path for School Readiness Related Professions

The Commissioner of Education, in conjunction with the Florida Partnership for School Readiness, the Postsecondary Education Planning Commission, and the Education Standards Commission, must conduct a statewide assessment to determine the extent and nature of instruction for those who work or are training to work in the fields of child care and early childhood education, as well as an assessment of the market demand for individuals trained at various levels. Based on this assessment, the Articulation Coordinating Committee must establish an articulated career path for

school readiness-related professions, which must lead from entry-level employment in child care and early childhood education to a baccalaureate degree. The career path must provide for the articulation of:

- ◆ Vocational credit to college credit for associate in science degrees;
- ◆ Credit earned in associate in science or associate in arts degree programs to credit in baccalaureate degree programs;
- ◆ Credit awarded by public and private institutions; and
- ◆ Credit for experiential learning associated with minimum training requirements for employment. The Articulation Coordinating Committee must ensure that the articulation of such credit does not jeopardize the receiving institution's accreditation status. Before the printing of the catalog for the fall semester 2002, the articulation agreement must guarantee the statewide articulation of appropriate course work as established in the career path.

Transfer of Funds

The Governor is authorized to transfer funds from the relevant state departments or agencies to the partnership to fund local school readiness coalitions during the phase-in period.

Recommendations for Appropriations and Positions

The partnership must recommend to the Legislature by February 15, 2000, whether the current appropriations and positions for Department of Children and Family Services contract managers and Department of Education Prekindergarten Early Intervention and School Readiness personnel should be phased out, or transferred in whole or in part to the partnership to provide for school readiness program staffing. If, before such time as its own staff is in place, the partnership needs staff assistance in reviewing and approving local coalition plans, the Department of Children and Family Services and the Department of Education must provide such staff assistance.

Best Practices Model

Subject to appropriation by the Legislature, the Inter-University Consortium on Child and Family Studies is authorized to design and develop the concept for a child care and development center, which may be used as a model for demonstrating best practices in children's readiness for school.

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 Florida Partnership for School Readiness to make rules needed to implement the program.

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

Yes, the bill establishes the Florida Partnership for School Readiness to implement a cohesive school readiness statewide program for at-risk children from birth to kindergarten, and calls for 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, by adding a school readiness component to all subsidized child care programs.

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 School Readiness Coalitions. The State Coordinating Council for Early Childhood Education is renamed, its membership reduced by 50 percent, and terminated in 2002.

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

Anticipated costs are: per diem for partnership members, salaries and operating expenses for staff for the partnership and the coalitions, and coalition incentive grants for new coalitions established and approved within the specified deadlines. The bill authorizes transfer of funds to the partnership for the coalitions from relevant agencies during the phase in period.

Additionally, the bill authorizes the partnership to use DOE and CFS staff during the phase-in period.

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

The local coalitions include representatives of the people governed and the coalitions operate on their behalf. The Florida Partnership for School Readiness 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 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 coalition evaluates the family's needs.

- (2) Who makes the decisions?

The Florida Partnership for School Readiness establishes policies. The local coalitions work out local plans. The providers contracted by the 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 Florida Partnership for School Readiness through its approval and periodic review of local coalitions and plans.

D. STATUTE(S) AFFECTED:

Creates sections 411.01 and 229.567, F.S. Amends sections 216.136, F.S., 414.026, 624.91, 411.222, 240.115, F.S. Repeals subsection 411.222(4), F.S.

E. SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS:

- Section 1** Creates s. 411.01, F.S., establishing the Florida Partnership for School Readiness for purposes of administering the School Readiness Program; providing legislative intent; providing for the program to be phased in; providing responsibilities and duties of the partnership; providing membership and meeting requirements; providing that members are subject to certain ethics requirements; authorizing partnership members to be reimbursed for per diem and travel expenses; providing for hiring certain employees; requiring that the partnership prepare a system for measuring school readiness; specifying objectives to be measured by such system; requiring that the partnership adopt performance standards and measures; requiring the partnership to make recommendations to the Governor and the State Board of Education; requiring reports to the Legislature; authorizing the partnership to adopt rules; requiring the establishment of school readiness coalitions; specifying services to be provided by the coalitions; requiring coalitions to develop reimbursement schedules; providing for designation and approval of a fiscal agent; providing for grants to be provided to coalitions to develop school readiness plans; providing requirements for school readiness plans; providing for incentive bonuses to be awarded; requiring evaluations and an annual report; providing eligibility criteria; providing for parental choice with respect to child care arrangements and payments; providing for evaluation and performance measures; providing requirements or funding school readiness programs; requiring the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) to make certain reports; providing responsibility for implementation.
- Section 2** Creates s. 229.567, F.S.; requiring the Department of Education to adopt the school readiness uniform screening developed by the partnership and to require their use by the school districts.
- Section 3** Amends s. 216.136, F.S.; creating the School Readiness Program Estimating Conference; requiring the conference to develop estimates and forecasts of students eligible for school readiness programs; specifying the principals of the conference.
- Section 4** Amends s. 414.026, F.S.; requiring the chairperson of the Florida Partnership for School Readiness to serve on the WAGES Program State Board of Directors.
- Section 5** Amends s. 624.91, F.S.; providing legislative intent that the Florida Healthy Kids Corporation work cooperatively with the School Readiness Program.
- Section 6** Amends s. 411.222, F.S.; abolishing the State Coordinating Council for Early Childhood Services; establishing the State Coordinating Council for School

Readiness Programs; requiring the State Coordinating Council for Early Childhood Services to submit a final report.

