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Florida School Boards Association 2021 Legislative Session Report

COMMITTEE WEEK THREE
February 1, 2021 – February 5, 2021

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COMMITTEE REPORTS

Senate Education Committee

Bill Discussion and Debate
Wednesday, February 3, 2021

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

Summary

The Senate Education Committee held a meeting to discuss and debate SB 48, SB 146, SB 282, and SB 200.

SB 48 – Educational Scholarship Programs (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 and 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 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. Finally, it modifies eligibility requirements for the scholarships programs and establishes award priorities.

Q&A

Vice Chair Jones

Q: On lines 4106-4110 we eliminated the review of the Hope Scholarship recipients at their new private school. Is there a reason we did that?

A: In the consolidation process and bringing the Hope Scholarship under the FES all of the requirements and the implementation of the scholarship fall under the FES rules that are already in the statute.

Q: In lines 2962-2965 it says the state may not determine standards or curriculum for private schools, but does it not have responsibility in awarding the public funds to ensure students outcomes attain certain standards?

A: Again, in consolidating these scholarships, a lot of what is in this bill is current law simply being consolidated under two scholarship programs we are created here. All of the accountability measures remain current law it is just brought under the umbrella of the one scholarship instead of having certain sets.

Q: Can you talk about the difference between the state trust fund and the lottery as pertaining to K-12 funding?

A: Yes absolutely. The trust fund that is dedicated to the lottery has specific uses delineated in statute. This trust fund would directly fund K-12 education coming into that one pot of money that is the FEFP. Any funds that go into it go to K-12 funding.

Q: In lines 339-341, there was an elimination. I want to make sure we are not putting ourselves in a position to where a business can choose who they want to designate those dollars to knowing that if we are focusing on low-income students that they are not being excluded from this. So why did we strike that language pertaining to the eligible business contribution?

A: That language is not necessary for our program. The way the tax credit scholarship is funded is that donations are made to an SFO. It is a pot of money. Students become eligible by applying and being accepted into the program and they go through the priority list. There is no allowable designation under our current law. It is not possible to designate a particular student. Under the bill, that does not change, it is just a slightly different mechanism. It is still a lump sum and the money coming out of the FESP is still used. The families still have to apply and be deemed eligible and accepted. They are funded based on priority.

Q: In lines 1832-1836, we moved the poverty level line significantly from 185% to 300%. Why did we do that?

A: To be clear, Senator, that is current law. We are not changing current law, the 300%, we are just bringing it over to this program and are consolidating it to make it consistent.

Q: When looking at the funding and payment in both the McKay and FTC, we increased by 7% after each year. If that money does not get used, what happens?

A: Just like we do our school funding based on students that show up, this would operate the same. As a legislature we have agreed to appropriate more funds to meet the demands of the waitlist in the Gardiner scholarship. We have a little wiggle room, so if all of that money does not get used it simply goes back into the FEFP pot used for K-12 education.

Q: I know that Step Up has made grade strides in working with Equality Florida. Do you believe in the bill we can look at putting language encouraging providers that they implement updated policies to ensure to child is being discriminated against based on their race, ethnicity or sexual orientation?

A: First of all, the providers have to meet federal law when it comes to discrimination. And number two, some of those things listed in those handbooks you mentioned were outdated and they have been changed. We have worked with schools and those rules have been made consistent. We are obviously open to conversations to making the bill better but we feel that with having the federal discrimination law there and the fact this has been created to empower families and parents from students who face these kinds of issues, parents are going to make the best decision for their children. Essentially, the language is unnecessary because the whole point of this program is to ensure that children that do face bullying because of issues like these get to go to a better school where they can thrive.

Senator Berman

Q: 5 programs are being combined into two programs. Where is the money coming from? I got confused. Are we still using the corporate tax credit, are we still using the tax credit from car sales, etc.

A: It seems like a really big change, but it really is a lot of consolidation and streamlining. The funding sources under Gardiner sat outside the FEFP and what we are doing here is just bringing in to the FEFP so there is consistency. That money remains state funds. With McKay there is no real change, it is in the same funding vein as it was before. We are simply streamlining that scholarship for all students with unique abilities. With the FES, that remains the same, we are combining the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship for consistencies. The Hope Scholarship is in the FES now. Contributions made by taxpayers go into the trust fund, solely dedicated to funding K-12 education. What we have created with this bill really is one single pot of money. The eligibility requirements still function the same but they are consolidated and streamlined so parents can choose the avenue of which program to apply for.

