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Florida School Boards Association 2021 Legislative Session Report



COMMITTEE WEEK FIVE
February 15, 2021 – February 19, 2021

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COMMITTEE REPORTS

Senate Education Committee

Discussion of Labor Market Alignment and Postsecondary Education & Bill Presentations

Tuesday, February 16, 2021

Meeting packet can be found [here](#).

Representatives from the Following Organizations Were Present

- Department of Economic Opportunity
- Department of Education
- State University System

Summary

The Senate Education Committee held a meeting to discuss how to strengthen current efforts in Florida to align postsecondary education and industry. After the panelists and presenters finished, the committee discussed and debated on four different bills, all of which were reported favorably by a unanimous vote.

Workforce Services Director in the Department of Economic Opportunity (Adrienne Johnston)

In her presentation, Mrs. Johnson walked through data produced at the Department of Economic Opportunity. She discussed the foundational data that they produce at DEO and some of the projections they foresee in the future. She also covered some of the products DEO produces for analysis by the Department of Education and Board of Governors staff as they make decision in regards to training programs and alignments with labor market demands.

Q&A

Vice Chair Jones

Q: Do we track how many students graduate and leave the state of Florida after entering these programs?

A: We do now but that is very recent. There are federal data cooperative agreements that have allowed us to start tracking that.

Q: The 700,000 jobs we have seen, what types of jobs are those?

A: They span most industries. Most likely the jobs that were least impacted by the pandemic. Financial activities and professional business services are probably the biggest contributors.

Senator Thurston

Q: How long has DEO been collected this information?

A: Since around 2000 for many statistics, but we have books that go back to the 40s.

Q: With regards to the online occupational information is that where most people would get their employment opportunities?

A: I think it is moving in that direction for sure, but there is still word of mouth and some businesses that post job ads in the windows.

Q: Prior to 2005 when you started tracking the online, what were you tracking then?

A: The primary means of understanding labor demand was a survey by industry. Other than that, to get a sense of hiring needs it would have been job vacancy surveys. We would contact employers directly and would send out a form.

Q: So it's more self-reporting, there is no obligation to just respond and give you the information?

A: That is correct.

Q: In colleges back in my day, recruitment officers might reflect trends of who is hiring/not hiring, do you analyze that?

A: Not specifically but I think that is where we get a lot of rich detail from the online job postings.

Q: So as opposed to getting the information from colleges, you are giving them the information?

A: That is correct.

Q: With regards to the employment and wage data, you collect that county by county?

Q: Yes sir, it comes to us with reemployment assistance data.

Q: So that is again voluntary reporting, are you able to tell me what employment and wages are for everyone in Broward county?

A: Yes, it is voluntary but we have a very high response rate and strict standards that come from the federal government on how much we can accept in terms of non-response.

Q: It is pretty accurate what you are collecting then. If I wanted to know the revenue to the state from a specific county, do you collect that?

A: We don't include in our statistics. I believe the Department of Revenue collects that.

Chancellor of Career and Adult Education in the Department of Education (Henry Mack)

Mr. Mack spoke on the Department of Education's opportunity to align its workforce education training programs to meet market demand. They are looking at everything from starting programs in the K-12 sector, such as exploratory courses, all the way through post-secondary institutions across the technical colleges in the state of Florida. CTE programs are top-notch in Florida, they are headed in the direction of becoming number one in workforce education by 2030. He spoke about certain kinds of credentials offered across the 48 technical colleges and state institutions.

Q&A

Senator Broxson

Q: We consider all education to be workforce this year. There is a sense we could do better. Listening to you it seems we are doing the best job ever. But we could probably do better. Here is my concern – the narrative for generations is that we want our kids to go to college. But we know that sometimes colleges and universities may not lead to the outcomes/careers students want and there are pathways that may get them to the careers they want faster and with less money. I'm thinking about the student that may not want to go to college. I think we could do a better job for those students, are we allowing students to visualize what they want to do without going to college where they don't get on a track committed to something that may not be a good fit for them?

A: I think that's a great question. Under Commissioner Corcoran we are trying to present CTE as an additional onramp and viable option to economic self-sufficiency and ultimately degree attainment if they choose. I am concerned about how we are having those conversations at the local level. We don't want to "other" CTE, because that is a harmful narrative. We launched Get There Florida, a marketing campaign to re-brand CTE so we are presenting a unified look to how we are talking about career and technical education. How the advisement is structured on the district level however, that is done by the districts.

Q: We are dealing with people going through the education system, how about those dropping out? How do we re-insert opportunities back to them so we can allow them to join the American Dream?

A: We have targeted advertisement for those individuals and have set aside funds for the districts to reach out to them and try to get them reengaged. What we have seen though is that degree attainment matters more than ever, it results in less disruption for individuals over the course of their life. What we are trying to figure out how to balance is how to use these CTE programs as an onramp to higher education.

Senator Hudson

Q: It is great to see the CTE pathway coming to fruition. I know we built in an academic advisor into a statute for those transitioning between CTE and career work. How is that working?

A: We want to create the flexible pathways for students. We are in the middle of pathway structuring and advising is a huge portion of that. The academic advising component you are speaking of, I'm going to have to get back to you on that. But there has been a huge increase in completion outcomes, CTE enrollment, and better placement into postsecondary jobs.

Senator Jones

Q: I think Florida is much further along when it comes to this level of CTEs than a lot of states to tell you the truth members. Do you think early career detection, like in 9th grade, is a way that the state can move in to begin help students identify what they want to do?

A: The data shows the more we engage in career conversations at earlier levels, the better. I think anything we can do to enhance that will do better by way of our students.

Senator Thurston

Q: I'm not familiar with the 48 technical colleges, do you rank them?

A: They are defined as career centers and they exist within school districts, so they report to the superintendents of the local school districts. But they are secondary in nature and often call themselves colleges. Their ranking is measured by the Department and identified in our strategic plan.

Q: You also talked about self-selected termination of programs, who were you referring to there?

A: Every CTE program that exists within the K-12 system, as well as Florida college institutions and our Florida technical centers. Within those providers, 500 local programs were terminated as a result of the audit.

Chancellor of the State University System of Florida (Marshall Criser)

In his presentation, Mr. Criser shared information about Florida's twelve public universities. He emphasized the focus on the more than 420,000 students in our state university system. Within that number, they award more than 97,000 degrees. Florida has the second lowest tuition in the country. The success comes from the legislature's investment in workforce initiatives and alignment towards workforce needs.

Q&A

Chair Gruters

Q: There is no doubt in my mind that performance funding incentives go a long way in marking our success in Florida. I have a question about wage increasement over time. Can you compare that versus non-graduates? Is that investment worth it?

A: We are working on what the value we create for an individual as they go through their career. We are still having that conversation and hope to work towards finding the exact answers.

Q: You had a slide that had teachers on it and we did some historic funding for our teachers. Is it too soon to tell if there has been a spike in people applying to be teachers?

A: We wouldn't see that that quickly in our data.

SB 258 Internship Tax Credit Program (Senator Jones)

This bill goes along with the conversation we are having right now. SB 258 creates the "Florida Internship Tax Credit Program" to authorize a tax credit of \$2,000 for each degree-seeking student intern employed by a qualified business, up to a maximum of \$10,000 in any taxable year, beginning in taxable years on or after January 1, 2022. The bill also provides a definition of a degree-seeking student intern, responsibilities for postsecondary educational institutions and the Department of Revenue, and an authorization to carry forward any unused portion of a tax credit. This bill is trying to keep students here upon graduation if they intern at that business and it incentivizes that business to hire them after graduation. So both the student and employer benefit.

Q&A

Senator Diaz

Q: This is a good bill here. Did you get the idea for this from my very successful tax credit scholarship in my contentious bill?

A: This bill helps keep good talent here (haha) I know what my good friend is trying to do here.

Appearance Forms

Benjamin Rembaum, UCF Student Government Deputy Chief of Staff: We speak highly in favor of this bill.

Outcome on SB 258

The bill is reported favorably by the committee.

SB 280 Training in Public Schools (Baxley)

SB 280 modifies the provision by school districts to provide basic training in first aid, including cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), and the use of an automated external defibrillator during the instruction. I brought this legislation to make sure CPR training is instructed during school time. I am astonished by how often CPR is not administered, particularly in ethnic communities, because that is not part of their cultural training. I embrace this cause and that is the reason.

Q&A

Senator Broxson

Q: Have you reached out to the school district superintendents? I think part of the issue we have here is that we pack the school day with so much activity that they have a hard time implementing the program. How would they do that?

A: The exciting part of this is that it takes little time and can be incorporated into the courses they are already in. We aren't adding anything, we are asking them to make it part of what they are teaching in health. I don't think this will add a burden.

Appearance Forms

Dr. Nancy Lawther, Florida PTA: Waiving in support.

Matthew Cobb, Matt's Mission: Waiving in support.

Bethany Keime: I applaud the actions of our legislatures over the years. The number one killer on school campuses is sudden cardiac death. I am calling on you to knock this out. Please pass this bill.

Shawn Simia: As leaders in Florida, you should know that 47,000 people die in our state because of heart problems. Please teach our kids about this.

Chair Baker: Waiving in support.

Ed Kosiec: I am a survivor of the silent killer. We have to do something; this is a national crisis.

Joe Cobb: I am in support of the bill. An hour of time in a school year is not much to save people's lives.

Outcome on the Bill

The bill is reported favorably.

SB 538 Use of Epinephrine Auto-injectors on Public K-20 Campuses (Senator Polsky)

SB 538 adds requirements related to the purchase and maintenance of a supply of epinephrine auto-injectors by K-12 public schools, Florida College System (FCS) institutions, and state universities in specific locations throughout the school. The bill makes mandatory provisions that are optional under current law related to the purchase and maintenance of a supply of epinephrine auto-injectors in K-12 public schools.

Appearance Forms

Erving Rodriguez, UCF Student Government: We are in favor of this bill.

Outcome on the Bill

The bill was reported favorably by the committee.

SB 760 Florida High School Athletic Association (Senator Burgess)

SB 760 enables public schools (including charter schools), virtual schools, and home education cooperatives to choose to maintain sport-selected membership, not only full membership, in the Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSA) without penalty from the FHSA. These privileges are all currently given to private schools, and now we are expanding that.

Q&A

Senator Broxson

Q: Can you explain to the committee why there is debate on this subject?

A: So there were conversations and agreements in the past and this bill seeks to stick to the spirit of those conversations. What it boils down to is choice. And we have representatives from organizations here that would be happy to get down into the technicality of the changes.

Senator Thurston

Q: You said that the change is needed because the FSHAA is restricting individuals from coming in to other leagues? How?

A: So there are examples where some of the privileges associated for those with full membership are not bestowed on those with partial memberships. So by choosing so you are not a full member and are not getting the full benefits.

Q: Was there an agreement in 2018? What has the FSHAA done to violate that agreement?

A: Yes, and it seems that the spirit of the agreement has not been applied consistently and so the effort here is to ensure consistency to meet with the spirit and intent of what that was. I see it as an opportunity to clarify and ensure that agreement is upheld.

Senator Diaz

Q: God bless you for wading into this. I know this can get heated. There is a view from the FHSAA that they know what rules. Have you been able to talk to any other conferences and have that same conversation with the FHSAA instead of going into statute? I'm not saying it's not appropriate but I'm wondering if you have had the conversation with both sides?

A: The uniqueness here is that the FHSAA possibly in the country that is outlined in the state statute. In a perfect world a change to the bylaws might be a better solution instead of legislation but I have had extensive conversation with the FHSAA and another conference. Those conversations will continue and hopefully we can bring this in for a good landing.

Appearance Forms

Stuart Weiss, Sunshine State Athletic Conference: SB 760 is about choice, we support schools having their coach have choices for the best opportunities for their athletes. The passage of this bill will also probably allow more conferences to exist. This is valuable.

Senator Thurston

Q: This is not about women's volleyball?

A: It came about because of that but it is an underlying symptom of a problem. The organization in statute has a semi-quasi monopoly which allows schools to have choice.

Q: You indicated that there are restrictions that the FHSAA is doing to limit choice?

A: Yes, in their by-laws, to have full membership benefits, you must be in the FHSAA for all sports you offer. We want to make a change here.

Q: So, if you elect to join by sport instead of by full membership, you can't participate in FHSAA championships?

A: That is correct, Senator.

Q: What does that have to do with girl's beach volleyball?

A: The SSAC started offering girls' beach volleyball in 2016 and the FHSAA did not offer it. We grew it to 87 schools competing. FHSAA decided last year to add it. The requirement now is going to require the FHSAA for girl's beach volleyball, which will remove our ability to run out league, so all of our members have to go to that league.

Ron Book, Florida High School Athletic Association: Waiving against.

(there is a very, very long list of people all available in the meeting packet waiving in support)

Debate on the Bill

Senator Thurston

I am not going to vote against the bill but I have concerns. I am trying to figure out what direction the FHSAA is trying to go in. I would rather speak to you about it. I thought this was resolved three years ago.

Senator Berman

I'm pretty much going to say the same thing. I'll support it today but I want to know the direction this is going in.

Senator Diaz

I'll support this today and offer to work with you. These are complex issues and can get convoluted. We can have further conversations.

Senator Thurston

I won't get a chance to see this bill again but what concerns me is that there was an agreement that has been maintained. There are nimble versus bureaucratic conferences. I don't have a problem with the language of the bill. I think the FHSAA feels the same way. I am worried there is a motivation behind the bill that we don't know about. I don't see this as being a choice issue. I'm going to support this today but I'm going to watch it and see if I can get a better understanding about another motivation other than allowing these conferences to participate because I do agree with that.

Closing

Thank you all for your support. This is a meaty issue; Senator Diaz is right. I think that probably the issue derives from this being a statutorily created entity. Perhaps that is the bigger question, but I'm not proposing that necessarily. I just want the spirit of the agreement to be met. I am going to continue to work with all of the stakeholders.

Outcome on the Bill

The bill is reported favorably by the committee.

House Education & Employment Committee

State Scholarship and Financial Aid Programs

Tuesday, February 16, 2021

Meeting packet can be found [here](#).

Representatives from the Following Organizations Were Present

- Bureau of One Stop and Program Support
- CareerSource Florida
- CareerSource Northeastern Florida

Chief of the Bureau of One Stop and Program Support (Casey Penn)

There are three main entities that are responsible for the oversight and accountability of the workforce system. The state workforce board, the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO), and the local workforce development boards. The DEO receives and allocates funding from the United States Department of Labor, for operations related to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). This includes ensuring local boards are meeting certain requirements and benchmarks, such as staying under the administrative cap meeting certain youth requirements, as well as ensuring that the boards are spending their funds in a timely manner. The DEO also conducts three different types of monitoring reviews. The first is a financial monitoring review or fiscal monitoring review. That review monitors internal controls policies and procedures, expenditures, and reconciliations to ensure that the grant funds spent were allowable, reasonable, and in compliance with the grant terms and conditions. There are also yearly programmatic monitoring reviews. These reviews provide an assessment of local boards comply with the workforce programs respective laws, regulations, state plans, and other authoritative guidance. They also review the operations and processes that determine if there are any factors that may impact overall service delivery and quality.

Prior to 2019, the fiscal and programmatic reviews were done in silos. Now they conduct joint reviews. Outside of monitoring, they also develop administrative policies that go before the State Board for approval. In 2019, in coordination with CareerSource Florida, they developed a policy development framework that outlines the development of both administrative and strategic policies. How they provide oversight: "First we develop a policy. It outlines the roles and responsibilities local boards must follow for their programs and activities. Next, we're going to deliver training on those policies to ensure that local board staff is aware and knowledgeable of the requirements. And then we conduct monitoring visits to ensure those services are being delivered in accordance with state and federal guidance." The local area oversight consists of two main entities:

- The chief local elected official(s): the chief local elected official is selected from either a consortium of counties, or in cases where one county comprises the local area, is chosen by those county's elected officials. The chief local elected official's main responsibilities include appointing members to their board approving the proposed budget. They're also accountable for the use of those federal funds,
- The local workforce development board: they're composed of community leaders, or businesses the public sector and educational institutions. They're responsible for activities related to the local delivery of services, such as developing their four- year WIOA plan. Selecting the One Stop operator, developing the budget and approving eligible training providers. The local workforce development board also conducts their own internal monitoring.

Next, performance in the system and accountability when it comes to performance:

WIOA establishes performance accountability measures, known as Primary Indicators of Performance, to assess the effectiveness of states and local workforce development boards in achieving positive outcomes for individuals served by the workforce development system.

These performance measures can be broken down into two categories, they monitor the state and local areas ability to deliver employment services, and to deliver training services. For training, the measurable skills gain indicator measures whether an individual is progressing on their path to achieve a credential. This is a real-time measure. For employment, they measure the state and local area's ability to place individuals in a livable wage, as well as whether they keep that employment for up to four quarters. So they measure it in the second quarter after they exit the program and in the fourth quarter.

The current performance year (PY-20) is the first year state and local areas will be held accountable for meeting their performance measures. This model considers factors, such as the characteristics of the population served as well as economic indicators during the reporting period. Not only does this assist in mitigating unforeseen factors, such as a pandemic, it also encourages boards to serve those that are the hardest to serve as those factors are taken into account during performance. USDL has developed their statistical adjustment model and is working with states now as DEO develops theirs, their statistical adjustment model is scheduled to be finished by the end of this program here. How does DEO hold boards accountable? They have a tiered approach to that accountability. It ranges from providing technical assistance for boards with less severe performance issues, to requiring the development of a performance improvement plan or a modification to the local plan for more severe cases.

Ultimately, if the board fails to meet a negotiated performance measure for three consecutive years, the state must take action, which includes reorganizing the local workforce development board. WIOA was designed to serve those with the biggest barriers to employment. It gives priority service to individuals who are the recipients of public assistance, low-income individuals, those that are basic skills deficient and veterans. When monitoring local boards, DEO monitors whether the boards are providing that priority service to individuals who meet those barriers. Eligible training providers, the approval of providers is currently done by the local workforce development boards and providers are required to submit certain documentation in the initial and subsequent applications. First, the provider must be on the local targeted occupations list, then the local workforce development board is going to analyze information provided by the training provider to determine they will approve them to receive the funds. These factors include verification that they are licensed, performance information on the provider, including completion and placement data, information on the number of individuals that received a post, a recognized post-secondary credential, and information on the cost of the program.

