

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to school readiness; creating
3 s. 411.01, F.S.; establishing the Florida
4 Partnership for School Readiness for purposes
5 of administering the School Readiness Program;
6 providing responsibilities and duties of the
7 partnership; providing membership and meeting
8 requirements; providing that the Florida
9 Partnership for School Readiness is subject to
10 public records and public meeting requirements;
11 providing for hiring certain employees;
12 requiring that the partnership prepare a system
13 for measuring school readiness; specifying
14 objectives to be measured by such system;
15 requiring that the partnership contract with an
16 independent entity to evaluate the measurement
17 system; requiring the partnership to make
18 recommendations to the Governor and the State
19 Board of Education; authorizing the partnership
20 to adopt rules; requiring the establishment of
21 school readiness coalitions; specifying
22 services to be provided by the coalitions;
23 providing for designation and approval of a
24 fiscal agent; providing for grants to be
25 provided to coalitions to develop school
26 readiness plans; providing for incentive
27 bonuses to be awarded; providing requirements
28 for school readiness plans; providing for early
29 implementation of a school readiness plan under
30 certain circumstances; providing for parental
31 choice with respect to child care arrangements

1 and payments; providing for evaluation and
2 performance measures; providing responsibility
3 for implementation; providing for parental
4 choice; creating s. 229.567, F.S.; requiring
5 the Department of Education to adopt the school
6 readiness uniform screening developed by the
7 Florida Partnership for School Readiness and to
8 require their use by the school districts;
9 amending s. 216.136, F.S.; creating the School
10 Readiness Program Estimating Conference;
11 requiring the conference to develop estimates
12 and forecasts of students eligible for school
13 readiness programs; specifying the principals
14 of the conference; amending s. 414.026, F.S.;
15 requiring the chairperson of the Florida
16 Partnership for School Readiness to serve on
17 the WAGES Program State Board of Directors;
18 amending s. 411.222, F.S.; abolishing the State
19 Coordinating Council for Early Childhood
20 Services; establishing the State Coordinating
21 Council for School Readiness Programs;
22 requiring the State Coordinating Council for
23 Early Childhood Services to submit a final
24 report; amending s. 624.91, F.S.; requiring the
25 Healthy Kids Corporation to work cooperatively
26 with the Florida Partnership for School
27 Readiness; repealing s. 411.222(4), F.S.,
28 relating to the State Coordinating Council for
29 Early Childhood Services; providing an
30 appropriation; providing effective dates.
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1 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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3 Section 1. Section 411.01, Florida Statutes, is
4 created to read:

5 411.01 Florida Partnership for School Readiness;
6 school readiness coalitions.--

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

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

16 (3) FLORIDA PARTNERSHIP FOR SCHOOL READINESS.--

17 (a) There is created the Florida Partnership for
18 School Readiness with responsibility for adopting and
19 maintaining coordinated programmatic, administrative, and
20 fiscal policies and standards for all school readiness
21 programs, while allowing a wide range of programmatic
22 flexibility and differentiation. The partnership is assigned
23 to the Executive Office of the Governor for administrative
24 purposes.

25 (b)1. The Florida Partnership for School Readiness
26 shall include the Governor, the Commissioner of Education, the
27 Secretary of Children and Family Services, the Secretary of
28 Health, the chairperson of the Child Care Executive
29 Partnership Board, and the chairperson of the WAGES Program
30 State Board of Directors.

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

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

28 (d) Members of the partnership are subject to the
29 ethics provisions in part III of chapter 112, and no member
30 may derive any financial benefit from the funds administered
31 by the Florida Partnership for School Readiness.

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

6 (f) For the purposes of tort liability, the members of
7 the partnership and its employees shall be governed by s.
8 768.28.

9 (g) The partnership shall appoint an executive
10 director to serve at its pleasure who shall perform the duties
11 assigned to him or her by the partnership. The executive
12 director shall be responsible for appointing all employees and
13 staff members, who shall serve under his or her direction and
14 control.

