

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to school readiness; creating
3 s. 411.01, F.S.; providing legislative intent;
4 providing definitions; creating the State
5 School Readiness Governing Board; providing
6 membership requirements, meeting requirements,
7 public records requirements, and
8 responsibilities and duties of the governing
9 board; authorizing the governing board to adopt
10 rules; providing eligibility requirements for
11 the school readiness program; requiring
12 performance standards and outcome measures
13 developed and approved by the governing board
14 to meet certain guidelines; providing for the
15 establishment of a school readiness coalition
16 in each county; providing membership of the
17 coalitions; providing for implementation and
18 phasing-in of the school readiness program;
19 requiring the development of a plan; providing
20 for exceptions to law; providing for coalition
21 initiation grants; providing incentive bonuses;
22 providing for the funding of the school
23 readiness program; requiring each coalition to
24 develop a reimbursement rate schedule for all
25 programs funded by the coalition; providing
26 requirements for school readiness agents;
27 providing for parental choice with respect to
28 child care arrangements and payments; requiring
29 the governing board to adopt an electronic
30 funds transfer system; requiring the Office of
31 Program Policy Analysis and Government

1 Accountability to provide consultation and
2 assess outcomes; requiring each coalition to
3 conduct an annual evaluation and submit a
4 report to the governing board and requiring an
5 annual report by the governing board that
6 includes coalition report information; creating
7 s. 229.567, F.S.; requiring the Department of
8 Education to require use by the school
9 districts of a school readiness screening
10 system adopted by the governing board; amending
11 s. 216.136, F.S.; creating the School Readiness
12 Program Estimating Conference; requiring the
13 conference to develop information relating to
14 school readiness programs; specifying the
15 principals of the conference; amending s.
16 414.026, F.S.; adding the chair of the State
17 School Readiness Governing Board to the WAGES
18 Program State Board of Directors; amending s.
19 624.91, F.S.; requiring the Florida Healthy
20 Kids Corporation to work cooperatively with the
21 State School Readiness Governing Board;
22 amending s. 240.115, F.S.; requiring the
23 Articulation Coordinating Committee to
24 establish a career path for school
25 readiness-related professions; authorizing the
26 Governor to transfer funds; authorizing the
27 State School Readiness Governing Board to make
28 staffing recommendations; authorizing the
29 Inter-University Consortium on Child and Family
30 Studies to design and develop the concept for a
31

1 child care and development center; providing an
2 effective date.

3
4 WHEREAS, the voters of the State of Florida, in the
5 November 1998 General Election, amended Section 1 of Article
6 IX of the State Constitution to state that it is "a paramount
7 duty of the state to make adequate provision for the education
8 of all children residing within its borders," and

9 WHEREAS, the Legislature recognizes the primacy of
10 parents as their children's first teachers and the importance
11 of children entering the education system ready to learn, and

12 WHEREAS, the Legislature seeks to assist parents by
13 providing opportunities for the state's at-risk
14 birth-to-kindergarten population to enhance their chances for
15 educational success by participating in quality school
16 readiness programs that can better prepare them for school,
17 NOW, THEREFORE,

18
19 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

20
21 Section 1. Section 411.01, Florida Statutes, is
22 created to read:

23 411.01 School readiness program.--

24 (1) LEGISLATIVE INTENT.--

25 (a) The Legislature recognizes that school readiness
26 programs increase children's chances of achieving future
27 educational success and becoming productive members of
28 society. It is the intent of the Legislature that such
29 programs be developmentally appropriate, research-based,
30 involve parents as their child's first teacher, serve as
31 preventive measures for children at risk of future school

1 failure, enhance the educational readiness of eligible
2 children, and support family education. Each school readiness
3 program shall provide the elements necessary to prepare
4 at-risk children for school, including health screening and
5 referral and an appropriate educational program.

6 (b) It is the intent of the Legislature that school
7 readiness programs be operated on a full-day, year-round basis
8 to the maximum extent possible to enable parents to work and
9 become financially self-sufficient.

10 (c) It is the intent of the Legislature that school
11 readiness programs not exist as isolated programs, but build
12 upon existing services and work in cooperation with other
13 programs for young children, and that school readiness
14 programs be coordinated and funding integrated to achieve full
15 effectiveness.

