

By the Committee on Education

304-450D-99

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to school readiness;
3 establishing the Florida Partnership for School
4 Readiness, Inc., for purposes of administering
5 the School Readiness Program; creating the
6 School Readiness Governing Board to operate as
7 the board of directors of the partnership;
8 providing responsibilities and duties of the
9 partnership and governing board; providing
10 membership of the governing board and meeting
11 requirements; providing that the Florida
12 Partnership for School Readiness, Inc., is
13 subject to public records and public meeting
14 requirements; providing for hiring certain
15 employees; providing for the partnership to
16 operate as a nonprofit corporation; requiring
17 that the partnership prepare a system for
18 measuring school readiness; specifying
19 objectives to be measured by such system;
20 requiring that the partnership contract with an
21 independent entity to evaluate the measurement
22 system; requiring the partnership to make
23 recommendations to the Governor and the State
24 Board of Education; authorizing the partnership
25 to adopt rules; requiring the establishment of
26 a school readiness coalition in each county;
27 specifying services to be provided by the
28 coalitions; providing for designation and
29 approval of a fiscal agent; providing for
30 grants to be provided to coalitions to develop
31 school readiness plans; providing for incentive

1 bonuses to be awarded; providing requirements
2 for school readiness plans; providing for
3 parental choice with respect to child care
4 arrangements and payments; providing for
5 evaluation and performance measures; providing
6 responsibility for implementation; providing
7 for special readiness grants to be awarded to
8 parents; creating s. 229.567, F.S.; requiring
9 the Department of Education to adopt the school
10 readiness screening instruments developed by
11 the Florida Partnership for School Readiness,
12 Inc., and to require their use by the school
13 districts; creating the School Readiness
14 Program Needs-Assessment Conference; requiring
15 the conference to develop information relating
16 to the school readiness programs; specifying
17 the principals of the conference; amending s.
18 414.026, F.S.; requiring the chairperson of the
19 Florida Partnership for School Readiness, Inc.,
20 to serve on the WAGES Program State Board of
21 Directors; requiring the State Coordinating
22 Council for Early Childhood Services to submit
23 a final report; amending s. 624.91, F.S.;
24 requiring the Healthy Kids Corporation to work
25 cooperatively with the Florida Partnership for
26 School Readiness, Inc.; amending s. 411.222,
27 F.S.; abolishing the State Coordinating Council
28 for Early Childhood Services; establishing the
29 State Coordinating Council for School Readiness
30 Programs; repealing s. 411.222(4), F.S.,
31 relating to the State Coordinating Council for

1 School Readiness Programs; providing effective
2 dates.

3
4 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

5
6 Section 1. Section 411.01, Florida Statutes, is
7 created to read:

8 411.01 Florida Partnership for School Readiness, Inc.;
9 school readiness coalitions.--

10 (1) SHORT TITLE.--This section may be cited as the
11 "School Readiness Act."

12 (2) SCHOOL READINESS PROGRAM.--For purposes of this
13 chapter, all child care and education programs that are funded
14 with state, federal, lottery, or local public funds and
15 provide services to children from birth to 5 years of age, or
16 until the child enters kindergarten, shall be components of
17 the school readiness program with the goal of preparing
18 children for success in school.

19 (3) SCHOOL READINESS GOVERNING BOARD.--

20 (a) There is created a School Readiness Governing
21 Board to operate as the board of directors of the Florida
22 Partnership for School Readiness, Inc., with responsibility
23 for adopting and maintaining coordinated programmatic,
24 administrative, and fiscal policies and standards for all
25 school readiness programs, while allowing a wide range of
26 programmatic flexibility and differentiation.

27 (b)1. As a condition for receiving funds appropriated
28 to the Florida Partnership for School Readiness, Inc., the
29 members of the School Readiness Governing Board shall include
30 the Governor, the Commissioner of Education, the Secretary of
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1 Children and Family Services, the Secretary of Health, and the
2 chairperson of the WAGES Program State Board of Directors.

