



Bill No. CS for SB's 2488 & 2314

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1 are to:

2 (a) Improve community awareness and education of  
3 parents and practitioners about the warning signs or  
4 precursors of learning problems and learning disabilities,  
5 including disorders or delayed development in language,  
6 attention, behavior, and social-emotional functioning,  
7 including dyslexia and attention deficit hyperactivity  
8 disorder, in children from birth through age 9.

9 (b) Improve access for children who are experiencing  
10 early learning problems and their families to appropriate  
11 programs, services, and supports through improved outreach and  
12 referral processes among providers.

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

17 (d) Improve the availability to parents of appropriate  
18 education and intervention programs, services, and supports to  
19 address learning problems and learning disabilities.

20 (e) Identify gaps in the array of services and  
21 supports so that an appropriate child-centered and  
22 family-centered continuum of education and support would be  
23 readily available in each community.

24 (f) Improve accountability of the system through  
25 improved planning, integration, and collaboration among  
26 providers and through outcome measurement in collaboration  
27 with parents.

28 (2) LEARNING GATEWAY STEERING COMMITTEE.--

29 (a) To ensure that parents of children with potential  
30 learning problems and learning disabilities have access to the  
31 appropriate necessary services and supports, an 18-member

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1 steering committee is created. The steering committee is  
2 assigned to the Department of Education for administrative  
3 purposes.

4 (b) The duties of the Learning Gateway Steering  
5 Committee are to provide policy development, consultation,  
6 oversight, and support for the implementation of three  
7 demonstration programs and to advise the agencies, the  
8 Legislature, and the Governor on statewide implementation of  
9 system components and issues and on strategies for continuing  
10 improvement to the system.

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

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

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1 who has expertise in emergent literacy, one member who has  
2 expertise in pediatrics, one member who has expertise in brain  
3 development, one member who is a parent of a child eligible  
4 for services by the Learning Gateway, and one member who is a  
5 provider of related diagnostic and intervention services. The  
6 Speaker of the House of Representatives shall appoint one  
7 member from the private sector who has expertise in  
8 communications, management or service provision, one member  
9 who has expertise in environmental health and allergies, one  
10 member who has expertise in children's nutrition, one member  
11 who has expertise in family medicine, one parent of a child  
12 eligible for services by the Learning Gateway, and one member  
13 who is a school psychologist providing diagnostic and  
14 intervention services.

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

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

29 (g) Steering committee members shall not receive  
30 compensation for their services, but may receive reimbursement  
31 for travel expenses incurred under section 112.061, Florida

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1 Statutes.

2 (3) LEARNING GATEWAY DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS.--

3 (a) Within 90 days after its initial meeting, the  
4 Learning Gateway Steering Committee shall accept proposals  
5 from interagency consortia in Orange, Manatee, and St. Lucie  
6 counties which comprise public and private providers,  
7 community agencies, business representatives, and the local  
8 school board in each county to serve as demonstration sites  
9 for design and development of a system that addresses the  
10 requirements in section 3 of this act. If there is no proposal  
11 from one of the designated counties, the steering committee  
12 may select another county to serve as a demonstration site by  
13 majority vote.

14 (b) The proposals for demonstration projects must  
15 provide a comprehensive and detailed description of the system  
16 of care. The description of the proposed system of care must  
17 clearly indicate the point of access for parents, integration  
18 of services, linkages of providers, and additional array of  
19 services required to address the needs of children and  
20 families.

21 (c) The demonstration projects should ensure that the  
22 system of care appropriately includes existing services to the  
23 fullest extent possible and should determine additional  
24 programs, services, and supports that would be necessary to  
25 implement the requirements of this act.

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

30 (e) The demonstration projects shall recommend to the  
31 steering committee the linking or combining of some or all of

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1 the local planning bodies, including school readiness  
2 coalitions, Healthy Start coalitions, Part C advisory  
3 councils, Department of Children and Family Services community  
4 alliances, and other boards or councils that have a primary  
5 focus on services for children from birth to age 9, to the  
6 extent allowed by federal regulations, if such changes would  
7 improve coordination and reduce unnecessary duplication of  
8 effort.

9 (f) Demonstration projects shall use public and  
10 private partnerships, partnerships with faith-based  
11 organizations, and volunteers, as appropriate, to enhance  
12 accomplishment of the goals of the system.