Q: So people who purchase automobiles are still going to be able to check off on the box that they want their money to go to the tax credit, and corporations can still put their tax credit in that pot of money. If there is a shortage of FEFP money, what happens?

A: Yes, that is correct, those donations will go into one pot of money used to fund all the scholarship programs. There is a cap on the number of students that can be funded, which accounts for consistent growth of the program.

Q: Why did you increase from 95% to 97.5%?

A: In consolidating the scholarships there was inconsistencies in the amount of funding. So this is to make it consistent across the board because we are bringing it all into one, really two scholarships, but one program.

Q: In here you removed the requirement that children needed to have attended public school to be eligible for the program. Why is that?

A: There is a public demand for students to be able to participate in this program and to have a menu of options to choose from. Even with the change in eligibility, the cap is still the same. It is not an expansion of the number of students who can participate in the program, it is just another pathway in.

Q: How much is the 2.5% equal to?

A: My general guess is somewhere in the \$562 million range is the cost of the program. But we can maybe get you those numbers, I'm not sure about the 2.5% though.

Q: You talk in the bill about incidents that occur with students in order for parents to be able to bring their child into the scholarship program. But there is no requirement for a finding about this incident and whether it was valid. What are we doing to ensure parents aren't lying about a bullying incident to take advantage of the program and send their kids to private school?

A: We don't change current law on the eligibility so in this bill there is no new law changing those parameters. It is the same.

Q: Are people allowed to take their ESAs and use them for prepaid college expenses?

A: An acceptable use of funds is that any leftover funds can be put in a 529 account.

Q: Is that a new addition?

A: I believe parents are eligible to do that under the Gardiner program now. We are mirroring most of what is done in Gardiner and applying it to the other scholarships.

Q: So now it is under all of the additional programs?

A: Yes.

Q: Does money in the ESAs ever go directly to the parents?

A: The expenses must be approved by the SFO from the list of approved expenses under Gardiner. They are a little more restrictive for students in the FES, because those funds are for traditional students and Gardiner is for students with unique abilities who may need OT, PT, and other therapy programs.

Q: I'm concerned about what you said about the prepaid. I'm worried parents may be putting away money for college instead of using it for students in the present. What is the state doing to measure the academic opportunities and outcomes for students receiving scholarships?

A: While in theory it sounds like something that could happen, it really doesn't. Most of their funds are used on the education of the child. This is an option used for children who may have a unique situation. They still must fulfill their main duty of educating their child.

Q: What evidence is there that these programs will be an effective and efficient use of our taxpayer dollars?

A: I think we have a clear track record in Florida that these scholarships are effective. The progress of the students is incontestable. The data shows the schools they come from have even improved their performance. This is really again more of a consolidation and streamlining than changing parameters of already successful programs.

Senator Polsky

Q: With respect to income level, is there a check to see if that income changes year after year? Do they need to re-up to prove their income has stayed the same?

A: Once a student is in, they get renewed unless they decide to opt out or they get removed by DOE for violating the rules. The entry parameters are put on the front end.

Q: What if parents are making significant money later on and are still receiving this money even though they don't need it? Is that something you'd consider putting in this bill?

A: The philosophy is to provide access to parents at that criteria and not to penalize parents for accepting a little better of a job that renders them ineligible. When they get in at those means, we are not going to dissuade them to improve their lives just to try to keep this scholarship. That remains steadfast from what we have done in the past and we are not going to change it.

Q: If someone puts money into prepaid college, if the student does not go to college, the family can just keep that money?

A: That is set up by a 529 and those plans are run federally. They must comply with those parameters, which are very specific.

Q: Will there be more money be coming from the state for these programs in the FEFP instead of going to traditional public-school education?

A: This is not affecting the money going to traditional public schools. Those funds are generated by student enrollment. With the Gardiner, the increase in funding is consistent with what the legislature has provided to eliminate the waitlist for Gardiner, which is about 3500 students per year. If all 3500 of those extra students qualify and get accepted, yes that would be an increase in funding that we would need to contemplate and deal with.

Q: It seems from the bill to me that there is no oversight on how the parent sends the money. Is there any more oversight on how its spent?

A: For homeschooling specifically there is a statute that provides the oversight and requirements. That will not change under this, parents still have an obligation to meet certain requirements.

Q: As far as the finances go, who oversees the parent is spending this money in the appropriate manner?