3 2. The governing board shall also include 10 members
4 of the public who shall be business, community, and civic
5 leaders in the state who are not elected to public office.
6 These members and their families must not earn their income in
7 the early education and child care industry. The members must
8 be geographically and demographically representative of the
9 state. Each member shall be appointed by the Governor. Eight
10 of the members shall be appointed from a list of 10 nominees,
11 of which five must be submitted by the President of the Senate
12 and five must be submitted by the Speaker of the House of
13 Representatives. Members shall be appointed to 4-year terms of
14 office. However, of the initial appointees, two shall be
15 appointed to 1-year terms, two shall be appointed to 2-year
16 terms, three shall be appointed to 3-year terms, and three
17 shall be appointed to 4-year terms. The members of the
18 governing board shall elect a chairperson annually. Any
19 vacancy on the governing board shall be filled in the same
20 manner as the original appointment.

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 August 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
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1 may derive any financial benefit from the funds administered
2 by the Florida Partnership for School Readiness, Inc.

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 appoint an executive
12 director to serve at its pleasure who shall perform the duties
13 assigned to him or her by the governing board. The executive
14 director shall be responsible for appointing all employees and
15 staff members, who shall serve under his or her direction and
16 control.

17 (h) The governing board has complete fiscal control
18 over the Florida Partnership for School Readiness, Inc., and
19 is responsible for all corporate operations. The governing
20 board is responsible for the prudent use of all public and
21 private funds and shall ensure that the use of such funds is
22 in accordance with all legal and contractual requirements.

23 (4) FLORIDA PARTNERSHIP FOR SCHOOL READINESS, INC.--

24 (a) The Legislature creates the Florida Partnership
25 for School Readiness, Inc., which shall be a private,
26 nonprofit organization, which shall be registered,
27 incorporated, organized, and operated in compliance with
28 chapter 617, and which may not be a unit or entity of state
29 government. The Legislature determines, however, that public
30 policy dictates that the Florida Partnership for School
31 Readiness, Inc., operate in the most open and accessible

1 manner consistent with its public purpose. To this end, the
2 Legislature specifically declares that the Florida Partnership
3 for School Readiness, Inc., is subject to the provisions of
4 chapter 119 which relate to public records, and the provisions
5 of chapter 286 which relate to public meetings and records.

6 (b) The Florida Partnership for School Readiness,
7 Inc., shall establish one or more corporate offices, at least
8 one of which shall be located in Leon County.

9 (c) The Florida Partnership for School Readiness,
10 Inc., is the principal organization responsible for the
11 enhancement of school readiness for the state's children, and
12 shall work actively with each school readiness coalition to
13 achieve its mission. It is the responsibility of the School
14 Readiness Governing Board to provide leadership for
15 enhancement of school readiness in this state by aggressively
16 establishing a unified approach to the state's efforts toward
17 enhancement of school readiness; by aggressively seeking
18 potential new school readiness programs; and by aggressively
19 assisting in the retention and expansion of effective existing
20 school readiness programs. In support of this effort, the
21 Florida Partnership for School Readiness, Inc., may develop
22 and implement specific programs or strategies that address the
23 creation, expansion, and preservation of the state's school
24 readiness programs, including recommendations to move agency
25 staff from the Department of Education or the Department of
26 Children and Family Services to the partnership. This approach
27 must ensure the effective use of federal, state, local, and
28 private resources.

29 (d) The governing board and staff of the Florida
30 Partnership for School Readiness, Inc., shall have specific
31 responsibility for implementing policies; monitoring progress

1 toward achievement of the established goals; assessing gaps in
2 current early childhood child care and education statewide;
3 recommending quality standards to the agency or agencies
4 responsible for school readiness programs and monitoring their
5 implementation; assisting in developing and approving plans of
6 school readiness coalitions; facilitating local
7 implementation; providing technical assistance to school
8 readiness coalitions; and recommending common eligibility
9 requirements for similar programs while seeking a diversity of
10 programs to meet the varieties of need within the established
11 guidelines.