15 (h) The Florida Partnership for School Readiness is
16 the principal organization responsible for the enhancement of
17 school readiness for the state's children, and shall:

18 1. Be responsible for the prudent use of all public
19 and private funds in accordance with all legal and contractual
20 requirements.

21 2. Provide final approval and periodic review of
22 coalitions and plans.

23 3. Provide leadership for enhancement of school
24 readiness in this state by aggressively establishing a unified
25 approach to the state's efforts toward enhancement of school
26 readiness. In support of this effort, the partnership may
27 develop and implement specific strategies that address the
28 state's school readiness programs.

29 4. Safeguard the effective use of federal, state,
30 local, and private resources to achieve the highest possible
31 level of school readiness for the state's children.

- 1 5. Provide technical assistance to coalitions.
- 2 6. Assess gaps in service.
- 3 7. Recommend common eligibility requirements for
4 similar programs.
- 5 8. Provide technical assistance to counties that form
6 a multicounty coalition.
- 7 9. By January 31, 2000, recommend to the Legislature
8 whether agency staff should be moved from the Department of
9 Education or the Department of Children and Family Services to
10 the partnership.
- 11 10. By May 1, 2000, adopt a screening system for
12 measuring school readiness which provides objective data
13 regarding the expectations for school readiness.
- 14 11. Establish a method for collecting data from the
15 screening instrument and establish guidelines for using the
16 data so that the measurement, the data collection, and the use
17 of the data serve the statewide goal that all children will be
18 ready for school. The criteria for determining which data to
19 collect should be the usefulness of the data to state
20 policymakers and local program administrators in administering
21 programs and allocating state funds.
- 22 12. By January 1, 2000, develop and adopt performance
23 standards and outcome measures that meet the requirements of
24 this section.
- 25 13. Use the resources and capabilities of the State
26 University System and the Division of Community Colleges in
27 improving school readiness programs. The partnership shall
28 work to establish a career path for employees in
29 readiness-related professions which leads from entry-level
30 employment in child care to a bachelor's degree. The State
31 University System and the Division of Community Colleges shall

1 assist and support the partnership and coalitions as much as
2 possible and shall provide services utilizing existing
3 resources.

4 (i) The partnership 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, and awarding incentives to coalitions.

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

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

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

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

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1 (n) By May 1, 2000, the partnership shall prepare and
2 submit to the State Board of Education a system for measuring
3 school readiness. The system must include a uniform screening,
4 which shall provide objective data regarding the following
5 expectations for school readiness which shall include, at a
6 minimum:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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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 17. The child's ability to identify colors, geometric
9 shapes, letters of the alphabet, numbers, and spacial and
10 temporal relationships.

11 (o) The partnership shall prepare a plan for
12 implementing the system for measuring school readiness in such
13 a way that all children in this state will undergo the uniform
14 screening established by the partnership when they enter
15 kindergarten. Children who enter public school for the first
16 time in first grade must undergo a uniform screening approved
17 by the partnership for use in first grade. Because children
18 with disabilities may not be able to meet all of the
19 identified expectations for school readiness, the plan for
20 measuring school readiness shall incorporate mechanisms for
21 recognizing the potential variations in expectations for
22 school readiness when serving children with disabilities and
23 shall provide for communities to serve children with
24 disabilities.

25 (p) The partnership shall establish a method for
26 collecting data from the uniform screening and establish
27 guidelines for using the data so that the measurement, the
28 data collection, and the use of the data serve the statewide
29 goal that all children will be ready for school. The criteria
30 for determining which data to collect should be the usefulness
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1 of the data to state policymakers and program administrators
2 in administering programs and allocating funds.

3 (q) The partnership shall contract with an independent
4 entity for an evaluation of the measurement system. The
5 evaluation must provide the information that local and state
6 agencies, the Governor, and the Legislature need to provide
7 for the effective administration of programs that serve
8 preschool children. The evaluation must provide information
9 that will assist providers of private preschool and child care
10 programs in assessing the success of preschool and child care
11 programs and making decisions about improving program services
12 to prepare children for school.