13 (g) Addressing system components delineated in section  
14 3 of this act, each demonstration project proposal must  
15 include, at a minimum:

- 16 1. Protocols for requiring and receiving parental
- 17 consent for Learning Gateway services.
- 18 2. A method for establishing communication with
- 19 parents and coordination and planning processes within the
- 20 community.
- 21 3. Action steps for making appropriate linkages to
- 22 existing services within the community.
- 23 4. Procedures to determine gaps in services and
- 24 identify appropriate providers.
- 25 5. A lead agency to serve as the system access point,
- 26 or gateway.

27 (h) As authorized under the budget authority of the  
28 Department of Education, demonstration projects,  
29 representative of the diversity of the communities in this  
30 state, shall be established in Manatee, Orange, and St. Lucie  
31 counties as local Learning Gateway sites and shall be

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1 authorized to hire staff, establish office space, and contract  
2 for administrative services as needed to implement the project  
3 within the budget designated by the Legislature.

4 (i) The steering committee must approve, deny, or  
5 conditionally approve a Learning Gateway proposal within 60  
6 days after receipt of the proposal. If a proposal is  
7 conditionally approved, the steering committee must assist the  
8 Learning Gateway applicant to correct deficiencies in the  
9 proposal by December 1, 2002. Funds must be available to a  
10 pilot program 15 days after final approval of its proposal by  
11 the steering committee. Funds must be available to all pilot  
12 programs by January 1, 2003.

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

14 (1) The Learning Gateway system consists of the  
15 following components:

16 (a) Community education strategies and family-oriented  
17 access.--

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

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1 to be provided by existing service systems:

2 a. Conducting intake with families.

3 b. Conducting appropriate screening or referral for  
4 such services.

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

6 d. Developing family resource plans.

7 e. Making referrals for needed services and assisting  
8 families in the application process.

9 f. Providing service coordination as needed by  
10 families.

11 g. Assisting families in establishing a medical home.

12 h. Conducting case management and transition planning  
13 as necessary.

14 i. Monitoring performance of service providers against  
15 appropriate standards.

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

28 3. In collaboration with local resources such as  
29 Healthy Start, the demonstration projects shall develop  
30 strategies for offering hospital visits or home visits by  
31 trained staff to new mothers. The Learning Gateway Steering



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1 Committee shall provide technical assistance to local  
2 demonstration projects in developing brochures and other  
3 materials to be distributed to parents of newborns.

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

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

28 b. Public awareness strategies targeting parents of  
29 children from ages 6 through 9 must be designed to disseminate  
30 training materials and brochures to parents and public and  
31 private school personnel, and must be coordinated with the

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1 local school board and the appropriate school advisory  
2 committees in the demonstration projects. The materials should  
3 contain information on state and district proficiency levels  
4 for grades K-3.

5 (b) Screening and developmental monitoring.--

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

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

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

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1           4. Using the screening guidelines developed by the  
2 steering committee, the demonstration projects shall develop  
3 strategies to increase early identification of precursors to  
4 learning problems and learning disabilities through providing  
5 parents the option of improved screening and referral  
6 practices within public and private early care and education  
7 programs and K-3 public and private school settings.  
8 Strategies may include training and technical assistance teams  
9 to assist program providers and teachers. The program shall  
10 collaborate appropriately with the school readiness  
11 coalitions, local school boards, and other community resources  
12 in arranging training and technical assistance for early  
13 identification and screening with parental consent.

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

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

29           7. In conjunction with the technical assistance of the  
30 steering committee, demonstration projects shall develop a  
31 system for targeted screening. The projects should conduct a

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1 needs assessment of existing services and programs where  
2 targeted screening programs should be offered. Based on the  
3 results of the needs assessment, the project shall develop  
4 procedures within the demonstration community whereby periodic  
5 developmental screening could be offered to parents of  
6 children from birth through age 9 who are served by state  
7 intervention programs or whose parents or caregivers are in  
8 state intervention programs. Intervention programs for  
9 children, parents, and caregivers include those administered  
10 or funded by the:

- 11 a. Agency for Health Care Administration;
- 12 b. Department of Children and Family Services;
- 13 c. Department of Corrections and other criminal
- 14 justice programs;
- 15 d. Department of Education;
- 16 e. Department of Health; and
- 17 f. Department of Juvenile Justice.