What does it look like when a participant walks into the board to determine what provider is right for them?

- First, the board is going to determine whether or not they're suitable for that training program. They're going to do an assessment on that individual, and they're going to get an idea of what skills they have, prerequisite classes that participant has completed that make them suitable for that training program.
- Barriers to the coordination of services:
 - o All of these partnerships exist throughout the network, there is one barrier that is consistent throughout the state - the availability of data,
 - o Each program operates their own case management system, and data collected on those systems is not readily available nor shared with partner programs.
 - o They also do not have the ability to track referrals to partner programs.

The DEO will require local workforce development boards to operate a comprehensive One Stop center within their local area. They will have a program staff physically on location at the One Stop center, those that are located on site, they have the ability for a staff member from a different partner program to be trained on how to appropriately deliver those services and activities, or they can make a direct link, via technology.

Recognizing barriers to overcome challenges the network is facing allows the state to implement meaningful changes that impact citizens' lives at the Department of Economic Opportunity.

Q&A

Chair Latvala

Q: Can you give us an update on the Ed Peachy situation if you have an update that you can give us?

A: We have submitted our corrective action plan, back to the United States Department of Labor. We have done an analysis of the files, and of the costs that are involved, and we are working with the United States Department of Labor to resolve those. We have not received a response back at this time.

Q: Can you talk about the policy that y'all have when it comes to compensation for board members?

A: I will definitely follow up with you, account, there are federal limits to the amount of compensation that an individual can receive and our financial monitoring unit tracks that. It's something that we update annually, we look at the salaries and other fringe benefits that are received by local workforce development board directors and their staff. I'm just not sure of the policy that we have in place there but it is something that we monitor yearly.

Representative Fine

Q: At a statewide level, how much money are we spending on this? And over the last year how many people got a job because of it?

A: I can get you that information from an annual expenditure standpoint, I can tell you that the WIOA program itself typically ranges around \$200 million a year. On average there are anywhere from 40 to 50,000 participants in the system. That program is also paying for training, wraparound services, different things of that nature. I can get you specific details at a later date.

Q: If we know the cost is 200 million what statistic here would be demonstrative, what number on here would I look at to get the best sense of the return that the state's getting from all these workforce programs?

A: Yes, so we produce an annual report that has cost per participant information on that, I'd be happy to send that to you.

Q: In a nutshell, what are we getting in the current construct? At a statewide level what are we getting for the 200 million from the taxpayers?

A: The services that are provided are not just education. They also provide employment services. They also provide wraparound services. There's a number of services that are provided for them. If you want statistics on the number of people served and the number of people employed. I'd be happy to provide that for you, I have that readily readily available and can send that to you this week,

Q: I'm done with my question but my recommendation is sort of executive summary one page. Here's what you spend here's what we spend and here's what we get.

Representative Mariano

Q: The first question is on slide six, he lists the primary indicators of performance set by WIOA. What additional performance measures exist in the workforce development system, other than the floor that is set by WIOA?

A: So currently those federal measures are the only measures that the state and local areas are held accountable for. The state does have the option to have a state specific measure that we can hold local boards and the state will then be held accountable for. We do not currently have that though but it is in federal law that we can implement that.

Q: Slide, 11, you explain the eligibility requirements to become an eligible training provider by the local workforce board. The audit found that the state failed to ensure that training providers were submitting all required information when adding their programs to this list. How can a provider be added to the list if they've not submitted all required information?

A: So the current process that we have in place right now - this is what I went into when I said we were updating our eligible training provider policy - is that the local workforce development boards are approving those training providers. They have to submit those applications to the boards, there are certain requirements that are in the local board's policies and procedures that outline what they need to submit. But with the update to the policy that we're doing, we're providing better state oversight on that process.

Q: On slide 8, program year 2020 is the first year where state and local performance accountability will be enforced. Why is it starting in 2020?

A: That's the first year that we had two years of data. While this law was implemented in 2016, the way that the Performance Reporting is, you have to exit the program before you count in a federal performance measure. That was the first time that we had two full years of WIOA data in order to negotiate. We had a baseline before, but it was with a previous law. They had previous rules and regulations, they had previous timelines for employment and things of that nature.

Q: Are there comparisons between Florida and other states as to the numbers for the total outcomes and how we're performing and measuring with states across the country?

A: There are state comparisons when it comes to primary indicators of performance. And I'd be able to share that with you. Typically, Florida performs at a very high level on these. If you're looking for detail on cost per participant, or number of individuals in the system, I'll have to look to see if there's any stable nationwide metrics to look at.

Q: Do you have any information on states that have set additional accountability standards, beyond the floor that WIOA sets?

A: I do not but I can look into that and get better information.

Representative Borrero

Q: With regard to eligible training providers, can you talk to me about the certification process to make sure that they are meeting certain benchmarks and expectations? What process do they undergo for them to become eligible? And what's the process to keep them on an annual basis or periodic basis?

A: Mr. Ferguson will go over that in his presentation but you have to submit an initial application. That initial application has to verify a number of items including that the program that you're submitting is on the targeted occupation list for your area. It has to be an in-demand occupation. Next, you're going to submit performance information. How many people are enrolled in your program and how many people complete it? What are the employment numbers when they leave your program? What kind of credentials are you offering? Are they stackable? How do you assist those with barriers? What does your training program look like for those that are working? All that information is submitted in an application to the local workforce development board. There is an inherent factor here that is the credential attainment rate that the local workforce development board has to meet. So if you have an underperforming eligible training provider, you will kick them to the curb pretty quickly, because it is now affecting your federal measure which could affect whether or not you're a local board anymore. They're not going to accept somebody having poor outcomes for those measures because it's affecting their overall local area.

Q: Has anyone actually ever been dropped for not meeting certain benchmarks?

A: Yes, they've been dropped in the local area. I don't have exact information on that, but yes.

Q: On the intake process. If a participant is coming to enroll in a particular program, do you demonstrate any performance measures to sell them into these programs. Do you have any performance outcomes that you say, these are the before and after on employment levels or income levels, and why you should enroll in this particular provider in this particular program?

A: So, as you meet with the case manager that's some of the information they're going to give you. What does employment look like for that particular profession? What does your future look like? Is it an in demand occupation? Is it receding or ascending from an employment standpoint? And then what possible career pathway may you have with that, is this something where you can stack on credentials afterwards and progress your career? They'll give that information when they meet with the participants.

President & CEO of CareerSource Florida (Michelle Dennard)

CareerSource Florida is designated as the State Workforce Development Board as noted in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. They are required to develop the State WIOA plan. The state board is responsible for implementing the governor's strategic vision for Workforce Services through policy guidance and targeted investments, developing strategic policy, and approving administrative policy developed in consultation with the Department of Economic Opportunity. The CareerSource Florida Board of Directors is responsible for ensuring the voice of the business community is engaged in developing the strategic policies of the workforce system. The board is appointed by the governor and includes a cross section of members of Florida's business community, representatives from small businesses, from targeted sectors, and leaders from the education community.

The lack of integration between workforce development, education, and economic development systems is a barrier to integration and coordination of service. The ability to better track those individuals and support the customers accessing disparate systems remains an opportunity for improvement in the system. That means pulling together state level workforce programs and setting priorities around aligning education programs and workforce programs to focus on long-term talent pipelines for those targeted sectors. One of the ways that they're doing that is through engaging businesses and targeted industry taskforce meetings, to help identify skills and talent needed now and down the road. There has also been discussion on colocation of services - aligning those services can sometimes be best facilitated when colocation is an option. The state workforce board has encouraged these opportunities such as locating a workforce board's office at a state college or technical college. Another opportunity, related to defining and encouraging self-sufficiency, is the formation of a self-sufficiency workgroup. As an individual is on their journey to self-sufficiency, at some point their dependency on public benefits begins to diminish, which isn't always a smooth transition. Industry experts and stakeholders meet regularly to identify connecting points, review case studies, and model the customer experience to make that transition easier for those individuals.

They also have the opportunity to better engage in assisting incarcerated individuals transitioning to working status. Thanks to a state appropriation that has been facilitated by CareerSource Florida, they have worked on the Florida Hires program, helping inmates realize employment success, which helps incarcerated Floridians with employability skills to secure employment after release. These are a few examples of existing integration that could be improved with enhanced case management tracking and information sharing. CareerSource Florida business and workforce development team each have sectors of focus helping businesses who seek statewide solutions connect with an expert in their field that can help build awareness of existing training programs that present growth opportunities. Everyone who seeks services from the workforce system can be provided assistance, whether directly from a workforce program

or connection to another program that may best serve an individual. They also work to provide awareness information on the availability of services through statewide program outreach initiatives.

Q&A

Representative Fine

Q: There's 24 local boards, right? Which one's the best, which one does the best?

A: There are wonderful pockets of excellence in different areas throughout the state. My colleague, Mr Ferguson who's here today does a fantastic job of engaging employers in his area, leveraging community partnerships. There are other workforce boards that have other best practices but the needs are so specific to the area. That question depends on what the needs of those constituents are.

Q: If you were going to rank them, what are the metrics that you use to rank your 24 local organizations to know whether they're doing a good job or not?

A: Those WIOA measures of performance are particularly useful in that regard because their performance targets are set based on the information relevant to their area. So that system of measurement that has been set out in that federal law gives us the best guidance for how that local workforce board is performing.

Q: Is it like the number of jobs placed? I mean how do you know whether someone's doing a good job? To me I feel like I'm sitting through buzzword bingo here. What are those three or four - as a business related organization - that you use to rank, who's best and who's worst?

A: Placements - how many individuals based on the relative size of the area - is an indicator of performance employment. Also, wage after exit, what kind of job did they get? Is it one that's going to provide them an income mobility trajectory? The ones that are listed in that chart in the previous presentation are what has been defined as the best judge of performance

Q: So how many placements did you all make last year? Across all 24?

A: Across all 24 for the fiscal year 130,061.

Q: So how many of those 130,000, you know, are actually because of your efforts as opposed to them just going out, and, and doing it on their own?

A: We can drill down into what kind of services that individual may have received from the workforce system but I don't have that data here with me today. I can work with our team to get that to you.

Q: Say it's 50,000, I just made up that number. Using that \$200 million number I got before it'd be like \$4,000 per incremental placed job. Do you tend to look at your value proposition that way, like what's our cost per placement and who's got a lower on?

A: The DEO report does have that cost per participant data, and I know that each local workforce board looks at their individual service delivery numbers a little differently. I think that could shed some light on that as well so we can work with the DEO to make sure you have that information,

Representative McCurdy

Q: How many of the 130,061, do we have a breakdown of demographics, to know who are we serving and who is benefiting from the job placements in the state of Florida?

A: Yes, this number can be broken down into more specific demographics to answer your question, but I have to work with our friends at DEO to get that information to you. I can tell you that 7,712 of them were military veterans.

Q: I'm curious to know how many minorities we're serving, how many veterans, you mentioned past offenders, I call them returning citizens, but, I'm very interested to know the breakdown of demographics of the individuals who were serving.

Chair Latvala

Q: For instance, could you tell us how many of that were African Americans? Do you have that information today?

A: Yes, we will be able to break that down for you. We will work with the DEO to get that to you.

Representative Morales

Q: I would like to also know how many of those fall under Hispanics.

A: Yes.

Representative Williams

Q: What type of jobs were we placing them in? Were they entry level jobs?

A: Workforce boards do everything they can to be sure that they are placing an individual into a position that provides them a career path, not just a job but a meaningful career. I'm not exactly sure how far we can break that down but let us work on that and we can provide some information back to you.

Q: How many applications were taken during that time period?

A: I would need to get that number for you.

Representative Andrade

Q: On the DEO list of eligible training providers each of the 24 career source locations information varied greatly. Is there any type of standard suggestion that career source groups submit to DEO for their websites?

A: That's one of the opportunities, updating the eligible training provider policy that we're working on with the DEO and I do think there are some areas of improvement to better standardize and allow training opportunities to be used across workforce board areas.

Q: If someone goes and pulls up this Pinellas list of eligible training providers then goes to the training provider, and that training provider says that you're eligible for these WIOA programs, does CareerSource Pinellas get credit for that placement?

A: If the placement is facilitated with the employer, then the workforce board would be able to count that as a place.

Q: Would CareerSource Pinellas get any kind of commission or credit if that person found out that provider had a website from the CareerSource Pinellas website?

A: If an individual is accessing a training provider, using the workforce system maybe being provided a voucher or tuition and then is employed based on that training and a connection with an employer provided from the workforce system that employment would need to be facilitated by the workforce system in order to count.

Q: These eligible training providers, they want to get a relationship with CareerSource, because they want to have access to these funds and support?

A: Yes.

Q: Is there any concern about conflicts of interest on this kind of reporting, if these training providers have an incentive to send their students to CareerSource to get set up with these funds and resources?

A: The information provided from an eligible training provider would be on a training program as a whole, not necessarily specific to the performance of those individuals who have been served by the workforce system.

Q: On the standards for the list of eligible training providers that CareerSource submits, what's the minimum requirement for that information?

A: There are certain requirements, I would need to double check to get to a comprehensive list of what all is necessary for those providers to report well we can provide that to you.

President of CareerSource Northeast Florida (Bruce Ferguson)

Board structure throughout the state is based on state college service areas under WIOA. Career centers: Job placement services, employability skills training and workshops. Their rapid response team on every board so if there's a mass layoff from an employer, their notified from the DEO. The team can meet with the company management, as well as those employees that have been impacted by the layoff, so they understand what services are available at the local level. Veteran services has specific funding to serve veterans and disabled veterans always get priority of service. Trying to help people move off of cash assistance and into self-sufficient employment. The vast majority of the funding that we have is really targeted to those that are out of school, trying to re-engage them and get them back into an employable situation. Some of the challenges that come with a multitude of federal programs is they each have their own unique eligibility requirements and their own reporting requirements. Each board has to do its own internal monitoring. CareerSource Northeast does that through a third party or CPA firm every four months. They also have annual independent audits from a general auditing firm. They are audited against governmental auditing standards, in their region they have attained and maintained a low risk audit status. CareerSource does their assessments, both on a career interest survey type of methodology, as well as testing rather basic skills. When someone can't yet meet an eligibility requirement, they can offer adult basic education. They work with people through the process and coach them through

Career centers are located in high need areas to try to meet the individuals where they are. Services are mostly done virtually but career centers are open. Mobile units were a way for them to take the services to where the people are by setting up mini career centers in libraries and churches community centers, any kind of partner organization that would be able to take the service to the individuals. They've been teaming up with many community entities to combine resources and services.

One recent example is our area's hospitals were short on surgical technicians. They were hiring traveling surgical technicians at an extraordinarily high cost. They decided to invest in their entry level employees. Employees that were sometimes in administrative jobs, certified nursing assistant, laundry service, food service, etc. CareerSource partnered with those hospitals and with Florida State College of Jacksonville to bring the training program to the hospital. After a relatively short term workforce certification (11 to 12 months,) they pass their surgical tech certification and their wages increase from an average of 11/13\$ an hour to 18/20\$ an hour Now those entry level positions are vacated, we're able to go back and provide more individuals at that entry level but they can already see a career path going forward.

Q&A

Chair Latvala

Q: Can you just give us a broad description of the types of board members that you have?

A: When we are looking at our board membership, we work with our chambers of commerce and our economic development partners to find those board members. We're looking specifically for board members in these targeted industries. With that helps us understand and stay informed that goes back to how do we how do we cross pollinate economic development workforce development, how do we understand what the business needs are so that we can then translate those needs to how to inform the customers about the job seekers about what the opportunities are so we're trying to convert to a board that maintains membership around those targeted.

Q: Can you tell us if you have any board members, either past or present that have had contracts with your workforce board.

A: Yes sir we have.

Q: Would they have exceeded the \$25,000 limit?

A: If we have a board member who has a contract that exceeds the \$25,000 threshold. Before that contract is executed. All the proper steps in the contract and the board votes are submitted to the Department of Economic Opportunity for review and approval.

Q: Would that be common to have board members that would have contracts with the workforce board that they serve on?

A: It's quite possible it's certainly allowable. As long as we follow all the proper procedures in terms of recusal, and that sort of thing from a board member standpoint, the last thing we want is any kind of conflict of interest.

Representative Aloupis

Q: Who would not be eligible under WIOA?

A: There are eligibility requirements, there income thresholds you also have to have a barrier to employment and that's listed out in the various regulation so we try to ensure we try to ensure we ensure that everyone that we enroll or spend a we owe a training dollar on is indeed eligible for that.

Q: So, what do you do in the instance of somebody coming into one of your one-stop centers, who is not eligible, what does that look like?

A: That's where the Wagner Peyser funding comes in, there's no eligibility requirement for Wagner Peyser. Also we're going to try to determine are they a dislocated worker? If they've been laid off through no fault of their own the income piece of that eligibility goes away and we can still serve that individual or retrain.

Q: Is the Wagner Peyser component dictated by funding so are you limited to, to how many folks you can potentially help?

A: We don't get a quota that says you can only serve 1000 Wagner Peyser, as long as we're open and people come in, they can use the services that are there.

Q: What's your sense of the consistencies of what my experience would be if I were to go to one-stop centers across the state?

A: So the general services should be consistent. All the career centers have resource rooms and abilities for individuals to log into the computer systems and use Employ Florida. Individual scholarship processes may differ.

Vice Chair McClain

Q: Can you walk me through what some of those wraparound services would be?

A: One of the things that we're trying to do is help those individuals overcome barriers and sometimes it may be a wraparound service. They may need assistance with gas money to get from home to training. If they need child care assistance. So those are a couple of examples of what would be common.

Q: Would some of those wraparound services possibly be something that would be contracted with a provider to do that?

A: We wouldn't necessarily have a contract for instance, we utilize a gas card service for individuals that are from our region. In some cases, we also use or purchase bus passes from the Jacksonville Transportation Authority. Just depends on the type of service.

Q: Do you have a line item in your budget then for gasoline or or something of that nature?

A: We have a line item for support services so there are various categories that you have them, and then you'd have sub categories.

