

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to reorganization within the
3 Department of Education; reenacting and
4 amending s. 20.15, F.S., which creates the
5 Department of Education; providing for the head
6 of the department and for its executive
7 director; prescribing powers and duties of the
8 State Board of Education; prescribing powers
9 and duties of the Commissioner of Education;
10 renaming the Divisions of Public Schools and
11 Universities, creating the Division of
12 Vocational Rehabilitation, and abolishing the
13 Divisions of Workforce Development,
14 Professional Educators, Administration,
15 Financial Services, Support Services, and
16 Technology; providing for appointment of
17 division directors, councils, committees, and
18 boards; authorizing a demonstration program to
19 be called Learning Gateway; creating a steering
20 committee; providing for membership and
21 appointment of steering committee members;
22 establishing duties of the steering committee;
23 authorizing demonstration projects in specified
24 counties; authorizing designated agencies to
25 provide confidential information to such
26 program; providing for funding; providing an
27 effective date.

28
29 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:
30
31

1 Section 1. Notwithstanding subsection (7) of section 3
2 of chapter 2000-321, Laws of Florida, section 20.15, Florida
3 Statutes, shall not stand repealed on January 7, 2003, as
4 scheduled by that act, but is reenacted and amended to read:

5 20.15 Department of Education.--There is created a
6 Department of Education.

7 (1) STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION.--In accordance with s.
8 2, Art. IX of the State Constitution, the State Board of
9 Education is a body corporate and must supervise the system of
10 free public education as is provided by law. The State Board
11 of Education is the head of the Department of Education the
12 chief policymaking body of public education in the state as
13 specified in chapter 229. The Governor is chair of the board,
14 and the Commissioner of Education is the secretary and
15 executive officer and in the absence of the Governor shall
16 serve as chair.

17 (2) COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION.--The Commissioner of
18 Education is appointed by the State Board of Education and
19 serves as the Executive Director of the Department of
20 Education head of the Department of Education is the
21 Commissioner of Education who shall be elected by vote of the
22 qualified electors of the state pursuant to s. 5, Art. IV of
23 the State Constitution.

24 (a) ~~The Commissioner of Education shall appoint a~~
25 ~~Deputy Commissioner for Educational Programs who has such~~
26 ~~powers, duties, responsibilities, and functions as are~~
27 ~~necessary to ensure the greatest possible coordination,~~
28 ~~efficiency, and effectiveness of kindergarten through~~
29 ~~12th-grade education and vocational and continuing education~~
30 ~~programs, including workforce development.~~

31

1 ~~(b) The Commissioner of Education shall appoint a~~
2 ~~Deputy Commissioner for Planning, Budgeting, and Management~~
3 ~~who has such powers, duties, responsibilities, and functions~~
4 ~~as are necessary to ensure the greatest possible coordination~~
5 ~~of policies, programs, and procedures for the statewide system~~
6 ~~of education and the department.~~

7 ~~(c) The Commissioner of Education shall appoint a~~
8 ~~Deputy Commissioner for Technology and Administration who has~~
9 ~~such powers, duties, responsibilities, and functions as are~~
10 ~~necessary to ensure the greatest possible coordination and~~
11 ~~development of technological supports for the education system~~
12 ~~and efficient administration of the department.~~

13 (3) DIVISIONS.--The following divisions of the
14 Department of Education are established:

15 (a) Division of Community Colleges.

16 (b) Division of Public Schools and ~~Community~~
17 ~~Education.~~

18 (c) Division of Colleges and Universities.

19 (d) Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Workforce
20 ~~Development.~~

21 ~~(e) Division of Professional Educators.~~

22 ~~(f) Division of Administration.~~

23 ~~(g) Division of Financial Services.~~

24 ~~(h) Division of Support Services.~~

25 ~~(i) Division of Technology.~~

26 ~~(e)(j)~~ Division of Blind Services.

27 (4) DIRECTORS.--~~The Board of Regents is the director~~
28 ~~of the Division of Universities, and the State Board of~~
29 ~~Community Colleges is the director of the Division of~~
30 ~~Community Colleges, pursuant to chapter 240.~~The directors of
31

1 all ~~other~~ divisions shall be appointed by the commissioner
2 subject to approval by the state board.