16 (d) It is the intent of the Legislature that the
17 implementation of a school readiness program be phased in on a
18 county-by-county basis. Each coalition's school readiness
19 program shall have available to it funding from all the
20 county's publicly funded early education and child care
21 programs, including Florida First Start programs, Even-Start
22 literacy programs, prekindergarten early intervention
23 programs, Head Start programs, programs offered by public and
24 private providers of child care, migrant prekindergarten
25 programs, Title I programs, subsidized child care programs,
26 teen parent programs, and other services, together with any
27 additional funds appropriated or obtained for purposes of this
28 section, and these programs and services shall be a part of
29 the coalition's integrated school readiness program.

30 (e) It is the intent of the Legislature that the
31 administrative staff at the state level for school readiness

1 programs be kept to the minimum necessary to carry out the
2 duties of the State School Readiness Governing Board, as the
3 school readiness programs are to be locally designed,
4 operated, and managed, with the State School Readiness
5 Governing Board adopting a system for measuring school
6 readiness; developing school readiness program performance
7 standards, outcome measurements, and data design and review;
8 and approving and reviewing local school readiness coalitions
9 and plans.

10 (f) It is the intent of the Legislature that
11 appropriations for combined school readiness programs shall
12 not be less than the programs would receive in any fiscal year
13 on an uncombined basis.

14 (g) It is the intent of the Legislature that the
15 school readiness program coordinate and operate in conjunction
16 with the district school systems. However, it is also the
17 intent of the Legislature that the school readiness program
18 not be construed as part of the system of free public schools
19 but rather as a separate program for children under the age of
20 kindergarten eligibility, funded separately from the system of
21 free public schools, utilizing a mandatory sliding fee scale,
22 and providing an integrated and seamless system of school
23 readiness services for the state's birth-to-kindergarten
24 population.

25 (h) It is the intent of the Legislature that the
26 federal child care income tax credit be preserved for school
27 readiness programs.

28 (2) DEFINITIONS.--As used in this section, the term:

29 (a) "Governing board" means the State School Readiness
30 Governing Board.

31

1 **(b) "Coalition" means a Local School Readiness**
2 **Coalition.**

3 **(c) "Plan" means a coalition's school readiness**
4 **program implementation plan.**

5 **(3) STATE SCHOOL READINESS GOVERNING BOARD.--The State**
6 **School Readiness Governing Board is established in the**
7 **Executive Office of the Governor.**

8 **(a) The governing board shall consist of:**

9 **1. The Lieutenant Governor, or his or her designee.**

10 **2. The Secretary of the Department of Children and**
11 **Family Services.**

12 **3. The Commissioner of Education, or his or her**
13 **designee.**

14 **4. The chair of the WAGES Program State Board of**
15 **Directors.**

16 **5. The Secretary of Health.**

17 **6. The chair of the Child Care Executive Partnership**
18 **Board.**

19 **7. Five members appointed by the Governor. Four of**
20 **the Governor's appointees shall be appointed from a list of**
21 **six nominees, of which three have been submitted by the**
22 **President of the Senate, and three have been submitted by the**
23 **Speaker of the House of Representatives. Members shall be**
24 **appointed to 4-year terms of office. However, of the initial**
25 **appointees, one shall be appointed to a 1-year term, one shall**
26 **be appointed to a 2-year term, two shall be appointed to**
27 **3-year terms, and one shall be appointed to a 4-year term. Any**
28 **vacancy on the governing board shall be filled in the same**
29 **manner as the original appointment.**

1 The appointed members shall be business, community, and civic
2 leaders in the state who are not elected to public office and
3 who are not providers of early education or child care. The
4 members must be geographically and demographically
5 representative of the state. The Governor shall select a chair
6 and a vice chair, and shall appoint an executive director, who
7 is responsible for other staff authorized by the governing
8 board.

9 (b) For purposes of administration of the Federal
10 Child Care and Development Fund, 45 C.F.R. Parts 98 and 99,
11 the governing board may be designated by the Governor as the
12 Lead Agency, and if so designated shall comply with the Lead
13 Agency responsibilities pursuant to federal law.

14 Additionally, the governing board shall establish a reading
15 and literacy partnership with the Governor, the Commissioner
16 of Education, the chairs and ranking minority members of the
17 appropriate Senate and House education committees, and the
18 coalitions for purposes of receiving federal Reading
19 Excellence Act grants, and shall make every attempt to draw
20 down all available relevant federal funds.

21 (c) The governing board shall meet quarterly and may
22 meet as often as it deems necessary to carry out its duties
23 and responsibilities. Members of the governing board shall
24 participate without proxy at the quarterly meetings. The
25 governing board may take official action by a majority vote of
26 the members present at any meeting at which a quorum is
27 present. The governing board shall hold its first meeting by
28 October 1, 1999.

