

STORAGE NAME: h0365.edk

DATE: March 4, 1999

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION K-12
ANALYSIS**

BILL #: HB 365

RELATING TO: Public School Curricula (Program in Elementary School Character Development)

SPONSOR(S): Representative Stafford

COMPANION BILL(S): None

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

- (1) EDUCATION K-12
 - (2) EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS
 - (3)
 - (4)
 - (5)
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I. SUMMARY:

House Bill 365 requires school boards, to install, if they choose, a character-development program which is the same as or similar to Character Counts or Character First! Education Series, in elementary schools. The program must be secular in nature and must stress such character qualities as attentiveness, patience, and initiative.

This bill has no fiscal impact to the state.

Provides an effective date upon becoming a law.

II. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS:

A. PRESENT SITUATION:

233.0612, F.S., Authorized Instruction.

Each school district may provide students with programs and instruction at the appropriate grade levels in areas including, but not limited to, the following:

- ◆ Character development and law education;
- ◆ The objective study of the Bible and religion;
- ◆ Traffic education;
- ◆ Free enterprise and consumer education;
- ◆ Programs to encourage patriotism and greater respect for country;
- ◆ Drug abuse resistance education;
- ◆ Comprehensive health education;
- ◆ Care of nursing home patients;
- ◆ Instruction in acquired immune deficiency syndrome;
- ◆ Voting instruction, including the use of county voting machines; and
- ◆ Before-school and after-school programs.

School boards are encouraged to install in the elementary schools of the district a program in character development which is the same or similar to the Character Counts or Character First! Education Series. The program must be secular in nature and stress such character qualities as attentiveness, patience, and initiative.

Within the state of Florida more than 171 schools have inquired about the use of character development programs. School districts have spent more than \$20,000 on program materials for the development of character education implementation. There are more than 21 states involved in Character Education Partnership programs. In the past three (3) years more than \$4,951,287 has been spent on character education programs in the nation.

Additional character education teacher training programs designed for special needs and physically challenged students are now in the development stages. Character Counts! Education Series has completed the character education parent component called, "Parent Preview." The cost for this series has not been determined. The projected time for the new series to become available to school districts is August 1999. The Character Counts! Education Series program cost is \$5 - \$7 per student. Teacher training cost is included in the per student cost. If a new character quality is introduced every month, the approximate cost for a school of five hundred would be \$2,500 to \$3,500 for the entire year.

B. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

If a school board chooses to provide character development education they must install in the elementary schools, a program which is the same as or similar to the Character Counts or Character First! Education Series.

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?

No.

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

No.

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

No.

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

A program is not eliminated or reduced.

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

N/A

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

N/A

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

N/A

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?

No.

4. Individual Freedom:

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

No.

- 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:

The bill does not purport to provide services to families or children.

- (1) Who evaluates the family's needs?

N/A

- (2) Who makes the decisions?

N/A

- (3) Are private alternatives permitted?

N/A

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

N/A

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

N/A

- 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:

This bill does not create or change a program providing services to families or children.

(1) parents and guardians?

N/A

(2) service providers?

N/A

(3) government employees/agencies?

N/A

D. STATUTE(S) AFFECTED:

Amends s. 233.0612, F.S.

E. SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS:

Section 1: House Bill 365 requires school boards, to install, if they choose, a character-development program in the elementary schools, which is the same as or similar to Character Counts or Character First! Education Series. The program must be secular in nature and must stress such character qualities as attentiveness, patience, and initiative.

Section 2: Provides an effective date upon becoming a law.

III. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT:

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE AGENCIES/STATE FUNDS:

1. Non-recurring Effects:

None.

2. Recurring Effects:

None.

3. Long Run Effects Other Than Normal Growth:

None.

4. Total Revenues and Expenditures:

None.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AS A WHOLE:

1. Non-recurring Effects:

None.

2. Recurring Effects:

None.

3. Long Run Effects Other Than Normal Growth:

None.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

1. Direct Private Sector Costs:

None.

2. Direct Private Sector Benefits:

None.

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

None.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

None.

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

A. APPLICABILITY OF THE MANDATES PROVISION:

This bill does not require counties or municipalities to spend funds or take an action requiring the expenditure of funds.

B. REDUCTION OF REVENUE RAISING AUTHORITY:

This bill does not reduce the authority that municipalities or counties have to raise revenues in the aggregate.

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

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

V. COMMENTS:

The sponsor's intent was to require character education programs in elementary schools. Since the controlling section of statute only authorizes certain programs, this intent is not accomplished.

VI. AMENDMENTS OR COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES:

None.

VII. SIGNATURES:

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION K-12:

Prepared by:

Staff Director:

Janifer J. Booher

Patricia W. Levesque