

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

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

BILL: SB 642

INTRODUCER: Senator Siplin

SUBJECT: School/Multiple Birth Siblings/Classroom Placement

DATE: April 8, 2008

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	deMarsh-Mathues	Matthews	ED	Favorable
2.	Armstrong	Hamon	EA	Favorable
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____

I. Summary:

The bill provides for parents to request the placement of multiple birth siblings in the same or separate classrooms in the same grade level. A school must grant the parent's request unless the student's performance indicates otherwise or if it would require the district to add another class to the students' grade level. The bill provides for a principal to change the student's placement if his or her behavior is disruptive to the school. A parent may appeal the principal's decision.

The bill specifies that these provisions do not apply to the rights or obligations of students with disabilities or the removal of students pursuant to disciplinary policies.

This bill creates section 1003.06 of the Florida Statutes.

II. Present Situation:

Multiple-birth siblings include twins, triplets, quadruplets, or quintuplets. The rate of multiple births rose substantially in the 1980s and 1990s in the United States.¹ From 1980–1997, the twin birth rate increased 42 percent, whereas the triplet and higher order multiple-birth rate increased fivefold. Although the triplet and higher order birth rate seems to have stabilized in the past few years, the rate for twins continues to increase.² The twin birth rate rose by two percent in 2004, a

¹ Joyce A. Martin and Melissa M. Park. *Trends in twin and triplet births: 1980–97*. National Vital Statistics Report; Vol. 47, No. 24.

² *Id.*

record high.³ In contrast, the rate of triplet and higher order multiple births declined by six percent in 2004. The current year level is nine percent lower than the 1998 peak.⁴

Among the considerations in making a decision related to the placement of twins or other multiple-birth siblings in the same classroom or in a different classroom are the following:⁵

- Frequent comparisons of the siblings;
- How separation would affect siblings;
- Stresses within the family or if there are health concerns for one or more of the siblings;
- School-age siblings' preferences about separation; and
- Parental preferences.

Additional considerations include a flexible placement policy throughout the early elementary years and a consistent approach to instruction and classroom management when siblings are in different classrooms.⁶

In 2005, the Minnesota Legislature enacted legislation to permit parents of multiple-birth siblings to be placed in the same or separate classrooms. The Virginia Legislature is currently considering a similar measure (HB 722, 2008).

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill allows the parents of multiple birth siblings who are assigned to the same grade level and school to request that the school place the siblings either in the same or separate classrooms.⁷ With two exceptions, the school must grant the parent's request for classroom placement. The exceptions to the parent's request are based on student performance or a requirement for the district to add another class to the students' grade level. Presumably, a parent's placement request can be denied based upon the siblings' academic performance, although it is not explicit or clear.

The principal may change the placement of the students if, at the end of the first grading period, he or she consults with the students' teachers and determines that the placement is disruptive to the school. A parent may appeal the principal's decision, as provided for in school district policy, and the students would remain in their classroom until a decision is made.

The provisions of the bill do not apply to individual placement decisions of the school district for students with disabilities under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)⁸

³ Donna M. Strobino, and Bernard Guyer, Brady E. Hamilton., Arialdi M. Miniño., Joyce A. Martin, Kenneth D. Kochanek., *Annual Summary of Vital Statistics: 2005*, Pediatrics , Vol. 119; No. 2, 2007.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ Ron Banks, *Classroom Placement of Twins*, Clearinghouse on Early Education and Parenting, Early Childhood and Parenting Collaborative, University of Illinois, 2004. See <http://ceep.crc.uiuc.edu/poptopics/twins.html>

⁶ *Id.* See also Heather M. Beauchamp and Lawrence J. Brooks, Jr., *The Perceptions, Policy, and Practice of Educating Twins: A Review*, Psychology in the Schools, Vol. 40, July 2003.

⁷ The bill defines multiple birth siblings as twins, triplets, quadruplets, or other siblings resulting from a multiple birth.

⁸ Federal law (20 U.S.C. § 1400) specifically provides for placement decisions for a student with a disability.

or for students who are removed from the classroom according to school district disciplinary policies.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

There may be some additional administrative effort associated with the placement of students relating to teacher assignment, course offerings, or class size; however, this workload is expected to have an insignificant fiscal impact.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Additional Information:

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.

This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.