29 (d) Members of the governing board are subject to the
30 ethics provisions in part III of chapter 112, and no member
31

1 may derive any financial benefit from the funds administered
2 by the governing board.

3 (e) Members of the governing board shall serve without
4 compensation but are entitled to reimbursement for per diem
5 and travel expenses incurred in the performance of their
6 duties as provided in s. 112.061, and reimbursement for other
7 reasonable, necessary, and actual expenses.

8 (f) For the purposes of tort liability, the members of
9 the governing board and its employees shall be governed by s.
10 768.28.

11 (g) The governing board shall:

12 1. Be responsible for the prudent use of all public
13 and private funds in accordance with all legal and contractual
14 requirements.

15 2. Provide final approval and periodic review of
16 coalitions and plans.

17 3. Provide leadership for enhancement of school
18 readiness in this state by aggressively establishing a unified
19 approach to the state's efforts toward enhancement of school
20 readiness. In support of this effort, the governing board may
21 develop and implement specific strategies that address the
22 state's school readiness programs, and may make
23 recommendations to the appropriate oversight entity to move
24 agency staff from other state agencies.

25 4. Seek the most strategic use of federal, state,
26 local, and private resources to maximize the effectiveness of
27 school readiness programs.

28 5. Adopt a system for measuring school readiness that
29 provides objective data regarding the expectations for school
30 readiness, and establish a method for collecting the data and
31 guidelines for using the data. The measurement, the data

1 collection, and the use of the data must serve the statewide
2 school readiness goal. The criteria for determining which data
3 to collect should be the usefulness of the data to state
4 policymakers and local program administrators in administering
5 programs and allocating state funds, and must include the
6 tracking of school readiness system information back to
7 individual school readiness programs to assist in determining
8 program effectiveness. The governing board shall also adopt a
9 system for evaluating the performance of students through the
10 third grade to compare the performance of those who
11 participated in school readiness programs with the performance
12 of students who did not participate in school readiness
13 programs in order to identify strategies for continued
14 successful student performance.

15 6. Develop and adopt performance standards and outcome
16 measures which meet the requirements of subsection (5).

17 7.a. Use the resources and capabilities of the State
18 University System and the Division of Community Colleges in
19 improving school readiness programs, including establishing a
20 career path for employees in school readiness professions that
21 leads from entry-level employment to a bachelor's degree. The
22 State University System and the Division of Community Colleges
23 shall assist and support the governing board and the
24 coalitions in utilizing existing resources.

25 b. In consultation with the Postsecondary Education
26 Planning Commission and the Education Standards Commission,
27 assess the expertise of public and private Florida
28 postsecondary institutions in the areas of infant and toddler
29 developmental research; the related curriculum of training,
30 career, and academic programs; and the status of articulation
31 among those programs. Based on this assessment, the governing

1 board shall provide recommendations to the Governor and the
2 Legislature for postsecondary program improvements to enhance
3 school readiness initiatives.

4 (h) The governing board may adopt rules necessary to
5 administer the provisions of this section which relate to
6 preparing and implementing the system for school readiness,
7 collecting data, approving local school readiness coalitions
8 and plans, providing a method whereby a coalition can serve
9 two or more counties, awarding incentives to coalitions, and
10 issuing waivers.

11 (i) The governing board shall recommend to the
12 Governor, the Commissioner of Education, and the State Board
13 of Education rules, and revisions or repeal of rules, which
14 would increase the effectiveness of programs that prepare
15 children for school.

16 (j) The governing board shall submit an annual report
17 of its activities to the Governor, the executive director of
18 the Florida Healthy Kids Corporation, the President of the
19 Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the
20 minority leaders of both houses of the Legislature. In
21 addition, the governing board's reports and recommendations
22 shall be made available to the State Board of Education, other
23 appropriate state agencies and entities, district school
24 boards, central agencies for child care, and county public
25 health units. The annual report must provide an analysis of
26 school readiness activities across the state, including the
27 number of children who were served in the programs and the
28 number of children who were ready for school. The annual
29 report shall be submitted in a timeframe that summarizes the
30 coalition reports pursuant to subsection (13) and the work of
31 the School Readiness Program Estimating Conference.

1 (k) The governing board shall work with school
2 readiness coalitions to increase parents' training for and
3 involvement in their children's preschool education and to
4 provide family literacy activities and programs.

