

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. DOES THE BILL:

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|--|---|
| 1. Reduce government? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Lower taxes? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Expand individual freedom? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Increase personal responsibility? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Empower families? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

The bill broadens the eligibility category for children who receive state-funded prekindergarten programs to include all four-year-old children in Florida. This will have a significant fiscal impact on state expenditures. It will also require considerable oversight by the State Board of Education, Agency for Workforce Innovation, the Partnership for School Readiness, or such other entity as the Legislature may direct.

B. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

THE FLORIDA SCHOOL READINESS ACT

The Legislature created the Florida School Readiness Act ("Act") by enacting section 411.01, Florida Statutes (1999). The purpose of the Act was to create a more cohesive, efficient and integrated school readiness system and increase children's chances of achieving future educational success and becoming productive members of society. The system is supposed to provide developmentally appropriate educational services from birth to kindergarten to improve readiness for school and reduce academic failure.

The Act created the Florida Partnership for School Readiness as the statewide entity responsible for overall leadership and for coordinating programmatic, administrative and fiscal policies and standards relating to school readiness programs. The law also created local school readiness coalitions to oversee local services, separate from but coordinated with local school districts. Initially there were 57 coalitions. The Act also created a School Readiness Program Estimating Conference to annually forecast the number of children eligible for services. The emphasis of the Act is on providing readiness services to Florida's at-risk and economically disadvantaged children. In general, the program provides services to economically disadvantaged children from birth to kindergarten who are at risk of future academic failure, with priority being given to children at risk of abuse or neglect. The Partnership is housed under the Agency for Workforce Innovation for administrative purposes.

THE UNIVERSAL PRE-K AMENDMENT

In November 2002 the voters passed the Voluntary Universal Pre-Kindergarten Education amendment to the State Constitution. That amendment adds the following language to Article IX, Section 1:

(b) Every four-year old child in Florida shall be provided by the State a high quality pre-kindergarten learning opportunity in the form of an early childhood development and education program which shall be voluntary, high quality, free and delivered according to professionally accepted standards. An early childhood development and education program means an organized program designed to address and enhance each child's ability to make age appropriate progress in an appropriate range of settings in the development of language and cognitive capabilities and emotional, social regulatory and moral capacities

through education in basic skills and such other skills as the Legislature may determine to be appropriate.

(c) The early childhood education and development programs provided by reason of subparagraph (b) shall be implemented no later than the beginning of the 2005 school year through funds generated in addition to those used for existing education, health and development programs. Existing education, health and development programs are those funded by the State as of January 1, 2002 that provided for child or adult education, health care or development.

HOUSE BILL 193

The bill amends section 411.01, F.S., to require that school-based prekindergarten programs be available to all four-year-old children at no cost to their parents.

It also broadens the school readiness eligibility provisions of section 411.01(6) to include all four-year-old children in Florida.

The bill also provides an unspecified appropriation to the Agency for Workforce Innovation to implement these provisions.

C. SECTION DIRECTORY:

Section 1. Amends s. 411.01(5)(d) and 411.01(6), F.S., to make all four-year-old children eligible for prekindergarten programs.

Section 2. Appropriates nonspecified funds to the Agency for Workforce Innovation for implementation of the provisions of the bill.

Section 3. Provides that the bill shall take effect on July 1, 2003.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues: None.

2. Expenditures:

Revenue Estimating Conference

On June 27, 2002, the Revenue Estimating Conference determined that the estimated annual cost of the implementation of the universal prekindergarten program would be between \$425 million and \$650 million dollars. The Conference used the following assumptions in reaching this estimate:

Four-year-old population in 2005:	217,140
Participation Rate:	70%
Number of days in program:	180
Number of hours per day:	6
Cost per day, per child:	\$24.00
Children currently being served:	59,624

The \$425 million estimate assumes that funds currently being used to provide readiness services to eligible children will be used to offset the costs in 2005. If current funds are not used, as may be required by the constitutional amendment, the cost would be \$650 million.

Council for Education Policy, Research and Improvement (CEPRI)

CEPRI has determined that the annual estimated cost of providing universal prekindergarten programs will be \$395 million to \$651 million. CEPRI used the following assumptions in reaching this estimate:

Four-year-old population in 2005:	217,140
Participation Rate:	70%
Number of days in program:	180
Number of hours per day:	6
Annual cost per full-time equivalent child:	\$4,282
Children currently being served:	59,624

The \$395 million estimate assumes that current funds used for school readiness can be used to offset the costs in 2005. The \$651 estimate assumes that current funds cannot be used.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues: None.
2. Expenditures: None.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR: None.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

It is unclear what the Agency for Workforce Innovation may need in terms of an appropriation to administer the bill. The agency currently oversees the Partnership for School Readiness and serves as an administrative and budgetary umbrella for the Partnership. Since it currently performs this role through existing appropriations, it may not require additional funds to continue this activity.

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision: The bill does not affect any city or county.
2. Other: None.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY: None.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

The bill alternates between the use of "four-year-old" and "4-year-old" when referencing eligible children. This usage should be made consistent.

The bill also requires that prekindergarten programs be “school-based.” This language may be read to require services to be offered only through providers who meet the definition of a “school.” The Florida School Code defines a “school” as “an organization of students for instructional purposes on an elementary, middle or junior high school, secondary or high school, or other public school level authorized under rules of the State Board of Education.” § 1003.05(2), F.S. (2002). The constitutional amendment does not have this specific requirement. This language may exclude providers of quality prekindergarten services who offer those services outside of the traditional school delivery model.

IV. AMENDMENTS/COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES

Representative Barreiro offered a strike-everything amendment which was recommended favorably by the Subcommittee on Education Pre-K through 12. This analysis is drawn to the amendment as adopted. The amendment does the following:

The bill requires the State Board of Education, Office of Auditor General and Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability to perform a joint interim study of the school readiness program established by Section 411.01, F.S.

The purposes of the joint interim study are:

- To determine how best to restructure the existing school readiness program;
- To determine how to create the new constitutionally-required voluntary universal prekindergarten program for 4-year-olds; and
- To determine how to efficiently operate and fund both programs.

The bill requires the study to be completed by December 31, 2003 and reported to the Governor, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.