A: The spending of the money is the same process that currently exists under Gardiner. The scholarship program has a very strict policy on the approval of expenses, that process does not change and will remain under this consolidation. That model seems to be working under the Gardiner.

Senator Thurston

Q: You talked about additional accountability but I didn't hear anything about additional accountability.

A: We are bringing the existing Gardiner scholarship accountability over to the other programs.

Q: So the Gardiner had accountability that FES, FTC, and Hope did not have?

A: That is correct and that is by the nature of the scholarship because the Gardiner was created as an ESA. The expenditures have to be submitted to the scholarship funding organizations, vetted, and approved under Gardiner and we are bringing that over to the other programs.

Q: Is public school funding derived from the FEFP?

A: Yes.

Q: So, private school scholarships are being funded from the same entity public schools are being funded from?

A: That is correct. It is current law; this is not a change.

Amendment 876706 (Berman)

The amendment deletes lines 275, 1713 and 279, which requires the Auditor General to conduct audits every three years. This amendment creates annual reviews. Now is not the time to change the auditing process.

Q&A

Senator Diaz

Q: Are you aware of the recommendation made by the Auditor General report on page seven? The Auditor General in 2020 recommended this change.

A: Can you explain why?

Q: In trying to do a complete audit every year they were always lagging behind so none of the recommendations could be implemented in a timely manner, not that there were many findings anyway. The scholarships still must conduct independent audits every year and this is not changing with this bill. The Auditor General wanted to make the process more effective and efficient.

Appearance Forms on Amendment 876706

Dawn Stewart, representing the Florida PTA: Waiving in support.

Billie-Anne Gray, representing FSBA: Waiving in support.

Debate on Amendment 876706

Chair Gruters

Q: Senator Diaz, is this a friendly amendment?

A: Friendly Senator, unfriendly amendment.

Closing on the Amendment (Berman)

I still have a lot of concerns. Now is not the time to change the auditing process. I think it is better to have the Auditor General looking at it every year.

The Amendment failed.

Amendment 453090 (Diaz)

This is a purely technical amendment of conforming language to make sure it is in line with the rest of the bill.

The Amendment was adopted.

Amendment 854600 (Berman)

This amendment deleted lines related to the teacher salary increase allocation.

Appearance Forms on Amendment 854600

Dawn Stewart, representing the Florida PTA: Waiving in support.

Marie Leeman, representing Fund Education Now: This group is in support of this bill. She thinks this is all a misuse of tax dollars.

Cathy Bane, Florida Education Association: She is in support of the amendment.

BillieAnne Gay, representing FSBA: Waiving in support.

Debate on Amendment 854600

Senator Diaz

In order to understand this we need more clarification on the FEFP. This is an appropriations decision. The teacher allocation is a categorical per student allocation that goes to the districts. It's not a pot of money that sits outside the FEFP. I understand this concern but it's a question for the appropriations process. That conversation should take place during that process. This is not the right place to address that.

Closing on Amendment 854600 (Berman)

This is probably an appropriations decision to make but I feel like because this is in the bill now, I think we should address it. I ask you to support this amendment to protect our teacher salary allocation categorical.

Amendment fails.

Late Filed Amendment 782544 (Jones)

This amendment reinstates that a business making a tax credit contribution to the scholarship program may not designate a specific student as a recipient.

Appearance forms on Amendment 782544

Dawn Stewart, representing the Florida PTA: Waiving in support.

Debate on Amendment 782544

Senator Diaz

I appreciate Senator Jones' concern, but this is unnecessary language. The way our scholarships are structured, that cannot happen anyway.

Closing (Jones)

I just wanted to make sure individuals who could not bargain did not fall through the cracks.

Amendment fails.

Late Filed Amendment 904122 (Jones)

As a former teacher, I am clear on the time frame in which it takes an IEP to go through the process. This is probably a technical amendment. I'm asking for the length of time to change from 30 days to 30 school days to extend the time frame.

Debate on Amendment 904122

Senator Diaz

I think this is a valid conversation piece but there is a net effect. We need to do a deeper dive. I'd ask to work with Senator Jones going forward to make sure there are no unintended consequences. I am asking you all to defeat the amendment so we can have the conversation going forward. This bill has a long way to go.

Closing (Jones)

I'm going to withdraw this amendment.

