



HB 0193

2003
CS

CHAMBER ACTION

Committee on Education K-20 recommends the following:

Committee Substitute

Remove the entire bill and insert:

A bill to be entitled

An act relating to school readiness; providing legislative findings and purpose; requiring a joint interim study to make recommendations with respect to restructuring the existing school readiness program and creating the new constitutionally required voluntary universal prekindergarten program; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Legislative findings and purpose.--

(1) LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS.--

(a) The Legislature finds:

1. In 1999, the Legislature created s. 411.01, Florida Statutes, the "School Readiness Act," and expressed legislative intent in s. 411.01(2), Florida Statutes, to provide for an integrated and seamless system of school readiness for the state's at-risk and economically disadvantaged birth-to-



HB 0193

2003
CS

28 kindergarten children, a system coordinated with, but separate
29 from, the state's public school system.

30 2. The focus of the new school readiness program was
31 intended to be appropriate early education, not child care. All
32 programs receiving public funds for school readiness programs
33 were charged with transitioning to the education focus. A
34 statewide board, the Florida Partnership for School Readiness,
35 and local school readiness coalitions were directed to
36 accomplish the intent of the new system.

37 (b) Due to a variety of reasons, the School Readiness Act
38 has failed to be fully implemented in the 4 years since its
39 enactment, as noted in the Office of Program Policy Analysis and
40 Government Accountability report #02-07, entitled "School
41 Readiness Program's Potential Not Realized with Critical Issues
42 Unresolved."

43 (c) Furthermore, there have been indications of
44 inefficiencies, waste of taxpayer dollars at both the state and
45 local levels, and instances of ineligible children being served
46 while eligible children were turned away.

47 (d) In the November 2002 General Election, the voters
48 amended the State Constitution to require, no later than the
49 beginning of the 2005 school year, voluntary universal
50 prekindergarten education for the state's 4-year-old children.
51 The State Constitution includes no eligibility requirements for
52 4-year-old children to participate in the new voluntary
53 universal prekindergarten program. However, the constitutional
54 language stipulates that the new voluntary universal



HB 0193

2003
CS

55 prekindergarten program shall not be funded with funds from any
56 existing education, health, or development program.

57 (e) The 1999 School Readiness Act must now be revisited as
58 part of the process of determining how best to establish and
59 fund the new voluntary universal prekindergarten program for 4-
60 year-old children.

61 (2) LEGISLATIVE PURPOSE.--It is the purpose of the
62 Legislature to:

63 (a) Require, in accordance with provisions and timeframes
64 of this act, a joint interim school readiness study conducted by
65 the State Board of Education, the Office of Program Policy
66 Analysis and Government Accountability, and the Auditor General
67 to assist the Legislature in determining how best to restructure
68 the existing school readiness program, create the new
69 constitutionally required voluntary universal prekindergarten
70 program for 4-year-old children, and efficiently operate and
71 fund both programs.

72 (b) Reexamine the state and local governance structure of
73 the existing school readiness program and prescribe a governance
74 structure that will reduce system bureaucracy; eliminate waste,
75 inefficiency, and duplication; and identify and eliminate
76 obstacles to effective and efficient governance, service
77 delivery, and funding.

78 (c) Prescribe best practices for accomplishing the
79 original legislative intent for the existing school readiness
80 program and for establishing the new voluntary universal
81 prekindergarten program for 4-year-old children in a manner that
82 emphasizes instruction for 4-year-old children in the areas of



HB 0193

2003
CS

83 language, cognitive, and early reading development, based on
84 scientific research and proven instructional and outcome-based
85 assessment practices, so that all 4-year-old children who
86 participate in either program enter school ready to succeed.
87 This should include a recommendation as to the optimal number of
88 hours per day and days per year for voluntary universal
89 prekindergarten education.

90 (d) Prescribe best practices for funding the new voluntary
91 universal prekindergarten program for 4-year-old children in a
92 manner that maximizes the benefit of taxpayer dollars expended
93 on the education of children rather than on system bureaucracy.

94 (e) Assess accountability of school readiness funding
95 based on an audit of funds that have been appropriated by the
96 Legislature for the Florida Partnership for School Readiness for
97 the 2000-2001, 2001-2002, and 2002-2003 fiscal years and the
98 existing school readiness program at the local level for the
99 2001-2002 and 2002-2003 fiscal years. Audit objectives must
100 include a determination of the extent that management controls
101 promoted the achievement of management objectives relating to
102 compliance with controlling laws, rules, and other guidelines;
103 efficient and effective operations; reliability of financial
104 records and reports; and safeguarding of assets. The audit must
105 include, but not be limited to, an identification of waste,
106 inefficiency, and instances of ineligible children being served
107 while eligible children remained on waiting lists. The audit
108 must also include a review of expenditures by the Agency for
109 Workforce Innovation on behalf of the school readiness program.



HB 0193

2003
CS

110 (f) Prescribe a new funding formula for the existing
111 school readiness program that is based on equity for all
112 children eligible for the program and that rewards outcome-based
113 performance.

114 Section 2. Joint interim school readiness study.--The
115 State Board of Education, the Office of Program Policy Analysis
116 and Government Accountability, and the Office of the Auditor
117 General shall collaborate to conduct a joint interim school
118 readiness study to provide the Legislature with findings and
119 recommendations in accordance with the findings, purpose, and
120 requirements of this act.

121 (1) The State Board of Education shall identify best
122 practices in accordance with section 1(2)(a) and (c) of this act
123 and shall report its findings to the Governor, the President of
124 the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives no
125 later than October 1, 2003. Best practices shall be based on
126 recommendations of the Florida Center for Reading Research and
127 the reading office of the Department of Education. Best
128 practices must recognize flexibility but must be based on the
129 framework of appropriate scientific research in language and
130 vocabulary skills, phonological awareness, and alphabetic
131 knowledge. Best practices must include a full spectrum of
132 parental choice options among public, private, and faith-based
133 providers, but shall not include the option of offering any
134 existing school readiness program or new voluntary universal
135 prekindergarten program in a school designated as a performance
136 grade category "D" or "F."



HB 0193

2003
CS

137 (2) The Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government
138 Accountability shall reexamine the existing school readiness
139 program and governance structure in accordance with section
140 1(2)(a) and (b) of this act; identify best practices for funding
141 the new voluntary universal prekindergarten program in
142 accordance with section 1(2)(a) and (d) of this act; recommend a
143 new funding formula for the existing school readiness program in
144 accordance with section 1(2)(a) and (f) of this act; and report
145 its findings and recommendations to the Governor, the President
146 of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives
147 no later than January 15, 2004.

148 (3) The Auditor General shall conduct an audit in
149 accordance with the requirements of section 1(2)(a) and (e) of
150 this act and shall include audit procedures as determined
151 necessary by the Auditor General; collaborate with the Office of
152 Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability to
153 identify best practices for funding the new voluntary universal
154 prekindergarten program in accordance with section 1(2)(a) and
155 (d) of this act; collaborate, based on the audit performed in
156 accordance with section 1(2)(a) and (e) of this act and other
157 audit results, with the Office of Program Policy Analysis and
158 Government Accountability to recommend a new funding formula for
159 the existing school readiness program in accordance with section
160 1(2)(a) and (f) of this act; and report its findings and
161 recommendations to the Governor, the President of the Senate,
162 and the Speaker of the House of Representatives no later than
163 January 15, 2004.



HB 0193

2003
CS

164 | Section 3. This act shall take effect upon becoming a
165 | law.