5 (4) PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY.--The school readiness program
6 shall be established for children under the age of
7 kindergarten eligibility. Priority for participation in the
8 school readiness program shall be given to children who meet
9 one or more of the following criteria:

10 (a) Children under the age of kindergarten eligibility
11 who are:

12 1. Children determined to be at risk of abuse,
13 neglect, or exploitation and who are currently clients of the
14 Children and Family Services Program Office of the Department
15 of Children and Family Services.

16 2. Children at risk of welfare dependency, including
17 economically disadvantaged children, children of participants
18 in the WAGES program, children of migrant farmworkers, and
19 children of teen parents.

20 3. Children of working families whose family income
21 does not exceed 150 percent of the federal poverty level.

22 (b) Three-year-old children and 4-year-old children
23 who may not be economically disadvantaged but who have
24 disabilities, have been served in a specific part-time or
25 combination of part-time exceptional education programs with
26 required special services, aids, or equipment, and were
27 previously reported for funding part time with the Florida
28 Education Finance Program as exceptional students.

29 (c) Economically disadvantaged children, children with
30 disabilities, and children at risk of future school failure,
31 from birth to 4 years of age, who are served at home through

1 home visitor programs and intensive parent education programs
2 such as the Florida First Start Program.

3 (d) Children who meet federal and state requirements
4 for eligibility for the migrant preschool program but who do
5 not meet the criteria of economically disadvantaged.

6
7 An "economically disadvantaged" child means a child whose
8 family income is below 150 percent of the federal poverty
9 level. Notwithstanding any change in a family's economic
10 status, but subject to additional family contributions in
11 accordance with the sliding fee scale, a child who meets the
12 eligibility requirements upon initial registration for the
13 program shall be considered eligible until the child reaches
14 kindergarten age.

15 (5) STANDARDS; OUTCOME MEASURES.--

16 (a) All publicly funded school readiness programs
17 shall be required to meet the performance standards and
18 outcome measures developed and approved by the governing
19 board. The Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government
20 Accountability shall provide consultation to the governing
21 board in the development of the measures and standards. These
22 performance standards and outcome measures shall be applicable
23 on a state-wide basis and must:

24 1. Help prepare preschool children to enter
25 kindergarten ready to learn, as measured by a methodology
26 adopted by the governing board with input from the Department
27 of Education.

28 2. Provide extended-day services and extended-year
29 services when needed.

30 3. Include a staff development plan to ensure that the
31 program has qualified professionals.

1 4. Provide for expanded access to community services
2 and resources, including adult literacy assistance, to help
3 families achieve economic self-sufficiency.

4 5. Provide for a simplified point of entry and unified
5 waiting list.

6 6. As long as funding or eligible populations do not
7 decrease, serve at least as many children as were served prior
8 to implementation of the program.

9 7. Establish a community plan to address the needs of
10 all eligible children.

11 8. Meet all state licensing guidelines, where
12 applicable.

13 9. Assess the developmental status of each child upon
14 the child's entry into a school readiness program and exit
15 from the program for the purpose of assisting program
16 effectiveness determinations.

17
18 The governing board shall develop a phase-in schedule through
19 which all publicly funded school readiness programs shall be
20 measured by these performance standards.

21 (b) All publicly funded school readiness programs
22 shall be required to implement a comprehensive program of
23 children and family services that will enhance the cognitive,
24 social, and physical development of children to achieve the
25 performance standards and outcome measures specified in
26 paragraph (a).

27 (6) LOCAL SCHOOL READINESS COALITIONS.--

28 (a) Each coalition shall consist of at least 14
29 members but not more than 21 members, including the following
30 local officials:

1 1. The Department of Children and Family Services
2 district administrator or his or her deputy or the equivalent.

3 2. The district superintendent of schools or his or
4 her deputy or the equivalent.

5 3. The regional workforce development board chair or
6 director, where applicable.

7 4. The county health department director or his or her
8 designee.

9 5. The Children's Services Council chair or executive
10 director, if applicable.

11 6. The child care licensing agency head.

12 7. Two members appointed by the Department of Children
13 and Family Services district administrator.

14 8. Two members appointed by the board of county
15 commissioners.

16 9. Two members appointed by the district school board.

17 10. The central child care agency administrator.

18 11. Head Start director or directors.

19 12. Up to 7 additional members appointed by the
20 coalition.