13 (r) The partnership shall recommend to the Governor,
14 the Commissioner of Education, and the State Board of
15 Education rules, and revisions or repeal of rules, which would
16 increase the effectiveness of programs that prepare children
17 for school.

18 (s) The partnership shall conduct studies and planning
19 activities related to the overall improvement and
20 effectiveness of school-readiness measures.

21 (t) By February 1, 2000, the partnership shall work
22 with the Office of the Comptroller for electronic funds
23 transfer.

24 (u) By February 1, 2000, the partnership shall present
25 to the Legislature a plan for combining funding streams for
26 school readiness programs into a School Readiness Trust Fund.

27 (v) The partnership shall establish procedures for
28 performance-based budgeting in school readiness programs.

29 (w) The partnership shall submit an annual report of
30 its activities to the Governor, the executive director of the
31 Florida Healthy Kids Corporation, the President of the Senate,

1 the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the minority
2 leaders of both houses of the Legislature. In addition, the
3 partnership's reports and recommendations shall be made
4 available to the State Board of Education, other appropriate
5 state agencies and entities, district school boards, central
6 agencies for child care, and county health departments. The
7 annual report must provide an analysis of school readiness
8 activities across the state, including the number of children
9 who were served in the programs and the number of children who
10 were ready for school.

11 (x) The partnership shall work with school readiness
12 coalitions to increase parents' training for and involvement
13 in their children's preschool education and to provide family
14 literacy activities and programs.

15 (y) The partnership may adopt rules necessary to
16 administer the provisions of this section which relate to
17 preparing and implementing the system for school readiness,
18 collecting data, approving local coalition plans, providing a
19 method whereby a coalition can serve two or more counties,
20 awarding incentives to coalitions, and contracting for an
21 evaluation.

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23 To ensure that the system for measuring school readiness is
24 comprehensive and appropriate statewide, as the system is
25 developed and implemented, the partnership must consult with
26 representatives of district school systems, providers of
27 public and private child care, health care providers, large
28 and small employers, experts in education for children with
29 disabilities, and experts in child development.

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

31 (a) School readiness coalitions.--

1 1. Each school readiness coalition shall serve a
2 geographic area with a population of at least 20,000 children,
3 ages birth to 5 years. The partnership may grant an exemption
4 from this requirement if a proposal demonstrates that meeting
5 this requirement would constitute a hardship.

6 2. Each coalition shall have 25 members and such
7 members must include the following:

8 a. A Department of Children and Family Services
9 district administrator.

10 b. A district superintendent of schools.

11 c. A regional workforce development board chair or
12 director, where applicable.

13 d. A county health department director or his or her
14 designee.

15 e. A children's services council or juvenile welfare
16 board chair or executive director, if applicable.

17 f. A child care licensing agency head.

18 g. Two members appointed by a Department of Children
19 and Family Services district administrator.

20 h. Two members appointed by a board of county
21 commissioners.

22 i. Two members appointed by a district school board.

23 j. A central child care agency administrator.

24 k. A Head Start director.

25 l. A representative of private child care providers.

26 m. A representative of faith-based child care
27 providers.

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29 An additional nine members must be appointed to represent the
30 private sector so that more than one-third of the coalition
31 members are from the private sector. These nine members and

1 their families may not earn an income from the early education
2 and child care industry. A chamber of commerce within the
3 geographic area of the coalition must present a list of 15
4 nominees to a district school board, a board of county
5 commissioners, and a district administrator of the Department
6 of Children and Family Services. From the list of 15 nominees,
7 the district school board must appoint three private-sector
8 members, the board of county commissioners must appoint three
9 private-sector members, and the district administrator of the
10 Department of Children and Family Services must appoint three
11 private-sector members.

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

16 4. The school readiness coalition shall replace the
17 district interagency coordinating council required under s.
18 230.2305.

19 5. The coalition must set term limits for membership,
20 not to exceed 4 years.

21 (b) Program participation.--The school readiness
22 program shall be established for children from birth to 5
23 years of age or until the child enters kindergarten. The
24 program shall be administered by the school readiness
25 coalition. Within funding limitations, the school readiness
26 coalition, along with all providers, shall make reasonable
27 efforts to accommodate the needs of children for extended-day
28 and extended-year services without compromising the quality of
29 the program.