12 (e) The Florida Partnership for School Readiness,
13 Inc., shall have all powers necessary to carry out the
14 purposes of this section, including, but not limited to, the
15 power to receive and accept grants, loans, or advances of
16 funds from any public or private agency and to receive and
17 accept from any source contributions of money, property,
18 labor, or any other thing of value, to be held, used, and
19 applied for the purposes of this section.

20 (f) The Florida Partnership for School Readiness,
21 Inc., shall be an independent, nonpartisan body and shall not
22 be identified or affiliated with any one agency, program, or
23 group.

24 (g) The Florida Partnership for School Readiness,
25 Inc., shall have a budget, shall be financed through an annual
26 appropriation made for this purpose in the General
27 Appropriations Act, and shall be subject to compliance audits
28 and annual financial audits by the Auditor General.

29 (h) The partnership shall coordinate the efforts
30 toward school readiness in this state and provide independent
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1 policy analyses and recommendations to the Governor, the State
2 Board of Education, and the Legislature.

3 (i) The partnership shall prepare and submit to the
4 State Board of Education a system for measuring school
5 readiness. The system must include a screening instrument, or
6 instruments, which shall provide objective data regarding the
7 following expectations for school readiness:

8 1. The child's immunizations and other health
9 requirements as necessary, including appropriate vision and
10 hearing screening and examinations.

11 2. The child's display of physical development
12 appropriate for kindergarten.

13 3. The child's compliance with rules, limitations, and
14 routines.

15 4. The child's successful engagement in kindergarten
16 tasks.

17 5. The child's demonstration of appropriate
18 interactions with adults.

19 6. The child's demonstration of appropriate
20 interactions with peers.

21 7. The child's effective coping with challenges and
22 frustrations.

23 8. The child's demonstration of appropriate self-help
24 skills.

25 9. The child's ability to express his or her needs
26 appropriately.

27 10. The child's demonstration of verbal communication
28 skills necessary to succeed in kindergarten.

29 11. The child's demonstration of problem-solving
30 skills necessary to succeed in kindergarten.

31 12. The child's following of verbal directions.

1 13. The child's demonstration of curiosity,
2 persistence, and exploratory behavior.

3 14. The child's demonstration of an interest in books
4 and other printed materials.

5 15. The child's paying attention to stories.

6 16. The child's participation in art and music
7 activities.

8 (j) The partnership shall prepare a plan for
9 implementing the system for measuring school readiness in such
10 a way that all children in this state will undergo screening
11 when they enter kindergarten. Because children with
12 disabilities may not be able to meet all of the identified
13 expectations for school readiness, the plan for measuring
14 school readiness shall incorporate mechanisms for recognizing
15 the potential variations in expectations for school readiness
16 when serving children with disabilities and shall provide for
17 communities to serve children with disabilities.

18 (k) The partnership shall establish a method for
19 collecting data from the screening instrument and establish
20 guidelines for using the data so that the measurement, the
21 data collection, and the use of the data serve the statewide
22 goal that all children will be ready for school. The criteria
23 for determining which data to collect should be the usefulness
24 of the data to state policymakers and program administrators
25 in administering programs and allocating state funds.

26 (l) The partnership shall contract with an independent
27 entity for an evaluation of the measurement system. The
28 evaluation must provide the information that local and state
29 agencies, the Governor, and the Legislature need to provide
30 for the effective administration of programs that serve
31 preschool children. The evaluation must provide information

1 that will assist providers of private preschool and child care
2 programs in assessing the success of preschool and child care
3 programs and making decisions about improving program services
4 to prepare children for school.

5 (m) The partnership shall recommend to the Governor,
6 the Commissioner of Education, and the State Board of
7 Education rules, and revisions or repeal of rules, which would
8 increase the effectiveness of programs that prepare children
9 for school.

10 (n) The partnership shall conduct studies and planning
11 activities related to the overall improvement and
12 effectiveness of school-readiness measures.