Late Filed Amendment 837324 (Jones)

Knowing that there are a great deal of parents that will not put their students back in a brick-and-mortar school, I would just hope we would look at ensuring there are accountability measures in place outside of the normal tests to make sure students are learning as they should as they move to matriculate in the higher education system. All this is doing is asking for accountability in testing for students who choose this as an option.

Appearance Forms on Amendment 837324

Dawn Stewart, representing the Florida PTA: Waiving in support.

Debate on Amendment 837324

Senator Diaz

Under current statute all of the scholarship program participating schools retain the option to participate in testing. That option for testing is available to the schools. I would respectfully ask us to defeat the amendment.

Closing (Jones)

We put the measure in place to make sure students are meeting certain benchmarks in their learning, that is all.

The Amendment fails.

Late Filed Amendment 380768 (Jones)

Withdrawn.

Appearance Forms on SB 48 as Amended

Marquavias Wilson, Student: Everything got better when I started going to a new school. I know my new school cares about me and I can be myself.

Alexis LeRoux, representing Step Up for Students: Waiving in support.

Reverend Rachel Gunter Shepard, representing Pastors for Florida Children and Together For Hope: Vehemently opposes. There is no relief to current under-funding of public education in the state. This undermines millions of students to help a select group.

Jennifer Wilson, Parent: This scholarship has been a godsend for my child. She supports the bill.

Lamisha Stevens, Parent: School choice has made a huge difference in her son's life.

Dr. Simone Arnold, Citizen: My son relies on the Gardiner scholarship and its flexible spending for therapeutic needs.

Alicia Cower, Parent: The Gardiner scholarship changed her son's life.

Derek Sandifer, Parent: His daughter is a unique girl, she is smart and gets to attend classes that stimulates her.

Ida Eskamani, representing Florida Rising: Waiving in opposition.

Cara Gross, representing the ACLU: Waiving in opposition.

NAACP Florida State Conference: Waiving in opposition.

Matthew Choy, representing the Florida Chamber of Commerce: Waiving in support.

Michael Barret, representing the Florida Conference of Catholic Bishop: Waiving in support.

Linda Edson, representing the Florida Retired Educators Association: Waiving in opposition.

James Mostettler, representing Foundation for Florida's Future: Waiving in support.

Dawn Stewart, representing the Florida PTA: We are concerned about the accountability. There are good measures in here but we can do better. The Florida PTA does not think that vouchers are a way to educate children well.

Marie Leeman, representing Fund Education Now: This group opposes this bill. SB 48 is misleading.

John Argueo, representing Osceola County District Three School Board Member: He supports this bill, and so is his community.

Phillip Suderman, representing American for Prosperity: He is in support of this bill and believes educational choice is the way to give their children the best path.

Trish Neely, representing the League of Women Voters of Florida: We believe in parents' rights to choose where their child is educated. But we take issue with state tax dollars funding private institutions through the voucher program. This is bad policy. She is happy to see that there will be more accountability with this bill, however. Asked senators to vote no on this bill.

Reverend Dr. Russell Meyer, representing the Council of Florida Churches: This group is in opposition of this bill. Vouchers increase segregation and discrimination. Let us return to fully funding public education and providing services to all of our students.

Caesar Grajales, representing the Libre Initiative: Please support SB 48. We need legislation that will make it easier for families, particularly Latino families, to exercise choice over their child's education.

William Mattox, representing the James Madison Institute: Identifying three things that will make it better.

Cathy Bane, representing the Florida Education Association: We have questions and concerns about this bill and want to work with the sponsor to fix them. We ask you to vote no on this bill but would like to work with the sponsor.

Debate on the Bill as Amended

Senator Thurston

There has been a lot of testimony about the benefits of the bill. I'm going to start my debate from the Florida Constitution. The Florida Constitution guarantees a well-funded public education system. I am working for the 95% of the students working in the public school system who will be there when we divert money from the public school system. I want all of the students in my district attending these public schools to thrive. Had we been pumping the same amount of money that we do into these programs into the public school system, I can tell you I would have better outcomes from the students in my district. Yes, you combine McKay and Gardiner, I am going to support that 200%. But the death knell to public education is by including this in the FEFP. I'm going to go on the record that I am voting against this bill and I'm sad I'm going to be a part of the legislature that put this into place.

Senator Broxson

Can I make a motion that we vote on this bill at 10:50?

Chair Gruters

Is there any rejection to this time certain vote? There is a rejection so we have to have a 2/3 vote. Looks like the 2/3 have it.