Q: On your list of community partnerships, some of those that would be on that list are they contracted partners?

A: None of those are contracted partners, some of those are mandatory partners that we talked about under the WIOA.

Q: You mentioned that data sharing is haphazard due to various rules and regulations. He also said that bureaucratic barriers can significantly delay decisions and actions. Who are these bureaucrats and who are these people that are impeding the rules?

A: They're not impeding the rules. For example, we have cost sharing agreements for mandatory partners. It can be difficult sometimes when we have to send those cost sharing agreements, up to the state level. And in some cases, I can get that back in a couple of weeks. If it has to come over here to Tallahassee to the Department of Education it can take months to get that cost sharing agreement back because it's going through so many levels of review before it comes back to the local level.

Representative Fine

Q: What's your budget?

A: Approximately \$18 million.

Q: How many people got jobs last year through your efforts?

A: I will certainly get that to you.

Q: Do you think that was a good idea coming in to talk to the legislature about workforce development. I went through your whole presentation and other than something about 33 surgical technicians I couldn't find a single number, about actual results in this presentation but you knew the expenses. Can you give us something that shows us what we got for the 18 million?

A: Yes, sir. I will be sure to get that.

Q: I mean you're in charge can you do it now? I'm sure you get asked this all the time.

A: I did not put that as part of the presentation and that is a significant error on my part. And I don't have the data numbers off the top of my head.

Q: Do we have to do this? I know this is a federally funded program but do we have to take the money, are we obligated to borrow this \$200 million from our grandchildren in order to do this program?

A: Yes sir I am certain that the state decided it did not want to accept the federal funding there's a mechanism to do that.

Q: I asked my aide do you ever work with CareerSource, the answer was hardly. I learned in my area \$13.4 million a year is their budget. Do you know how many kids we can send to VPK or other things that might help people get jobs with that 18 million?

A: I don't know what the average cost for VPK is so if I knew that we could quickly do that math.

Q: It's a set amount we actually, my \$13.4 million in my area could send 5,360 kids to either a new VPK or double the amount of hours. From what I've heard, we don't know what we do, we can't rank anybody with data. None of these presentations have a lot of results for a business-related organization. So my question is, can we say that this is the highest and best use of \$200 million, or even a good use of \$200 million?

A: There are hundreds of employees across this entire state that go to work every day, to try to do the best job that they can do to get the people coming in gainful employment. When we're able to remove them from the need of SNAP or cash assistance, then we're getting some return on investment. That's a difficult thing, ROI. Because there are so many different factors that go in. But I can tell you that the system is dedicated to helping the citizens of Florida and helping Florida businesses be as good as they can be.

Chair Latvala

Q: I think where my frustration comes from is I've seen this show before and it happened to my own backyard and those of us from the Tampa Bay area. I don't want to make comparisons, but what led to Mr. Peachy's downfall was he couldn't explain who got jobs, basically, he was making up people and making up numbers. And it's very concerning to me when

you're getting paid to get people jobs, and can't tell us who you got jobs for, and how many veterans or how many African Americans or women, etc. There's no transparency, there's no accountability.

A: We have this data. It is not what we presented today, but I do not want to give the opinion that we don't know who we serve. what job they got into what demographics they make up, like, we have this information, and we'd be happy to provide it to you.

Q: Mr. Penn. My staff has been asking for this since October, it's now February. If we can get it, we would very much appreciate it.

Representative Valdes

Q: If they don't pass the TABE test, in our county, services are denied. Students who receive the TANF benefits, and do not have a high school diploma, or are not mastered in the English language. Now, they might sign up for the Penn Foster and attend a job training online or work at a nonprofit organization 40 hours a week, in order for them to receive the TANF benefits of \$300 a month food stamps that slavery, I you know, work all month to then get \$300. Is that a common practice, sir?

A: So the work participation requirement is part of the federal statute, those are standards that we are required to follow.

Q: So is it acceptable that an individual can work 40 hours a week for \$300 a month in food stamps? Is that what we're about? Because if you do the math, they're working for pennies at that point, without an opportunity for training just because they don't have the GED, or they don't have the English language. The training programs, back home, there's a short term welding program that you can do for 12 weeks, but it's in direct competition with our career technical colleges that offer the full 18 months for the larger certification. So it's almost like we're just training them, get the minimum certification, go get a job, but you can't move up. We are investing all of this money and really seeing very little return on investment. Do you have training programs better than what the technical colleges were to offer that? I mean, is that a common practice?

A: Any provider that is on the training provider list has to be licensed, they have to be authorized under Florida law, they are registered through the Department of Education. So they have to meet all those standards to be on that list. And so some are longer term, some are entry level that then become stackable.

Q: About co-locations, is it a common practice to actually lease them for a dollar amount?

A: That is part of the One Stop cost sharing agreement. Each entity is paying its fair share of the costs of operating that center. And various partners are physically present, they have space in the center, some come in through direct linkage only, which is essentially a virtual service that we're able to fit a job seeker down at a computer and link them for instance, say to the Housing Authority.

Q: In a state owned facility there is a contract for a lease agreement. Is that permissible?

A: So essentially like a sublease of that space? The way we do this cost sharing agreement at the beginning of each program year we add the cost of lease, computer technology, phone systems, and determine what the cost for us is in that particular center, and then through either direct cost contribution or in kind, each mandatory partner pays their fair share.

Q: So then does your total budget include that because if that's the case, local government agencies are also using our taxpayer dollars to help subsidize a federally tax and state funded program as well. It's double taxation at that point, if it's a state owned building, and we have minimal maintenance, and electricity, or just the operation aspect. It's a lot of money that is not accounted for in a specific budget. Yet, I believe that it should be because of the actual cost of what it costs to run a business of the workforce.

A: If the Career Center is in a state owned building, and there is no direct lease cost for that space, there would be a zero in that line item. We have offices in the state owned building from the DEO, but we do pay rent back to the DEO for that.

Representative Borrero

Q: I'm just concerned about the accuracy of the numbers that are being reported. Are there any protocols in place to ensure that the employment numbers, wages participants are actually earning are true and correct? And if there is any false application of those records do you take any corrective measures?

A: If we were to find that, we would definitely take some corrective action. We rely heavily on the Department of Revenue reporting, in order to determine what those wages are. Our verification is going to come out of that employer reported number in the reports that they have to make to the Department of Revenue. That's what our performance is based on.

Representative Bell

Q: Mr. Penn. when you're bringing all the figures back for us, would you mind also bringing in what the salary is for each executive director of the 24 Regional workforce agencies?

Casey Penn

A: Yes, we'll compile a list of all the data requests that are necessary. We'll begin working immediately on that, but that is information that we have and that we can provide.

Representative McCurdy

Q: We talked about an integration with workforce, education, and employment. My question is, how is the integration between your office and the 20 other offices across the state?

A: We have what is called the Florida Board of Workforce Development Association that is made up of 22 of the 24 boards and that is an entity where not only meet collectively as directors, but our financial officers meet and share information and best practices among them.

Representative Aloupis

Q: You mentioned 22 of the 24 are part of the association. Why are the other two not part of the association?

A: I cannot answer that question. I don't know why they choose not to be.

Q: Do you know which workforce boards are not part of the association?

A: CareerSource South Florida and CareerSource Tampa.

Marti Coley

A: Being a member of the Florida Workforce Development Association is completely by choice. Those boards have simply just opted not to be a part of it.

Representative Morales

Q: Is there any way we can get a copy of your reports during those meetings of what best practice? And what are the results of it?

A: We have not prepared any formal reports. We can certainly go back and review where best practices have been implemented and provide you examples of that.

Ranking Member Williams

Q: The association, is there a fee associated with that?

A: We have not had a dues structure in place in the last two years. Prior to that, we did have dues, but we currently do not.

Q: Prior to the two years, do you remember the amount that each member had to pay?

A: I don't remember each specific region, but it was a formula that was based on the regions allocation, so smaller regions didn't pay as much, and the larger regions were capped.

Chair Latvala

I served on the CareerSource Florida board. I just wanted to make mention of that. Speaker Avila did appoint me to the CareerSource Florida board that I served on under his speakership. Part of the reason was because of what happened in Tampa Bay and Pinellas County. Once I became a chair of this committee and realized the jurisdiction of this committee, I did resign from that board.

House Secondary Education & Career Development Subcommittee

Presentations on Florida's School Choice Landscape and Discussion on Preparing Students for College Careers Wednesday, February 17, 2021

Meeting packet can be found [here](#).

Representatives from the Following Organizations Were Present

- Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability
- School District of Lee County
- Orange Technical College
- Tallahassee Community College

Summary

Presentations on how the education system prepares students for college and a career. Research has shown that the effective student advising, which includes early identification of a student's educational or career path and continued strategic institutional support, can decrease time to degree or credential completion, lower educational costs, and better prepare the students for transfer or entry into the workforce.

Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (Tina Young, Sr Legislative Analyst)

Presented an overview of Florida's school choice landscape, including school option school choice that leads to college credit and career readiness. Also reviewed OPPAGA's report that provides state and school districts profiles that include information on student participation and demographics for each available school choice option. The representatives asked a bunch of questions on information that OPPAGA was not tasked with studying, in result Ms. Young did not know the answer to most of the questions but would follow up with committee staff.

Q&A

Representative Rizo

Q: On slide 13 for school year 19-20, can you give us an indication of an increase in virtual attendance? My question is more directed to before the pandemic struck.

A: We did not look at the data beyond 19-20, so we wouldn't have information on the students who are learning digitally this year during COVID and the numbers that we have from last year from the second survey was prior to that fourth quarter when students were out. So we don't have that information.

Q: When might you have that information?

A: We can work with committee staff to provide you that information.

Q: Is there a choice program that has declined in participation over the period of time that you presented today?

A: One that comes to mind is looking at Cape Academy in the past couple of years and that could just be because students are taking advantage of other career education options.

Q: What is the testing incentive, on slides 20 and 21, for the schools, in particular AP tests, ACE tests?

A: Schools get bonus FTE upon student passage of an exam and then there are also bonus incentives for teachers, for the students in their class who passed those exams; they get \$50 per student who passes an exam up to \$2000.

Q: Is that the same for the ACE?

A: I think that's for ACE, IB, and AP. There is also an FTE bonus available for dual enrollment.

Q: IB programs, it seems like it's reached a saturation or it's at least there's no more of an increase in participation. Is there any reason for that it, is it simply a saturation within each district or have there been hurdles in that districts are moving to other choice options?

A: We were just directed to look at the enrollment numbers over this time period, so we can't talk about any reasoning for upward or downward trends. We do know for an IB program you have to have that program established out of school and we're not sure what the process involved there or if there are districts who are experiencing barriers with that.

Q: Is there an IB program at every one of the 67 LEA's?

A: No.

Q: Is there a virtual option for IB?

A: I do not know the answer to that question.

Representative Valdes

Q: If we go to the data on the VPK where we've seen very little participation of VBK, is your Department going a little bit deeper to find out what the reasons are, is it because there aren't many programs available or what are some of the challenges in those counties?

A: We were directed to just report on the information and show the data for by County participation of VPK but it would require further analysis to see what the barriers may be.

Q: On slide 5 about the different educational settings, I am interested to see in the private school sector if you have any information on income levels of all participants of this data?

A: No I do not believe we have that information available.

Vice Chair Shoaf

Q: You noted that a large percentage of district virtual instruction is provided outside of the County of residence, does the district where the student reside pay for that?

A: Hendry County was the only county where we saw a large percent of students outside of the County taking a district virtual program, that was the only anomaly we saw in the data.

Q: So Hendry County is paying for the instruction of students who do not live in Henry County?

A: I'm not sure who's paying for it, we just know that they have this program and that there are students all over the state that're taking it.

Representative Woodson

Q: Has there been any thought as to how the students feel about the outcomes?

A: We were only directed to study program participation, so we do not have any outcome data.

Representative Harding

Q: As we look for opportunities how to improve the career education and workforce education programs in our state, do you have any insight you could give us on a couple areas that maybe we could look to improve and be an asset on that front?

A: I'm not sure if I can answer that based on this what we were directed to do here, again we weren't looking at any sort of outcomes or you know program availability of these career education options.

Representative Maney

Q: I represent a large military population, where a lot of my constituents take part in Florida virtual school outside of the county, where do they fit into the data?

A: We don't have information on those students, just students in Florida.

School District of Lee County (Dr. Greg Adkins, Superintendent)

Presented Lee County's college and career continuum, specifically focusing on a career and technical education. Every single student who graduates from Lee County has at least one industry certification and has a really clear knowledge of career options and pathways available to them. Lee County has over 80 Career & Tech Ed programs at 15 high schools and 2 charter high schools, and 10 Career & Tech Ed course options at 20 middle schools.

Orange Technical College (Andrew Jenkins, Senior Director)

Orange County public schools just released their 2019-20 annual report, last year 8783 industry certifications were earned by secondary students. The number of certifications earned continues to increase each year, they currently have 1094 high school dual enrolled students who attend classes on the tech college campuses and 2441 students that are enrolled in a career certificate program on their high school campus. Those are just students getting a certificate, there are a lot more taking courses. Orange County Technical College has career specialists in 20 high schools that work in collaboration with the high school staff to provide career counseling for students, they inform high school students of the myriad of CTE programs on the tech college campuses as well as those offered on the high school campus.

Tallahassee Community College (Kimberly Moore, VP for Workforce Innovation)

TCC serves over 11,000 students right now, they are one of the top 10 colleges in the nation with an Aspen designation. 33% of their students served are African Americans, with 50% of them receiving financial aid. TCC starts working with their students as soon as they apply, within 24 to 48 hours they are contacted by an admissions navigator that works with them to make sure that there are not any barriers to enrolling and they will also complete an assessment that looks at careers and interests. They want to know up front what the student is driven by, how can TCC can make sure that they invest in that.

Q&A

Representative Valdes

Q: Do you have any marketing dollars in your budget to promote your options and your opportunities that you offer?

Atkins: We use the power of social media marketing, we have accounts approved by the district so we've used that in mass to get our word out, we also have a podcast.

Q: Do you have any bilingual guidance counselors to assist the ELL population in your district with understanding what resources are available? How do you assist the ELL population?

Atkins: That has certainly been a challenge in here in Lee County, we are the fastest growing ELL population in the state of Florida for six years in a row. We do have a gap between the diversity that we see in our students and what we see in our workforce. We do have bilingual staff and resources available. We also have a district wide graduation task force related to the needs of our ELL students.

Q: Can you talk about your bridge programs and how many bridge programs you have? Specifically if you have one for the LPN to the RN track and how long does that program take and what are some of the barriers?

Moore: We have bridge programs with our technical schools in the area.

Representative Rizo

Q: Can you quantify for us the cost of the career continuum program and specifically if you could tell us what your investment is versus in kind with partners that you may have? If you could give us a per pupil investment.

Adkins: I don't have that readily available to provide today. Our primary funding source for our career and tech Ed programs from grades 5-12 is the Perkins grant. Our community partners are extremely generous and key to our abilities.

Q: Have you seen a decrease in your traditional programs with your increase in your CTE programs?

Moore: Yes, we have seen that there was a greater interest in how can I complete and earn something fairly quickly.

Q: So overall have you seen an increase in your student population?

Moore: Absolutely.

Q: Do you have any sort of longitudinal data as to the efficacy or the return on investment for these 70 programs?

Moore: Working with our institutional effectiveness office, I asked for our students when we look at are they in employment or are they returning back to gain other education. 95% are either in the workforce or they're coming back to get another certification or degree.

Closing

Very good panel with a lot of information to digest. There were a lot of questions asked that some information was not available for, but they will be working with committee staff to distribute further data and information.

Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Education

Discussion and Presentation of CS/SB48

Wednesday, February 17, 2021

Meeting packet can be found [here](#).

Summary

The Appropriations Subcommittee on Education met to discuss CS/SB 48, which significantly changes Education Scholarship Programs in the state of Florida. Chair Broxson began the meeting by saying that this bill was a committee substitute, and for the sake of transparency, that a lot of these changes were technical substitutes that would have to be presented by amendment, and this PCS allows the committee members to see those changes as a whole.

PCS for CS/SB 48 308678 (Senator Diaz)

The intent of the bill is to consolidate educational scholarship programs. The bill merges the McKay and Gardiner Scholarship Programs and creates a new program called the McKay-Gardiner for students with disabilities. It also brings the Hope Scholarship Programs into the Family Empowerment Program. The bill establishes both scholarship programs as an educational savings account, allowing parents to choose between public and private schools to find the best fit for their child. It enhances accountability, establishing accountability metrics across all scholarship programs. It streamlines the funding process for requiring SFOs to be responsible for reporting students for funding. It requires parents to annually commit to the program and to compliance requirements. It maintains private school financial compliance requirements for schools receiving more than \$250,000 in scholarships. It strengthens the requirements for student scholarship account closure. It provides for tax credits to be used for K-12 funding through a designated fund and increases per student funding from 95% to 97.5% for the FES. It establishes an educational savings fund for students and provides options for how the funds can be used, such as for digital devices. It allows private virtual school within an administrative office and administrative staff in the State of Florida to meet the physical location requirement to participate in the scholarship programs. It also modifies eligibility requirements for the McKay-Gardiner scholarship and establishes scholarship award priorities. It establishes a scholarship up to 50,000 FTE with an additional scholarship growth rate of 7% of that student population, which was changed to 1% in the PCS, amounting to roughly 4,000 students. It modifies the FES portion of the bill. It establishes scholarship award priorities on renewal for FTC and Hope scholarships. It clarifies that a student will maintain eligibility until high school graduation and allows for an FTS transportation award for students choosing to go outside the district.

Then Senator Diaz went into the changes implemented in the PCS from the original bill. In section three it adds that the DoR must ensure that eligible contributions held by the SFO are deposited into the designated student fund and the trust fund. In the next section it adds school equipment and expenses as allowable expenses for instructional materials. It aligns the tuition and fee language from McKay-Gardner and the FES. It allows the DOE to approve a part-time tutor using different mastery standards. It requires the district to accept the licensed professional diagnosis of IEP. It clarifies the surety bond, clarifying the SFO has a surety bond that covers its functions. It establishes a new annual growth rate of 1% of the population of exceptional students. Modifies the purpose of FES to include students who qualify under the Hope category. It adds siblings of McKay-Gardiner as eligible for FES. It establishes the allocation to provide funds to implement the M-G and FES. The purpose is to provide specificity for the allocation. It requires that unused tax credits continue in effect subject to carry forward provisions.