30 (c) Program expectations.--
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1 1. The school readiness program must meet the
2 following expectations:

3 a. The program must prepare preschool children to
4 enter kindergarten ready to learn, as measured by criteria
5 established by the Florida Partnership for School Readiness.

6 b. The program must provide extended-day and
7 extended-year services to the maximum extent possible to meet
8 the needs of parents who work.

9 c. There must be coordinated staff development and
10 teaching opportunities.

11 d. There must be expanded access to community services
12 and resources for families to help achieve economic
13 self-sufficiency.

14 e. There must be a single point of entry and unified
15 waiting list.

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

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

25 a. Developmentally appropriate curriculum.

26 b. A character development program to develop basic
27 values.

28 c. An age-appropriate assessment of each child's
29 development.

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1 d. A pretest administered to children when they enter
2 a program and a posttest administered to children when they
3 leave the program.

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

6 f. A healthful and safe environment.

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

9 (d) Implementation.--

10 1. The school readiness program may be implemented in
11 any county by a school readiness coalition with the approval
12 of the Florida Partnership for School Readiness. Approval by
13 the partnership is predicated on the submission of a plan of
14 implementation prepared and submitted by the school readiness
15 coalition.

16 2. Each school readiness coalition shall develop a
17 plan for implementing the school readiness program to meet the
18 requirements of this section and the performance standards
19 established by the partnership. The plan must include a
20 written description of the role of the program in the
21 district's effort to meet the first state education goal,
22 readiness to start school, including a description of the plan
23 to involve prekindergarten early intervention programs, Head
24 Start Programs, programs offered by public or private
25 providers of child care, preschool programs for children with
26 disabilities, programs for migrant children, Title I programs,
27 subsidized child care programs, and teen parent programs. The
28 plan must also demonstrate how the program will ensure that
29 each 3-year-old and 4-year-old child in a publicly funded
30 early education and child care program receives scheduled
31 activities and instruction designed to prepare children to

1 enter kindergarten ready to learn. Prior to implementation of
2 the program, the school readiness coalition must submit the
3 plan to the partnership for approval. The plan shall be
4 reviewed, revised, and approved biannually.

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

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

11 b. A choice of settings and locations in licensed,
12 registered, religious-exempt, or school-based programs to be
13 provided to parents.

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

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

23 (e) Reimbursement rate.--The school readiness
24 coalition shall include in its implementation plan a
25 reimbursement rate schedule that encompasses all publicly
26 funded early education and child care programs and complies
27 with applicable state and federal laws and regulations. The
28 reimbursement rate schedule must include the projected number
29 of children to be served and must be submitted to the
30 Partnership for School Readiness for approval. Informal child
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1 care arrangements shall be reimbursed at not more than 50
2 percent of the rate developed for family child care.

3 (f) Requirements relating to fiscal agents.--If the
4 local coalition is not a legally established corporate entity,
5 the coalition must designate a fiscal agent, which may be a
6 public entity or a private nonprofit organization. The fiscal
7 agent shall be required to provide financial and
8 administrative services pursuant to a contract or agreement
9 with the school readiness coalition. The fiscal agent may not
10 provide direct early education or child care services,
11 however, a fiscal agent may provide such services upon written
12 request of the coalition to the partnership and upon the
13 approval of such request by the partnership. The cost of the
14 financial and administrative services shall be negotiated
15 between the fiscal agent and the school readiness coalition.
16 If the fiscal agent is a provider of early education and care
17 programs, the contract must specify that the fiscal agent will
18 act on policy direction from the coalition and will not
19 receive policy direction from its own corporate board
20 regarding disbursement of coalition funds. The fiscal agent shall
21 disburse funds in accordance with the approved coalition
22 school readiness plan and based on billing and disbursement
23 procedures approved by the partnership. The fiscal agent must
24 conform to all data-reporting requirements established by the
25 partnership.