13 (o) The partnership shall work with the Department of
14 Management Services for electronic funds transfer.

15 (p) The partnership shall recommend to the Legislature
16 the feasibility of combining funding streams for school
17 readiness programs into a School Readiness Trust Fund.

18 (q) The partnership shall establish procedures for
19 performance-based budgeting in school readiness programs.

20 (r) The partnership shall submit an annual report of
21 its activities to the Governor, the executive director of the
22 Florida Healthy Kids Corporation, the President of the Senate,
23 the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the minority
24 leaders of both houses of the Legislature. In addition, the
25 partnership's reports and recommendations shall be made
26 available to the State Board of Education, other appropriate
27 state agencies and entities, district school boards, central
28 agencies for child care, and county public health units. The
29 annual report must provide an analysis of school readiness
30 activities across the state, including the number of children
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1 who were served in the programs and the number of children who
2 were ready for school.

3 (s) The partnership shall work with school readiness
4 coalitions to increase parents' training for and involvement
5 in their children's preschool education.

6 (t) The partnership may adopt rules necessary to
7 administer the provisions of this section which relate to
8 preparing and implementing the system for school readiness,
9 collecting data, approving local coalition plans, providing a
10 method whereby a coalition can serve two or more counties,
11 awarding incentives to coalitions, and contracting for an
12 evaluation.

13
14 To ensure that the system for measuring school readiness is
15 comprehensive and appropriate statewide, as the system is
16 developed and implemented, the partnership must consult with
17 representatives of district school systems, providers of
18 public and private child care, health care providers, large
19 and small employers, experts in education for children with
20 disabilities, and experts in child development.

21 (5) CREATION OF SCHOOL READINESS COALITIONS.--

22 (a) School readiness coalitions.--

23 1.a. Each school readiness coalition must consist of
24 at least nine and not more than 15 members. Two members shall
25 be appointed by the district school board, two members shall
26 be appointed by the board of county commissioners, and two
27 members shall be appointed by the district administrator of
28 the Department of Children and Family Services. The six
29 members thus appointed shall appoint the remaining members of
30 the coalition.

31

1 b. School readiness coalition membership shall
2 include, in addition to private-sector business leaders, the
3 local public and private leaders in health care, education,
4 disabilities, and child welfare systems in each county. Three
5 members of the coalition must be administrators from each of
6 the following entities: the central agency for child care,
7 the district school board, and the Head Start Program. School
8 readiness coalition membership must include representatives
9 from programs serving children in the early education and
10 child care programs, must include a representative from the
11 Department of Health, and may include representatives from
12 organizations such as children's services councils, central
13 agencies for child care, Healthy Start Coalitions, district
14 school boards, child care licensing boards, the local public
15 library, local WAGES Coalitions, Head Start Programs,
16 municipal and county governments, the Department of Children
17 and Family Services, the county public health unit, and
18 chambers of commerce. Thirty percent of the coalition members
19 shall be from the private sector.

20 2. The school readiness coalition shall replace the
21 district interagency coordinating council required under s.
22 230.2305.

23 (b) Program eligibility.--The school readiness program
24 shall be established for children from birth to 5 years of age
25 or until the child enters kindergarten. The program shall be
26 administered by the school readiness coalition, and receive
27 funds pursuant to SB ___ or similar legislation. Within
28 funding limitations, the school readiness coalition, along
29 with all providers, shall make reasonable efforts to
30 accommodate the needs of children for extended-day and
31

1 extended-year services without compromising the quality of the
2 program.

3 (c) Standards; outcome measures.--

4 1. The school readiness program must meet the
5 following performance standards and outcome measures developed
6 by the Department of Education and the Department of Children
7 and Family Services:

8 a. The program must help prepare preschool children to
9 enter kindergarten ready to learn, as measured by criteria
10 established by the Florida Partnership for School Readiness,
11 Inc.