3 (5) POWERS AND DUTIES.--The State Board of Education
4 and the Commissioner of Education*

5 ~~(a)~~ shall assign to the divisions ~~Division of Public~~
6 ~~Schools and Community Education~~ such powers, duties,
7 responsibilities, and functions as are necessary to ensure the
8 greatest possible coordination, efficiency, and effectiveness
9 of education for students in K through 20 education.
10 ~~prekindergarten through 12th grade, for secondary school~~
11 ~~vocational education, and for community education.~~

12 ~~(b)~~ ~~Shall assign to the Division of Workforce~~
13 ~~Development such powers, duties, responsibilities, and~~
14 ~~functions as are necessary to ensure the greatest possible~~
15 ~~coordination, efficiency, and effectiveness of workforce~~
16 ~~development education.~~

17 ~~(c)~~ ~~Shall assign to the State Board of Community~~
18 ~~Colleges such powers, duties, responsibilities, and functions~~
19 ~~as are necessary to ensure the coordination, efficiency, and~~
20 ~~effectiveness of community colleges, except those duties~~
21 ~~specifically assigned to the Commissioner of Education in ss.~~
22 ~~229.512 and 229.551, the duties concerning physical facilities~~
23 ~~in chapter 235, and the duties assigned to the Division of~~
24 ~~Workforce Development in chapter 239.~~

25 (6) COUNCILS AND COMMITTEES.--Notwithstanding anything
26 contained in law to the contrary, the commissioner of
27 ~~Education~~ shall appoint all members of all councils and
28 committees of the Department of Education, except the
29 Commission for Independent Education, ~~Board of Regents, the~~
30 ~~State Board of Community Colleges, the community college~~
31 ~~district boards of trustees, the Postsecondary Education~~

1 ~~Planning Commission,~~ the Education Practices Commission, and
2 the Education Standards Commission, ~~the State Board of~~
3 ~~Independent Colleges and Universities,~~ and the State Board of
4 ~~Nonpublic Career Education.~~

5 (7) BOARDS.--Notwithstanding anything contained in law
6 to the contrary, all members of the university, college, Board
7 ~~of Regents, the State Board of Community Colleges,~~ and the
8 community college district boards of trustees must be
9 appointed according to chapter 240.

10 Section 2. Learning Gateway.--

11 (1) PROGRAM GOALS.--The Legislature authorizes a
12 3-year demonstration program, to be called the Learning
13 Gateway, the purpose of which is to provide parents access to
14 information, referral, and services to lessen the effects of
15 learning disabilities in children from birth to age 9.
16 Parental consent shall be required for initial contact and
17 referral for evaluation and services provided through the
18 Learning Gateway. Each pilot program must design and test an
19 integrated, community-based system to help parents identify
20 learning problems and access early-education and intervention
21 services in order to minimize or prevent learning
22 disabilities. The Learning Gateway must be available to
23 parents in the settings where they and their children live,
24 work, seek care, or study. The goals of the Learning Gateway
25 are to:

26 (a) Improve community awareness and education of
27 parents and practitioners about the warning signs or
28 precursors of learning problems and learning disabilities,
29 including disorders or delayed development in language,
30 attention, behavior, and social-emotional functioning,
31

1 including dyslexia and attention deficit hyperactivity
2 disorder, in children from birth through age 9.

3 (b) Improve access for children who are experiencing
4 early learning problems and their families to appropriate
5 programs, services, and supports through improved outreach and
6 referral processes among providers.

7 (c) Improve developmental monitoring and the
8 availability to parents of appropriate screening resources,
9 with emphasis on children from birth through age 9 who are at
10 high risk of having learning problems.

11 (d) Improve the availability to parents of appropriate
12 education and intervention programs, services, and supports to
13 address learning problems and learning disabilities.

14 (e) Identify gaps in the array of services and
15 supports so that an appropriate child-centered and
16 family-centered continuum of education and support would be
17 readily available in each community.