Q&A on PCS

Senator Cruz

Q: If this is streamlining scholarships by removing red tape, how much money will we be saving taxpayers?

A: I don't have an exact amount on here, the streamlining part of the bill is to facilitate with ease for parents to access the scholarship at an easier to use one-stop shop. The current system is confusing and has varied eligibility requirements.

Q: For the parents who choose to homeschool and enroll, how will they be receiving these funds?

A: No. Currently we have the Gardiner scholarship which has functioned as an ESA. This bill brings all of these scholarships under that format. All expenditures must meet strict guidelines and must be approved by the SFO, which has been doing this for the last 8 or 9 years.

Q: Can you speak to whether the Step-Up program is making profits off of supplies?

A: The ESA functions as a reimbursement. The SFO does not act as a provider of supplies, however they do have to prove expenditures. I am not aware of any situation where an SFO is a provider of supplies.

Q: How will we monitor how these funds are being used for legitimate education expenditures?

A: We have been doing that for 8 or 9 years with the McKay scholarship, and we are applying that format to the other scholarship programs.

Senator Polsky

Q: I was wondering about homeschooling and getting funds to spend in these ESA accounts. I get why foster kids would potentially qualify but I am concerned if there is a house with multiple foster kids choosing to go into this program, that could be quite a bit of money going into a house. Can you speak to that?

A: The statutes that governs homeschooling is very strict and requirements must be met that are not changed by this bill. If a student qualifies and is registered as a home school student, the parents must comply with every single part of the statute. On the designation of the funds, they would be managed by the SFO, so all expenditures must be approved. It would not change any of that and would retain all of those accountability measures. They are not receiving a pot of money.

Q: You said each expense must be approved in advance?

A: Yes, the process is delineated through the scholarships. Expenditures must be approved before. The process is very extensive in validating each expenditure.

Q: In the Hope scholarship, that one was originally developed for students bullied in a school. Is it my understanding that those kids' siblings now automatically qualify?

A: So the student who qualifies under Hope would still enter the consolidated scholarship under Hope. What I was talking about was Gardiner siblings under PCS.

Q: Can there be a cap on the administrative fees? Thinking about economies of scale we are increasing the program dramatically. It seems we keep adding students but they really don't have that many more expenses. Can you speak on that?

A: It's not that clear cut. We are not increasing the administrative fee, we are consolidating the programs, bringing the administrative fees to a mid-point at 2.5%, so they are really looking at the same amount of money for administrative services that area actually more labor intensive. Some of our programs have a 3% fee now.

Q: When a public school gets their funding, they are required to spend it towards categoricals. As for these parents or private schools who receive the money, they do not have to spend their money according to categoricals, is that correct?

A: In this case it is just one pot of money separate from the FEFP. They don't receive categoricals.

Senator Gibson

Q: I want to ask about combining the programs. You mentioned that they have different eligibility. Is that changing?

A: Yes. Different scholarships have had different requirements. Now differences have been consolidated in this bill for eligibility. There were differences and mechanical differences on how scholarships were being issued. In this case we are going to center this all around and ESA and SFO. There is a lot of technical stuff in the weeds that were different, and now we are streamlining them and making them even.

Q: For home school students funding, where does that go?

A: The home school student is no different than any other student under the ESA. It is the same process for getting the approval of the expenditures. The only difference is that parents may be using it for home schooling or for tuition, they will have different expenses, those allowable expenses allow flexibility for parents to cater towards home-schooled students.

Q: It is my understanding that all of the testing for home schooled students are done by the public school and so what exactly is the 2.5% for the scholarship agent paying for if they are not doing anything?

A: It is very labor intensive to vet and approve scholarships expenditures. These scholarship agents are doing every that the district staff is not doing that is the parts such as create this system, approve expenses, etc. I am speaking in perspective as per capita.

Q: Is that 2.5% for scholarships? What is it?

A: It is 2.5% of the allocation per student.

Q: The virtual school gets funding apparently if they establish a website in Florida. Does that mean out of state virtual schools?

A: No. For it to be considered eligible, it has to have a Florida presence and administrative office. If the parents wanted to take the option of a virtual private school, in order for the school to be qualified it has to meet those parameters.

Q: When do you get to the 300% of the poverty level?

A: We have a cap on the scholarships, and we have to work within certain parameters to make that happen. So there are tiers as to who gets first dibs at the scholarships. So we move to the 300% level after certain tiers based on the availability of scholarships after the other tiers have been met.

Q: I'm reading the language "a student in foster care or participant sibling." Is that a scholarship student sibling?

A: Yes, that is speaking to the sibling of a current scholarship student. They are in the third tier of priority.

Q: And that is regardless of whether they will end up at the same school?

A: Correct, that does not have a requirement of which school, it just has to be an eligible school on the list.

Amendment 140650 to PCS (Senator Cruz)

This amendment requires the Auditor General to conduct an annual operational audit every year instead of the very three years as previously recommended and as established in the bill. I believe with the new changes of this bill there needs to be more oversight.

Appearance Forms on Amendment 140650

Marie Claire Leeman, Fund Education Now: She thinks Senator Cruz's amendment is great and thinks it is not the time to reduce oversight.

Debate on Amendment 140650

Senator Diaz

Thank you for this amendment. However, this was brought up at the first stop. The Auditor General's recommendation is one year and I think it flies more because this is all now consolidated. The AG doesn't think the one year check is efficient or effective.

Closing on Amendment 140650 (Senator Cruz)

In Arizona this program was implemented and an auditor general that nearly \$700,000 were spent on things outside of the scope of education. This is a new program; we are the stewards of taxpayers money. I am begging you to vote for this so we can make sure that we are on track, at least for the first few years.

Outcome on Amendment 140650

The amendment fails.

Amendment 441606 (Senator Cruz)

This amendment makes two changes from the CS. It preserves the statement that these scholarships are to provide families with limited resources educational options. And secondly, it seeks to revise to income threshold, so that more people would qualify. So this will continue to increase the threshold at an exponential rate. It just simply will change the language so we increase from 300% to 325% only in incremental stages. I can't imagine this was intended and that this must be an error so please vote in favor of this.

Debate on Amendment 441606

Senator Diaz

While I appreciate your review on this, there are a couple of guardrails here, with the cap on the program and the emphasis on the 185%. The hard cap and priority list and the fact that this escalator only applies is there are 5% or more scholarships left off the table, I don't think we need this amendment now. Also to be clear, she is amending current law and not the PCS.

Closing (Senator Cruz)

Well, you almost convinced me not to vote for my own amendment. Members, we don't know, though. I'm sure that the plan is to eventually move everyone over to a program like this. We need to be fiscally responsible so we don't end up with an award for families receiving almost \$500,000 a year. Any fiscally responsible individual would vote for this. We love Manny Diaz but I'm going to ask you to give me a break.

Outcome on Amendment 441606

The amendment fails.

Outcome of PCS for CS/SB 48 308678

The PCS is adopted.

Q&A on the Bill as Amended

Senator Polsky

Q: In the PCS lines 1607-1615 talk about debit cards. So can you clarify that a parent who has a child in one of these programs gets an actual debit card to use for these programs?

A: The idea of the debit card is that they are handed a debit card with the funds in them. But the funds have to be approved through the statutory uses to be able to receive the funds to be able to spend. If it is a debit card it is not a lump sum. They then purchase the item, with approval before the purchase, and must show documentation afterwards. The funds are held by the SFO. They cannot purchase something without approval. I believe if they purchase something on their own they can submit it for approval and receive reimbursement but they cannot employ this method with any card that has been given to them by the program. There is approval purchase by purchase

Q: If a parent spends money inappropriately, are there penalties?

A: They will be removed from the scholarship and the program has the ability to recover the funds. We have had that going on with Gardiner for 8 or 9 years successfully.

Appearance Forms on PCS

Rev. Rachel Shepard, Pastors for Florida Children: There needs to be more oversight over private schools.

Ron Gilly, representing himself: I am speaking against this bill because I believe it is going to leave out a group of students that will like to attend schools that do not take any government funding whatsoever.

Victoria Salis: We are thankful for the program, without your help it wouldn't be possible for us to go to our schools. We will give our best to this bill.

Angel Pittman, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship: Low-income parents cannot afford to have this kind of bill pass. Few schools provide aid for students with disabilities.

Victorio Nastasi, Reason Foundation: SB 48 would solidify Florida as the leading state in providing education options for families.

Marie Claire Leeman, Fund Education Now: Vouchers and ESAs ruin public education. Parents will realize they have to make difficult choices and they cannot pay for certain services they accessed in public schools. We are widening the gap of accessibility to accountable education services that serve our students the best.

Jeanette Burge, Parent: I'm glad to see Senator Diaz give parents like me more flexibility in spending our scholarship dollars.

Nancy Lauther, Florida PTA: We have some policy differences with this bill as proposed. The bill proposes a radical departure from current scholarship program funding mechanisms. We would hope you will consider alternatives for this funding in the interest of a better future for Florida's children.

Phillip Suderman, Americans for Prosperity: This is a wonderful bill. Educational choice and freedom allows a collaborative approach instead of a top down system imposed as if all children are the same. I urge for your favorable support.

Natalie Wallace, Step up For Students: Thanks to these scholarships we can afford to send our students to Hillel schools. The scholarship has lessened the financial burden on my family. Thanks to Senator Diaz, things can be even better with scholarship spending flexibility.

Lauren Gallow, League of Women Voters: Waiving in Opposition

Kathy Bane, Florida Education Association: 1200 pages of rule for public schools and 48 pages for government-funding private schools. We need to educate all of our students.

William Mattox, James Madison Institute: We are supportive of this proposal and the leadership here. We like the simplicity and flexibility. We believe there is one modest tweak that would make this better. We'd like to see the Senate add a provision adding priority for middle-income families living in Florida Opportunity Zones.

Samantha King, Parent: We are very thankful for the FTC. My son has made a 180 degree turn with this scholarship. This bill will make it possible for more families to have flexibility in spending their education dollars.

Daniel Aqua, Florida: Waiving in support.

Alexis La Roux, Step up for Students: Waiving in support.

Matthew Troy, Florida Chamber of Commerce: Waiving in support.

Cesar Lajoyas, Libre Initiative: Waiving in support.

Michael Barrett, Florida Conference of Catholic Bishops: Waiving in support.

James Monsteller, Foundation for Florida Future: Waiving in support.

Carry Boyd, SPLC Action Fund: Waiving against.

Pamela Burge, NAACP Florida State Chapter: Waiving against.

Barbra Devane, Florida NOW: Waiving against.

ACLU of Florida: Waiving against.

Debate on PCS

Senator Cruz

I think my concerns with this legislation are evident. We are expanding these programs and are riddled with problems. 90% of our students attend public schools. We are diverting public dollars into private schools and that is inexcusable. At a minimum, if this bill passes, we need to at least have more oversight. Now is not the time to massively expand the Florida voucher program. We are in a pandemic. Academic learning is in disarray, but instead we launch a new program in front of a million unemployed Floridians.

Senator Gibson

I totally support the McKay and Gardiner scholarships that help a different population of students. I have some issues with the fact that the people making all of the money don't look like the students at their school or their parents largely. That is problematic to me. Nobody care about what was happening in our schools until they started getting paid, until there was a way to divert funds from traditional public schools. I have an issue with that. I think that we need to talk about equity, not just fairness, in our public schools, when we start sending money away from them. We need to bring everyone up and contribute more money to public schools. I think this bill creates more division than anything in certain neighborhoods. Now were talking about opportunity zones, ridiculous. I am going to wait for a more equitable bill for our public schools.

Closing on PCS

I really appreciate the comments from my colleagues. There are sometimes when we are just going to differ in philosophy, and that is the beauty of this process. We are all trying to get to the same place, just using different methods. Where I come from is streamlining, not expansion. I have always been open to see how we can provide more flexibility everywhere. I am about school choice and innovation everywhere. If you give me ideas on how to better serve your communities, I am open to that. Where we differ is that my view is that public education is to provide free education to our student. But I still believe the parents is the best decision maker for the child, that is what makes a difference in the

life of the student. I do ask for my colleagues support on this bill to keep providing these students and parents the ability to take advantage of these programs, and to make it easier to access the programs.

Outcome on PCS

The bill was reported favorably by the committee.

House Early Learning & Elementary Education Subcommittee

Discussion and Presentation of Bills

Wednesday, February 17, 2021

Meeting packet can be found [here](#).

HB 529 Moments of Silence in Public Schools (Representative Fine)

House Bill 529 is a simple bill. It would create a mandatory one-to-two-minute moment of silence or reflection for all of our school students in K-12 in the state of Florida. The bill says that teachers cannot get involved in how students choose to take advantage of that moment of silence reflection, but it does ask them to have parents and guardians talk to students about it. The other thing that the bill does is it cleans up some old language that's in existing statute that references voluntary prayer in schools. So it takes out these portions of the bill that reference prayer in our current statute.

Q&A

Representative Hunschofsky

Q: Thank you for talking with me this morning about some of my concerns, the main one being the line that says the bill prohibits students from interfering with other students' participation in the moment of silence. My concern regarding that is what is meant by that? For example if there are students who have trouble with a moment of silence being silent, will this cause them from being future stigmatized in the classroom? Will this lead to disciplinary action? Will this lead to disciplinary action of the teacher? So those are my concerns regarding that line of the bill as we discussed earlier this morning.

A: So my son goes to school for 420 minutes every day, and if he can't stay quiet for this one to two minutes than I suspect that he can't for the other 400 plus minutes of the day. That said, the purpose of this is not to get kids in trouble, the purpose of this is to say the time is to be quiet, it is not a time to be goofing off or things like that. I did promise you on the phone and I will take it out of here, a discussion with staff to say does this language in here create a precondition where a child can get in trouble? I don't think that's the purpose of the language and I don't think that would happen, but I will make sure that is the case as we move forward.

Q: I have been contacted by a rabbi in my district initially asked me to be supportive of this. When I went through the bill and I shared with him my concerns on that line. He shared exactly similar concerns and we wouldn't want this to be used for something that could lead to disciplinary actions. I look forward to seeing this in our future committee meetings with hopefully some language to amend that. Thank you.

A: As I said I will discuss that. I will say we do want it to be clear that now is not the time to engage in classroom cheers or throwing a football or what have you. The idea is for the time to be quiet, but the goal here is not to create an instrument that can be used to discipline students and like I said I will take that up with staff to make sure- to see how it fits with the remainder of our education statutes. If there is an issue the bill has two more committee stops. Many of you probably sit on the full Education Committee because you're here in this committee- that will be the third stop, so there is an opportunity to improve the bill as it moves through the process. For those of you that are new the kind of question is exactly the purpose of this process. The bills that I am most proud of have no resemblance at the end of the process of what they did at the beginning because I've gotten so many good ideas along the way. So again, I will take this up with staff moving forward.

Representative Nixon

Q: Starting on line 42 it said “A teacher may not make suggestions as to the nature of any reflection that a student may engage in during the moment of silence,” but then it goes down to line 47 which states that “Each first-period classroom teacher shall encourage parents or guardians to discuss the moment of silence with their children and to make suggestions as to the best use of this time.” Can you just clarify what this mean because it seems somewhat like it could cancel it out?

A: What the intent of this language is to say is that the teacher cannot direct the student in how to engage in the moment of silence. “Hey, I think you should do X or I think you should do Y.” But what it also says is that they are encouraged to have the student to go home and talk about it with their parents. It’s absolutely ok for a parent to say to a child “Hey you’ve got a 2 minute moment of silence here’s how you should get ready for the day and prepare the day.” But it is not saying in one place teachers shouldn’t be involved and in another they should. The teacher should not be giving directions; the teacher should be asking the parent or the guardian to provide direction- that’s the portion of the bill discusses.

Representative Davis

Q: In this language this now said that this is a mandate. Would you like to talk to us about this being a mandate instead of something that’s permissible already in our school districts?

A: That’s correct. It’s a mandate

Q: Why the mandate?

A: Because I think it’s a good idea. I think we live in a world in which our kids have a lot of problems. Two years ago, almost three years ago, I can’t even remember, the most vivid day that many of us have had in the Legislature was Parkland. Where, on Valentine’s Day, we were sitting on the Floor and we learned of students being shot in school. I fundamentally believe that our kids have issues today in part because they don’t have time for moment of reflections. They’re so focused on Instagram and Snapchat and whatever’s going on in school and extracurriculars, that they never have that opportunity to get centered before the beginning of the day., however it is that they choose to do that. I think that this is a good idea. I think for the same reason that we mandate many things as it relates in our education system. We provide the funding to our school systems. It’s our money it should be our rules. I think this is a good idea and I think this is something that schools should offer for kids and that’s why I’m advancing it.

Q: I like the fact that you said this is our money and these are our schools. So this is a one to two minute potential mandate right for a moment of silence? So my issue is why not longer-- If we’re trying to center our children? Why not a 10 to 15 minute period of time where they’re allow to do something else other than this moment of silence? Maybe a stretch or something else to center them—an exercise other than this moment of silence where they potentially can read the bible or something like that?

A: I think it’s a fair question. I think if someone wanted to talk about students mandatory stretches in the middle of the day, that’s a bill that I might be open to the point here is for them to have a moment of silence reflection and I will tell you again as a father of a 3rd grader and a 7th grader, a moment of silence reflection will never last for 15 minutes. One to two minutes is the most that those two are going to be able to handle before they’re ready to move on. The purpose of this is quite time to reflect. It is not to stretch, it is not to do other things, but there are reasons we do that. There are reasons why we have mandated PE for our children at least at the age of my son because we believe they need that time. We do lots of thing to address the needs of students in our schools. This is one where I think we can do a bit more and it’s my personal belief that a one to town minute moment of silence at the beginning of the day is a good way to be centered. I’m trying to balance the fact that there’s lots of thing we want students to do at the beginning of the day. One to two minutes seems like a reasonable amount of time given all of the other things that have to go on in the course of the school day.

