

CS/CS/CS/SB 2014 — Early Learning

by Transportation and Economic Development Appropriations Committee; Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee; Commerce Committee; and Senators Wise and Crist

This bill amends Florida's school readiness provisions by:

- Clarifying the role of the Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI) and its responsibilities to implement a comprehensive system of support services;
- Requiring early learning coalitions to implement direct enhancement services and ensure access to such services in all of Florida's 67 counties;
- Granting AWI greater rulemaking authority for the administration of the school readiness program in certain areas, including standards, outcome measures, and system support services;
- Altering eligibility requirements for the school readiness programs;
- Consolidating provisions that are in disparate sections of the statutes;
- Deleting obsolete references to programs that no longer exist and agencies that no longer direct aspects of school readiness programs; and
- Repealing statutes that administer programs no longer in existence.

The bill amends the Gold Seal Quality Care Program for child care facilities to specify the process by which the Department of Children and Family Services (DCF) is to establish accreditation standards.

The bill permits the State Board of Education to grant a good cause exemption for a VPK provider who has been on probation for 2 consecutive years or more and serves twice the statewide population of children with disabilities or limited English proficient students. The provider is required to show certain documentation and meet certain criteria. This will provide an exemption to those providers serving these special classes of students and encourages the continued service of these students.

The bill requires that a county, in a general election, must submit to the electors of a children's services district the question whether to retain or dissolve the district.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2010, except as otherwise expressly provided in the act.

Vote: Senate 36-2; House 113-0