18 (f) Improve accountability of the system through
19 improved planning, integration, and collaboration among
20 providers and through outcome measurement in collaboration
21 with parents.

22 (2) LEARNING GATEWAY STEERING COMMITTEE.--

23 (a) To ensure that parents of children with potential
24 learning problems and learning disabilities have access to the
25 appropriate necessary services and supports, an 18-member
26 steering committee is created. The steering committee is
27 assigned to the Department of Education for administrative
28 purposes.

29 (b) The duties of the Learning Gateway Steering
30 Committee are to provide policy development, consultation,
31 oversight, and support for the implementation of three

1 demonstration programs and to advise the agencies, the
2 Legislature, and the Governor on statewide implementation of
3 system components and issues and on strategies for continuing
4 improvement to the system.

5 (c) The steering committee shall direct the
6 administering agency of the Learning Gateway program to expend
7 the funds appropriated for the steering committee's use to
8 procure the products delineated in section 3 of this act
9 through contracts or other means. The steering committee and
10 the Learning Gateway pilot programs will provide information
11 and referral for services but will not provide direct services
12 to parents or children.

13 (d) The steering committee must include parents,
14 service providers, and representatives of the disciplines
15 relevant to diagnosis of and intervention in early learning
16 problems. The Governor shall appoint one member from the
17 private sector who has expertise in communications, management
18 or service provision, one member who has expertise in
19 children's vision, one member who has expertise in learning
20 disabilities, one member who has expertise in audiology, one
21 member who is a parent of a child eligible for services by the
22 Learning Gateway, and one provider of related diagnostic and
23 intervention services. The President of the Senate shall
24 appoint one member from the private sector who has expertise
25 in communications, management or service provision, one member
26 who has expertise in emergent literacy, one member who has
27 expertise in pediatrics, one member who has expertise in brain
28 development, one member who is a parent of a child eligible
29 for services by the Learning Gateway, and one member who is a
30 provider of related diagnostic and intervention services. The
31 Speaker of the House of Representatives shall appoint one

1 member from the private sector who has expertise in
2 communications, management or service provision, one member
3 who has expertise in environmental health and allergies, one
4 member who has expertise in children's nutrition, one member
5 who has expertise in family medicine, one parent of a child
6 eligible for services by the Learning Gateway, and one member
7 who is a school psychologist providing diagnostic and
8 intervention services.

9 (e) To support and facilitate system improvements, the
10 steering committee must consult with representatives from the
11 Department of Education, the Department of Health, the Florida
12 Partnership for School Readiness, the Department of Children
13 and Family Services, the Agency for Health Care
14 Administration, the Department of Juvenile Justice, and the
15 Department of Corrections and the director of the Learning
16 Development and Evaluation Center of Florida Agricultural and
17 Mechanical University.

18 (f) Steering committee appointments must be made, and
19 the committee must hold its first meeting, within 90 days
20 after this act takes effect. Steering committee members shall
21 be appointed to serve a term of 3 years. The Governor shall
22 designate the chairman of the steering committee.

23 (g) Steering committee members shall not receive
24 compensation for their services, but may receive reimbursement
25 for travel expenses incurred under section 112.061, Florida
26 Statutes.

27 (3) LEARNING GATEWAY DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS.--

28 (a) Within 90 days after its initial meeting, the
29 Learning Gateway Steering Committee shall accept proposals
30 from interagency consortia in Orange, Manatee, and St. Lucie
31 counties which comprise public and private providers,

1 community agencies, business representatives, and the local
2 school board in each county to serve as demonstration sites
3 for design and development of a system that addresses the
4 requirements in section 3 of this act. If there is no proposal
5 from one of the designated counties, the steering committee
6 may select another county to serve as a demonstration site by
7 majority vote.

8 (b) The proposals for demonstration projects must
9 provide a comprehensive and detailed description of the system
10 of care. The description of the proposed system of care must
11 clearly indicate the point of access for parents, integration
12 of services, linkages of providers, and additional array of
13 services required to address the needs of children and
14 families.

15 (c) The demonstration projects should ensure that the
16 system of care appropriately includes existing services to the
17 fullest extent possible and should determine additional
18 programs, services, and supports that would be necessary to
19 implement the requirements of this act.