Q: For those students who choose not to do this. What about an opt out provision? Why does the bill not give them that opportunity to opt out? We're mandating it, but they don't have the option to opt-out... Why not?

A: We're not mandating what they do with the time. Just one to two minutes to be quite and reflect they can use that time however they want. I don't know what you'd opt-out to do, maybe you'd run around in circles in the classroom or scream and yell. I mean we're not mandating what they do at that time. What we're saying is spend that one to two minutes if you want to use it for one purpose by not using it for that purpose you're opting out of it. So, I think it's one to two minutes the student can use it how they want so long as they are quite and they use that as a time for reflection, but we're not mandating what they do so there's not that we really need them to opt out of.

Q: So for those that would say that this mandate violates the establishment clause how would you answer that?

A: I'd say they'd be wrong. The constitution says that the government cannot establish religion. Now, nothing about this moment of silence establishes religion. In fact, the teachers and the school is expressly forbidden to tell people how to use this time. Moreover, those who are incorrectly concerned about this issue should applauded the bill because the language in this bill removes the idea of prayer. We're taking prayer, which is currently in our statute, if you look at the lines that get marked out we are talking about taking those out, we're making it closer to the erroneous view of the constitution that I would point out that they have.

Representative Learned

Q: Is there a school district or school asking for this bill? Is there anybody below our jurisdiction advocating for this?

A: Fair question. I don't general solicit the view of local politicians when I'm trying to figure out what I think is a good idea. You'll find I'm generally not the biggest fan of local politicians. But there are groups, some of who will be here today, who brought the idea. This is also not a new idea. This bill has passed off the House floor for those of you that haven't been here at least the last two years. In fact the bill was run by a Democrat in both of those years. It's passed off the House floor last year it made it all the way to the Senate floor, but because everything got weird at the end because of COVID a lot of things got off track so it did not ultimately make it over the finish line.

Q: I'm looking for something, so I'm going to ask very plainly cause I think it will help clear it up. What is the problem this bill is trying to solve?

A: I don't think anything in life is a silver bullet. I don't know that this bill solves a problem. What I think it does is it moves us one small step down that path. We have a problem with our kid today. When I was a kid, the high school I went to, half those kids came to school with guns every day. They brought their guns so school. They were hanging on racks in the back of their truck. Yet it never occurred to any one of them, and there were hundreds of guns on campus, never did it occur to anyone that 'hey I should grab one of these and I should go inside the school and start shooting people.' Never occurred to anyone. And that's just one endemic problem in our society. Between video games and the loss of just so many aspects of our culture, our kids have become detached from understanding what's important in the world. Before they engage in that 6 or 7 hours of learning, it's a chance to get calm, to get focused, to think about the broader issues, to mediate, to do whatever they want with that time to be able to get them down that path. Is that gonna solve the problem that I mentioned? No. But it might help reduce it to some degree. The way we solve problems is a battle of inches; it's a little bit at a time. I don't think this bill solves every problem in our society. I also don't think it makes anything worse and I think it moves us down that path just a little bit at basically no cost to anybody.

Q: When I was a kid the moments of silence were 20 seconds. This is a minute I'm just curious why that 60 seconds was chosen and not what we've done historically?

A: I think historically is a matter of perspective. I don't think that many people are doing this now so it was simply a time period that seemed reasonable. No less than one, no more than two and we've given some reflection. So I just think that was a time that felt right and that's the reasoning. There's no science involved that is should be 26.3 seconds. It was just an amount of time that seems reasonable.

Representative Nixon

Q: I have a daughter at home and we reflect but we do it through stretching. Would a child get in trouble for stretching, or mediating, or, I know it's supposed to be silence and things like that, but how would that work?

A: I think mediating would be explicitly ok. As long as it's quite it's a moment of silence. There will be wide teacher discretion here. I mean if the student's flailing around and being disruptive: no. But I'm certain there would be forms of this that would be fine. The idea is a minute or two to get centered, to reflect on the world, before the day begins, without the government telling you how to spend it without you being disruptive to the other students. That is the purpose of the time.

Representative Koster

Q: I love the idea. I agree that our lives are too hectic right now and our children do need some time to reflect. Mine is just a technical question it may be something that can be resolved. It says it requires the time to be spent in first period classrooms for all grades, but in elementary school generally, I don't think a lot of our public school elementary students are have a "first period" and so I don't know if there's maybe technical language or an amendment that could clarify- does it happen within the first five minutes of the school day or after the first bell rings so there's not confusion? That would be my only question.

A: The idea is at the beginning of the day- I would argue if you only have one class the whole day than that class is the first period. But, much as we're going to take the issue using this as a disciplinary vehicle, I will address this with staff as well and see if some clarify amendment in a future committee makes sense.

Representative Hunschofsky

Q: In reference to the Parkland shooting. What does it have in common with this bill?

A: I believe that when you see the problems that some of our children have today, and there's no greater impact than what happened at Parkland, I think that part of the reason the kids have gotten off track, some kids have gotten off track, is because they don't have time to reflect, they don't sit back and think about the world in which they are involved. To be clear, I'm not saying if this bill had pass then Parkland wouldn't have happened. I'm not saying that. I think Parkland is an extreme example of the kinds of issues that of happened because students don't take the time because children don't take the time to reflect and spend time in thought. That is that is the idea of the bill. Thank you.

Q: As the former mayor of Parkland who is the mayor at the time, a local elected official, who followed the whole history of what happened I would just respectfully say that I don't- no moment of silence was ever brought up in any of the MSD commission meetings, by any of the experts, by anybody from the Secret Service, nor anyone else down the line that a moment of silence would've done anything to prevent that tragedy from happening. I just would like to be on the record with that. Thank you very much.

A: I wasn't intending to imply that that was the case. I think what happened in Parkland is endemic of a much larger problem that this bill is intended to make one small step towards addressing. The notion that kids have become detached from the larger world, that they don't have time to reflect, that they don't have time to be centered at the beginning of the day. We have a problem in our culture- a problem that did not exist when many of us were kids. I think this is one small step to begin to try to address that problem.

Appearance Forms on the Bill

Rabbi Oirechman, Chabad Rabbis in Florida: I was giving a class yesterday and a doctor who attend my classes tells me about a program he's taking, a fit program or health program, and part of the program is to take moments to reflect, to mediate, to take deep breathing in and out twice a day. I tried to do it after he shared it with me and I know

how hard it is to commit to something like that cause; we know it's going to further our health, be so beneficial to us. As far as why mandating, because you know it hard to do what's right. There's something that could help and there is actually- I think there's more than 20 other states that have this mandatory. There is research and data shown that this is reducing crime. States that have that mandatory is reduced crime and I'll be glad to share this with Representative Fine if any of you want to take a look at it. Other than educating our students for knowledge, we want to educate them for moral values, and here you have the idea of this. You have a moment or two at the beginning of the day for them to take this time which will further the relationship between the parents and the children. Having the parents taking the time to tell their children what is important for them to reflect on. Moments like this for contemplation, meditation are making the children and teachers more productive. We're dealing with so much darkness in the world like Representative Fine was referring too, the shooting in Parkland, there's a lot of darkness, we're dealing with a lot of darkness. We've witness a lot of darkness in schools with shooting and things like that, so here we're trying to bring something productive, something of value, a little bit of light and you don't fight darkness with darkness. You fight darkness with a little bit of light. So, all we're saying is we're going to mandate this to bring some light into the school and with this little bit of light you know darkness is the mere absent of light and when you ring light darkness disappears.

Rabbi Wetner, Chabad Rabbis in Florida: Waive in support.

Devon Graham, American Atheists: I've been fighting this bill for going on 2 years now and between that and my deconversion from Christianity about 5 years ago I've learned that there's very little that I or the 25% of non-religious Floridians can say that can convince people that the separation of church and state matters and is vital to our democracy. The fact that this bill is part of a statute that explicitly describes the study of religion and the Christian bible in our schools isn't convincing anyone that this moment of silence isn't religiously motivated. So, in addition to being the local neighborhood atheist who's here to kill your joy, I'm also the mother of two kids in public schools. As a parent there are few things that are more heartbreaking than watching your kids being bullied for who they are or for what they believe in. The mandatory moment of silence is setting up children who do not pray, who's faith does not subscribe to a bowed head posture, or who just don't want to participate, to setting them up for bullying. There are multiple cases of this in our court system currently where options of secular or neutral moments of silence or religious classes are implemented. In a lawsuit against Mercer County Board of Education, one student who chose not to participate in an optional religion class was thrown into a broom closet by the teacher and was bullied so badly by her peers that they had had to go to school in a different county. In another case against the West Virginia Board of Education, a Jewish student who chose not to pray during the optional moment of silence was told by his classmates that if he didn't do it that he was going to burn in hell for all eternity. It comes down to this, there are no guidelines for how to run this moment of silence. There's no guidance in the bill as to how to opt out. There's no language in this bill on how it will be guaranteed that this moment of silence will remain secular and neutral and compliant with an establishment clause in the first amendment. The current statute as someone already said, already allows kids to take part in a moment of silence if they so choose to and they should absolutely be allowed to if they want to. What it shouldn't be is compulsory, because like all rituals and religious practices, it should be done because the person wants to and not because their forced to.

Barbara DeVane, Florida National Organization for Women, Inc: Waive in Opposition.

Kara Gross, American Civil Liberties Union of Florida: Waive in Opposition.

Debate on the Bill

Representative Nixon

I just wanted to state two points that my rationale was for not voting on this bill. One, I'm an elitist against Home Rule. The Representative stated that he doesn't really consult with the local governments as it relates to passing policy that actually may affect them, and that's something that I'm totally opposed to. I believe if you are about to pursue a policy or pass legislation that does affect any type of person or government or whatever, you should speak with those individuals. Lastly, being a Black mom and working too, and in the school to prison pipeline, I know that Black students are disproportionately and at a higher rate disciplined more than White students. I feel that this bill unfortunately often times -- I go from 1-5 kids with my blend and I have two elementary school kids, two in first grade and I know how hard it is for them to stay still. And I just think that this bill could create an atmosphere where students of color, Black students, are disciplined at a higher rate than other students and for that reason I'm going to have to object to this bill.

Representative Hawkins

One thing, and I'm not here to speak for you, but you didn't say you wouldn't take a call from a local elected official, or anything, you just said you don't reach out. So I just wanted to make sure that's on the record because, coming from a local elected official, I know I've reached out to you and you returned my calls from Central Florida. So I think that we're in a time now where I know my daughter has suffered from anxiety and a lot of that's from peer-pressure going to school, so having this at the first part of the day can resolve a lot of those issues. You remember as kids they used to separate us until we cooled down. When things happened a lot of times having that time the first part of the day could change the whole attitude of how that student goes about their business for the day. We see apps on our phones, LeBron James advertising "Clam" to take time, the commercials we see on TV- it's a trend, it's not saying that it's just for students. It's for all of us really we should take time and reflect. Our Apple Watches remind us to take deep breaths how many times a day. So, I'm in favor of this bill and I'll be voting up on this bill.

Representative McCurdy

You mentioned in your bill that you're looking to make our society better and allow our children to reflect on the things that they currently face in society. I just personally believe that one to two minutes is not going to move the needle in any direction when you talk about the children, especially in my district that I represent that are faced with homeless. Their parents are facing unemployment. They're walking to schools in deplorable neighborhoods. If you really wanted to do something- and that's the reason that I unfortunately won't be supporting this bill.

Representative LaMarca

Because the discussion of local electeds and Representative Fine has brought up, I wanted to at least get the presenters comments as a former City Commissioner in Broward County and a County Commissioner. I know that former Mayor Hunschofsky here, the thought is that you don't listen to local elected... My comment is that in the two years that I've had the opportunity to work with, you and work on some bills with you, and work on some legislation, and travel places with you, that I think that I've made a dent that you believe that County Commissioners maybe make some since but that the reality is I think that you do listen but your comment was that you don't solicit.

Representative Learned

I just want to say I came here today prepared to vote yes on this from the staff reports that I saw. I still may on the floor. I'm going to be down today. I just think what I was looking was a little bit more data a little bit more as to what the rationale for this bill is, and I think we have an opportunity to clear that up in the future before it gets to the floor. One

hundred minutes a year is longer than we spend on a lot of our standardize tests. In 1 to 2 minutes could be as much as 360 minute, our kids are already behind in a lot of their subjects especially after the pandemic. So I'm gonna be down today but I look forward to seeing this on the floor.

Representative Hunschofsky

I just want to reiterate on my initial concern with the bill is that statement regarding students prohibited from interfering with each other's participation in a moment of silence. I wouldn't want that to lead to disciplinary action against the student or the teacher. And just since the comments have come up about making this a more caring world and everything, today is two days after the third commemoration of the Parkland shooting. I am honored to have the privilege of the respect and the trust of my community, and when we talk about being a better place, a more compassionate world, and being the good and being the light, that also includes being compassionate to other peoples experiences and also being reflective of what one says. There are 17 families who lost their loved ones permanently in an awful tragedy. I just want to make sure that when we talk about other peoples experiences and situations, we come with an open heart and open mind and a sense of humanity realizing that this wasn't just a little thing that could've been prevented from a moment of silence, but this is a larger systemic issue. Thank you very much.

Representative Williams

I didn't see anything in the bill itself about opting out. My concern is to force something at this particular time without speaking to the shareholders over our student, I think is a problem for me. Because there's not something in this bill that gives me the opportunity to opt out today I will be down on the bill. But it's if something that we can work towards to make it better I'd be willing to change my vote on the next stop. But today I will be down. Thank you.

Representative Davis

I'll bring this in from a teacher's perspective. We're talking about having the teachers counsel and suggest ways that our students can use their moment of silence. Being someone that was in a classroom with special needs students for seven years, I'm not particularly sure that any teacher want to be a counselor at this point. They are counseling their students all day, they are trying to center them throughout the day, and so the counseling of the parents and making suggestions to them as what their students can do with a moment of silence as well as making it a mandate is difficult for me today. So with that being said I'm going to be down on the bill, but I know you've heard that people want to want you to talk to stakeholders and I know you're gonna do that, so today I'm gonna be down on the bill. I'm hoping that you'll take in some suggestions from the stakeholders so we can get this bill in a better posture. Thank you.

Closing on the Bill (Representative Fine)

This bill attempts to do one simple thing and that is to give students at the beginning of their day a moment to be centered. We do that ourselves in the Chamber. Many of you are new and you spent I think one day on the House floor during Org Session. But in about two weeks we'll probably spend 30 days of that 60 at some part of the day sitting on the floor. And that day begins every day with a prayer. I will talk about how I spend my time during that prayer in a minute, but the notion of taking time to be centered before engaging in the stress and the craziness of the world is not a bad thing. Will it solve all the problems of the world? No, it will not. But will it move things down the line? I like to tackle big problems and part of the reason that I've been successful in the process is that I realize that the way you eat an elephant is one bite at a time. You don't try and eat the whole elephant at once because when you do try, you get full very quickly. That's what we're trying to do. I want to address a few of the points that we're made here, because a lot were made. I have an open door to anyone who reaches out to me on any of my bills. I encourage you all to do that as well. Anyone who calls my office who wants to talk about one of my bills gets a callback or meeting from me. I will point

out that this bill has been filed for about a month, for 5-6 weeks. Not one school district has asked to talk to me about the bill. Frankly, no one has asked to talk about the bill in either way, but the door is open should they care. But why don't I proactively do it? This is a broader discussion as part of Home Rule, because we are elected to come here and do what we think is right. Taking away nothing from my friends here who are local elected officials. We are not we are not the United Counties of Florida. We are not the United States Cities of Florida. We create local government here at the State Legislature. We made them, they didn't make us. We are the ones who determine what's the right policy is at a statewide level. Beyond that particularly in this, you will see me advocating at times to allow local governments to do things. Most of the money that's spent on education, which you will see it's my budget, is state money. I have a rule in my house "my money my rules." Now, this our money this is state money that we allocate. We have every right to have a strong say in how things are working. I want to address this, there is no such thing as a "separation of church and state." It is a fiction. That is being created by some people. It is no establishment of religion. That is very different than the prevention of religion and while this bill doesn't deal with prayer and it doesn't mandate prayer- in fact for those people that advocate this incorrect view, this bill removes references to prayer from the bill. The individual who spoke out against the bill she's got an issue far beyond this- she's got an issue with teaching prayer, or the teaching of religion. We teach religion, my son got to learn about the five pillars of Islam this year. She has an issue with that- I might understand that, but that's not what this bill deals with. If that's something that people have an issue with that is a bill that should be filed on their own. Someone else said that they can pray if they want, they can't. We have made it optional for districts to do this today, we have not made it optional for the individual student to do this today. They can if the local government allows the to do it. And we're not counseling, there not telling parents how to spend the time. The teachers telling the parent I encourage you to think about your child however you want and it's not like "here's a list of 12 ideas" that's explicitly what we don't want the to do. We just say "hey, two minutes is going to happen you ought to talk to them about how they're going to spend it." But it's up to the parents as to how they make that decision. Lastly, the moment of silence- it's interesting for me to carry this bill. Many of you may know this, but I'm Jewish. I live in a world where every day I'm the odd man out. I understand what that's like, so why am I carrying the moment of silence bill? In a world where my son who's in 7th grade who has been bullied for being Jewish, why would I carry a bill that has a moment of silence? Every day when we are on the floor the majority of the time the pray does not address me. I don't need to get into why, I'm explicitly excluded from the prayer. I don't protest, I don't not attend, I don't make a big deal. What I use that time for is exactly what we do in this bill. To get myself centered to get myself ready for the fact that we have to serve the people of Florida, to recognize that I am here to do what is best for my children and yours as well. That is something that everyone would value. Whether you're here in the legislature, whether you're my 7th grade Jewish student who's the only Jewish kid in his class if not his school, and that is for every other student as well. It is a good thing for people to take time and to get centered for the day and to plan. We need more of this in this world. This bill will not change the world, but it will make it a little bit better and with that I ask for your favorable support.

Outcome on the Bill

The bill was passed. 12 Yeas 6 Nays and was reported favorably by the committee.