21 (b) No member of a coalition may appoint a designee to
22 act in his or her place. A member who is unable to attend may
23 send a representative to coalition meetings, but that
24 representative will have no voting privileges.

25 (c) Members of the coalition are subject to the ethics
26 provisions in part III of chapter 112.

27 (d) Multicounty coalitions shall include
28 representation from each county.

29 (7) IMPLEMENTATION; PHASING-IN OF PROGRAM; EXCEPTIONS
30 TO LAW.--

31

1 (a) The school readiness program is to be phased-in as
2 prescribed by the procedures for implementation provided in
3 this subsection and subsection (8). Until the coalition
4 implements its plan, the county shall continue to receive the
5 services identified in paragraph (1)(d) through the various
6 agencies that would be responsible for delivering those
7 services under current law.

8 (b) In order to obtain plan approval by the governing
9 board, the coalition must submit to the governing board a plan
10 that includes strategies to meet the requirements of this
11 section, including:

12 1. Specific eligibility priorities for children within
13 the coalition's county pursuant to subsection (4).

14 2. Performance standards and outcome measures
15 established by the governing board or alternatively, standards
16 and outcome measures to be used until such time as the
17 governing board adopts such standards and outcome measures.

18 3. Reimbursement rates that have been developed by the
19 coalition.

20 4. A sliding fee scale establishing a copayment for
21 parents based on their ability to pay, which is the same for
22 all program providers, to be implemented and reflected in each
23 program's budget.

24 5. Systems support services, including a central
25 agency, child care resource and referral, eligibility
26 determinations, training of providers, and parent support and
27 involvement.

28 6. Direct enhancement services to families and
29 children. System support and direct enhancement services shall
30 be in addition to payments for the placement of children in
31 school readiness programs.

1 7. A business plan, which must include the contract
2 with a school readiness agent if the coalition is not a
3 legally established corporate entity. Coalitions may contract
4 with other coalitions to achieve efficiency in multiple-county
5 services, and such contracts may be part of the coalition's
6 business plan.

7 8. Strategies to meet the needs of unique populations,
8 such as migrant workers.

9
10 As part of the plan, the coalition may request the Governor to
11 apply for a waiver to allow the county to administer the Head
12 Start Program to accomplish the purposes of the school
13 readiness program. If any school readiness plan can
14 demonstrate that specific statutory goals can be achieved more
15 effectively by using procedures that require modification of
16 existing rules, policies, or procedures, a request for a
17 waiver to the governing board may be made as part of the plan.
18 Upon review, the governing board may grant the proposed
19 modification.

20 (c) The coalition may not implement its plan until it
21 submits the plan to and receives approval from the governing
22 board. Once the plan has been approved, the plan and the
23 services provided under the plan shall be controlled by the
24 coalition rather than by the state agencies or departments.
25 The plan shall be reviewed and revised as necessary, but not
26 less than every 3 years.

27 (d) Upon approval by the governing board of a
28 coalition's plan that adequately addresses the substance of
29 the following itemized statutes, the provisions of this
30 section shall supersede and prevail over ss. 125.901(2)(a)3.,
31 228.061(1) and (2), 230.2303, 230.2305, 230.2306, 230.23166,

1 232.01(1)(a)3., 402.3015, 411.204, 411.221, 411.222, 411.223,
2 and 411.232.

3 (e) Two or more counties may join for the purpose of
4 planning and implementing a school readiness program.

5 (f) A coalition may, subject to approval of the
6 governing board as part of the coalition's plan, receive
7 subsidized child care funds for all children eligible for any
8 federal subsidized child care program and be the provider of
9 the program services.

10 (g) Coalitions are authorized to enter into multiparty
11 contracts with statewide service providers in order to meet
12 the needs of unique populations such as migrant workers.

13 (8) COALITION INITIATION GRANTS; INCENTIVE BONUSES.--

14 (a)1. Coalitions that are approved by the governing
15 board by December 1, 1999, shall be eligible for a \$50,000
16 initiation grant to support the coalition in developing its
17 plan.

18 2. Coalitions that are approved by the governing board
19 by March 1, 2000, shall be eligible for a \$25,000 initiation
20 grant to support the coalition in developing its plan.

21 3. Funds appropriated for coalition initiation grants
22 shall be allocated on a first-come first-served basis.

23 (b) Coalitions that have their plans approved by March
24 1, 2000, shall receive funding from the governing board in
25 fiscal year 2000-2001, and each year thereafter.