Senator Jones

I wish we were having a different conversation when it comes to this. I am voting against this bill and for the teachers who have been begging for the state to come through for them for PPE. I'm voting for the child who I don't have the opportunity to see. The reason I think this is not a good time to do this is because in the age of COVID we need to unclog the school to prison pipeline. I think it is going to happen in the age of COVID. Teachers, administrators, school boards have been asking us to come through for them and I think it's not the right time for this bill.

Chair Gruters

I stand corrected. That motion did not pass so we can debate this bill further. But I would ask you all to be conscious of the other bills we have on the agenda.

Senator Berman

I oppose this bill. 90% of our students go to traditional public or charter schools. We spend an inordinate amount of time and money on the 10% for voucher students. We don't know the true fiscal impact of this bill yet. It appears more money is going to be coming away from the FEFP. I can't justify spending any more money on this small number of students and not in public schools. I also have issues with the accountability for the voucher programs. The consolidation is not the way to move forward and I'm very concerned about the parents being allowed to put money away for college education. I'll be voting against this bill today.

Outcome on the Bill

CS for SB 48 is reported favorably.

SB 146 – Civic Education (Senator Brandes)

This bill is a bi-partisan bill with Representative Diamond. The bill requires the DOE to develop minimum criteria for a non-partisan beginning civic practicum for high school students.

Q&A

Senator Burman

Q: If someone wanted to work with a particular political party, would they be allowed to as part of the curriculum.

A: I don't think there is any prohibition against that, we just want to keep the program itself non-partisan.

Appearance Forms

William Mattox, representing the James Madison Institute: We are in support of this important legislation. We have a keen interest in civic education.

Outcome of the Bill

SB 146 is reported favorably.

SB 282 – Moments of Silence in Public Schools (Senator Baxley)

It is a very simple idea. We open school with a moment of silence to change the tone of the day.

Q&A

Senator Polsky

Q: It wasn't mentioned in the bill but what if a teacher neglects to do the moment of silence, is there going to be a disciplinary action?

A: To my knowledge we haven't put any disciplinary actions in the bill.

Senator Berman

Q: If a student wanted to bring in a prayer rug or cross themselves during this time period, would those activities be permitted?

A: The bill does not address that.

Appearance Forms

Rabbi: This is all about giving students the ability to reflect and to get their minds off everything else. I wish I had something like this in school

Cara Gross, representing the ACLU: Waiving in Opposition.

Devon Graham, representing American Atheists: I'm here to oppose this bill. This statute caters to a very specific audience.

Debate on the Bill

Senator Burman

I can't support this bill. We already have the ability for school districts to allow it and I don't want to mandate it.

Closing on the Bill (Baxley)

I cannot see how it is offensive to anyone to have a moment of reflection and it would change the tone of everything.

Outcome of the Bill

SB 282 is reported favorably.

SB 200 – Student Retention (Senator Berman); addressing Amendment 794706

I am starting with the strike-all, Amendment 794706. With the pandemic, we have seen how school districts and students have been pushed in uncharted territory. Many students have not done well with online learning. This bill allows parents with students in grades K-8 to repeat a grade, just for this next school year. This would give parents the opportunity to hold their child back for one year only. They would need to submit a written request. The bill requires school districts to report to DOE the students who retain.

Closing on the Amendment

The amendment is adopted.

Q&A

Senator Hutson

Q: At a certain age we have to cut you off from begin able to participate in sports. Have you contemplated that decision in this bill?

A: We cut it off at K-8 for that reason. We can look into that eligibility to see if we need to change something about it. Maybe we need to discuss with the parents that issue. That might be a better way to give parents a lot more information. Maybe we can amend the bill at the next meeting.

Outcome of the Bill

CS for SB 200 is reported favorably.

Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Education

Presentation and Discussions of the Governor’s Budget Recommendations

Wednesday, February 3, 2021

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

Representatives from the Following Organizations Were Present

- Governor’s Office of Policy and Budget
- Department of Education
- Board of Governors

Summary

The Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Education held a meeting to discuss the Governor’s budget recommendations for the 2021-2022 fiscal year. Chair Broxson emphasized that each senator should meet with Mark Armstrong to go over the FEFP and what it means, and what they will be doing so that they can be more equipped to understand proposed bills and formulas. He also discussed how education is a workforce and how the budget should be designed to put people to work and give children a quality of life.