PRESENTATIONS REGARDING LITERACY

The Science of Reading In Action

Presented by Paige Pullen, University of Florida

Overview of Literacy Policy and Practice to Support Educators & Improve Student Outcomes

Presented by Cari Miller, Vice Chancellor for Literacy Achievement, Department of Education

House PreK-12 Appropriations Subcommittee

Budget Workshop and State Student Financial Assistance Overview

Thursday, February 18, 2021

Meeting packet can be found [here](#).

Representatives from the Following Organizations Were Present

- Florida Board of Governors
- Department of Education

Summary

This meeting included a brief overview of the FEFP given by Chair Fine, as well as a panel discussion on the FEFP and the CARES Act Funding with five of Florida's district superintendents from Bradford, Bay, Brevard, Miami-Dade, and Palm Beach counties. The committee also discussed the issue of missing students. Before they got to the discussions, they voted on the consent agenda.

Appearance Forms on the Consent Agenda

Chris Dudley: Waiving in support of HB 2277 and HB 2295

Outcome of the Consent Agenda

The consent agenda resulted in 13 Yeas and 2 absentee Nays.

Presentation on the FEFP (Chair Fine)

Chair Fine gave a presentation on the FEFP by providing an overview and a snapshot of the program. He then went into discussing revenue sources and 2020-2021 FEFP amount. Chair Fine discussed the growth of FEFP funds over the past five years, which has surpassed the number of students enrolled in schools, so the funding per student has increased. There are two main categories of FEFP funding – basic FEFP funding and categorical FEFP funding. He ended the presentation showing the overpayment or underpayments based on missing students per county. Some of these payments were very small, and others were not. He specifically pointed out that many parents sent their children for Florida Virtual School, which got a lot more enrollment than they expected. Chair Fine emphasized that it is not sustainable to fund based on expected enrollment. He seemed to be a proponent of funding based on actual enrollment. He made sure to add that the legislature has spent \$700 million educating “no one.” Moreover, he was clear that many districts got additional money (besides this overpayment) from the federal government for COVID-19 related costs. There are very broad differences on how that money has been spent. The good news is as for the missing students is, we have found a number of them and I expect many of them are still being educated through home-schooling or are being held back a year because they are still in kindergarten. But the fact of the matter is we still spent an unnecessary \$700 million. Our job is to educate and fund our kids, not our government funded schools.

Q&A

Representative Bartleman

Q: On the overpayment and underpayment, does that include a McKay and the Empowerment Dollars? Because it should, that could definitely change things. But anyway, these schools had to still pay all of their overhead. So when you say that we should put this money into reserve, that money is still being expended, maybe not all of it, but a lot of it. There is some money left over, but many are using general budget to pay for cleaning services and other things. I don't think it's fair to say that we need to put the money into reserves, they still have to pay the teachers and keep their lights on.

A: We can have a debate later. I am not criticizing what happened in the past, but I want to figure out options for the future. Not all districts benefitted from what happened with the funding. This is less about what we are doing this year. It is about whether we are going to continue with this fundamental shift in how we fund education. My view is I would like us to return us to funding based on student enrollment.

Chair Fine

Before I introduce the panel, I want to talk about the missing kids. I want to remind you that it is the parents' responsibility to out their kids in school. They should be aggressive, but it was not their decision that led to the 87,000 students disappearing. I don't want us to blame them. Each of our guests will speak individually and then we can ask them questions as a group.

Panel Discussion with District Superintendents (concerning FEFP & enrollment)

Bay County Superintendent – up 181 students, underpaid \$3.4 million

We have 40 schools, with 20% of our students in charter schools. Hurricane Michael and Hurricane Irma have had a huge impact on my area. We are still trying to recover from that, and that is where we are at. We are so thankful for the DoE leadership and staff however. You are going to ask me about FTE later but I want to talk about the phantom students and I appreciate that this is a parent issue. Our concern is the issue that don't have the parents in their lives. We are having a major problem, and we are becoming investigators and we are tracking them down. We have a major concern that there is not enough teeth in the laws that exist now. This is about the kids, whatever else you do, give us more ability to track down these kids and hold these parents accountable.

Bradford County Superintendent – down 350 students, overpaid \$2.4 million

Our districts' FTE numbers have been down. Holding districts harmless and continuing them to fund them fully is a blessing as well as the CARES Act funding. I know it's been a strain on our state budget. But this money has allowed us to open more safely and allows us to close learning gaps. As for our missing students, in analyzing the reasons for the withdraws, we think a lot of it has to do with economic factors more than anything because our community has lot more than 700 jobs. We are currently missing 13 students and are doing our best to locate them. We also have 50 students and their parents ready to see a judge and we are diligently working towards getting them in court. We hear and understand your concerns about ensuring that our students are in our schools and we are working to make that happen.

Miami Dade County Superintendent – down 10,000 students, overpaid \$85 million

Around 78% of the 10,000 students can be accounted for in three categories. Roughly 2,400 moved out of state, roughly 2,600 moved to a different county, roughly 2,700 enrolled in private school. The remaining 2,200 students were not represented in our enrollment numbers for a variety of reasons. We know where these students are but their parents

refuse to send them to school. Our district has employed a number of strategies to locate those that have not been accounted for. By leveraging our community partners we have increased our reach exponentially. When we find these students, we connect them with a number of support systems. Our moral obligation is to do all we can to leave no stone unturned in finding these students. We will continue to search for the remaining 1,000 students that we have not located yet to the best of our ability. Turning to the federal funding, there is a sentiment that it is a windfall for education, however that is not the case in Miami. It more accurately represents solutions for known and emerging needs. It is much needed funding to combat the issues of coronavirus.

Brevard County Superintendent – down 3,800 students, overpaid \$25.7 million

Thank you for our state leadership during these past months. Brevard has experienced the greatest under-projection we have ever faced. We realize its great significance, however. In analyzing the causes of our decline, we looked at different statistics. Where we are today is that we have developed a plan for those students who have showed up and we have employed services and followed up with these families. We identified students who are truly considered missing. Currently, 87 students remain as whereabouts unknown. We are utilizing all of our staff and services to make contact with the families. We do believe enrollment will grow in March. We are optimistic about restoring enrollment numbers as we know where most of these students are and give them re-introductions to our schools.

Palm Beach County Superintended – down 8,035, overpaid \$71 million

Thank you for our state leadership. While many students that have not returned have been quickly accounted for, the most troubling component of our enrollment loss was a group of students who did not appear to be actively engaged in education. We investigated approximately 3,300 students and found that roughly half of this group was truly MIA. We have ongoing efforts to locate them, employing a group of social workers and others to locate them. While the funding implications of losing these students has our attention, we are far more focused on getting these students back in schools for their own well-being.

Q&A

Vice Chair Bell

Q: I believe our system has failed and when you all say we need statutes and policy; I agree with you. We need to hold these parents accountable. What tools can we give you as a legislative body to hold these kids and parents accountable to find them?

A: I'm glad you asked that question. We need work groups from each community from DCF, DOH, and other agencies for the purpose of locating these students. Each state agency needs to share any information related to the missing information. We know these children are living in difficult situations. We have no legal remedy in statute right now to do anything to help them because they have no accountability and they are in trauma. Perhaps we need funding for more truancy officers, that would be really beneficial for us.

Chair Fine

Q: Truancy officers sounds like a COVID related expense to me. If you need help figuring that out, we can help you. Anyway, are there any other tools we can help you with?

A: We are having trouble with the backlog of the court process. Being able to hold the parents accountable would really help our efforts to help get these kids back in our schools.

Ranking Member Willhite

Q: Can we get a quick idea of those who you can't find, what grades are they associated with?

A: The greatest numbers are our younger children, but it really can go across the board.

Representative Aloupis

Q: Looking beyond the immediate students, what is your sense of what the impact of FLVS or home school will have on your larger enrollment numbers?

A: We are worried about those that are being "home-schooled" right now because we don't believe they are doing much of anything at all and we are going to have to focus on bringing them back up when they get back.

Q: That is my concern but my other thought is that parents might start to look at education differently. Are any of you thinking that this new outlook could significantly impact you as parents move to a different delivery method for education?

A: We have the opportunity to re-market our schools in this new arena. Plus, we can provide all of these additional services can set us apart with this additional funding of ESSR. This is obviously a serious concern but I think we will know better in the next 60-90 days. A lot of parents have left the workforce and are staying home with their children. I do think that even if we want everyone to come back, those who can will make choice to stay in the virtual model.

Representative Valdes

Q: I want us to be careful and cognizant of how we build these rules and these laws, because this is also a problem of choice. Although we are not attacking you all, I want us to be careful that we don't attack parents for these public-school students and create another taxing situation where we are adding more to the school to prison pipeline. With that in mind, what kinds of things do you think you can do or we can do to be thoughtful about how we hold parents accountable?

A: I think one of the things I would say is it's important to consider where the students are enrolled. If they are enrolled in home school, we are not going to go after them with truancy. In the context of what I was speaking was the missing students, not the home school students. I'm talking about finding and making sure these parents who claim their kids are being home schooled actually are being home schooled because for many of them we knock on their doors and we can't find them. There is a difference between home school and no school. I want to throw out there that if a kid shows up for one day or 180 days, either way, you're going to us accountable for their performance. Accountability goes both ways.

Representative Fine

Q: How confident are we in the data here about the missing children?

A: In the context if students going to other schools in Florida, typically the receiving schools would ask for those students' records. It is easy to track that. But you are right, I'm sure there is a high number of parents that are not being truthful. But we know those who are being truthful because we have documentation.

Q:/moving into a comment: These kids are in multiple categories, not all of the 87,000 are truly missing. Either way that is crisis. Let's assume of that 87,000, 40,000 don't come back because they are getting a legitimate form of education in another way. My question is this – should we still fund you in the same way as we did this year? Because I think we need to return to a funding model based on enrollment.

Panel on ESSR Funding

Palm Beach County Superintendent – 40 million in ESSR funds, 87% spent

We have drawn down these funds significantly. We had no trouble spending this money because the cost of COVID was far greater than the allocation. PPE was extremely expensive. At the end of the day, our total financial impact with COVID will exceed \$100 million by the end of the school year.

Bay County Superintendent – 6.3 million, 59% spent

We have a calculation of only 13% not obligated. We have spent it on laptop, hotspots, and increased teachers, as well as other workers. Our big item is going to be learning recovery, we are spending \$500,000 right now on extra tutorial sessions for students. The biggest challenge we have is funding substitutes and it is causing a major concern because they can make more at home on unemployment.

Miami-Dade Superintendent (had to leave before presenting).

Brevard County Superintendent – 17.4 million, 20% spent

To date, to provide an update we are at about 54% between expended and encumbered. All of the funds are obligated. We have prioritized extended school days, year-long tutoring, extended ESE, extensive PPE, and technical support services. Moreover, we have invested significantly in staff. We have significant unemployment claims. The point is, all of the money is going to be spent.

Bradford County Superintendent - \$952,000, 15% spent

When I started digging through our data, there has been a delay in reporting. 35.6% of our funding has been spent, a large majority going to PPE, technology, private schools, additional teachers and supplies. We are facing issues dealing with private schools and trying to get them to spend their money down but they still haven't spent any of the money. As for supplies, it is hard to get things. A lot of these supplies in order to be safe for the students have a short shelf life, so we are ordering them in small batches and not in bulk.

Q&A

Vice Chair Bell

Q: The process set up for the reimbursement, how is that working for you?

A: Things have been going very good for us once things have started getting figured out in December.

Ranking Member Willhite

Q: How do we make sure we recognize that you will be using these funds? Are there things you have put in place to start utilizing these funds more quickly that are obligated to you.

A: We have had no problems at all since December. Also, we want to be frugal because we thought that we would need to make do with those funds until 2022. But now we know more funding is coming so things could look different. ESSR is supporting what we need to do.

Representative Bartleman

Q: I think it is important to discuss, how are we going to fund education in the future. And one of you brought up, well how are we going to know when these students are going to come back? I have concerns about that discussion in general. What suggestions do you have to deal with FTE funding?

A: When you start cutting the FTE, it's going to have a huge impact. I know this is a big lift but I can tell you there are 200 employees I wish I could hire right now. The challenge for me to fill in and hire positions is terrible. I need many teachers now and I'm afraid of laying people off.

Chair Fine

Q: I think your concern about the future, representative Bartleman, is a fair one. We haven't asked this, but we have talked about how you've spent the ESSR money. You are about to get 4x as much as you got the first time. Knowing you have that, wouldn't that address the concerns about the "unknown" expenses?

A: The challenge we face is the learning loss during COVID. That can't be done in one year, it is going to take intensive efforts to begin to help them recover. We are looking at a very robust summer school program. This is a very expensive proposition. We are trying to prepare for those. We want to and need to sustain our school workforce as well. There is some other thinking we need to put around those extra dollars, but luckily, we have time to do so. None of us would suggest the full FTE is a sustainable option but the reality is we don't anticipate that we will fully recover from last year which would lead to a considerable loss in revenue.

Representative Bush

Q: I have a question for the superintendent of Bay County. I am concerned about the kids we cannot find and that whether there is abuse and whether we need to find a way to engage to make the parents accountable. The Panama City kids, what percentage of those students are minority students?

A: Probably 13% of them.

Q: The wraparound services, are you putting something in place to have them for these parents with these issues?

A: We have more social workers than we have ever had. We want to figure out how to help the family.

Representative Willhite

I just want to make a quick comment. This is the best panel I have ever been on in the five years I have served here. So thank you, Chair.

Closing

I'm hoping to not do block scheduling next year. I hope it goes away and we save money by doing it. I want to make two points. We learned that there are thousands of students actually missing. And some of these kids are gone because their parents want them to be. They may have changed how they live. COVID will change us. I think you all need to be prepare to accept the fact that those enrollment numbers may be down for forever and that is something we need to think about as we do the budget.

LEGISLATION OF INTEREST

HB 0003 Home Book Delivery for Elementary Students (Trabulsy)

Establishes New Worlds Reading Initiative under DOE; provides duties & responsibilities of administrator; provides requirements & procedures for participating entities; establishes student eligibility requirements & options relating to book selection; requires books be delivered at no cost to families; authorizes DOE to contract with third-party entity. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

HB 0005 Civic Education Curriculum (Zika)

Revises social studies high school graduation credit requirement; requires DOE to develop or approve integrated civic education curriculum that meets certain requirements; requires department to curate oral history resources to be used with such curriculum; requires department to approve civic education curricula submitted by school districts & charter schools. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

HB 0007 Civil Liability for Damages Relating to COVID-19 (McClure)

Provides requirements for civil action based on COVID-19-related claim; provides that plaintiff has burden of proof in such action; provides statute of limitations; provides retroactive applicability. Effective Date: upon becoming a law.

HB 0011 Limitation on Terms of Office for Members of a District School Board (Sabatini)

Proposing amendments to the State Constitution to limit the terms of office for a member of a district school board.

HB 0015 Sales and Use Tax (Clemons)

Revises conditions for certain dealers subject to sales tax; deletes exemption for certain dealers from collecting local option surtaxes; provides certain marketplace providers are subject to registration, collection, & remittance requirements for sales taxes; requires marketplace providers to provide certification to marketplace sellers; specifies requirements for marketplace sellers; requires marketplace providers to allow DOR to audit books & records; provides that marketplace seller is liable for sales tax collection & remittance; authorizes marketplace providers & marketplace sellers to enter into agreements to recover certain taxes, interest, & penalties; grants DOR settlement & compromise authority for marketplace sales; removes authority of DOR to negotiate collection allowance with certain dealers. Effective Date: July 1, 2021

SB 0048 Educational Scholarship Programs (Diaz)

Requiring the Auditor General to conduct certain audits at least every 3 years instead of annually; adding certain students to those whom district school boards must provide preferential treatment in the controlled open enrollment process; establishing the McKay-Gardiner Scholarship Program; prohibiting a student from participating in the program under certain circumstances; providing that program funding for specified children constitutes their full funding under part V of ch. 1002; providing commissioner authority and obligations relating to suspending or revoking program participation, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

HB 0051 Charter Schools (McClain)

Authorizes state universities & Florida College System institutions to sponsor charter schools; revises reporting & accountability requirements & populations for which charter school is authorized to limit enrollment process; provides for funding; authorizes career & professional academy to be offered by charter school. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

SB 0072 Civil Liability for Damages Relating to COVID-19 (Brandes)

Providing requirements for a civil action based on a COVID-19-related claim; providing that the plaintiff has the burden of proof in such action; providing a statute of limitations; providing severability; providing retroactive applicability, etc. Effective Date: This act shall take effect upon becoming a law and shall apply retroactively. However, the provisions of this act shall not apply in a civil action against a particularly named defendant which is commenced before the effective date of this act.

HB 0075 Feminine Hygiene Products in Public Schools (Grieco)

Requires school districts to make feminine hygiene products available, at no charge, in female restroom facilities of public school buildings. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

SB 0078 Dues and Uniform Assessments (Rodrigues (R))

Requiring that a public employee who desires to join an employee organization sign a membership authorization form; requiring an employee organization to revoke an employee's membership upon receipt of the employee's request for revocation; providing that certain deductions commence upon the employer's receipt and confirmation of the employee's signed deduction authorization form; specifying the time period that an employee's authorization to deduct dues and uniform assessments remains in effect, etc. Effective Date: Upon becoming a law.

SB 0084 Retirement (Rodrigues (R))

Providing for compulsory membership in the Florida Retirement System Investment Plan for employees initially enrolled on or after a specified date; modifying provisions governing participation in the investment plan for individuals who are eligible to participate in the State University System Optional Retirement Program to conform to changes made by the act; modifying provisions governing the administration of the investment plan to reflect compulsory membership for specified employees, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

HB 0099 Use of Epinephrine Auto-injectors on Public K-20 Campuses (Gottlieb)

Provides that state universities & FCS institutions are considered authorized entities for specified purposes relating to emergency use of epinephrine auto-injectors; requires, rather than authorizes, public schools to purchase or acquire supply of epinephrine auto-injectors for specified purposes; requires such epinephrine auto-injectors be maintained in specified location; requires state universities & FCS institutions to purchase or acquire supply of epinephrine auto-injectors for specified purposes; provides requirements for such supplies of epinephrine auto-injectors; requires state universities & FCS institutions to develop specified protocols; provides liability for use of such epinephrine auto-injectors. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

HB 0105 Required Instruction in the History of the Holocaust and of African Americans (Thompson)

Required Instruction in the History of the Holocaust and of African Americans: Requires DOE to prepare standards & curriculum related to history of African Americans; authorizes DOE to seek input from or contract with specified entities to develop specified training & resources relating to such instruction; provides requirements for specified entities relating to history of Holocaust & history of African Americans instruction; requires certain statewide, standardized assessments to include curricula content from history of Holocaust & history of African Americans. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

HB 0127 Teach to Lead Program (Hinson)

Teach to Lead Program: Requires additional tax funds allocated & applied to FEFP to be used for specified purposes; creates Teach to Lead Program. Effective Date: July 1, 2021., but only if HB 129 or similar legislation takes effect.

