

## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

**BILL #:** CS/CS/CS/HB 803 Jump Start Literacy Pilot Project

**SPONSOR(S):** Education Committee; Education Appropriations Subcommittee, Choice & Innovation Subcommittee, Lee, Jr.

**TIED BILLS:** **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:** SB 1034

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR or BUDGET/POLICY CHIEF
1) Choice & Innovation Subcommittee	12 Y, 0 N, As CS	Ammel	Fudge
2) Education Appropriations Subcommittee	12 Y, 0 N, As CS	Seifert	Heflin
3) Education Committee	18 Y, 0 N, As CS	Ammel	Mizereck

### SUMMARY ANALYSIS

The bill requires the Department of Education (DOE) to establish a 5-year Literacy Jump Start Pilot Project in St. Lucie County to assist low-income, at-risk children in developing emergent literacy skills. The DOE, in consultation with the Early Learning Coalition of St. Lucie County shall select one or more municipalities to participate in the project. The DOE must seek partnerships with local nonprofit organizations and the business community to implement the project. The bill:

- Provides a definition for “emergent literacy”.
- Defines child eligibility.
- Requires background and fingerprint screening for employees and volunteers participating in the pilot project.
- Requires instructors in the project to complete an emergent literacy training course approved by DOE.
- Requires the DOE to select a local organization to implement the pilot project and provides criteria the organization must meet in order to be selected.
- Requires the instruction to be conducted in a subsidized housing unit to provide easy access for participating children and families.
- Encourages the organization selected to implement the pilot project to coordinate with the St. Lucie County Health Department for the provision of basic health screening and immunization.
- Requires the organization to submit an annual accountability report to the Office of Early Learning, the St. Lucie County Early Learning Coalition, the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.
- Requires the selected organization to verify expenditures to the DOE by affidavit.

Specific Appropriation 103 of House Bill 5001 includes \$110,000 for the Literacy Jump Start Pilot Project.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2013.

## FULL ANALYSIS

### I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

#### A. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

##### Present Situation

Florida's Office of Early Learning (OEL) is the lead agency for administration of the federal Child Care and Development Block Grant Trust Fund, 45 C.F.R. parts 98 and 99 in Florida and must comply with the lead agency responsibilities under those sections.<sup>1</sup> The OEL is responsible for administering school readiness programs at the state level and must coordinate with the early learning coalitions in providing school readiness services on a full-day, full-year, full-choice basis to the extent possible in order to enable parents to work and be financially self-sufficient.<sup>2</sup>

The OEL provides funding and oversight to the School Readiness Program through the Early Learning Coalition of St. Lucie County. School Readiness services are offered by private schools, public schools, faith-based, profit and non-profit providers. The coalition determines a family's eligibility for School Readiness services, by considering several factors including verification of child age, residency, family income, purpose of care (work/education activities), whether children are at risk of abuse or neglect, and at risk of future school failure. OEL must follow specified criteria for prioritizing participants for the School Readiness Program.<sup>3</sup> The coalition currently partners with local non-profits and private businesses to administer early learning programs. Some individuals representing these entities may serve on the early learning coalition board. The coalition also verifies required instructor credentials and training, and monitors early learning provider sites.<sup>4</sup>

The Office of Early Learning is administratively housed within the Department of Education per s. 20.15(2)(h), Florida Statutes.

##### Effect of Proposed Changes

The bill requires the Department of Education (DOE) to:

- Establish the 5-year Literacy Jump Start Pilot Project in St. Lucie County.
- Select a local organization located in St. Lucie County to implement the pilot project.
- Consult with the Early Learning Coalition of St. Lucie County to select municipalities in St. Lucie County eligible for participation in the pilot project.
- Allocate funds for implementation of the pilot project.

A municipality within which locally or federally subsidized housing is located is eligible for participation in the pilot project.

The bill provides specific criteria an organization must meet in order to be selected by the DOE to implement the pilot project. The organization must:

- Be located in St. Lucie County;
- Be a not-for-profit corporation qualified as charitable under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code; and
- Provide training to parents to assist their children with success in school.

The bill identifies the Parents Academy of St. Lucie County as an example of a qualifying organization. The bill also provides that the Office of Early Learning shall oversee implementation of the project.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 411.01(4)(c), F.S.

<sup>2</sup> Section 411.01(4)(a), F.S.

<sup>3</sup> Section 411.01(6), F.S.

<sup>4</sup> Florida Department of Education 2013 Bill Analysis for HB 803

Instructors in the pilot project must have successfully completed an emergent literacy training course approved by the office. Further, the organization may not receive funds until it certifies in writing to the Office of Early Learning, subject to confirmation by the Office, that all of its volunteers, instructors, and noninstructional personnel who make direct contact with participating children have undergone level 2 background screening, which includes fingerprinting. The emergent literacy instruction must be conducted in a subsidized housing unit in order to provide easy access for participating children and families.