26 (g) Coalition initiation grants; incentive bonuses;
27 funding.--

28 1. School readiness coalitions that are approved by
29 the Florida Partnership for School Readiness by January 1,
30 2000, shall be eligible for a \$50,000 initiation grant to
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1 support the school readiness coalition in developing its
2 school readiness plan.

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

8 3. School readiness coalitions that have their plans
9 approved by July 1, 2000, shall receive funding from the
10 Partnership for School Readiness in fiscal year 2000-2001, and
11 each year thereafter.

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

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

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

27 7. Administrative costs for a school readiness program
28 may not exceed 10 percent of the total funds provided to the
29 coalition in any fiscal year. Not more than one-half of the
30 administrative funds, or 5 percent of the total funds, may be
31 expended for the administration of the coalition.

1 8. The Florida Partnership for School Readiness may
2 authorize a coalition with an approved plan to implement the
3 plan, within the restrictions of state and federal law, prior
4 to the beginning of the 2000-2001 fiscal year. However, no
5 coalition may receive funding through the partnership prior to
6 the 2000-2001 fiscal year.

7 (h) Evaluation and annual report.--Each school
8 readiness coalition shall conduct an evaluation of the
9 effectiveness of the school readiness program, including
10 performance standards and outcome measures, and shall provide
11 an annual report and fiscal statement to the Florida
12 Partnership for School Readiness. This report must conform to
13 the content and format specifications set by the Florida
14 Partnership for School Readiness. The partnership must include
15 an analysis of the coalition reports in its annual report.

16 (6) CONFLICTING PROVISIONS.--If any provision of this
17 section conflicts with federal requirements, the applicable
18 federal requirements shall control.

19 (7) PARENTAL CHOICE.--

20 (a) The school readiness program shall provide
21 parental choice pursuant to a purchase service order that
22 ensures, to the maximum extent possible, flexibility in school
23 readiness programs and payment arrangements. According to
24 federal regulations requiring parental choice, a parent may
25 choose an informal child-care arrangement. The purchase order
26 must bear the name of the beneficiary and the program provider
27 and, when redeemed, must bear the signature of both the
28 beneficiary and an authorized representative of the provider.

29 (b) If it is determined that a provider has provided
30 any cash to the beneficiary in return for receiving the
31 purchase order, the coalition or its fiscal agent shall refer

1 the matter to the Division of Public Assistance Fraud for
2 investigation.

3 (c) The Office of the Comptroller shall establish an
4 electronic transfer system for the disbursement of funds in
5 accordance with this subsection. School readiness coalitions
6 shall fully implement the electronic funds transfer system
7 within 3 years after plan approval unless a waiver is obtained
8 from the partnership.

9 (8) REPORTS.--The Office of Program Policy Analysis
10 and Government Accountability shall assess the implementation,
11 efficiency, and outcomes of the school readiness program and
12 report its findings to the President of the Senate and the
13 Speaker of the House of Representatives by January 1, 2000.
14 Subsequent reviews shall be conducted at the direction of the
15 Joint Legislative Auditing Committee.

16 Section 2. Section 229.567, Florida Statutes, is
17 created to read:

18 229.567 School readiness uniform screening.--The
19 Department of Education shall adopt the school readiness
20 uniform screening developed by the Florida Partnership for
21 School Readiness, and shall require that all school districts
22 administer the kindergarten uniform screening to each
23 kindergarten student in the district school system upon the
24 student's entry into kindergarten. Children who enter public
25 school for the first time in first grade must undergo a
26 uniform screening approved by the partnership for use in first
27 grade.

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 individuals eligible for school readiness programs in
6 accordance with the standards of eligibility established by
7 state or federal statute or administrative rule as the
8 conference determines are needed to support the state
9 planning, budgeting, and appropriations processes.

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

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

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

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

30 414.026 WAGES Program State Board of Directors.--

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

3 1. The Commissioner of Education, or the
4 commissioner's designee.

5 2. The Secretary of Children and Family Services.

6 3. The Secretary of Health.

7 4. The Secretary of Labor and Employment Security.

