

1 A bill to be entitled
 2 An act relating to children in foster care; providing for
 3 the creation of the Community Advisory Panel on Foster
 4 Care Pilot Program in Duval County; providing purposes and
 5 goals; providing for administration of the program by
 6 community-based care; providing for hiring personnel;
 7 creating the Community Advisory Panel on Foster Care;
 8 providing for panel membership; providing for a
 9 chairperson; providing duties of specified county judges,
 10 the personnel, and the panel; requiring research to
 11 determine the effectiveness of the program; requiring an
 12 annual report to the court and to legislative leaders;
 13 providing for future expiration of the pilot program;
 14 providing an appropriation; providing an effective date.

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

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 18 Section 1. Community Advisory Panel on Foster Care Pilot
 19 Program; creation; purpose; administration; panel membership;
 20 duties of court and panel; evaluation.--

21 (1) There is created the Community Advisory Panel on
 22 Foster Care Pilot Program in Duval County. The purpose of the
 23 program is to identify educational needs and followup strategies
 24 for foster children who are 6 through 12 years of age and are
 25 enrolled in the Duval County school system. The goal of the
 26 program is to ensure that youth who are in foster care will be
 27 tested appropriately and placed in an educational environment
 28 that optimizes their opportunities for success.

29 (2) The community-based care (CBC) shall administer the
30 pilot program. The CBC shall employ a full-time project
31 coordinator who shall assist the student's case manager in
32 identifying resources for such assessment and treatment. The CBC
33 shall also employ a full-time psychologist who will provide
34 advice, research, assessments, and other services to the judges
35 and to foster children and their families.

36 (3) The chief judge for the Fourth Judicial Circuit or his
37 or her designee shall create the Community Advisory Panel on
38 Foster Care, which will consist of 15 community volunteers who
39 are community leaders that have diverse areas of expertise and
40 talent. The chief judge who is responsible for dependency and
41 adoption in the Fourth Judicial Circuit or his or her designee
42 shall appoint four members of the panel; the Department of
43 Children and Family Services shall appoint four members; the
44 county school board shall appoint four members; and the guardian
45 ad litem for Duval County shall appoint three members. The judge
46 shall chair the panel.

47 (4) The judge may issue orders and obtain educational
48 information relating to students who are 6 to 12 years of age
49 and are in the foster care system in District IV of the
50 department. The panel shall review the academic progress,
51 behavioral issues, and attendance of each student and shall
52 recommend referral of any student for whom the review
53 demonstrates a need for followup services. The panel may
54 prioritize referrals by assessing the severity of need and
55 recommending that the most critical needs be met first. A
56 student who is failing must be referred for educational testing,

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57 for additional psychological and therapeutic counseling as
58 recommended, or for both, to determine why he or she is failing
59 and what accommodations and remediation are needed.

60 (5) The project coordinator shall oversee the development
61 of a research component, or assessment tool, that is designed to
62 determine the effectiveness of the pilot program.

63 (a) The research data must be set up to link systems among
64 providers of educational services, psychological services, case
65 management, and the court system.

66 (b) The entity that designs the assessment tool must,
67 during the first year of the pilot program, undertake the
68 following tasks:

69 1. Discovery. This phase includes meeting with information
70 technology staff from the department, school board staff, and
71 caseworkers.

72 2. Development. This phase consists of determining the
73 best method for data entry, the best database, and the best data
74 format.

75 3. Implementation. This phase comprises completing,
76 testing, and delivering the assessment tool.

77 4. Maintenance. This phase involves developing a
78 maintenance plan and schedule, after the initiation of the
79 assessment methodology.

80 (6) The project coordinator shall submit an annual report
81 to the court and to the President of the Senate and the Speaker
82 of the House of Representatives.

83 (7) The pilot program expires on July 1, 2009.

84 Section 2. The sum of \$300,000 is appropriated from the

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85 General Revenue Fund to the Fourth Circuit Court in Duval County
86 for the 2006-2007 fiscal year, to be used in implementing the
87 Community Advisory Panel on Foster Care Pilot Program created in
88 section 1 of this act.

89 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2006.