12 b. The program must provide extended-day and
13 extended-year services to the maximum extent possible to meet
14 the needs of parents who work.

15 c. There must be coordinated staff development and
16 teaching opportunities.

17 d. There must be expanded access to community services
18 and resources for families to help achieve economic
19 self-sufficiency.

20 e. There must be a single point of entry and unified
21 waiting list.

22 f. As long as funding does not decrease, the program
23 must serve at least as many children as were served prior to
24 implementation of the program.

25 2. The school readiness coalition must implement a
26 comprehensive program of children and family services that
27 enhance the cognitive and physical development of children to
28 achieve the performance standards and outcome measures
29 specified in paragraph (a). At a minimum, these programs must
30 contain the following elements:

31 a. Developmentally appropriate curriculum.

1 b. A character development program to develop basic
2 values.

3 c. An assessment of each child's development, which is
4 appropriate for the age of the child.

5 d. A pretest administered to children when they enter
6 a program and a posttest administered to children when they
7 leave the program.

8 e. An appropriate staff-to-child ratio, as required by
9 the respective participating programs.

10 f. A healthful and safe environment.

11 g. A resource and referral network to assist parents
12 in making an informed choice pursuant to s. 402.27.

13 (d) Implementation.--

14 1. The school readiness program may be implemented in
15 any county by a school readiness coalition, pursuant to an
16 agreement of the district school board and the Department of
17 Children and Family Services district, and with the approval
18 of the Florida Partnership for School Readiness, Inc. Approval
19 by the partnership is predicated on the submission of a plan
20 of implementation prepared and submitted by the school
21 readiness coalition.

22 2. Each school readiness coalition shall develop a
23 plan for implementing the school readiness program to meet the
24 requirements of this section. The plan must include a written
25 description of the role of the program in the district's
26 effort to meet the first state education goal, readiness to
27 start school, including a description of the plan to involve
28 prekindergarten early intervention programs, Head Start
29 Programs, programs offered by public or private providers of
30 child care, preschool programs for children with disabilities,
31 programs for migrant children, Title I programs, subsidized

1 child care programs, and teen parent programs. The plan must
2 also demonstrate how the program will ensure that each
3 3-year-old and 4-year-old child in a publicly funded early
4 education and child care program receives scheduled activities
5 and instruction designed to prepare children to enter
6 kindergarten ready to learn. Prior to implementation of the
7 program, the school readiness coalition must submit the plan
8 to the partnership for approval. The plan shall be reviewed
9 and revised as necessary, but not less than every 3 years.

10 3. The plan for the school readiness program must
11 include the following minimum standards and provisions:

12 a. A sliding fee scale establishing a co-payment for
13 parents based upon their ability to pay, which is the same for
14 all program providers, to be implemented and reflected in each
15 program's budget.

16 b. A choice of settings and locations in licensed,
17 registered, religious-exempt, or school-based programs to be
18 provided to parents.

19 c. Instructional staff who have completed the training
20 course as required in s. 402.305(2)(d)1., as well as staff who
21 have additional training or credentials as required by the
22 respective program provider. The plan must provide a method
23 for assuring the qualifications of all personnel in all
24 program settings.

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

28 (e) Reimbursement rate.--The school readiness
29 coalition shall develop a reimbursement rate schedule that
30 encompasses all publicly funded early education and child care
31 programs and complies with applicable state and federal laws

1 and regulations. The reimbursement rate schedule must include
2 the projected number of children to be served and must be
3 submitted to the Partnership for School Readiness, Inc., for
4 approval. Informal child care arrangements shall be reimbursed
5 at not more than 50 percent of the rate developed for family
6 child care. A school readiness program provider may not expend
7 more than 15 percent of program funds in any one fiscal year
8 for administrative costs.