To participate in the pilot project a child must be:

- Two or 3 years of age
- Eligible for a federally subsidized child care program
- A member of a family that is economically disadvantaged and reside in locally or federally subsidized housing.

The bill provides the following definitions:

- “Economically disadvantaged” means having a family income that does not exceed 150 percent of the federal poverty level.
- “Emergent literacy” means a variety of early behaviors and skills associated with successful reading and writing development during the first 5 years of life that contribute to a child’s foundations for literacy and learning and future success in school and life.

The bill encourages the organization implementing the pilot project to coordinate with the St. Lucie County Health Department for the provision of basic health screening and immunization services for children participating in the pilot project in conjunction with emergent literacy instruction. It also encourages the organization to engage in community outreach efforts to local community service organizations for the purpose of improving the availability and effective delivery of emergent literacy instruction.

The bill requires the organization selected to implement the pilot project to annually submit an accountability report to the Office of Early Learning, the Early Learning Coalition of St. Lucie County, the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives. The report must include, at minimum, the following information:

- The manner in which all state funds received by the organization are used to implement the pilot project, separated by type of expenditure and measured in exact dollar amounts;
- Other sources of funding received by the organization for purposes of providing emergent literacy instruction;
- The municipalities selected by the organization for participation in the pilot project;
- The identities of the organization’s corporate officers;
- The number of children receiving emergent literacy instruction in each municipality; and
- Information and data relating to coordinated health screening and immunization services provided in conjunction with the emergent literacy instruction, if any.

The bill requires the organization to verify its expenditures of state funds for implementation of the pilot project to DOE by affidavit. The format of the affidavit and the procedure of submission are to be determined by the DOE.

## B. SECTION DIRECTORY:

**Section 1.** Creates an unnumbered section of law; requiring the Department of Education to establish the pilot project in St. Lucie County to assist low-income, at-risk children in developing emergent literacy skills; providing eligibility requirements for participation; requiring background screening for instructors, volunteers, and noninstructional personnel who make direct contact with children; requiring emergent literacy training for instructors; encouraging the coordination of basic health screening and immunization services in conjunction with emergent literacy instruction; requiring annual submission of an accountability report; requiring the department to allocate funds for the pilot project; requiring for the verification of expenditures by affidavit.

**Section 2.** Provides an effective date of July 1, 2013.

## **II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT**

### **A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:**

1. Revenues:

None.

Expenditures:

None.

### **B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:**

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

### **C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:**

None.

### **D. FISCAL COMMENTS:**

Specific Appropriation 103 of House Bill 5001 includes \$110,000 for the Literacy Jump Start Pilot Project.

## **III. COMMENTS**

### **A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:**

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

This bill does not appear to require a city or county to expend funds or to take any action requiring the expenditure of funds.

The bill does not appear to reduce the authority that municipalities or counties have to raise revenues in the aggregate.

This bill does not appear to reduce the percentage of state tax shared with counties or municipalities.

2. Other:

None.

### **B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:**

None.

### **C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:**

None.

#### **IV. AMENDMENTS/ COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES**

On March 20, 2013, the Choice & Innovation Subcommittee reported HB 803 favorably as a committee substitute. There was one amendment to the bill that:

- clarified that the statewide Office of Early Learning was required to administer the program, not the Office of Early Learning within the Department of Education, and
- renamed the program to Literacy Jump Start so it is not confused with the national Jumpstart Program.

On April 4, 2013, the Education Appropriations Subcommittee reported CS/HB 803 favorably with one amendment. The amendment clarifies the Department of Education, as the agency, to issue the grant since the statewide Office of Early Learning is administratively housed within the Department of Education.

On April 9, 2013, the Education Committee adopted a strike-all amendment and reported CS/CS/HB 803 favorably as a committee substitute. The strike-all amendment changed the bill by:

- Providing that the Office of Early Learning will oversee implementation of the project;
- Requiring the DOE to select a local organization to implement the pilot project;
- Providing criteria the organization must meet in order to be selected by the DOE;
- Requiring level 2 background screening of the organization's employees and volunteers who make direct contact with children participating in the pilot project;
- Encouraging the organization to coordinate with the St. Lucie County Health Department for the provision of basic health screening and immunization services in conjunction with emergent literacy instruction;
- Encouraging the organization to reach out to community service organizations for the purpose of improving the availability and effective delivery of emergent literacy instruction;
- Requiring the organization to annually submit an accountability report and requiring certain minimum information to be included in the report; and
- Requiring expenditures of state funds for the purpose of implementing the pilot project to be verified by affidavit.

This analysis is drafted to committee substitute passed by the Education Committee.