SB 0128 Florida Talent Development Council (Bradley)

Florida Talent Development Council; Requiring the council, by a specified date, to submit to specified entities a report that includes recommendations on the feasibility of establishing and implementing the Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P-TECH) program or a similar program; providing requirements for the report, etc. Effective Date: Upon becoming a law.

HB 0131 Educator Conduct (Duggan)

Requiring DOE to maintain a disqualification list of individuals; revises provisions relating to employment & termination of public school & private school employees; revises duties of DOE, Commissioner of Education, & school districts relating to employee conduct & employment & termination of public school & private school employees. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

HB 0135 School District Career Center Workforce Education Programs (Robinson W)

Revises workforce education programs that school district career centers are authorized to conduct. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

SB 0146 Civic Education (Brandes)

Requiring the Commissioner of Education to develop minimum criteria for a nonpartisan civic literacy practicum for high school students, beginning with a specified school year; authorizing students to apply the hours they devote to practicum activities to certain community service requirements; requiring school districts accept nonpartisan civic literacy practicum activities and hours in requirements for certain awards; requiring the State Board of Education to designate certain high schools as Freedom Schools, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

HB 0149 Students with Disabilities in Public Schools (DuBose)

Prohibits use of seclusion on students; revises provisions relating to use of restraint on certain students; provides DOE, school district, school, & personnel requirements; provides for placement of video camera in specified classrooms; provides requirements for such placement; requires continuing education & inservice training for teaching students with emotional or behavioral disabilities. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

SB 0154 Local Government Fiscal Transparency (Diaz)

Expanding the scope of a Legislative Auditing Committee review to include compliance with local government fiscal transparency requirements; providing procedures for the Auditor General and local governments to comply with the local government fiscal transparency requirements; revising reporting requirements for certain local government economic development incentives; creating the "Local Government Fiscal Transparency Act"; requiring local governments to post certain voting record information on their websites, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

SB 0156 Homestead Assessment Limitation (Diaz)

Proposing amendments to the State Constitution to authorize the Legislature, by general law, to prohibit increases in the assessed value of homestead property, for school district levy purposes, if the legal or equitable title to the property is held by a person who is 65 years of age or older and if that person has held such title and maintained permanent residence on the property for at least 25 years, and to provide an effective date, etc.

HB 0157 K-12 Physical Health Requirements (Hawkins)

Requires school districts to provide training in CPR to students at high school level; provides requirements for such training; & requires medical evaluation for participation in interscholastic athletic competition to include EKG. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

SB 0158 Homestead Assessments (Diaz)

Providing a homestead assessment limitation for the purpose of school district levies for certain persons age 65 years or older; specifying who may apply for and receive the limitation; specifying who may apply for and receive the limitation in circumstances in which title is held jointly with right of survivorship, etc. Effective Date: On the effective date of the amendment to the State Constitution proposed by SJR 156 or a joint resolution having substantially the same specific intent and purpose, if such amendment to the State Constitution is approved at the general election held in November 2022 or at an earlier special election specifically authorized by law for that purpose.

HB 0171 Children With Developmental Delays (Tant)

Revises definition of term "exceptional student" to include additional students with developmental delays. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

HB 0173 Individual Education Plan Requirements for Students with Disabilities (Tant)

Revises timeline for development & implementation of individual education plan (IEP) for transition services for student with disabilities to postsecondary education & career opportunities; revises requirements for IEP for transitions to postsecondary education & career opportunities. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

SB 0174 School Safety Funding (Cruz)

Revising certain allocations to school districts; specifying uses and distribution requirements for certain safe schools allocation funds for the 2021-2022 fiscal year; requiring each district school superintendent to remit specified unused funds from the 2020-2021 fiscal year to the Department of Education by a specified date; authorizing the department, upon request, to redistribute such funds to certain school districts for a specified purpose, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

HB 0175 Apprenticeship and Preapprenticeship Programs (Shoaf)

Revises requirements of DOE's annual report on apprenticeship & preapprenticeship programs; provides DOE's duties relating to apprenticeship programs; revises membership of State Apprenticeship Advisory Council; provides that parents of public school students be informed of workforce education opportunities. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

HB 0179 Prohibited Discrimination Based on Hairstyle (Brown)

Provides that it is unlawful to discriminate against any person because of protected hairstyle in areas of housing, employment, & K-20 public education system. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

SB 0188 Solar Energy Systems Located On the Property of an Educational Facility (Berman)

Prohibiting costs associated with such systems from being included in the calculation of total cost per student station for the purpose of a limit imposed on such costs for certain new construction, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

SB 0198 Solar Schools (Berman)

Authorizing a public educational customer to enter into a contract for the installation, maintenance, or operation of a renewable energy source device on property owned or controlled by the public educational customer; providing that financing arrangements for such contracts are not considered retail sales of electricity; limiting the capacity of the renewable energy source device, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

HB 0199 Students With Limited English Proficiency (Valdes)

Requires district school boards to provide certain instruction to students who have limited English proficiency; requires certain standardized assessments be waived for such students in specified circumstances. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

SB 0200 Student Retention (Berman)

Authorizing a parent to request that his or her student be retained in a grade level for a specified school year; clarifying that specified students may qualify for midyear promotion; authorizing a parent to request such promotion or to request that his or her student continue to be retained, etc. Effective Date: Upon becoming a law.

HB 0201 Florida Kidcare Program Eligibility (Bartleman)

Increases income eligibility threshold for coverage under Florida Kidcare program; authorizes AHCA to seek federal waiver approval or submit state plan amendments as necessary; requires agency to examine graduated family contribution rates for newly qualifying families under program; provides guidelines for such rates; requires agency to increase income eligibility threshold for coverage under program each fiscal year until meeting specified income threshold. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

SB 0202 Standard High School Diploma Award Requirements (Cruz)

Adding a new requirement for the award of a standard high school diploma to Academically Challenging Curriculum to Enhance Learning students; requiring certain students to submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid in order to be awarded a standard high school diploma, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

HB 0211 Students Leaving School Grounds (Slosberg)

Authorizes district school boards to adopt programs & policies for students to leave school grounds during school lunch periods; requires parental consent for student to participate in such policy under certain circumstances. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

HB 0215 Prohibition of Public Funds for Lobbying by Local Governments (Sabatini)

Prohibits local governments from using public funds to retain lobbyists; provides exceptions; provides sanctions for violations; authorizes people to file complaints with the Commission on Ethics; requires commission to provide a report to specified entities; specifies procedures for disciplining violators. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

HB 0225 Dyslexia (Trabulsy)

Provides requirements for mandatory dyslexia screening for certain students & subsequent diagnosis of student; establishes Dyslexia Task Force within DOE; provides requirements for such task force; removes requirement for district school superintendents to refer parents to home education review committee; removes penalty for parents failing to provide portfolio to such committee. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

HB 0227 School Protocols During a COVID-19 State of Emergency (Hinson)

Requires district school board to adopt specified policies during certain declared state of emergency; provides requirements for such policies; requires statewide, standardized assessments be waived during certain declared state of emergency. Effective Date: July 1, 2021

HB 0229 Hazardous Walking Conditions for K-12 Students (Salzman)

Requires DOT to develop & adopt standards & criteria to identify hazardous walking conditions; Revises provisions relating to the transportation of students subjected to hazardous walking conditions & funding for such students. Effective Date: July 1, 2022.

HB 0241 Parents' Bill of Rights (Grall)

Provides parental rights relating to a minor child's education, upbringing, & health care; provides school district, health care practitioner, hospital requirements & specified penalties. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

SB 0254 Education (Stewart)

Requiring specified teachers to have received, at a minimum, a bachelor's degree; requiring private schools to provide specified students with a certain amount of time for recess; requiring private school students to participate in the statewide assessment program; requiring private schools to comply with the State Requirements for Educational Facilities of the Florida Building Code, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

SB 0258 Internship Tax Credit Program (Jones)

Internship Tax Credit Program; Designating the "Florida Internship Tax Credit Program"; providing a corporate income tax credit for qualified businesses employing degree-seeking student interns if certain criteria are met; specifying the amount of the credit a qualified business may claim per student intern, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

SB 0274 Juvenile Diversion Program Expunction (Perry)

Requiring the Department of Law Enforcement to expunge the nonjudicial arrest record of certain minors who have successfully completed a diversion program for any offense, rather than only a misdemeanor offense; authorizing a minor who successfully completes a diversion program for any offense, rather than only for a first-time misdemeanor offense, to lawfully deny or fail to acknowledge certain information, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

SB 0280 Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation Training In Public Schools (Baxley)

Providing that school districts are encouraged to provide basic training in first aid, including cardiopulmonary resuscitation, in specified grades; requiring school districts to provide basic training in first aid, including cardiopulmonary resuscitation, in specified grades; revising requirements for instruction in cardiopulmonary resuscitation, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

SB 0282 Moments of Silence in Public Schools (Baxley)

Providing legislative findings; requiring that public school principals require certain teachers to set aside time for a moment of silence at the beginning of each school day; prohibiting teachers from making suggestions as to the nature of any reflection that a student may engage in during the moment of silence; deleting a provision authorizing district school boards to provide a brief period of silent prayer or meditation; requiring certain teachers to encourage parents or guardians to discuss the moment of silence with their children and to make suggestions as to the best use of this time, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

HB 0321 Employment After Retirement of School District Personnel (McFarland)

Establishes exception to reemployment after retirement limitations to authorize retired instructional staff to be employed as substitute teachers before meeting definition of termination; prohibits accrual of additional retirement service credit & renewed membership during such period of reemployment; requires SBA & DMS to request determination letter & private letter ruling from Internal Revenue Service. Effective Date: January 1, 2022.

HB 0337 Impact Fees (DiCeglie)

Specifies instances when local government or special district may collect impact fee; requires local governments & special districts to credit against collection of impact fee any contribution related to public facilities; provides annual limitations on impact fee increases; requires school districts to report specified items regarding impact fees; requires specified entities to file affidavit attesting that impact fees were appropriately collected & expended. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

HB 0355 The Florida High School Athletic Association (Beltran)

Requires FHSAA to allow certain schools & cooperatives to maintain full membership or to join by sport; prohibits FHSAA from discouraging simultaneously membership in other athletic associations; requires FHSAA to allow public schools to join other athletic associations; prohibits FHSAA from taking actions against member schools that join other athletic associations; prohibits the FHSAA from taking certain actions against specified entities that choose not to participate in the association. Effective Date: July 1, 2021

HB 0357 Photographic Enforcement of School Zone Speed Limit (Duran)

Authorizes county or municipality to contract with vendor to install cameras in school speed zones to enforce speed limits; provides civil penalty for violation found through recording of photographic images; provides for disposition & use of funds; provides for determination of liability; provides nonapplication of violation to driver license points assessment, conviction, driving record, or provision of motor vehicle insurance coverage; requires referral to DHSMV resulting in prohibition of motor vehicle registration renewal & transfer of title; provides for removal of penalties. Effective Date: July 1, 2021

HB 0359 COVID-19 Impact on School Accountability (Bartleman)

Provides that school grades, school improvement ratings, & student performance results from statewide, standardized assessments during the 2020-2021 school year may not be used for specified purposes. Effective Date: upon becoming a law.

SB 0366 Apprenticeship and Preapprenticeship Training (Hutson)

Revising the general duties of the Department of Education with regard to apprenticeship and preapprenticeship programs; revising the membership of the State Apprenticeship Advisory Council; providing that apprenticeship or preapprenticeship program sponsors are responsible for the selection and training of certain personnel, as approved by the department; encouraging state university boards of trustees and apprenticeship program sponsors to cooperate in developing and establishing apprenticeship and preapprenticeship programs that include career instruction, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

HB 0419 Early Learning and Early Grade Success (Grall)

Deletes Office of Early Learning; creates Division of Early Learning within DOE; revises provisions relating to early learning coalitions; VPK & school readiness programs; & DOE responsibilities & duties relating to early learning and Gold Seal Quality Care Program. Effective Date: upon becoming a law.

SB 0432 Gardiner Scholarship (Perry)

Revising the definition of “curriculum”; revising eligibility requirements for the Gardiner Scholarship program; revising authorized uses of program funds; revising the number of consecutive fiscal years an account must be inactive before the remaining funds revert to the state; revising an obligation of scholarship-funding organizations with respect to student eligibility, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

SB 0476 Prohibited Discrimination (Bracy)

Citing this act as the “Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair Act,” or “CROWN Act”; providing that it is unlawful for sponsors under the Florida Housing Finance Corporation Act to discriminate against any person or family because of traits historically associated with race; defining terms; reenacting provisions relating to the State Apartment Incentive Loan Program, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

HB 0489 Student Identification Cards (Daley)

Requires school principals to ensure that crisis prevention hotline & text line and behavioral health hotline & text line numbers are printed on back of student ID cards. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

SB 0498 Safety of Religious Institutions (Gruters)

Authorizing, for specified purposes, a concealed weapons or firearms licensee to carry a firearm on certain property of a church, a synagogue, or any other religious institution, etc. Effective Date: Upon becoming a law.

HB 0507 Education (Rizo)

Revises provisions relating to DOE powers & duties, the statewide assessment program, and postsecondary civics education. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

HB 0517 School Meals (Morales)

Requires district school boards participating in the National School Lunch Program provide meals regardless of ability to pay or unpaid meal charges; provides students be allowed to eat such meal; requires district school boards adopt certain policies regarding unpaid meal charges. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

HB 0519 Required Health Education (Yarborough)

Provides additional requirements for health education; revises grades when students receive certain health education instruction; requires health education instruction include prevention of specified harms. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

HB 0529 Moments of Silence in Public Schools (Fine)

Requires principals to require teachers to set aside time for moment of silence; prohibits teachers from making suggestions to nature of any reflection during moment of silence; deletes provision authorizing district school boards to provide brief period of silent prayer or meditation; requires certain teachers encourage parents or guardians to discuss moment of silence & make suggestions as to the best use of this time. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

SB 0532 Workforce Education (Burgess)

Revising the workforce education programs that school district career centers are authorized to conduct, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

SB 0538 Use of Epinephrine Auto-Injectors on Public K-20 Campuses (Polsky)

Providing that state universities and Florida College System institutions are considered authorized entities for specified purposes relating to the emergency use of epinephrine auto-injectors; requiring, rather than authorizing, public schools to purchase or acquire a supply of epinephrine auto-injectors for specified purposes; requiring state universities and Florida College System institutions to purchase or acquire a supply of epinephrine auto-injectors for specified purposes, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

SB 0554 Human Trafficking Education in Schools (Thurston, Jr.)

Revising the required health education in public schools to include information regarding the dangers and signs of human trafficking; specifying the minimum requirements of the human trafficking education portion of the comprehensive health education curriculum, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

HB 0575 The Gold Seal Quality Care Program (Omphroy)

Revises Gold Seal Quality Care program requirements; requires State Board of Education to adopt specified rules; specifies requirements for accrediting entity, rather than accrediting association, to be approved for participation in such program; requires DOE to establish verification process & provides requirements therefor; authorizes DOE to recommend maintenance of Gold Seal Quality Care designation for certain child care facilities; provides exemption from ad valorem taxation & rate differentials for certain child care facilities; provides for type two transfer of such program within DCF to DOE within specified time period; provides for continuation of certain contracts & agreements. Effective Date: upon becoming a law.

SB 0580 Dyslexia (Harrell)

Requiring public schools to screen all students in kindergarten through grade 3 for dyslexia within a certain timeframe; requiring public school students with a substantial deficiency in reading to be placed in an intensive remedial intervention program; requiring public schools to have at least one person on staff with specified certification in reading instruction for students with dyslexia; establishing the Dyslexia Task Force within the Department of Education; requiring the task force members to be appointed by the Commissioner of Education; requiring the task force to consist of nine members having certain backgrounds, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

SB 0582 Parental Rights (Rodrigues (R))

Creating the “Parents’ Bill of Rights”; prohibiting the state, its political subdivisions, other governmental entities, or other institutions from infringing on parental rights unless specified conditions are met; requiring each district school board to develop and adopt a policy to promote parental involvement in the public school system; prohibiting health care practitioners and their employees from providing health care services or prescribing medicinal drugs to a minor child without a parent’s written consent, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

SB 0590 Involuntary Examinations of Minors (Harrell)

Revising parent, guardian, or caregiver notification requirements that must be met before an involuntary examination of a minor; revising parent and guardian notification requirements that must be met before conducting an involuntary examination of a minor who is removed from school, school transportation, or a school-sponsored activity; creating reporting requirements for schools relating to involuntary examinations of minors; requiring that certain plans include

procedures to assist certain mental and behavioral health providers in attempts to verbally deescalate certain crisis situations before initiating an involuntary examination, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

SB 0598 Back-to-school Sales Tax Holiday (Perry)

Back-to-school Sales Tax Holiday; Providing exemptions from the sales and use tax on the retail sale of certain clothing, wallets, bags, school supplies, personal computers, and personal computer-related accessories during a specified timeframe; defining terms; specifying locations where the exemptions do not apply; authorizing certain dealers to opt out of participating in the tax holiday, subject to certain requirements, etc. APPROPRIATION: \$237,000 Effective Date: Upon becoming a law.

SB 0600 Private School Eligibility Requirements (Rouson)

Private School Eligibility Requirements; Revising private school eligibility requirements for the state school choice scholarship program, etc. Effective Date: Upon becoming a law.

