

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to the school readiness program;
3 amending s. 1002.81, F.S.; revising the definition of
4 the terms "economically disadvantaged" and "single
5 point of entry"; amending s. 1002.82, F.S.; revising
6 requirements for a specified statewide data
7 information program within the school readiness
8 program; amending s. 1002.84, F.S.; revising
9 requirements for the program's uniform waiting list;
10 amending s. 1002.85, F.S.; conforming provisions to
11 changes made by the act; amending s. 1002.89, F.S.;
12 revising the requirements for determining the school
13 readiness program allocation; providing an effective
14 date.

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

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18 **Section 1. Subsections (6) and (13) of section 1002.81,**
19 **Florida Statutes, are amended to read:**

20 1002.81 Definitions.—Consistent with the requirements of
21 45 C.F.R. parts 98 and 99 and as used in this part, the term:

22 (6) "Economically disadvantaged" means having a family
23 income that does not exceed the greater of either 50 percent of
24 the state median income or 150 percent of the federal poverty
25 level and includes being a child of a working migratory family

as defined by 34 C.F.R. s. 200.81(d) or (f) or an agricultural worker who is employed by more than one agricultural employer during the course of a year, and whose income varies according to weather conditions and market stability.

(13) "Single point of entry" means an integrated information system that allows a parent to enroll his or her child in the school readiness program or the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program at various locations throughout a county, that may allow a parent to enroll his or her child by telephone or through a website, and that uses a uniform waiting list to track ~~eligible~~ children waiting for enrollment in the school readiness program based on family household income and the priorities established under s. 1002.87.

Section 2. Paragraph (f) of subsection (2) of section 1002.82, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1002.82 Department of Education; powers and duties.—

(2) The department shall:

(f) Establish a unified approach to the state's efforts to coordinate a comprehensive early learning program. In support of this effort, the department:

1. Shall adopt specific program support services that address the state's school readiness program, including:

a. Statewide data information program requirements that include:

(I) Eligibility requirements.

(II) Financial reports.

(III) Program accountability measures.

(IV) Child progress reports.

b. Child care resource and referral services.

c. A single point of entry and uniform waiting list that tracks children waiting for school readiness program services based on family household income and the priorities established under s. 1002.87.

2. May provide technical assistance and guidance on additional support services to complement the school readiness program, including:

a. Warm-Line services.

b. Anti-fraud plans.

c. Training and support for parental involvement in children's early education.

d. Family literacy activities and services.

Section 3. Subsection (2) of section 1002.84, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1002.84 Early learning coalitions; school readiness powers and duties.—Each early learning coalition shall:

(2) Establish a uniform waiting list to track ~~eligible~~ children waiting for enrollment in the school readiness program based on family household income and the priorities established under s. 1002.87 and in accordance with rules adopted by the

76 State Board of Education.

77 **Section 4. Paragraph (b) of subsection (2) and subsection**
78 **(5) of section 1002.85, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:**

79 1002.85 Early learning coalition plans.—

80 (2) Each early learning coalition must submit a school
81 readiness program plan every 3 years to the department before
82 the expenditure of funds. A coalition may not implement its
83 school readiness program plan until it receives approval from
84 the department. A coalition may not implement any revision to
85 its school readiness program plan until the coalition submits
86 the revised plan to and receives approval from the department.
87 If the department rejects a plan or revision, the coalition must
88 continue to operate under its previously approved plan. The plan
89 must include, but is not limited to:

90 (b) The coalition's procedures for implementing the
91 requirements of this part, including:

92 1. Single point of entry.

93 2. Uniform waiting list that tracks children waiting for
94 school readiness program services based on family household
95 income and the priorities established under s. 1002.87.

96 3. Eligibility and enrollment processes and local
97 eligibility priorities for children pursuant to s. 1002.87.

98 4. Parent access and choice.

99 5. Sliding fee scale and policies on applying the waiver
100 or reduction of fees in accordance with s. 1002.84(9).

101 6. Use of preassessments and postassessments, as
102 applicable.

103 7. Use of contracted slots, as applicable, based on the
104 results of the assessment required under paragraph (i).

105 (5) The department shall collect and report data on
106 coalition delivery of early learning programs. Elements shall
107 include, but are not limited to, measures related to progress
108 towards reducing the number of children on the waiting list, the
109 percentage of children served by the program as compared to the
110 number of administrative staff and overhead, the percentage of
111 children served compared to total number of children under the
112 age of 5 years below either 50 percent of the state median
113 income or 150 percent of the federal poverty level, whichever is
114 greater, provider payment processes, fraud intervention, child
115 attendance and stability, use of child care resource and
116 referral, and kindergarten readiness outcomes for children in
117 the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program or the school
118 readiness program upon entry into kindergarten. The department
119 shall request input from the coalitions and school readiness
120 program providers before finalizing the format and data to be
121 used. The report shall be implemented beginning July 1, 2014,
122 and results of the report must be included in the annual report
123 under s. 1002.82.

124 **Section 5. Paragraph (a) of subsection (1) of section**
125 **1002.89, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:**

126 1002.89 School readiness program; funding.—

127 (1) DETERMINATION OF EARLY LEARNING COALITION SCHOOL
128 READINESS PROGRAM FUNDING.—Funding for the school readiness
129 program shall be used by the early learning coalitions in
130 accordance with this part and the General Appropriations Act.

131 (a) School readiness program allocation.—If the annual
132 allocation for the school readiness program is not determined in
133 the General Appropriations Act or the substantive bill
134 implementing the General Appropriations Act, it shall be
135 determined as follows:

136 1. For each county in the early learning coalition, the
137 total number of unweighted full-time equivalent school readiness
138 children, as adopted by the Early Learning Programs Estimating
139 Conference pursuant to s. 216.136(8), which shall consider the
140 historical trend of children served and population changes for
141 each county, shall be multiplied by the appropriate care level
142 factor to calculate the weighted full-time equivalent school
143 readiness children. For purposes of this subparagraph, the term
144 "care level factor" means the adjustment made based on the
145 relative differences in reimbursement rates associated with the
146 eligible school readiness children pursuant to s. 1002.87.

147 2. The total weighted full-time equivalent school
148 readiness children shall be multiplied by the rate index to
149 calculate the adjusted weighted full-time equivalent school
150 readiness children. For purposes of this subparagraph, the term

151 "rate index" means the adjustment made based on the impact of
152 geographic location on reimbursement rates.

153 3. The school readiness program funds shall be distributed
154 based on each county's proportionate share of the total adjusted
155 weighted full-time equivalent school readiness children.

156 **Section 6.** This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.