

HOUSE MESSAGE SUMMARY

BILL: CS/CS/SB 366 & others, 1st. Eng. [S0366.HMS]
SPONSOR: Fiscal Policy and Education Committees and Senators Holzendorf and Kirkpatrick
SUBJECT: School Readiness Program
PREPARED BY: Senate Committee on Education
DATE: April 6, 1999

I. Amendments Contained in Message

House Amendment 1-963557 (body with title)

II. Summary of Amendments Contained in Message

House Amendment 1 strikes from the bill everything after the enacting clause and inserts the text of CS\HB 259, 1st Eng. Like CS/CS/SB 366, the amendment creates a school readiness program with a state governing board, local coalitions and a school readiness program estimating conference. The amendment differs from CS/CS/SB 366 in the following major ways:

State Governing Board--Only 5 of 11 members are from the private sector; in the Senate Bill, 10 of 16 members are from the private sector. The Senate Bill prohibits the private sector members or their families from earning an income in the early education and child care industry; the House amendment prohibits the members themselves from being early education or child care providers.

Local Coalitions--The Senate bill requires each coalition to serve a minimum population of 20,000 preschool children, thus requiring small counties to join in multi-county coalitions. The Senate bill anticipates 26 coalitions. The House amendment does not require a minimum size but requires the program to be implemented on a county-by county basis, thus anticipating 67 coalitions. The cost of the House amendment is estimated at \$1,025,000 (41 counties at \$25,000 per county for incentive funds.)

The House amendment requires coalitions of 14 to 21 members; it does not require members from the private sector or representatives of private child care and faith-based child care providers. The Senate Bill requires 25 members and requires that more than one-third of the local coalition member be from the private sector. Those members and their families cannot earn their living in the early education and child care industry. The Senate Bill also requires each coalition to have a member representing private providers of child care and one representing faith-based child care providers.

System for Measuring School Readiness--The House amendment requires the governing board to adopt a system for measuring school readiness that provides objective data regarding the expectations for school readiness but does not say what the expectations are. The Senate Bill lists 17 expectations to give everyday examples of the domains of development that must be included in the system for measuring readiness.

In addition, the House amendment requires the board to adopt a system for evaluating the performance of student through third grade. As a cost of \$25.00 per child, this requirement would cost an estimated \$18,250,000.

Standards and Outcome Measures--Certain processes that are called program expectations in the Senate Bill are listed in the House amendment as standards and outcome measures by which programs will be measured. Under the Senate Bill, standards and outcome measures must be adopted by the governing board by January 1, 2000.

Statutes Governing Preschool and Child Care Programs--The House amendment permits local coalitions to specify statutes from which they will be exempt once their plan is approved by the board. Those statutes are: ss. 125.901 (2) (a)3., 228.061(1) & (2), 230.2303, 230.2305, 230.2306, 230.23166, 232.01(1)(a)3. & (3), 402.3015, 411.204, 411.221, 411.222, 411.223, and 411.232. The Senate Bill does not address those statutes but anticipates the 2000 Legislature doing so by requiring the governing board to recommend common eligibility requirements for similar programs; develop and adopt performance standards and outcome measures; and present to the Governor and the Legislature a plan for combining funding streams into a School Readiness Trust Fund.

The State Coordinating Council for Early Childhood Services--The Senate Bill reconstitutes the State Coordinating Council for Early Childhood Services into a 15-member Coordinating council for school readiness. The council will advise the partnership until 2002, when the council will be repealed. The House amendment does not repeal the council, but the statute that creates it is one from which a coalition could be exempt if it cited the statute in its plan.

Comprehensive Program of Children and Family Services--The House amendment requires all school readiness programs to implement a comprehensive program of children and family services and requires coalitions to include in their plans direct enhancement services to families and children in addition to the payments for the placement of the children. The cost could be in excess of \$10 million.

Administrative Cost--The House amendment requires the pro rata share of the state administrative cost for readiness programs to be transferred to coalitions. The cost for that requirement is indeterminate. The Senate Bill caps administrative cost at 10 percent for the readiness programs and limits coalitions's administrative costs to 5 percent, or one-half of the administrative funds.

Appropriation--The Senate Bill appropriates \$330,000 from the General Revenue Fund to the Executive Office of the Governor for implementation of the act in FY 1999-2000. The House amendment does not contain an appropriation.