SB 0610 Collective Bargaining for Instructional Personnel (Stewart)

Removing a requirement that each school district and the certified collective bargaining unit for instructional personnel within each district negotiate a specified memorandum of understanding; removing a requirement that certain certified collective bargaining units include specified information in their applications for renewal of registration; removing a requirement that certain employee organizations petition the Public Employees Relations Commission for recertification, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

HB 0611 Civic Literacy Education (Diamond)

Requires Commissioner of Education to develop criteria for civic literacy practicum that meets certain goals; provides purpose & requirements; authorizes time spent on specified civic engagement activities to count toward requirements for certain scholarships & academic awards. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

HB 0641 Charter and Private Schools (Goff-Marcil)

Provides requirements for charter school websites; requires specified teachers to meet specified requirements; requires charter school facilities & private schools to comply with State Requirements for Educational Facilities of Florida Building Code; revises information required to be included in specified database relating to private schools; provides requirements for private school recess; requires private school students to participate in statewide assessment program; provides private school curricula requirements; provides for injunctive relief; authorizes attorney fees & costs; provides requirements for private school grading & assessments; requires DOE to annually develop private school report card. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

SB 0692 Medical Marijuana Public Employee Protection (Duran)

Prohibiting an employer from taking adverse personnel action against an employee or a job applicant who is a qualified patient using medical marijuana; providing exceptions; requiring an employer to provide written notice of an employee or job applicant's right to explain a positive marijuana test result within a specified timeframe; providing procedures when an employee or job applicant tests positive for marijuana, etc. Effective Date: Upon becoming a law.

SB 0760 Florida High School Athletic Association (Burgess)

Requiring the FHSAA to allow certain schools and home education cooperatives to maintain full membership in the association or to join by sport; prohibiting the FHSAA from discouraging such school or cooperative from simultaneously maintaining membership in another athletic association; requiring, rather than authorizing, the FHSAA to allow public schools to join other athletic associations, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

HB 0827 School District Funding (Hawkins)

Requires school districts allocate certain amount of specified funds to programs that prepare students to enroll in AICE courses; requires such funds be spent on specified costs; requires school districts to distribute specified bonuses to certain teachers providing pre-AICE instruction; requires bonuses based on student's score on AICE examination to be paid to all AICE teachers. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

HB 0829 Senior Citizen and Teacher Property Tax Protection (Bush III)

Prohibits tax collector from including on forms, or assessing or collecting, certain charges on property tax bills for certain identified populations; prohibits tax collector from authorizing debt collection entity to collect certain charges on property tax bills for certain identified populations; prohibits tax collector from selling tax certificate on certain properties; requires DOR to identify mechanisms for assisting certain populations pay for delinquent charges. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

HB 0835 Employee Organizations (Byrd)

Revises registration renewal application requirements for certain employee organizations; requires employee organizations to petition PERC for recertification; authorizes PERC to conduct investigations; requires personnel & employees to submit specified form to school districts; provides acknowledgment language for such form; prohibits district school boards from deducting certain dues or assessments; requires school districts to receive confirmation before making deduction; requires school districts to adopt policies. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

HB 0849 School Absence Due to Sickness or Injury (Valdes)

Specifies types of sickness or injury included under certain exemption to attendance policy. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

HB 0856 School Administrator and Instructional Personnel Salaries (Plasencia)

Revises teacher salary increase allocation; deletes definitions of the terms "grandfathered salary schedule" & "performance salary schedule"; authorizes, rather than requires, district school boards to provide salary adjustments for certain personnel related to performance. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

SB 0880 Florida High School Athletic Association (Rodriguez (A))

Requiring the Florida High School Athletic Association to adopt specified bylaws or policies, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

SB 0886 COVID-19 Impact on School Accountability (Thurston, Jr.)

Prohibiting a school from being required to select and implement a turnaround option in the 2021-2022 school year based on the school's 2020-2021 school grade or improvement rating; prohibiting a school or an approved provider from being subject to sanctions or penalties as a result of its 2020-2021 school grade or improvement rating; prohibiting student performance results from the 2020-2021 statewide, standardized assessments from being used for determining grade 3 retention or high school graduation or for calculating student performance measurement and evaluating personnel, etc. Effective Date: Upon becoming a law.

HB 0889 Nonprofit Property Tax Exemptions (Borrero)

Specifies conditions under which exempt property, upon receipt of specified types of revenues, retains its exemption from ad valorem taxation. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

HB 0907 Schools of Innovation (DiCeglie)

Provides for operation of schools of innovation by district school board; provides such schools operate pursuant to performance contract; providing requirements & monitoring of such contracts; provides application process; authorizes schools to request waivers from statutes & rules; provides for support network; authorizes third-party contracts; provides protections for students; requires annual reporting; authorizes alternative grading system & instructional hours. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

SB 0918 Education (Bradley)

Requiring school districts to allocate a certain amount of specified funds to certain programs that prepare prospective students to enroll in Advanced International Certificate of Education courses; requiring such funds to be spent on specified costs; requiring school districts to distribute specified bonuses to certain classroom teachers providing International General Certificate of Secondary Education instruction, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

SB 0934 Education (Wright)

Requiring additional specified strategies to be included in rules establishing uniform core curricula for each state-approved teacher preparation program; expanding the instruction that an educator preparation institute may provide to include instruction and professional development for part-time and full-time nondegreed teachers of career programs; providing that the William Cecil Golden Professional Development Program for School Leaders must consist of a network of specified entities, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

HB 0947 Dues and Uniform Assessments (Plakon)

Requires that public employee who desires to join employee organization sign membership authorization form; requires that form include specified acknowledgement; requires employee organization to revoke employee's membership upon receipt of request for revocation; requires employees to provide specified notice to employer to revoke deductions; provides revocation form may not require employee to state reason for revocation; provides deductions commence upon employer's receipt & confirmation of employee's signed deduction authorization form; requires confirmation within specified time; specifies time period that employee's authorization to deduct dues & uniform assessments remains in effect. Effective Date: upon becoming a law.

HB 0951 Reporting of School Safety Issues (Daley)

Requires Office of Safe Schools to establish hotline & use data for specified purposes; provides requirements for reporting specified threats & incidents by threat assessment teams & school principals; establishes Safe Schools Grant Program; provides for administration, funding, & requirements for such program. Effective Date: July 1, 2021

HB 0985 Digital Learning for Low-income Students (Shoaf)

Provides that infrastructure includes digital devices & home-based broadband Internet access; requires district school boards to adopt digital learning plans; provides requirements for such plans; requires DOE & Office of Broadband collaborate for specified purposes; requires annual reporting; requires DOE develop state term contracts. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

SB 1000 Part-time Public School Enrollment (Baxley)

Authorizing certain students to take up to three courses per school year at any public school, subject to space, availability, and course prerequisites; providing construction; revising the definition of the term "part-time student"; requiring program membership surveys of each school made by each district by aggregating the full-time equivalent

student membership of each program by school and by district to include part-time students, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

SB 1014 Employee Organizations (Baxley)

Requiring employee organizations that have been certified as the bargaining agent for educational support employees to include specified information in applications for renewal of registration; revising the information that employee organizations certified as the bargaining agent for a unit of instructional personnel or educational support employees must report in applications for renewal of registration; requiring that an employee organization whose full dues-paying membership as of a specified date is less than 50 percent of eligible employees to petition the Public Employees Relations Commission for recertification, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

SB 1016 Digital Learning (Baxley)

Revising legislative findings to include digital devices and home-based Internet connectivity in infrastructure as necessary for a high-quality digital learning environment; requiring each school district to adopt a digital learning plan; requiring school districts to submit plans to the Department of Education by a certain date in a format prescribed by the department; requiring the department to develop one or more state term contracts for a specified purpose, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

HB 1023 Cost-of-living Adjustment of Retirement Benefits (Skidmore)

Specifies minimum amount of factor used to calculate cost-of-living adjustment of benefits for certain retirees & beneficiaries of Florida Retirement System; provides declaration of important state interest. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

HB 1025 Student Retention (Skidmore)

Authorizes parent to request that his or her student be retained in grade level for specified school year; requires such request to be submitted in specified manner; requires school district superintendents to grant such requests if they are timely received; authorizes school district superintendents to grant requests that are not timely received; requires retained student to remain in grade in which he or she was retained in until student qualifies for promotion at end of school year; requires school districts to report certain data to DOE by specified date. Effective Date: upon becoming a law.

HB 1027 Opening Remarks at High School Athletic Events (Barnaby)

Requires FHSAA to provide schools participating in certain FHSAA events opportunity for opening remarks; provides requirements for such opening remarks; requires certain announcements before such opening remarks; provides that opening remarks at regular season events are at discretion of FHSAA member schools. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

HB 1031 Charter Schools (Rodriguez (Ant))

Revises provisions relating to charter school applications, use of specified assets, opening of additional high-performing charter schools, & virtual charter schools. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

HB 1033 Certificate of Completion (Borrero)

Specifies students who have been awarded certificates of completion are eligible to enroll in certain programs. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

SB 1050 School Bus Safety (Berman)

Authorizing a school district to install cameras on district school buses for certain purposes; authorizing the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, a county, or a municipality to authorize a traffic infraction enforcement officer to issue and enforce a citation for certain violations; requiring notification to be sent to the registered owner of the motor vehicle involved in the violation; prohibiting an individual from receiving a commission from any revenue collected from violations detected through the use of a camera and a manufacturer or vendor from receiving a fee or remuneration based upon the number of violations detected through the use of a camera, etc. Effective Date: October 1, 2021.

HB 1061 Schools of Hope (Smith (D))

Adds certain hope operators to entities required to perform annual financial audit & provide financial statements; revises definition of "persistently low-performing school"; revises student reporting for schools of hope; revises provisions related to the list of specified facilities; revises time certain funds may be carried forward; requires certain school of hope personnel undergo background screening. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

HB 1073 Student Mental Health (Woodson)

Requires district school boards to adopt policies relating to student mental health; Requires such policies include access to specified professionals, access to continuum of services & procedures to aid a student experiencing a mental health crisis; requires such procedures minimize law enforcement & hospitalization, involve mobile crisis response services that meet certain criteria, include method to discreetly request assistance, & include ongoing treatment. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

SB 1108 Education (Diaz)

Authorizing the Department of Education to hold patents, copyrights, trademarks, and service marks; requiring certain students to take a specified assessment relating to civic literacy; requiring certain postsecondary students to complete a civic literacy course and pass a specified assessment to demonstrate competency in civic literacy; requiring school districts to provide the SAT or ACT to grade 11 students beginning in a specified school year; revising the tests that are included under test administration and security rules, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

SB 1158 School Attendance (Rouson)

Providing that a parent of a student within the compulsory attendance age is not responsible for the student's nonattendance at school if attendance was impracticable or inadvisable on account of mental or physical sickness or injury, as attested to by a written statement of a licensed practicing physician, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

SB 1180 District School Board Member Salaries (Rodrigues (R))

Requiring that the salaries of certain officials elected on or before July 1, 2021, be adjusted until the official completes his or her 8th year of total service; requiring a member of a district school board elected on or before July 1, 2021, to receive a salary until he or she completes 8 years of total service on the district school board; prohibiting a member of a district school board elected after July 1, 2021, from receiving a salary, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

SB 1184 Schools of Innovation (Brodeur)

Establishing Schools of Innovation; authorizing a school district to apply to the Commissioner of Education to designate a public school as a School of Innovation; authorizing a School of Innovation to request the state board to waive rules or the district school board to waive policies; authorizing a School of Innovation to use an alternative to letter grades;

requiring the department to determine and implement an equitable method of equivalent funding for Schools of Innovation, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

SB 1214 Nonprofit Taxation (Gruters)

Specifying conditions for retaining an ad valorem tax exemption for certain property used for certain purposes; defining the term “incidental use”, etc. Effective Date: 7/1/2021.

SB 1218 Student Identification Cards (Jones)

Requiring school principals to ensure that crisis prevention hotline and text line numbers and behavioral health hotline and text line numbers are printed on the back of student identification cards, etc. Effective Date: 7/1/2021.

SB 1220 Teach to Lead Program (Jones)

Requiring additional tax funds to be allocated and applied to the Florida Education Finance Program to be used for specified purposes; creating the Teach to Lead Program for specified purposes, etc. Effective Date: On July 1, 2021, but only if SB___ or similar legislation takes effect, if such legislation is adopted in the same legislative session or an extension thereof and becomes a law.

SB 1228 Education (Diaz)

Requiring school districts to provide for live remote operation of all public schools as free schools for a term of 180 days or the equivalent on an hourly basis as specified by rules of the State Board of Education; providing that the number of students attending classes through live remote attendance counts toward class size maximums as equally as the number of students attending in person; including live remote attendance pursuant to rules adopted by the state board as a manner in which students may satisfy the requirement to attend school regularly; requiring the actual or live remote attendance of all public K-12 school students to be checked by each school, etc. Effective Date: 7/1/2021.

SB 1244 Florida Kidcare Program Eligibility (Book)

Increasing the income eligibility limit for coverage under the Florida Kidcare program; requiring applicants to provide specified documentation if the Florida Kidcare program is unable to verify eligibility according to federal requirements; authorizing the Agency for Health Care Administration to seek federal waiver approval or submit state plan amendments as necessary; requiring the agency to examine graduated family contribution rates for newly qualifying families under the Kidcare program, etc. Effective Date: 7/1/2021.

SB 1266 Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Memorial Day (Book)

Recognizing February 14, 2022, and each February 14 thereafter, as “Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Memorial Day” in Florida, a day of remembrance for all of those who lost their lives, or whose lives were forever changed, as a result of the mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, etc.

SB 1282 Early Learning and Early Grade Success (Harrell)

Deleting the Office of Early Learning from within the Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice of the Department of Education; establishing the Division of Early Learning within the department; revising approved child care or early education settings for the placement of certain children; requiring each parent who enrolls his or her child in the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program to allow his or her child to participate in a specified screening and progress monitoring program; revising the performance standards for the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program;

authorizing certain students who enrolled in the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program to receive intensive reading interventions using specified funds, etc. APPROPRIATION: \$3,865,759 Effective Date: Upon becoming a law.

SB 1284 Reporting of School Safety Issues (Jones)

Requiring data from a specified hotline to be included in a certain centralized integrated data repository; requiring the Office of Safe Schools to establish and operate a hotline for specified purposes; requiring threat assessment teams to report all threats and incidents to the school principal; establishing the Safe Schools Grant Program; providing for funding and administration of the program, etc. Effective Date: 7/1/2021.

SB 1300 Charter Schools (Diaz)

Revising requirements for the annual reports that charter school sponsors are required to submit to the Department of Education; requiring the Charter School Commission, formerly the Charter School Appeal Commission, to recommend denial of a charter school application if the school does not propose a certain reading curriculum; prohibiting specified individuals and entities from submitting an application to open a charter school for specified periods of time, etc. Effective Date: 7/1/2021.

SB 1310 Retirement (Polsky)

Specifying the minimum amount of the factor used to calculate the cost-of-living adjustment of benefits for certain retirees and beneficiaries of the Florida Retirement System; providing a declaration of important state interest, etc. Effective Date: 7/1/2021.

SB 1336 Gold Seal Quality Care Program (Gibson)

Revising the requirements of the Gold Seal Quality Care program; requiring the Department of Education to establish a verification process for accrediting entities and providing requirements therefor; providing that an accrediting entity is liable for repayment of certain rate differentials if the accrediting entity granted accreditation to specified entities under fraudulent terms or failed to conduct onsite verifications; providing an exemption from ad valorem taxation and rate differentials for certain child care facilities, etc. Effective Date: Upon becoming a law.

SB 1372 Literacy Improvement (Burgess)

Establishing the New Worlds Reading Initiative under the Department of Education; requiring the administrator, in consultation with a specified entity, to develop a selection of books; requiring the administrator to coordinate monthly book distribution to certain students; requiring the administrator to assist with local implementation of the initiative; requiring that a certain notification include information about the initiative, etc. Effective Date: 7/1/2021.

SB 1394 Certificates of Completion (Rodriguez (A))

Specifying that students awarded a certificate of completion are eligible to enroll in career center and charter technical career center programs, etc. Effective Date: 7/1/2021.

HB 02051 English as a Second Language through Arts Integration (Morales)

English as a Second Language through Arts Integration: Provides an appropriation for the English as a Second Language through Arts Integration. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

HB 3685 Manatee Schools STEM Career Pathways Pilot

Provides an appropriation for the Manatee Schools STEM Career Pathways Pilot. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

HB 6001 Licenses to Carry Concealed Weapons or Firearms (Sabatini)

Removes provision prohibiting concealed carry licensees from openly carrying handgun or carrying concealed weapon or firearm into college or university facility. Effective Date: July 1, 2021.

YOUR GRAYROBINSON TEAM



**Dean Cannon, President and Chief Executive Officer
Chair of Government Affairs**

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Dean served in the Florida House of Representatives from 2004 until 2012. During his eight-year tenure, he played pivotal roles in property tax reform, growth management reform, health care and Medicaid reform, and major transportation infrastructure policy initiatives, among many others. He was selected by his peers to become Speaker of the House for the 2010 to 2012 term and is credited with leading the Florida House effectively during a time of great economic and political challenge.



Kim McDougal, Ph.D., Senior Government Affairs Consultant

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Kim brings almost three decades of education policy knowledge and experience to the firm's lobbying practice, having served in multiple leadership roles at the Department of Education, including governmental relations director and senior policy advisor for several commissioners of education. Most recently, Kim served as chief of staff to Florida Governor Rick Scott. In this role, she was responsible for directly serving and advising the Governor on issues pertaining to 100,000 plus executive branch employees and administered an \$83 billion state budget. She also served as Governor Scott's deputy chief of staff, legislative affairs director, education policy coordinator and as policy advisor during his successful re-election campaign.



Carlecia Collins, Government Consultant

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Carlecia has more than a decade of experience working in Florida politics. Her experience includes serving as a special assistant to the Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives and in several leadership roles within the Florida Senate President's office. In her most recent position, Carlecia served as a senior legislative assistant for Florida Senate President Bill Galvano, where she handled statewide appointments to boards, commissions, and taskforces for the Florida Senate.