20 (d) The projects, in conjunction with the steering
21 committee, shall determine what portion of the system can be
22 funded using existing funds, demonstration funds provided by
23 this act, and other available private and community funds.

24 (e) The demonstration projects shall recommend to the
25 steering committee the linking or combining of some or all of
26 the local planning bodies, including school readiness
27 coalitions, Healthy Start coalitions, Part C advisory
28 councils, Department of Children and Family Services community
29 alliances, and other boards or councils that have a primary
30 focus on services for children from birth to age 9, to the
31 extent allowed by federal regulations, if such changes would

1 improve coordination and reduce unnecessary duplication of
2 effort.

3 (f) Demonstration projects shall use public and
4 private partnerships, partnerships with faith-based
5 organizations, and volunteers, as appropriate, to enhance
6 accomplishment of the goals of the system.

7 (g) Addressing system components delineated in section
8 3 of this act, each demonstration project proposal must
9 include, at a minimum:

10 1. Protocols for requiring and receiving parental
11 consent for Learning Gateway services.

12 2. A method for establishing communication with
13 parents and coordination and planning processes within the
14 community.

15 3. Action steps for making appropriate linkages to
16 existing services within the community.

17 4. Procedures to determine gaps in services and
18 identify appropriate providers.

19 5. A lead agency to serve as the system access point,
20 or gateway.

21 (h) As authorized under the budget authority of the
22 Department of Education, demonstration projects,
23 representative of the diversity of the communities in this
24 state, shall be established in Manatee, Orange, and St. Lucie
25 counties as local Learning Gateway sites and shall be
26 authorized to hire staff, establish office space, and contract
27 for administrative services as needed to implement the project
28 within the budget designated by the Legislature.

29 (i) The steering committee must approve, deny, or
30 conditionally approve a Learning Gateway proposal within 60
31 days after receipt of the proposal. If a proposal is

1 conditionally approved, the steering committee must assist the
2 Learning Gateway applicant to correct deficiencies in the
3 proposal by December 1, 2002. Funds must be available to a
4 pilot program 15 days after final approval of its proposal by
5 the steering committee. Funds must be available to all pilot
6 programs by January 1, 2003.

7 Section 3. Components of the Learning Gateway.--

8 (1) The Learning Gateway system consists of the
9 following components:

10 (a) Community education strategies and family-oriented
11 access.--

12 1. Each local demonstration project shall establish
13 the system access point, or gateway, by which parents can
14 receive information about available appropriate services. An
15 existing public or private agency or provider or new provider
16 may serve as the system gateway. The local Learning Gateway
17 should provide parents and caretakers with a single point of
18 access for screening, assessment, and referral for services
19 for children from birth through age 9. The demonstration
20 projects have the budgetary authority to hire appropriate
21 personnel to perform administrative functions. These staff
22 members must be knowledgeable about child development, early
23 identification of learning problems and learning disabilities,
24 family service planning, and services in the local area. Each
25 demonstration project must arrange for the following services
26 to be provided by existing service systems:

27 a. Conducting intake with families.

28 b. Conducting appropriate screening or referral for
29 such services.

30 c. Conducting needs/strengths-based family assessment.

31 d. Developing family resource plans.

1 e. Making referrals for needed services and assisting
2 families in the application process.

3 f. Providing service coordination as needed by
4 families.

5 g. Assisting families in establishing a medical home.

6 h. Conducting case management and transition planning
7 as necessary.

8 i. Monitoring performance of service providers against
9 appropriate standards.

10 2. The Learning Gateway Steering Committee and
11 demonstration projects shall designate a central information
12 and referral access phone number for parents in each pilot
13 community. This centralized phone number should be used to
14 increase public awareness and to improve access to local
15 supports and services for children from birth through age 9
16 and their families. The number should be highly publicized as
17 the primary source of information on services for young
18 children. The telephone staff should be trained and supported
19 to offer accurate and complete information and to make
20 appropriate referrals to existing public and private community
21 agencies.

