

1                   A bill to be entitled  
2           An act relating to funding for the school readiness  
3           program; amending s. 1002.89, F.S.; deleting a  
4           requirement that specified funds be used to increase  
5           the number of children served; conforming provisions  
6           and cross-references to changes made by the act;  
7           creating s. 1002.90, F.S.; requiring the Division of  
8           Early Learning to conduct the School Readiness Funding  
9           Formula Allocation Conference before the distribution  
10          of certain funds for the school readiness program;  
11          specifying conference principals; requiring conference  
12          principals to discuss and approve specified  
13          conventions for calculating the school readiness  
14          funding formula; requiring such conventions to remain  
15          in effect until a specified time; requiring the  
16          division to provide conference principals with  
17          specified data; providing requirements for such data;  
18          amending ss. 1002.81 and 1002.82, F.S.; conforming  
19          cross-references to changes made by the act; providing  
20          an effective date.

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

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24           Section 1. Subsections (4) through (6) of section 1002.89,  
25   Florida Statutes, are renumbered as subsections (3) through (5),

26 | respectively, and subsections (1) and (3) and present subsection  
 27 | (5) of that section are amended to read:

28 |       1002.89 School readiness program; funding.—

29 |       (1) Funding for the school readiness program shall be  
 30 | allocated among the early learning coalitions in accordance with  
 31 | ~~this section and~~ the General Appropriations Act and s. 1002.90.

32 |       ~~(3) All cost savings and all revenues received through a~~  
 33 | ~~mandatory sliding fee scale shall be used to increase the number~~  
 34 | ~~of children served.~~

35 |       (4)~~(5)~~ Costs shall be kept to the minimum necessary for  
 36 | the efficient and effective administration of the school  
 37 | readiness program with the highest priority of expenditure being  
 38 | direct services for eligible children. However, no more than 5  
 39 | percent of ~~the funds described in subsection (4)~~ may be used for  
 40 | administrative costs and no more than 22 percent of ~~the funds~~  
 41 | ~~described in subsection (4)~~ may be used in any fiscal year for  
 42 | any combination of administrative costs, quality activities, and  
 43 | nondirect services as follows:

44 |       (a) Administrative costs as described in 45 C.F.R. s.  
 45 | 98.54, which shall include monitoring providers using the  
 46 | standard methodology adopted under s. 1002.82 to improve  
 47 | compliance with state and federal regulations and law pursuant  
 48 | to the requirements of the statewide provider contract adopted  
 49 | under s. 1002.82(2)(m).

50 |       (b) Activities to improve the quality of child care as

51 described in 45 C.F.R. s. 98.53, which shall be limited to the  
52 following:

53 1. Developing, establishing, expanding, operating, and  
54 coordinating resource and referral programs specifically related  
55 to the provision of comprehensive consumer education to parents  
56 and the public to promote informed child care choices specified  
57 in 45 C.F.R. s. 98.33.

58 2. Awarding grants and providing financial support to  
59 school readiness program providers and their staff to assist  
60 them in meeting applicable state requirements for the program  
61 assessment required under s. 1002.82(2)(n), child care  
62 performance standards, implementing developmentally appropriate  
63 curricula and related classroom resources that support  
64 curricula, providing literacy supports, and providing continued  
65 professional development and training. Any grants awarded  
66 pursuant to this subparagraph shall comply with ss. 215.971 and  
67 287.058.

68 3. Providing training, technical assistance, and financial  
69 support to school readiness program providers, staff, and  
70 parents on standards, child screenings, child assessments, child  
71 development research and best practices, developmentally  
72 appropriate curricula, character development, teacher-child  
73 interactions, age-appropriate discipline practices, health and  
74 safety, nutrition, first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, the  
75 recognition of communicable diseases, and child abuse detection,

76 prevention, and reporting.

77 4. Providing, from among the funds provided for the  
 78 activities described in subparagraphs 1.-3., adequate funding  
 79 for infants and toddlers as necessary to meet federal  
 80 requirements related to expenditures for quality activities for  
 81 infant and toddler care.

82 5. Improving the monitoring of compliance with, and  
 83 enforcement of, applicable state and local requirements as  
 84 described in and limited by 45 C.F.R. s. 98.40.

85 6. Responding to Warm-Line requests by providers and  
 86 parents, including providing developmental and health screenings  
 87 to school readiness program children.