- Section 7** Repeals s. 411.222(4), F.S., relating to the State Coordinating Council for Early Childhood Services.
- Section 8** Amends s. 240.115, F.S.; requiring that the Commissioner of Education establish a career path for school-readiness-related professions.
- Section 9** Authorizes the Governor to transfer funds.
- Section 10** Requires that the Florida Partnership for School Readiness recommend appropriations and positions.
- Section 11** Authorizes the Inter-University Consortium of Child and Family Studies to develop a model to demonstrate best practices.
- Section 12** Provides that the act does not impede the state's ability to receive federal funds.
- Section 13** Provides an appropriation.
- Section 14** Provides an effective date upon becoming a law, except as otherwise provided.

IV. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT:

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE AGENCIES/STATE FUNDS:

1. Non-recurring Effects:

One-time coalition initiation grants shall be provided in the amount of \$50,000 to coalitions approved by the governing board by January 1, 2000, and \$25,000 to coalitions approved by the governing board by March 1, 2000, to support coalitions in developing their plans. An incentive bonus shall be provided subject to appropriation, on a per-student served basis for coalition plans which show enhancement in the quality and standards of the school readiness program without diminishing the number of children served.

2. Recurring Effects:

Program funding for the combined program will continue in the same amount as appropriated for the uncombined programs.

Funding to staff the governing board for per diem will be needed. Transfer of funds and positions from relevant agencies are authorized for this purpose.

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

3. Long Run Effects Other Than Normal Growth:

Transfer of funds from relevant agencies suggest a neutral fiscal impact at the state level for administration of readiness programs.

4. Total Revenues and Expenditures:

The revenue required to implement the readiness program would consist of the \$50,000 or \$25,000 initiation grant per approved coalition. Specific Appropriation 6 appropriates \$2,085,000 from the Educational Enhancement Trust Funds (lottery dollars) for coalition initiation grants. Revenue for operation of the governing board could be transferred from relevant agencies. The governing board is to recommend by February 15, 2000, appropriations and positions from the Department of Children and Families to be transferred

to the governing board for readiness programs. All other revenues would be subject to appropriation.

Also, by February 15, 2000, the partnership will present to the Legislature recommendations for combining funding streams for school readiness programs into a School Readiness Trust Fund. These recommendations must include recommendations for the inclusion or noninclusion of prekindergarten disabilities programs and funding. The partnership must also present to the Legislature recommendations for providing necessary transportation services for school readiness programs at this time.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AS A WHOLE:

1. Non-recurring Effects:

2. Recurring Effects:

3. Long Run Effects Other Than Normal Growth:

Indeterminate; however, potentially, service would become more efficient. Assessment of the effectiveness of readiness programs would lend itself to performance funding.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

1. Direct Private Sector Costs:

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 students and productive citizens.

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

Private providers of readiness programs may have greater opportunity to participate in the delivery of services.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

Specific Appropriation 2A appropriates \$1,075,000 from the Educational Enhancement Trust Fund to the Executive Office of the Governor on behalf of the Florida Partnership for School Readiness (\$915,000 for the partnership, \$35,000 for the coordinating council, and \$125,000 for evaluation). The bill appropriates \$330,000 from General Revenue to the Executive Office of the Governor for FY 1999-2000 implementation.

V. 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.

VI. COMMENTS:

N/A

VII. AMENDMENTS OR COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES:

On April 6, 1999, on the House floor, CS/CS/SB 366 was substituted for CS/HB 259, which was laid on the table. CS/CS/SB 366 was amended with the House language and immediately certified to the Senate. The Senate refused to concur and a Conference Committee was appointed.

The Conference Committee report differs from CS/CS/SB 366, as amended on the House floor on April 6, 1999. The *Effect of Proposed Changes* and the *Section by Section* portions of this analysis reflect the Conference Committee report as adopted by the Legislature.

VIII. SIGNATURES:

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION INNOVATION:

Prepared by:

Pamela M. Allen

Staff Director:

Ouida J. Ashworth

AS REVISED BY THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS:

Prepared by:

MARK ARMSTRONG

Staff Director:

JOHN NEWMAN

FINAL ANALYSIS PREPARED BY THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION INNOVATION:

Prepared by:

Pamela M. Allen

Staff Director:

Ouida J. Ashworth