26 (c) Upon the governing board's approval of any
27 coalition's plan that clearly shows enhancement in the quality
28 and standards of the school readiness program without
29 diminishing the number of children served in the program, the
30 governing board shall award the coalition an incentive bonus
31 on a per-child-served basis, subject to appropriation.

1 (d) In fiscal year 2000-2001, and each year
2 thereafter, any increases in funding for school readiness
3 programs shall be administered through the coalitions.

4 (e) In fiscal year 2001-2002, the governing board
5 shall request proposals from government agencies and nonprofit
6 corporations for the development and operation of a coalition
7 in each county that does not have an approved coalition by
8 March 1, 2001, unless the county has requested and been
9 granted a waiver by the governing board for good cause.

10 (9) FUNDING; SCHOOL READINESS PROGRAM.--

11 (a) It is the intent of this section to establish an
12 integrated and quality seamless service delivery system for
13 all publicly funded early education and child care programs
14 operating in this state.

15 (b) All state funds budgeted for a county for the
16 programs specified in paragraph (1)(d), along with the pro
17 rata share of the state administrative costs of those
18 programs, all federal funds and required local matching funds
19 for a county for programs specified in paragraph (1)(d), and
20 any additional funds appropriated or obtained for purposes of
21 this section, shall be transferred for the benefit of the
22 coalition for implementation of its plan, including the hiring
23 of staff to effectively operate the coalition's school
24 readiness program. As part of plan approval and periodic plan
25 review, the governing board shall require that administrative
26 costs be kept to the minimum necessary for efficient and
27 effective administration of the plan.

28 (c) By February 15, 2000, the governing board shall
29 present to the Legislature recommendations for combining
30 funding streams for school readiness programs into a School
31 Readiness Trust Fund. These recommendations must include

1 recommendations for the inclusion or noninclusion of
2 prekindergarten disabilities programs and funding.

3 (d) The governing board shall annually distribute all
4 eligible funds as block grants to assist coalitions in
5 integrating services and funding to develop a quality service
6 delivery system. Subject to appropriation, the governing board
7 may also provide financial awards to coalitions demonstrating
8 success in merging and integrating funding streams to serve
9 children and school readiness programs.

10 (e) State funds appropriated for the school readiness
11 program may not be used for the construction of new facilities
12 or the purchase of buses. By February 15, 2000, the governing
13 board shall present to the Legislature recommendations for
14 providing necessary transportation services for school
15 readiness programs.

16 (f) All cost savings and all revenues received through
17 a mandatory sliding fee scale shall be used to help fund the
18 local school readiness program.

19 (10) REIMBURSEMENT RATE.--Each coalition shall develop
20 a reimbursement rate schedule that encompasses all programs
21 funded by that coalition. The reimbursement rate schedule must
22 take into consideration the relevant market rate and must
23 include the projected number of children to be served and must
24 be submitted to the governing board for information.

25 (11) REQUIREMENTS RELATING TO SCHOOL READINESS
26 AGENTS.--If the coalition is not a legally established
27 corporate entity, the coalition must designate a school
28 readiness agent, which may be a public entity or a private
29 nonprofit organization. The school readiness agent shall be
30 required to provide financial and administrative services
31 pursuant to a contract with the coalition. The cost of the

1 financial and administrative services shall be negotiated
2 between the school readiness agent and the coalition. If the
3 school readiness agent is a provider of early education and
4 care programs, the contract must specify that the school
5 readiness agent will act on policy direction from the
6 coalition and will not receive policy direction from its own
7 corporate or governance board regarding disbursement of coalition
8 funds. The school readiness agent shall disburse funds in
9 accordance with the approved coalition school readiness plan
10 and based on billing and disbursement procedures approved by
11 the governing board. The school readiness agent must conform
12 to all data-reporting requirements established by the
13 governing board. A contract between a coalition and a school
14 readiness agent must be presented to the governing board as
15 part of the coalition's plan approval process.

16 (12) PARENTAL CHOICE.--

17 (a) The school readiness program shall provide
18 parental choice pursuant to a purchase service order that
19 ensures, to the maximum extent possible, flexibility in school
20 readiness programs and payment arrangements. According to
21 federal regulations requiring parental choice, a parent may
22 choose an informal child-care arrangement.

23 (b) If it is determined that a provider has provided
24 any cash or other unlawful remuneration to the beneficiary in
25 return for receiving the purchase order, the school readiness
26 agent shall refer the matter to the Division of Public
27 Assistance Fraud for investigation.