9 (f) Requirements relating to fiscal agents.--The
10 coalition's fiscal agent may be a public entity or a private
11 nonprofit organization. The fiscal agent shall be required to
12 provide all administrative and direct funding services as
13 determined by the school readiness coalition. The cost of
14 these services shall be negotiated between the fiscal agent
15 and the school readiness coalition. The fiscal agent shall
16 monitor all providers to ensure that coalition funds are
17 expended in the manner and for the purpose required by the
18 funding source. Coalition funds may not be paid to a provider
19 unless the provider agrees to allow the fiscal agent access to
20 fulfill its monitoring responsibilities.

21 (g) Coalition initiation grants; incentive bonuses;
22 funding.--

23 1. School readiness coalitions that are approved by
24 the Florida Partnership for School Readiness, Inc., by October
25 1, 1999, shall be eligible for a \$50,000 initiation grant to
26 support the school readiness coalition in developing its
27 school readiness plan.

28 2. School readiness coalitions that are approved by
29 the Florida Partnership for School Readiness, Inc., by March
30 1, 2000, shall be eligible for a \$25,000 initiation grant to
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1 support the school readiness coalition in developing its
2 school readiness plan.

3 3. School readiness coalitions that have their plans
4 approved by March 1, 2000, shall receive funding from the
5 Partnership for School Readiness, Inc., in fiscal year
6 2000-2001, and each year thereafter.

7 4. Upon approval by the Florida Partnership for School
8 Readiness, Inc., of any coalition's plan that clearly shows
9 enhancement in the quality and standards of the school
10 readiness program without diminishing the number of children
11 served in the program, the partnership shall award the
12 coalition an incentive bonus, subject to appropriation.

13 5. In fiscal year 2000-2001, and each year thereafter,
14 any increases in funding for the prekindergarten early
15 intervention program and the subsidized child care program
16 shall be administered through school readiness coalitions.

17 6. In fiscal year 2001-2002, the Florida Partnership
18 for School Readiness, Inc., shall request proposals from
19 government agencies and nonprofit corporations for the
20 development and operation of a school readiness coalition in
21 each county that does not have an approved coalition by March
22 1, 2001.

23 (h) Parental choice; payment arrangement.--The school
24 readiness program shall be provided in a manner that ensures,
25 to the maximum extent possible, parental choice through
26 flexibility in early education and child care arrangements and
27 payment arrangements. Payment arrangements must be in
28 accordance with all federal and state laws that govern the
29 respective participating programs.

30 (i) Evaluation and annual report.--Each school
31 readiness coalition shall conduct an evaluation of the

1 effectiveness of the school readiness program, including
2 performance standards and outcome measures, and shall provide
3 an annual report and fiscal statement to the Florida
4 Partnership for School Readiness, Inc. This report must
5 conform to the content and format specifications set by the
6 Florida Partnership for School Readiness, Inc. The partnership
7 must include an analysis of the coalition reports in its
8 annual report.

9 (6) CONFLICTING PROVISIONS.--If any provision of this
10 section conflicts with federal requirements, the applicable
11 federal requirements shall control.

12 Section 2. Special readiness grants.--

13 (1) The Florida Partnership for School Readiness,
14 Inc., shall make available to parents whose 4-year old child
15 experiences difficulty in achieving readiness objectives a
16 special readiness grant for up to 12 months of early childhood
17 education services from a provider that meets applicable
18 licensure or registration requirements and whose education
19 program is appropriate to fulfill the child's need for
20 remediation. Each special readiness grant will carry a value
21 of not more than \$3,500. This amount will remain constant
22 regardless of the rate charged by the alternative provider.

23 (2) The special readiness grant is not intended to
24 provide an additional year of early childhood services, but,
25 rather, to give options to parents as to the setting in which
26 early childhood services will be delivered. For that reason,
27 4-year-old children whose parents elect to receive a special
28 readiness grant are expected to enter kindergarten ready to
29 learn upon expiration of this special readiness grant.

