

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

BILL #: HB 291 Florida School Recognition Program
SPONSOR(S): Bean and others
TIED BILLS: **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:** SB 500 Identical

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR
1) PreK-12 Committee		Beagle	Mizereck
2) Education Appropriations Committee			
3) Education Council			
4) _____			
5) _____			

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

House Bill 291 requires that each ungraded K-3 school be assigned the school grade of its feeder pattern school, as designated by the Department of Education (DOE) and verified by the school district. Under the provisions of the bill, the K-3 schools would be eligible to participate in the Florida School Recognition Program and students served by these schools may become eligible for the Opportunity Scholarship Program.

The bill sets an effective date of July 1, 2006.

The bill will have a neutral fiscal impact. Please see FISCAL COMMENTS section.

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. HOUSE PRINCIPLES ANALYSIS:

Promote Personal Responsibility-- The bill enables previously ungraded K-3 schools to receive performance-based awards through the School Recognition Program.

Empower Families-- The bill increases the number of schools that receive school grades, potentially increasing the number of students becoming eligible for Opportunity Scholarships.

B. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

The Florida School Recognition Program¹ provides financial awards to public schools as a reward for performance. Schools that maintain a grade of "A" or improve one letter grade receive an amount per student as determined in the General Appropriations Act. In Fiscal Year 2004-05, schools received \$100 per student for a total of \$117.2 million in School Recognition awards.

Currently, schools serving any combination of students in grades kindergarten through grade 3 do not receive a school grade because students in grades K-2 do not take the FCAT, and learning gains cannot be calculated with only grade 3 data. Ungraded K-3 schools are not eligible for the Florida School Recognition program. Likewise, students served by ungraded K-3 schools are not eligible for Opportunity Scholarships.

The bill requires that an ungraded K-3 school receive the school grade designation of its feeder pattern school if a feeder pattern can be designated by the DOE and verified by the school district. A feeder pattern exists if at least 60 percent of the students in the ungraded K-3 school progress to the graded school. This provision enables such schools to receive a school grade designation and qualify for the Florida School Recognition Program. The bill makes students served by these schools eligible to receive Opportunity Scholarships if the feeder pattern school receives a school grade of "F" twice in a four year period.

C. SECTION DIRECTORY:

Section 1: Amends s. 1008.36, F.S., to provide school grades for certain K-3 schools and establish eligibility for the School Recognition and Opportunity Scholarship Programs.

Section 2: Provides an effective date of July 1, 2006.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

This bill does not appear to have a fiscal impact on state government revenues.

2. Expenditures:

Please see the FISCALCOMMENTS section.

¹ Section 1008.36, F.S.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

This bill does not appear to have a fiscal impact on local government revenues.

2. Expenditures:

This bill does not appear to have a fiscal impact on local government expenditures.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

This bill does not appear to have a direct economic impact on the private sector.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

Adding ungraded K-3 schools to the School Recognition Program will shift discretionary lottery dollars from school districts to school-based awards. Currently, 62% of graded elementary schools receive school recognition awards. There are presently 102 ungraded K-3 schools serving 12,404 K-3 students. The DOE estimates a potential fiscal impact of \$769,048 [12,404 students x 62% x \$100 = \$769,048].²

According to the DOE, there are currently no K-3 schools that qualify for the Opportunity Scholarship Program under this bill.

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

The bill does not require local governments to take any action because there is no requirement to use local funding.

2. Other:

None.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

None.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

The DOE expressed concern that the bill might be interpreted to exclude certain schools that serve both K-3 students and pre-kindergarten students or schools serving only grades 2 through 3. The bill could be amended to clarify that any ungraded school serving students at any of these grade levels, whether singularly or in combination with one another, are eligible to receive school grades.³

The bill could also be amended to clarify the timing for Opportunity Scholarship Program eligibility for the previously ungraded K-3 schools. For example, the Legislature may wish to specify that the eligibility would not retroactively apply.

² Florida Department of Education, 2006 Legislative Bill Analysis for HB 291, dated November, 18, 2005.

³ Id.

IV. AMENDMENTS/COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE & COMBINED BILL CHANGES