22 3. In collaboration with local resources such as
23 Healthy Start, the demonstration projects shall develop
24 strategies for offering hospital visits or home visits by
25 trained staff to new mothers. The Learning Gateway Steering
26 Committee shall provide technical assistance to local
27 demonstration projects in developing brochures and other
28 materials to be distributed to parents of newborns.

29 4. In collaboration with other local resources, the
30 demonstration projects shall develop public awareness
31 strategies to disseminate information about developmental

1 milestones, precursors of learning problems and other
2 developmental delays, and the service system that is
3 available. The information should target parents of children
4 from birth through age 9 and should be distributed to parents,
5 health care providers, and caregivers of children from birth
6 through age 9. A variety of media should be used as
7 appropriate, such as print, television, radio, and a
8 community-based internet web site, as well as opportunities
9 such as those presented by parent visits to physicians for
10 well-child check-ups. The Learning Gateway Steering Committee
11 shall provide technical assistance to the local demonstration
12 projects in developing and distributing educational materials
13 and information.

14 a. Public awareness strategies targeting parents of
15 children from birth through age 5 shall be designed to provide
16 information to public and private preschool programs,
17 childcare providers, pediatricians, parents, and local
18 businesses and organizations. These strategies should include
19 information on the school readiness performance standards for
20 kindergarten adopted by the School Readiness Partnership
21 Board.

22 b. Public awareness strategies targeting parents of
23 children from ages 6 through 9 must be designed to disseminate
24 training materials and brochures to parents and public and
25 private school personnel, and must be coordinated with the
26 local school board and the appropriate school advisory
27 committees in the demonstration projects. The materials should
28 contain information on state and district proficiency levels
29 for grades K-3.

30 (b) Screening and developmental monitoring.--
31

1 1. In coordination with the Partnership for School
2 Readiness, the Department of Education, and the Florida
3 Pediatric Society, and using information learned from the
4 local demonstration projects, the Learning Gateway Steering
5 Committee shall establish guidelines for screening children
6 from birth through age 9. The guidelines should incorporate
7 recent research on the indicators most likely to predict early
8 learning problems, mild developmental delays, child-specific
9 precursors of school failure, and other related developmental
10 indicators in the domains of cognition; communication;
11 attention; perception; behavior; and social, emotional,
12 sensory, and motor functioning.

13 2. Based on the guidelines established by the steering
14 committee and in cooperation with the Florida Pediatric
15 Society, the steering committee shall adopt a comprehensive
16 checklist for child healthcare checkups and a corresponding
17 training package for physicians and other medical personnel in
18 implementing more effective screening for precursors of
19 learning problems, learning disabilities, and mild
20 developmental delays.

21 3. Using the screening guidelines developed by the
22 steering committee, local demonstration projects should engage
23 local physicians and other medical professionals in enhancing
24 the screening opportunities presented by immunization visits
25 and other well-child appointments, in accordance with the
26 American Academy of Pediatrics Periodicity Schedule.

27 4. Using the screening guidelines developed by the
28 steering committee, the demonstration projects shall develop
29 strategies to increase early identification of precursors to
30 learning problems and learning disabilities through providing
31 parents the option of improved screening and referral

1 practices within public and private early care and education
2 programs and K-3 public and private school settings.
3 Strategies may include training and technical assistance teams
4 to assist program providers and teachers. The program shall
5 collaborate appropriately with the school readiness
6 coalitions, local school boards, and other community resources
7 in arranging training and technical assistance for early
8 identification and screening with parental consent.

9 5. The demonstration project shall work with
10 appropriate local entities to reduce the duplication of
11 cross-agency screening in each demonstration project area.
12 Demonstration projects shall provide opportunities for public
13 and private providers of screening and assessment at each age
14 level to meet periodically to identify gaps or duplication of
15 efforts in screening practices.

16 6. Based on technical assistance and support provided
17 by the steering committee and in conjunction with the school
18 readiness coalitions and other appropriate entities,
19 demonstration projects shall develop a system to log the
20 number of children screened, assessed, and referred for
21 services. After development and testing, tracking should be
22 supported by a standard electronic data system for screening
23 and assessment information.