28 (c) The governing board shall adopt an electronic
29 transfer system for the dissemination of funds in accordance
30 with this subsection, which shall be fully implemented within
31

1 3 years after plan approval unless a waiver is obtained from
2 the governing board.

3 (d) The Office of Program Policy Analysis and
4 Government Accountability shall assess the implementation,
5 efficiency, and outcomes of the revised school readiness
6 program and report findings to the President of the Senate and
7 the Speaker of the House of Representatives by January 1,
8 2002. Subsequent reviews shall be conducted at the direction
9 of the Joint Legislative Auditing Committee.

10 (13) EVALUATION AND ANNUAL REPORT.--Each coalition
11 shall conduct an evaluation of the effectiveness of its school
12 readiness program including performance standards and outcome
13 measures, and shall provide an annual report to the governing
14 board. This report must conform to the content and format
15 specifications set by the governing board. The governing board
16 must include an analysis of the coalition reports in its
17 annual report.

18 (14) CONFLICTING PROVISIONS.--In the event of a
19 conflict between the provisions of this section and federal
20 requirements, the federal requirements shall control.

21 Section 2. Section 229.567, Florida Statutes, is
22 created to read:

23 229.567 School readiness screening system.--The
24 Department of Education shall require that the school
25 readiness screening system adopted by the State School
26 Readiness Governing Board be utilized uniformly by all school
27 districts.

28 Section 3. Subsection (11) is added to section
29 216.136, Florida Statutes, 1998 Supplement, to read:

30 216.136 Consensus estimating conferences; duties and
31 principals.--

1 (11) SCHOOL READINESS PROGRAM ESTIMATING CONFERENCE.--

2 (a) Duties.--

3 1. The School Readiness Program Estimating Conference
4 shall develop such estimates and forecasts of the number of
5 children eligible for school readiness programs in accordance
6 with the eligibility standards established pursuant to this
7 act as the Conference determines are needed to support the
8 State planning, budgeting, and appropriations process.

9 2. In addition, the School Readiness Program
10 Estimating Conference shall estimate the unduplicated count of
11 children who are eligible for services under the school
12 readiness program.

13 3. The School Readiness Governing Board shall provide
14 information on needs and waiting lists for school readiness
15 program services requested by the School Readiness Program
16 Estimating Conference or individual conference principals in a
17 timely manner.

18 (b) Principals.--The Executive Office of the Governor,
19 the Director of Economic and Demographic Research, and
20 professional staff who have forecasting expertise from the
21 School Readiness Governing Board, the Department of Children
22 and Family Services, the Department of Education, the Senate,
23 and the House of Representatives, or their designees, are the
24 principals of the School Readiness Program Estimating
25 Conference. The principal representing the Executive Office of
26 the Governor shall preside over sessions of the conference.

27 Section 4. Subsection (2) of section 414.026, Florida
28 Statutes, 1998 Supplement, is amended to read:

29 414.026 WAGES Program State Board of Directors.--

30 (2)(a) The board of directors shall be composed of the
31 following members:

- 1 1. The Commissioner of Education, or the
2 commissioner's designee.
- 3 2. The Secretary of Children and Family Services.
- 4 3. The Secretary of Health.
- 5 4. The Secretary of Labor and Employment Security.
- 6 5. The Secretary of Community Affairs.
- 7 6. The Secretary of Transportation, or the secretary's
8 designee.
- 9 7. The director of the Office of Tourism, Trade, and
10 Economic Development.
- 11 8. The chair of the State School Readiness Governing
12 Board.
- 13 ~~9.8.~~ The president of the Enterprise Florida workforce
14 development board, established under s. 288.9620.
- 15 ~~10.9.~~ The chief executive officer of the Florida
16 Tourism Industry Marketing Corporation, established under s.
17 288.1226.
- 18 ~~11.10.~~ Nine members appointed by the Governor, as
19 follows:
 - 20 a. Six members shall be appointed from a list of ten
21 nominees, of which five must be submitted by the President of
22 the Senate and five must be submitted by the Speaker of the
23 House of Representatives. The list of five nominees submitted
24 by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of
25 Representatives must each contain at least three individuals
26 employed in the private sector, two of whom must have
27 management experience. One of the five nominees submitted by
28 the President of the Senate and one of the five nominees
29 submitted by the Speaker of the House of Representatives must
30 be an elected local government official who shall serve as an
31 ex officio nonvoting member.

1 b. Three members shall be at-large members appointed
2 by the Governor.

