

By Senator Bullard

39-01367-14

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to the Literacy Jump Start Pilot
3 Project; requiring the Department of Education to
4 establish the pilot project in St. Lucie County to
5 assist low-income, at-risk children in developing
6 emergent literacy skills; requiring the department to
7 select an organization to implement the pilot project;
8 requiring the Office of Early Learning to oversee
9 implementation of the pilot project; providing
10 eligibility requirements for participation; requiring
11 background screening for instructors, volunteers, and
12 noninstructional personnel who make direct contact
13 with children; requiring emergent literacy training
14 for instructors; encouraging the coordination of basic
15 health screening and immunization services in
16 conjunction with emergent literacy instruction;
17 requiring annual submission of an accountability
18 report; requiring the department to allocate funds for
19 the pilot project; providing an effective date.

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

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23 Section 1. (1) The Department of Education shall establish
24 the 5-year Literacy Jump Start Pilot Project in St. Lucie County
25 to assist low-income, at-risk children in developing emergent
26 literacy skills.

27 (a) The department shall consult with local organizations
28 within St. Lucie County and identify an organization to
29 implement the pilot project. The department shall also consult

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30 with the Early Learning Coalition of St. Lucie County to select
31 municipalities within St. Lucie County eligible for
32 participation in the pilot project. The Office of Early Learning
33 shall oversee the implementation of the pilot project.

34 (b) A municipality is eligible for participation in the
35 pilot project if locally or federally subsidized housing is
36 located within the municipality.

37 (c) The department shall select to implement the pilot
38 project a local organization that is a not-for-profit
39 corporation, qualified as charitable under s. 501(c)(3) of the
40 Internal Revenue Code, that provides training to parents to
41 assist their children with success in school, such as the Parent
42 Academy of St. Lucie County or another similarly qualified local
43 organization. The department may select a faith-based
44 organization; however, funds provided for the purpose of
45 implementing the pilot project may be used for only those
46 purposes expressly provided in this section and may not be used
47 for the purpose of religious indoctrination.

48 (2) The organization selected by the department must use
49 funds provided for the pilot project only to provide emergent
50 literacy instruction to children. In order to provide easy
51 access for participating children and families, the instruction
52 must be provided in a subsidized housing unit located within an
53 eligible municipality selected by the department.

54 (3) As used in this section, the term "emergent literacy"
55 means a variety of early behaviors and skills associated with
56 successful reading and writing development.

57 (4) A child is eligible to receive emergent literacy
58 instruction provided through the pilot project only if the child

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59 is:60 (a) Two or 3 years of age;61 (b) Eligible for a federally subsidized child care program;62 and63 (c) A member of a family that is economically disadvantaged
64 and resides in locally or federally subsidized housing. For
65 purposes of this paragraph, "economically disadvantaged" means
66 having a family income that does not exceed 150 percent of the
67 federal poverty level.68 (5) The organization selected by the department may not
69 receive any funds from the state for purposes of implementing
70 the pilot project until the Office of Early Learning receives
71 written certification from the organization and confirms that
72 all of the organization's volunteers, instructors, and
73 noninstructional personnel who make direct contact with children
74 have cleared level 2 background screening pursuant to s. 435.04,
75 Florida Statutes, within 5 years before implementation of the
76 pilot project. The organization shall require volunteers and
77 applicants for employment as instructors or noninstructional
78 personnel who make direct contact with children participating in
79 the pilot project to undergo level 2 background screening
80 pursuant to s. 435.04, Florida Statutes, prior to hiring the
81 applicant or allowing the volunteer to participate in the pilot
82 project. The organization may not use state funds provided to
83 implement the pilot project to pay for background screening.84 (6) An instructor in the pilot project must successfully
85 complete an emergent literacy training course, approved by the
86 department, prior to providing emergent literacy instruction
87 under this section.

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88 (7) The organization is encouraged to coordinate with the
89 St. Lucie County Health Department for the provision of basic
90 health screening and immunization services for children
91 participating in the pilot project in conjunction with emergent
92 literacy instruction. The organization is further encouraged to
93 engage in community outreach efforts to local community service
94 organizations for the purpose of improving the availability and
95 effective delivery of emergent literacy instruction.

96 (8) By December 31 of each year that the organization
97 provides emergent literacy instruction, the organization shall
98 submit an accountability report to the Office of Early Learning,
99 the Early Learning Coalition of St. Lucie County, the Governor,
100 the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of
101 Representatives. The accountability report must include, at
102 minimum, the following information:

103 (a) The manner in which all state funds received by the
104 organization are used to implement the pilot project, separated
105 by type of expenditure and measured in exact dollar amounts.

106 (b) Other sources of funding received by the organization
107 for purposes of providing emergent literacy instruction.

108 (c) The municipalities selected by the department for
109 participation in the pilot project.

110 (d) The identities of the organization's officers.

111 (e) The number of children receiving emergent literacy
112 instruction in each municipality.

113 (f) Information and data relating to coordinated health
114 screening and immunization services provided in conjunction with
115 the emergent literacy instruction, if any.

116 (9) The department shall allocate funds for implementation

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117 of the pilot project pursuant to this section. Expenditures of
118 state funds pursuant to this section must be verified by
119 affidavit submitted to the department in a procedure and format
120 determined by the department.

121 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2014.