24 7. In conjunction with the technical assistance of the
25 steering committee, demonstration projects shall develop a
26 system for targeted screening. The projects should conduct a
27 needs assessment of existing services and programs where
28 targeted screening programs should be offered. Based on the
29 results of the needs assessment, the project shall develop
30 procedures within the demonstration community whereby periodic
31 developmental screening could be offered to parents of

1 children from birth through age 9 who are served by state
2 intervention programs or whose parents or caregivers are in
3 state intervention programs. Intervention programs for
4 children, parents, and caregivers include those administered
5 or funded by the:

6 a. Agency for Health Care Administration;

7 b. Department of Children and Family Services;

8 c. Department of Corrections and other criminal
9 justice programs;

10 d. Department of Education;

11 e. Department of Health; and

12 f. Department of Juvenile Justice.

13 8. When results of screening suggest developmental
14 problems, potential learning problems, or learning
15 disabilities, the intervention program shall inform the
16 child's parent of the results of the screening and shall offer
17 to refer the child to the Learning Gateway for coordination of
18 further assessment. If the parent chooses to have further
19 assessment, the Learning Gateway shall make referrals to the
20 appropriate entities within the service system.

21 9. The local Learning Gateway shall provide for
22 followup contact to all families whose children have been
23 found ineligible for services under Part B or Part C of the
24 IDEA to inform them of other services available in the county.

25 10. Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, each
26 agency participating in the Learning Gateway is authorized to
27 provide to a Learning Gateway program confidential information
28 exempt from disclosure under chapter 119, Florida Statutes,
29 regarding a developmental screening on any child participating
30 in the Learning Gateway who is or has been the subject of a
31

1 developmental screening within the jurisdiction of each
2 agency.

3 (c) Early education, services and supports.--

4 1. The demonstration projects shall develop a
5 conceptual model system of care that builds upon, integrates,
6 and fills the gaps in existing services. The model shall
7 indicate how qualified providers of family-based or
8 center-based interventions or public and private school
9 personnel may offer services in a manner consistent with the
10 standards established by their profession and by the standards
11 and criteria adopted by the steering committee and consistent
12 with effective and proven strategies. The specific services
13 and supports may include:

14 a. High-quality early education and care programs.

15 b. Assistance to parents and other caregivers, such as
16 home-based modeling programs for parents and play programs to
17 provide peer interactions.

18 c. Speech and language therapy that is
19 age-appropriate.

20 d. Parent education and training.

21 e. Comprehensive medical screening and referral with
22 biomedical interventions as necessary.

23 f. Referral as needed for family therapy, other mental
24 health services, and treatment programs.

25 g. Family support services as necessary.

26 h. Therapy for learning differences in reading and
27 math, and attention to subject material for children in grades
28 K-3.

29 i. Referral for Part B or Part C services as required.

30 j. Expanded access to community-based services for
31 parents.

1 k. Parental choice in the provision of services by
2 public and private providers.

3
4 The model shall include a statement of the cost of
5 implementing the model.

6 2. Demonstration projects shall develop strategies to
7 increase the use of appropriate intervention practices with
8 children who have learning problems and learning disabilities
9 within public and private early care and education programs
10 and K-3 public and private school settings. Strategies may
11 include training and technical assistance teams. Intervention
12 must be coordinated and must focus on providing effective
13 supports to children and their families within their regular
14 education and community environment. These strategies must
15 incorporate, as appropriate, school and district activities
16 related to the student's academic improvement plan and must
17 provide parents with greater access to community-based
18 services that should be available beyond the traditional
19 school day. Academic expectations for public school students
20 in grades K-3 must be based upon the local school board's
21 adopted proficiency levels. When appropriate, school personnel
22 shall consult with the local Learning Gateway to identify
23 other community resources for supporting the child and the
24 family.

25 3. The steering committee, in cooperation with the
26 Department of Children and Family Services, the Department of
27 Education, and the Florida Partnership for School Readiness,
28 shall identify the elements of an effective research-based
29 curriculum for early care and education programs.