3 c. Of the nine members appointed by the Governor, at
4 least six must be employed in the private sector and of these,
5 at least five must have management experience.

6
7 The members appointed by the Governor shall be appointed to
8 4-year, staggered terms. Within 60 days after a vacancy occurs
9 on the board, the Governor shall fill the vacancy of a member
10 appointed from the nominees submitted by the President of the
11 Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives for the
12 remainder of the unexpired term from one nominee submitted by
13 the President of the Senate and one nominee submitted by the
14 Speaker of the House of Representatives. Within 60 days after
15 a vacancy of a member appointed at-large by the Governor
16 occurs on the board, the Governor shall fill the vacancy for
17 the remainder of the unexpired term. The composition of the
18 board must generally reflect the racial, gender, and ethnic
19 diversity of the state as a whole.

20 (b) The board of directors shall annually elect a
21 chairperson from among the members appointed by the Governor.
22 The board of directors shall meet at least once each quarter.
23 A member appointed by the Governor may not authorize a
24 designee to attend a meeting of the board in place of the
25 member. The Governor may remove an appointed member for cause,
26 and an absence from three consecutive meetings results in
27 automatic removal, unless the member is excused by the
28 chairperson.

29 (c) Members of the board shall serve without
30 compensation, but are entitled to reimbursement for per diem
31 and travel expenses as provided in s. 112.061.

1 Section 5. Paragraph (a) of subsection (2) of section
2 624.91, Florida Statutes, 1998 Supplement, is amended to read:

3 624.91 The Florida Healthy Kids Corporation Act.--

4 (2) LEGISLATIVE INTENT.--

5 (a) The Legislature finds that increased access to
6 health care services could improve children's health and
7 reduce the incidence and costs of childhood illness and
8 disabilities among children in this state. Many children do
9 not have comprehensive, affordable health care services
10 available. It is the intent of the Legislature that the
11 Florida Healthy Kids Corporation provide comprehensive health
12 insurance coverage to such children. The corporation is
13 encouraged to cooperate with any existing health service
14 programs funded by the public or the private sector and to
15 work cooperatively with the State School Readiness Governing
16 Board.

17 Section 6. Paragraph (e) is added to subsection (1) of
18 section 240.115, Florida Statutes, 1998 Supplement, to read:

19 240.115 Articulation agreement; acceleration
20 mechanisms.--

21 (1)

22 (e) The Commissioner of Education, in conjunction with
23 the State School Readiness Governing Board, the Postsecondary
24 Education Planning Commission, and the Education Standards
25 Commission, shall conduct a statewide assessment to determine
26 the extent and nature of instruction for those who work or are
27 training to work in the fields of child care and early
28 childhood education, as well as an assessment of the market
29 demand for individuals trained at various levels. The
30 Articulation Coordinating Committee shall establish an
31 articulated career path for school readiness-related

1 professions, which shall lead from entry-level employment in
2 child care and early childhood education to a baccalaureate
3 degree. The career path shall provide for the articulation of:

4 1. Vocational credit to college credit;

5 2. Associate in science and associate in arts degrees
6 to baccalaureate degree programs;

7 3. Credit awarded by public and private institutions;

8 and

9 4. Credit for experiential learning associated with
10 minimum training requirements for employment. The Articulation
11 Coordinating Committee shall ensure that the articulation of
12 such credit does not jeopardize the receiving institution's
13 accreditation status.

14
15 By fall semester 2001, the articulation agreement must
16 guarantee the statewide articulation of appropriate coursework
17 as established in the career path.

18 Section 7. The Governor is authorized to transfer
19 funds from the relevant state departments or agencies to the
20 State School Readiness Governing Board to fund local school
21 readiness coalitions during the phase-in period.

22 Section 8. The State School Readiness Governing Board
23 shall recommend to the Legislature by February 15, 2000,
24 whether the current appropriations and positions for
25 Department of Children and Family Services contract managers
26 and Department of Education Prekindergarten Early Intervention
27 and School Readiness personnel should be phased out, or
28 transferred in whole or in part to the governing board to
29 provide for school readiness program staffing.

30 Section 9. Subject to appropriation by the
31 Legislature, the Inter-University Consortium on Child and

1 Family Studies, with Florida State University as the lead
2 university, is authorized to design and develop the concept
3 for a child care and development center, which may be used as
4 a model for demonstrating best practices in children's
5 readiness for school.

6 Section 10. This act shall take effect upon becoming a
7 law.

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