8 5. The Secretary of Community Affairs.

9 6. The Secretary of Transportation, or the secretary's
10 designee.

11 7. The director of the Office of Tourism, Trade, and
12 Economic Development.

13 8. The chairperson of the Florida Partnership for
14 School Readiness.

15 ~~9.8.~~ The president of the Enterprise Florida workforce
16 development board, established under s. 288.9620.

17 ~~10.9.~~ The chief executive officer of the Florida
18 Tourism Industry Marketing Corporation, established under s.
19 288.1226.

20 ~~11.10.~~ Nine members appointed by the Governor, as
21 follows:

22 a. Six members shall be appointed from a list of ten
23 nominees, of which five must be submitted by the President of
24 the Senate and five must be submitted by the Speaker of the
25 House of Representatives. The list of five nominees submitted
26 by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of
27 Representatives must each contain at least three individuals
28 employed in the private sector, two of whom must have
29 management experience. One of the five nominees submitted by
30 the President of the Senate and one of the five nominees
31 submitted by the Speaker of the House of Representatives must

1 be an elected local government official who shall serve as an
2 ex officio nonvoting member.

3 b. Three members shall be at-large members appointed
4 by the Governor.

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

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

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

31

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

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

6 624.91 The Florida Healthy Kids Corporation Act.--

7 (2) LEGISLATIVE INTENT.--

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

20 Section 6. Subsection (4) of section 411.222, Florida
21 Statutes, is amended to read:

22 (Substantial rewording of subsection. See

23 s. 411.222(4), F.S., for present text.)

24 (4) STATE COORDINATING COUNCIL FOR SCHOOL READINESS
25 PROGRAMS.--

26 (a) Creation; intent.--The State Coordinating Council
27 for School Readiness Programs is established to ensure
28 coordination among the programs that serve preschool children
29 in order to support the first state education goal, readiness
30 to start school; to facilitate communication, cooperation, and
31 the maximum use of resources; and to promote high standards

1 for all programs that serve preschool children in this state.
2 It is the intent of the Legislature that the coordinating
3 council be an independent nonpartisan body and not be
4 identified or affiliated with any one agency, program, or
5 group.

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

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

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

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

19 (d) Organization.--

20 1. The council shall adopt internal organizational
21 procedures or bylaws necessary for the efficient operation of
22 the council. The council may establish committees that are
23 responsible for conducting specific council programs and
24 activities.

25 2. The council shall have a budget and be financed
26 through an annual appropriation made for this purpose in the
27 General Appropriations Act. Council members are entitled to
28 reimbursement for per diem and travel expenses as provided in
29 s. 112.061 while carrying out official business of the
30 council. When appropriate, parent representatives shall
31 receive a stipend for child care costs incurred while

1 attending council meetings. For administrative purposes only,
2 the council is assigned to the Florida Partnership for School
3 Readiness.

4 3. The coordinating council shall hold quarterly
5 meetings that are open to the public, and the public shall be
6 given the opportunity to comment at each such meeting. The
7 coordinating council shall notify persons of the date, time,
8 and place of each quarterly meeting upon request.

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

16 1. Advise the Florida Partnership for School Readiness
17 concerning criteria for grant proposal guidelines, the review
18 of plans and proposals, and eligibility for services of school
19 readiness programs.

20 2. Recommend to the Florida Partnership for School
21 Readiness methods to increase the involvement of public and
22 private partnerships in school readiness programs in order to
23 maximize the availability of federal funds and to effectively
24 use available resources through cooperative funding and
25 coordinated services.

26 (f) Reporting requirements.--The coordinating council
27 shall submit its final report to the Florida Partnership for
28 School Readiness by July 1, 2002.

29 Section 7. Effective July 1, 2002, subsection (4) of
30 section 411.222, Florida Statutes, is repealed.

31

1 Section 8. This act is not intended to impede or
2 curtail the state's ability to receive federal funds.

3 Section 9. The recurring sum of \$330,000 is
4 appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to the Executive
5 Office of the Governor for the purpose of implementing this
6 act in fiscal year 1999-2000.

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

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