88 (c) Nondirect services as described in applicable Office  
 89 of Management and Budget instructions are those services not  
 90 defined as administrative, direct, or quality services that are  
 91 required to administer the school readiness program. Such  
 92 services include, but are not limited to:

93 1. Assisting families to complete the required application  
 94 and eligibility documentation.

95 2. Determining child and family eligibility.

96 3. Recruiting eligible child care providers.

97 4. Processing and tracking attendance records.

98 5. Developing and maintaining a statewide child care  
 99 information system.

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101 As used in this paragraph, the term "nondirect services" does  
102 not include payments to school readiness program providers for  
103 direct services provided to children who are eligible under s.  
104 1002.87, administrative costs as described in paragraph (a), or  
105 quality activities as described in paragraph (b).

106 Section 2. Section 1002.90, Florida Statutes, is created  
107 to read:

108 1002.90 School Readiness Funding Formula Allocation  
109 Conference.—Before the distribution of any funds appropriated in  
110 the General Appropriations Act for the school readiness program,  
111 the Division of Early Learning shall conduct an allocation  
112 conference. Conference principals shall include representatives  
113 of the Division of Early Learning, the Executive Office of the  
114 Governor, and the appropriations committees of the Senate and  
115 the House of Representatives. Conference principals shall  
116 discuss and approve all conventions, including the actual cost  
117 of child care by level and care type, eligible population data,  
118 rounding conventions, and methods of computation, to be used to  
119 calculate the school readiness funding formula for the early  
120 learning coalitions for the fiscal year for which the  
121 appropriations are made. The conventions shall remain in effect  
122 until further agreements are reached in subsequent allocation  
123 conferences called by the division for that purpose. Before each  
124 recalculation of the school readiness funding formula and  
125 allocations to the early learning coalitions, the division shall

126 provide conference principals with all data necessary to  
 127 replicate those allocations precisely. Such data shall include a  
 128 matrix by early learning coalition of all full-time equivalent  
 129 changes made by the division as part of its administration of  
 130 the school readiness program.

131 Section 3. Subsection (4) of section 1002.81, Florida  
 132 Statutes, is amended to read:

133 1002.81 Definitions.—Consistent with the requirements of  
 134 45 C.F.R. parts 98 and 99 and as used in this part, the term:

135 (4) "Direct enhancement services" means services for  
 136 families and children that are in addition to payments for the  
 137 placement of children in the school readiness program. Direct  
 138 enhancement services for families and children may include  
 139 supports for providers, parent training and involvement  
 140 activities, and strategies to meet the needs of unique  
 141 populations and local eligibility priorities. Direct enhancement  
 142 services offered by an early learning coalition shall be  
 143 consistent with the activities prescribed in s. 1002.89(4)(b) ~~s.~~  
 144 ~~1002.89(5)(b)~~.

145 Section 4. Paragraph (a) of subsection (7) of section  
 146 1002.82, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

147 1002.82 Department of Education; powers and duties.—

148 (7) By January 1 of each year, the department shall  
 149 annually publish on its website a report of its activities  
 150 conducted under this section. The report must include a summary

151 of the coalitions' annual reports, a statewide summary, and the  
152 following:

153 (a) An analysis of early learning activities throughout  
154 the state, including the school readiness program and the  
155 Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program.

156 1. The total and average number of children served in the  
157 school readiness program, enumerated by age, eligibility  
158 priority category, and coalition, and the total number of  
159 children served in the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education  
160 Program.

161 2. A summary of expenditures by coalition, by fund source,  
162 including a breakdown by coalition of the percentage of  
163 expenditures for administrative activities, quality activities,  
164 nondirect services, and direct services for children.

165 3. A description of the department's and each coalition's  
166 expenditures by fund source for the quality and enhancement  
167 activities described in s. 1002.89(4)(b) ~~s. 1002.89(5)(b)~~.

168 4. A summary of annual findings and collections related to  
169 provider fraud and parent fraud.

170 5. Data regarding the coalitions' delivery of early  
171 learning programs.

172 6. The total number of children disenrolled statewide and  
173 the reason for disenrollment.

174 7. The total number of providers by provider type.

175 8. The number of school readiness program providers who

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176 | have completed the program assessment required under paragraph  
177 | (2)(n); the number of providers who have not met the minimum  
178 | program assessment composite score for contracting established  
179 | under paragraph (2)(n); and the number of providers that have an  
180 | active improvement plan based on the results of the program  
181 | assessment under paragraph (2)(n).

182 |         9. The total number of provider contracts revoked and the  
183 | reasons for revocation.

184 |         Section 5. This act shall take effect July 1, 2022.