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

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

30 10. Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, each  
31 agency participating in the Learning Gateway is authorized to

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1 provide to a Learning Gateway program confidential information  
2 exempt from disclosure under chapter 119, Florida Statutes,  
3 regarding a developmental screening on any child participating  
4 in the Learning Gateway who is or has been the subject of a  
5 developmental screening within the jurisdiction of each  
6 agency.

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

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

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

19 b. Assistance to parents and other caregivers, such as  
20 home-based modeling programs for parents and play programs to  
21 provide peer interactions.

22 c. Speech and language therapy that is  
23 age-appropriate.

24 d. Parent education and training.

25 e. Comprehensive medical screening and referral with  
26 biomedical interventions as necessary.

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

29 g. Family support services as necessary.

30 h. Therapy for learning differences in reading and  
31 math, and attention to subject material for children in grades

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1 K-3.

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

3 j. Expanded access to community-based services for  
4 parents.

5 k. Parental choice in the provision of services by  
6 public and private providers.

7  
8 The model shall include a statement of the cost of  
9 implementing the model.

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

29 3. The steering committee, in cooperation with the  
30 Department of Children and Family Services, the Department of  
31 Education, and the Florida Partnership for School Readiness,

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1 shall identify the elements of an effective research-based  
2 curriculum for early care and education programs.

3 4. The steering committee, in conjunction with the  
4 demonstration projects, shall develop processes for  
5 identifying and sharing promising practices and shall showcase  
6 these programs and practices at a dissemination conference.

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

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

29 Section 4. Accountability.--

30 (1) The steering committee shall provide information  
31 to the School Readiness Estimating Conference and the

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1 Enrollment Conference for Public Schools regarding estimates  
2 of the population of children from birth through age 9 who are  
3 at risk of learning problems and learning disabilities.

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

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

27 (4) By January 1, 2005, the steering committee, in  
28 conjunction with the demonstration projects, shall develop a  
29 model county-level strategic plan to formalize the goals,  
30 objectives, strategies, and intended outcomes of the  
31 comprehensive system, and to support the integration and



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1 efficient delivery of all services and supports for parents of  
2 children from birth through age 9 who have learning problems  
3 or learning disabilities. The model county-level strategic  
4 plan must include, but need not be limited to, strategies to:

5 (a) Establish a system whereby parents can access  
6 information about learning problems in young children and  
7 receive services at their discretion;

8 (b) Improve early identification of those who are at  
9 risk for learning problems and learning disabilities;

10 (c) Provide access to an appropriate array of services  
11 within the child's natural environment or regular classroom  
12 setting or specialized training in other settings;

13 (d) Improve and coordinate screening for children from  
14 birth through age 9;

15 (e) Improve and coordinate services for children from  
16 birth through age 9;

17 (f) Address training of professionals in effectively  
18 identifying factors, across all domains, which place children  
19 from birth through age 9 at risk of school failure and in  
20 appropriate interventions for the learning differences;

21 (g) Provide appropriate support to families;

22 (h) Share best practices with caregivers and referral  
23 sources;

24 (i) Address resource needs of the assessment and  
25 intervention system; and

26 (j) Address development of implementation plans to  
27 establish protocols for requiring and receiving parental  
28 consent for services; to identify action steps, responsible  
29 parties, and implementation schedules; and to ensure  
30 appropriate alignment with agency strategic plans.

31 Section 5. The Legislature shall appropriate a sum of

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1 money to fund the demonstration programs and shall authorize  
2 selected communities to blend funding from existing programs  
3 to the extent that this is advantageous to the community and  
4 is consistent with federal requirements.

5  
6 (Redesignate subsequent sections.)

7  
8  
9 ===== T I T L E A M E N D M E N T =====

10 And the title is amended as follows:

11 On page 1, line 16, after the semicolon,

12  
13 insert:

14 authorizing a demonstration program to be  
15 called Learning Gateway; creating a steering  
16 committee; providing for membership and  
17 appointment of steering committee members;  
18 establishing duties of the steering committee;  
19 authorizing demonstration projects in specified  
20 counties; authorizing designated agencies to  
21 provide confidential information to such  
22 program; providing for funding;

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