

The Florida Senate
HOUSE MESSAGE SUMMARY

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Education Pre-K - 12 Committee

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BILL: CS/CS/SB 1652

INTRODUCER: Education Pre-K-12 Appropriations Committee, Education Pre-K-12 Committee,
and Senator Gaetz

SUBJECT: Charter School Accountability

DATE: April 30, 2008

I. Amendments Contained in Message:

House Amendment 1- 784459 to CS/CS/SB 1652 (body with title)

II. Summary of Amendments Contained in Message:

House Amendment 1 narrows the grounds for determining the need for a charter school financial recovery plan by excluding an unreserved or total fund balance or retained earnings deficit, or unrestricted or total net assets deficit. The amendment also provides for the following:

- Permits personnel in privately operated schools to supervise a relative, if a waiver is granted by the Commissioner of Education;
- Requires a 15-year charter renewal under certain circumstances;
- Provides that having an unreserved or total fund balance or retained earnings deficit, or unrestricted or total net assets deficit is not grounds for terminating a charter;
- Provides for an application for exclusivity every four years, beginning in FY 2008-2009;
- Provides that a decision to grant or deny exclusivity would last for four fiscal years;
- Removes the requirement that exclusivity status is contingent upon compliance with the charter school law;
- Requires a district to make surplus or unused property and facilities available to charter schools within the district for lease or sale within 45 days and prohibits the sale or lease of the property without prior permission of the district;
- Provides that any student must be allowed an interdistrict transfer to attend a charter school, based on good cause;
- Provides when charter schools must receive state FEFP funds and funds under the federal school lunch program and IDEA; and
- Expands the use of charter school capital outlay funds to include any purpose in s. 1011.72(2), F.S. (two-mill funds).

The amendment provides that the class size calculation is the average for the grade grouping at the school level for charter schools and charter school technical career centers. This means that the compliance for class size reduction for charter schools will always be at the school level. This puts the charter schools at a 20-30 percent funding advantage over traditional public schools.