30 4. The steering committee, in conjunction with the
31 demonstration projects, shall develop processes for

1 identifying and sharing promising practices and shall showcase
2 these programs and practices at a dissemination conference.

3 5. The steering committee shall establish processes
4 for facilitating state and local providers' ready access to
5 information and training concerning effective instructional
6 and behavioral practices and interventions based on advances
7 in the field and for encouraging researchers to regularly
8 guide practitioners in designing and implementing
9 research-based practices. The steering committee shall assist
10 the demonstration projects in conducting a conference for
11 participants in the three demonstration projects for the
12 dissemination of information on best practices and new
13 insights about early identification, education, and
14 intervention for children from birth through age 9. The
15 conference should be established so that continuing education
16 credits may be awarded to medical professionals, teachers, and
17 others for whom this is an incentive.

18 6. Demonstration projects shall investigate and may
19 recommend to the steering committee more effective resource
20 allocation and flexible funding strategies if such strategies
21 are in the best interest of the children and families in the
22 community. The Department of Education and other relevant
23 agencies shall assist the demonstration projects in securing
24 state and federal waivers as appropriate.

25 Section 4. Accountability.--

26 (1) The steering committee shall provide information
27 to the School Readiness Estimating Conference and the
28 Enrollment Conference for Public Schools regarding estimates
29 of the population of children from birth through age 9 who are
30 at risk of learning problems and learning disabilities.

31

1 (2) The steering committee, in conjunction with the
2 demonstration projects, shall develop accountability
3 mechanisms to ensure that the demonstration programs are
4 effective and that resources are used as efficiently as
5 possible. Accountability should be addressed through a
6 multilevel evaluation system, including measurement of
7 outcomes and operational indicators. Measurable outcomes must
8 be developed to address improved child development, improved
9 child health, and success in school. Indicators of system
10 improvements must be developed to address quality of programs
11 and integration of services. Agency monitoring of programs
12 shall include a review of child and family outcomes and system
13 effectiveness indicators with a specific focus on elimination
14 of unnecessary duplication of planning, screening, and
15 services.

16 (3) The steering committee shall oversee a formative
17 evaluation of the project during implementation, including
18 reporting short-term outcomes and system improvements. By
19 January 2005, the steering committee shall make
20 recommendations to the Governor, the President of the Senate,
21 the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the
22 Commissioner of Education related to the merits of expansion
23 of the demonstration projects.

24 (4) By January 1, 2005, the steering committee, in
25 conjunction with the demonstration projects, shall develop a
26 model county-level strategic plan to formalize the goals,
27 objectives, strategies, and intended outcomes of the
28 comprehensive system, and to support the integration and
29 efficient delivery of all services and supports for parents of
30 children from birth through age 9 who have learning problems
31

1 or learning disabilities. The model county-level strategic
2 plan must include, but need not be limited to, strategies to:
3 (a) Establish a system whereby parents can access
4 information about learning problems in young children and
5 receive services at their discretion;
6 (b) Improve early identification of those who are at
7 risk for learning problems and learning disabilities;
8 (c) Provide access to an appropriate array of services
9 within the child's natural environment or regular classroom
10 setting or specialized training in other settings;
11 (d) Improve and coordinate screening for children from
12 birth through age 9;
13 (e) Improve and coordinate services for children from
14 birth through age 9;
15 (f) Address training of professionals in effectively
16 identifying factors, across all domains, which place children
17 from birth through age 9 at risk of school failure and in
18 appropriate interventions for the learning differences;
19 (g) Provide appropriate support to families;
20 (h) Share best practices with caregivers and referral
21 sources;
22 (i) Address resource needs of the assessment and
23 intervention system; and
24 (j) Address development of implementation plans to
25 establish protocols for requiring and receiving parental
26 consent for services; to identify action steps, responsible
27 parties, and implementation schedules; and to ensure
28 appropriate alignment with agency strategic plans.
29 Section 5. The Legislature shall appropriate a sum of
30 money to fund the demonstration programs and shall authorize
31 selected communities to blend funding from existing programs

1 to the extent that this is advantageous to the community and
2 is consistent with federal requirements.

3 Section 6. This act shall take effect January 7, 2003.
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31