

By the Committees on Education; Commerce, Economic Opportunities, and Consumer Services; and Senators Garcia, Constantine and Carlton

304-2201A-03

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to school readiness programs;
3 implementing s. 1(b) and (c), Art. IX of the
4 State Constitution; creating the voluntary
5 universal prekindergarten education program
6 within the Agency for Workforce Innovation;
7 limiting the application of provisions relating
8 to school readiness programs; requiring the
9 State Board of Education to submit a report
10 with recommendations on the curriculum, design,
11 and standards of the voluntary universal
12 prekindergarten education program; directing
13 the Office of Program Policy Analysis and
14 Government Accountability and the Auditor
15 General to conduct audits and submit reports to
16 the Governor and Legislature; providing an
17 effective date.

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

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21 Section 1. Voluntary universal prekindergarten
22 education program.--

23 (1) There is created a voluntary universal
24 prekindergarten education program within the Agency for
25 Workforce Innovation. The program shall provide a high-quality
26 prekindergarten learning opportunity in the form of early
27 childhood development and education which is voluntary, of
28 high quality, delivered according to professionally accepted
29 standards, and free for every child in this state who is 4
30 years of age. The program must be organized, designed, and
31 delivered in accordance with Section 1(b) and (c), Article IX

1 of the State Constitution. Except as otherwise expressly
2 provided by law, sections 411.01-411.011, Florida Statutes, do
3 not apply to the voluntary universal prekindergarten education
4 program.

5 (2) The State Board of Education shall conduct a study
6 on the curriculum, design, and standards for the voluntary
7 universal prekindergarten education program. By October 1,
8 2003, the State Board of Education shall submit a report to
9 the Governor, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the
10 House of Representatives, the director of the Agency for
11 Workforce Innovation, and the Florida Partnership for School
12 Readiness. The report must include the recommendations of the
13 board on each of the following program elements:

14 (a) Curriculum and standards.--Developmentally
15 appropriate curriculum and standards that provide children a
16 high-quality prekindergarten learning opportunity. These
17 curriculum and standards must be designed to:

18 1. Address and enhance each child's ability to make
19 age-appropriate progress;

20 2. Provide early childhood development of language and
21 cognitive capabilities and emotional, social, regulatory and
22 moral capacities;

23 3. Provide education in basic skills and other
24 appropriate skills; and

25 4. Deliver early childhood development and education
26 according to professionally accepted standards.

27 (b) High-quality learning opportunity.--Quality
28 standards that provide children a high-quality prekindergarten
29 learning opportunity. These quality standards must include
30 specific recommendations on the expected outcomes of the
31 voluntary universal prekindergarten education program.

1 (c) Quantity of instruction.--Standards for the
2 quantity of instruction to be provided as voluntary and free
3 for every child in the state who is 4 years of age. These
4 standards must include specific recommendations on each of the
5 following elements:

6 1. Hours per day; and

7 2. Days per year.

8 (d) Delivery system.--Standards for providers in order
9 to deliver children a high-quality prekindergarten learning
10 opportunity. These standards must include specific
11 recommendations on each of the following elements:

12 1. Appropriate range of settings, including both
13 public and private providers, with consideration of the
14 capacity in each available setting;

15 2. Licensing or regulatory requirements for providers;

16 3. Health and safety requirements for providers; and

17 4. Parental choice.

18 (e) Assessment and evaluation.--Methods for measuring
19 the performance of the voluntary universal prekindergarten
20 education program. These methods must include specific
21 recommendations on each of the following elements:

22 1. Assessment of age-appropriate progress for each
23 child;

24 2. Evaluation of outcome measures for each provider in
25 each setting; and

26 3. Evaluation of school readiness coalitions.

27 (f) Funding.--Estimated cost per full-time-equivalent
28 child of the recommended curriculum, design, and standards.
29 This cost estimate must consider funding for each of the
30 board's recommendations on each of the program elements
31 described in this subsection.

1 (3) The report must also include the board's
2 recommendations of best practices to improve the outcomes of
3 school readiness coalitions and providers.

4 Section 2. (1) The Office of Program Policy Analysis
5 and Government Accountability shall conduct a performance
6 audit of the school readiness programs administered by the
7 Florida Partnership for School Readiness, the Agency for
8 Workforce Innovation, and the school readiness coalitions for
9 fiscal years 2000-2001, 2001-2002, and 2002-2003. The audit
10 shall reassess the implementation, efficiency, and outcomes of
11 the school readiness programs and shall examine the progress
12 achieved by the Florida Partnership for School Readiness and
13 the school readiness coalitions in response to the office's
14 findings and recommendations reported under section
15 411.01(10), Florida Statutes, as created by section 1, chapter
16 99-357, Laws of Florida. The office shall also:

17 (a) Monitor the study conducted by the State Board of
18 Education on the voluntary universal prekindergarten education
19 program;

20 (b) Evaluate the ability of the school readiness
21 system to effectively implement the voluntary universal
22 prekindergarten education program based upon the board's
23 recommendations of curriculum, design, and standards for the
24 program; and

25 (c) Identify modifications to the school readiness
26 system necessary to effectively implement the voluntary
27 universal prekindergarten education program.

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29 A report of the audit's findings and recommendations shall be
30 submitted to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and
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1 the Speaker of the House of Representatives by January 15,
2 2004.

3 (2) The Auditor General shall conduct a financial and
4 operational audit of the school readiness programs
5 administered by the Florida Partnership for School Readiness,
6 the Agency for Workforce Innovation, and the school readiness
7 coalitions for fiscal years 2000-2001, 2001-2002, and
8 2002-2003. The Auditor General shall also examine compliance
9 with state and federal law and with rules adopted by the
10 Florida Partnership for School Readiness and shall review
11 implementation of the school readiness plans for compliance
12 with the approved plans. A report of the audit's findings and
13 recommendations shall be submitted to the Governor, the
14 President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of
15 Representatives by January 15, 2004.

16 Section 3. This act shall take effect upon becoming a
17 law.

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19 STATEMENT OF SUBSTANTIAL CHANGES CONTAINED IN
20 COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR
21 CS/SB's 1334, SB 534, SB 360

22 The committee substitute combines CS/SB 1334, SB 534, and SB
23 360.

24 The committee substitute eliminates the requirement that the
25 Partnership for School Readiness and the local coalitions
26 administer the voluntary prekindergarten program.