30 (3) The special readiness grants shall be available in
31 pilot programs in at least two counties where school readiness

1 coalitions have been formed, one large, urban county and one
2 small, rural or suburban county. The pilot program shall begin
3 July 1, 2000, and continue through June 30, 2001. Up to 200
4 special readiness grants shall be available in the large
5 county and up to 100 special readiness grants shall be
6 available in the small county. The pilot program is not
7 limited to two counties, but shall be open to all coalitions
8 that choose to provide special readiness grants.

9 (4) The Office of Program Policy Analysis and
10 Government Accountability must assess both the implementation
11 and the outcome of the pilot project and report findings to
12 the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of
13 Representatives by January 1, 2002.

14 Section 3. Section 229.567, Florida Statutes, is
15 created to read:

16 229.567 School readiness screening instruments.--The
17 Department of Education shall adopt the school readiness
18 screening instruments developed by the Florida Partnership for
19 School Readiness, Inc., and shall require that all school
20 districts administer the kindergarten screening instrument to
21 each kindergarten student in the district school system.

22 Section 4. School Readiness Program Needs-Assessment
23 Conference.--

24 (1) DUTIES.--

25 (a) The School Readiness Program Needs-Assessment
26 Conference shall develop official information relating to the
27 state's system of school readiness programs, including
28 forecasts of school readiness program needs, as the conference
29 determines is needed for the state planning and budgeting
30 system. Such official information must include, but need not
31 be limited to, program needs for subsidized child care, Head

1 Start, prekindergarten early intervention, prekindergarten
2 disabilities, Even-Start literacy, First Start, migrant
3 prekindergarten, and Title I prekindergarten.

4 (b) In addition, the School Readiness Program
5 Needs-Assessment Conference shall estimate the unduplicated
6 count of children who are eligible for services under the
7 school readiness program.

8 (c) The Florida Partnership for School Readiness,
9 Inc., shall provide information on needs and waiting lists for
10 school readiness program services requested by the School
11 Readiness Program Needs-Assessment Conference or individual
12 conference principals in a timely manner.

13 (2) PRINCIPALS.--The Executive Office of the Governor,
14 the Director of Economic and Demographic Research, and
15 professional staff who have forecasting expertise from the
16 Florida Partnership for School Readiness, Inc., the Department
17 of Children and Family Services, the Department of Education,
18 the Senate, and the House of Representatives, or their
19 designees, are the principals of the School Readiness Program
20 Needs-Assessment Conference. The principal representing the
21 Executive Office of the Governor shall preside over sessions
22 of the conference.

23 Section 5. Subsection (2) of section 414.026, Florida
24 Statutes, 1998 Supplement, is amended to read:

25 414.026 WAGES Program State Board of Directors.--

26 (2)(a) The board of directors shall be composed of the
27 following members:

28 1. The Commissioner of Education, or the
29 commissioner's designee.

30 2. The Secretary of Children and Family Services.

31 3. The Secretary of Health.

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

1 c. Of the nine members appointed by the Governor, at
2 least six must be employed in the private sector and of these,
3 at least five must have management experience.
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5 The members appointed by the Governor shall be appointed to
6 4-year, staggered terms. Within 60 days after a vacancy occurs
7 on the board, the Governor shall fill the vacancy of a member
8 appointed from the nominees submitted by the President of the
9 Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives for the
10 remainder of the unexpired term from one nominee submitted by
11 the President of the Senate and one nominee submitted by the
12 Speaker of the House of Representatives. Within 60 days after
13 a vacancy of a member appointed at-large by the Governor
14 occurs on the board, the Governor shall fill the vacancy for
15 the remainder of the unexpired term. The composition of the
16 board must generally reflect the racial, gender, and ethnic
17 diversity of the state as a whole.

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

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

30 Section 6. Paragraph (a) of subsection (2) of section
31 624.91, Florida Statutes, 1998 Supplement, is amended to read:

1 624.91 The Florida Healthy Kids Corporation Act.--

2 (2) LEGISLATIVE INTENT.--

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

15 Section 7. Subsection (4) of section 411.222, Florida
16 Statutes, is amended to read:

17 (Substantial rewording of subsection. See
18 s. 411.222(4), F.S., for present text.)

