

By Representatives Barreiro and Prieguez

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to education; creating a pilot
3 program to enable school districts in specified
4 counties to provide students with skills in
5 conflict resolution, anger management, and
6 related subjects and providing for development,
7 implementation, and support thereof; providing
8 legislative findings and intent; providing
9 program purpose and emphasis; providing for
10 annual incentive awards from appropriated
11 funds; providing measures for determining
12 program effectiveness and providing for annual
13 reporting thereon; providing an appropriation;
14 providing an effective date.

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16 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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18 Section 1. Pilot program on prevention of school
19 violence.--

20 (1) FINDINGS AND INTENT.--The Legislature finds that
21 changes in society have resulted in many schools in this state
22 having need of more pupil personnel services, as defined in s.
23 228.041(9)(b), Florida Statutes, to help prevent or alleviate
24 conflict among students at school and to help contribute to a
25 safe and cooperative learning environment. The Legislature
26 also finds that the guidance counselors, school psychologists,
27 and social workers who currently provide such services in the
28 district schools, while occupied with the necessary and
29 important duties assigned to them, such as career counseling,
30 truancy followup, and testing for special class placement, are
31 too few in number to provide all the services needed.

1 Therefore, it is the intent of the Legislature to create a
2 pilot program in a limited number of school districts to
3 determine the effect of hiring additional guidance counselors,
4 school psychologists, and social workers to provide such
5 services.

6 (2) PILOT PROGRAM; DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION, AND
7 SUPPORT.--

8 (a) There is hereby created a 5-year pilot program to
9 enable the school districts in Sarasota, St. Johns, Broward,
10 Okaloosa, Lake, and Duval Counties to provide students with
11 skills in conflict resolution, anger management, building
12 effective interpersonal relationships, and behavioral
13 self-controls such as impulse control, self-monitoring, and
14 internal achievement motivation.

15 (b) The Department of Education shall provide
16 procedures for development and implementation of the pilot
17 program and shall also provide technical assistance and
18 monitoring as needed to carry out the purpose of the pilot
19 program.

20 (3) PURPOSE AND EMPHASIS.--

21 (a) The purpose of the pilot program is to allocate
22 incentive funding to the participating school districts to
23 hire sufficient additional pupil services personnel to:

24 1. Provide students with skills to find positive
25 solutions to conflict, teach them to accept more personal
26 responsibility, enable them to stay more on task, provide them
27 with the skills necessary to interact positively with peers
28 and those in authority, help them deal with violent peers when
29 they encounter them, and improve their use of critical
30 thinking, reasoning, and problem-solving skills.

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1 2. Reduce disciplinary referrals significantly, as
2 well as the number of suspensions and expulsions.

3 3. Increase the confidence of parents and communities
4 that schools are safe and effective places for learning.

5 (b) The personnel eligible for hiring under the pilot
6 program are limited to guidance counselors, school
7 psychologists, and social workers who hold valid certificates
8 issued by the Department of Education under s. 231.15, Florida
9 Statutes. However, in hiring such personnel, each
10 participating school district must first increase the number
11 of guidance counselors per student in the middle schools.

12 (4) ANNUAL INCENTIVE AWARDS.--From funds appropriated
13 in the General Appropriations Act each fiscal year for the
14 pilot program, the Commissioner of Education shall allocate an
15 incentive award for that fiscal year for each participating
16 school district in an amount equal to 5 percent of the
17 district's salary and benefits expenditure for the most
18 recently completed fiscal year for those guidance counselors,
19 school psychologists, and social workers employed by the
20 school district during that fiscal year who held during that
21 employment a valid certificate issued by the Department of
22 Education under s. 231.15, Florida Statutes.

23 (5) MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS; ANNUAL REPORT.--

24 (a) The effectiveness of the pilot program shall be
25 measured by the core elements of the state school report card
26 as evidenced by:

- 27 1. Reduced referrals to the school office;
- 28 2. Reduced truancy;
- 29 3. Fewer in-school and out-of-school suspensions;
- 30 4. Fewer drug-related incidents;
- 31 5. Reduced weapon-related offenses;

1 6. Reduced incidents of violence;
2 7. Increased student academic performance; and
3 8. Increased parent and school staff satisfaction.
4 (b) Each participating school district shall collect
5 data on the effectiveness of the pilot program as provided in
6 paragraph (a) and shall submit a report thereon by June 30
7 each year to the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the
8 House of Representatives, and the chairs of the appropriate
9 substantive committees of the Legislature.

10 Section 2. The sum of \$5.5 million is appropriated
11 from the General Revenue Fund to the Department of Education
12 for fiscal year 2000-2001 to carry out the provisions of this
13 act.

14 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2000.

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17 HOUSE SUMMARY

18 Creates a 5-year pilot program to enable school districts
19 in Sarasota, St. Johns, Broward, Okaloosa, Lake, and
20 Duval Counties to provide students with skills in
21 conflict resolution, anger management, and related
22 subjects and provides for development, implementation,
23 and support thereof by the Department of Education.
24 Provides legislative findings and intent. Provides
25 program purpose and emphasis. Provides for the
26 Commissioner of Education to allocate incentive awards
27 annually to the participating school districts from funds
28 appropriated for the program. Provides measures for
29 determining program effectiveness, and provides for
30 annual reporting thereon. Provides an initial
31 appropriation. See bill for details.