19 (4) STATE COORDINATING COUNCIL FOR SCHOOL READINESS
20 PROGRAMS.--

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

1 (b) Membership.--The council shall be composed of the
2 following 15 members:

3 1. The seven current members of the 1998-1999 State
4 Coordinating Council Executive Committee.

5 2. Eight additional members, appointed by the
6 executive committee, including a representative of each of the
7 following: subsidized child care programs; prekindergarten
8 early intervention programs; Head Start programs; health care
9 programs; private providers; faith-based providers; programs
10 for children with disabilities; and parents of preschool
11 children.

12 (c) Term.--The State Coordinating Council for School
13 Readiness Programs shall terminate on July 1, 2002.

14 (d) Organization.--

15 1. The council shall adopt internal organizational
16 procedures or bylaws necessary for the efficient operation of
17 the council. The council may establish committees that are
18 responsible for conducting specific council programs and
19 activities.

20 2. The council shall have a budget and be financed
21 through an annual appropriation made for this purpose in the
22 General Appropriations Act. Council members are entitled to
23 reimbursement for per diem and travel expenses as provided in
24 s. 112.061 while carrying out official business of the
25 council. When appropriate, parent representatives shall
26 receive a stipend for child care costs incurred while
27 attending council meetings. For administrative purposes only,
28 the council is assigned to the Florida Partnership for School
29 Readiness, Inc.

30 3. The coordinating council shall hold quarterly
31 meetings that are open to the public, and the public shall be

1 given the opportunity to comment at each such meeting. The
2 coordinating council shall notify persons of the date, time,
3 and place of each quarterly meeting upon request.

4 (e) Duties.--The coordinating council shall recommend
5 to the Florida Partnership for School Readiness, Inc., methods
6 for coordinating public and private school readiness programs
7 and procedures to facilitate communication, cooperation, and
8 the maximum use of resources to achieve the first state
9 education goal, readiness to start school. In addition, the
10 council shall:

11 1. Advise the Florida Partnership for School
12 Readiness, Inc., concerning criteria for grant proposal
13 guidelines, the review of plans and proposals, and eligibility
14 for services of school readiness programs.

15 2. Recommend to the Florida Partnership for School
16 Readiness, Inc., methods to increase the involvement of public
17 and private partnerships in school readiness programs in order
18 to maximize the availability of federal funds and to
19 effectively use available resources through cooperative
20 funding and coordinated services.

21 (f) Reporting requirements.--The coordinating council
22 shall submit its final report to the Florida Partnership for
23 School Readiness, Inc., by July 1, 2002.

24 Section 8. Effective July 1, 2002, subsection (4) of
25 section 411.222, Florida Statutes, is repealed.

26 Section 9. This act is not intended to impede or
27 curtail the state's ability to receive federal funds.

28 Section 10. Except as otherwise expressly provided in
29 this act, this act shall take effect upon becoming a law.

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SENATE SUMMARY

Creates the School Readiness Act. Establishes the Florida Partnership for School Readiness, Inc., to act as a nonprofit corporation in administering a state school readiness program. Provides for the School Readiness Governing Board to be appointed and to direct the partnership. Specifies the responsibilities and duties of the partnership and governing board. Requires that the partnership prepare a system for measuring school readiness. Requires that an independent entity evaluate the measurement system. Authorizes the partnership to adopt rules. Requires that a school readiness coalition be established in each county. Specifies the services to be provided by the coalitions. Requires that the Department of Education adopt the school readiness screening instruments developed by the Florida Partnership for School Readiness, Inc. Creates the School Readiness Program Needs-Assessment Conference to develop information relating to the school readiness programs. Provides for the chairperson of the Florida Partnership for School Readiness, Inc., to serve on the WAGES Program State Board of Directors. Abolishes the State Coordinating Council for Early Childhood Services. Creates the State Coordinating Council for School Readiness Programs, which terminates on July 1, 2002.