Education Policy Coordinator in the Governor’s Office of Policy and Budget (Theresa Klebacha “TK”)

Mrs. Klebacha introduced the Florida Leads budget and turned the presentation over to Alex Kelly, the Chief of Staff of the Department of Education.

Chief of Staff of the Department of Education (Alex Kelly)

Governor DeSantis’ budget maintains the great increase the legislature provided last year to VPK. In addition, the Florida Leads budget provides \$100 million in federal budget authority for early learning coalitions to align with school readiness rates. The budget maintains \$10 million for the Teach Program to provide scholarships for early childhood professionals to work towards earning a degree or credentials in early childhood education. The budget also maintains the HIPPIE program to deliver high quality school readiness curriculum to families to strengthen early literacy skills at home. From K-1 to K-12, the Florida Leads budget provides \$22.8 billion in overall spending for Florida’s K-12 billion, which represents a 2.7% increase from the General Appropriations Act last year. As for additional K-12 funding, Governor DeSantis’ budget promotes security funding for Jewish Day Schools, a Gardiner Scholarship increase. It maintains \$10 million for computer science funding and maintains \$5.5 million for the Youth Mental Health Awareness and Assistance training. The budget for higher education continues to generously support the state college and university system and maintains successful initiatives. Student financial aid continues vital programs that help ensure pathways that support their needs to matriculate to secondary institutions.

Q&A

Senator Wright

Q: For the Gardiner Scholarship increase of \$21 million, how many students do you think that would add?

A: We estimate the addition to be around 2,000 students.

Senator Gibson

Q: On the VPK, I'm showing that there is almost \$7 million less funding going towards VPK, could you talk about that a little?

A: The estimating conference estimates that there will be less students in VPK next year than was funded for this year so the decline is just reflecting that expected decrease in enrollment. The rate per student remains the same.

Q: What is that percentage reduction based on?

A: That projection is based on the most recent data we have about enrollment currently.

Q: So the projection of less students is based on the COVID environment?

A: It is based on the data we have right now, it's not as simple as one data point, there are many. Right now VPK enrollment is around 120,000, so this is projecting that some of that typical enrollment will come back next year.

Q: You mentioned that there is some wiggle room if the number actually goes about what you are projecting, is there room to make sure we can accommodate that.

A: Yes absolutely, we will continue to monitor that data and work with the Senate and the House on this.

Q: And that will include those facilities that will potentially reopen?

A: Exactly.

Q: The post-secondary academic library network, does that provide access to all students enrolled in our colleges and universities to all electronic materials?

A: Yes. More than a million students are using those resources every year.

Q: On the PECO dollars charter schools are at \$180 million and traditional public schools are at \$0. Why is that?

A: All of the money that is collected locally for capital outlay stays with traditional public schools. The state is picking up the tab for the public charters so school boards can keep all of that money local.

Q: There is a reduction in Schools of Hope? Why is that?

A: That reduction takes \$50 million out of the carry-over and reallocates that to other key priorities. There was a significant amount of unutilized funds, but there is still plenty of money there.

Comment: There seems to be a lot of reductions based on anticipated enrollment numbers. The last thing we want is for there to be a large number of students and kids who want to be participate in these programs, schools, etc. but can't. I just want to put that out there.

Senator Cruz

Q: On the Gardiner Scholarship, I see a 11% increase, can you address that for me?

A: This increase funds an additional 2,000 students to participate in the program.

Q: An additional \$21 million for 2,000 students?

A: All students on the Gardiner are students with special needs and so the types of services they need if they were to stay in a traditional public school is around \$10,000 a student. Essentially that money is carried over to the Gardiner instead.

Q: Can you explain about the Title I funds?

A: The Title I school recognition program is based on the notion that the school is showing or maintaining improvement. Only schools serving low-income students would be eligible for these bonuses and they have to be allocated according to specific criteria.

Q: Speaking to a couple of the student financial aid changes, I see we decreased Bright Futures. How will we do that?

A: All of the scholarship programs have been adjusted by the enrollment conferences. These adjustments are based on enrollment projections, which have dipped a little. If those numbers are to shift during the year we can work on that with you.

Q: What is special about the Benequista Scholarship program?

A: It serves National Merit Scholars to bring that talent pool to the state of Florida and it has had considerable growth this last year which is why there has been an increase in funding allocation.

Chair Broxson

We are living in very difficult times. We can be thankful our federal partners have stepped up to provide aid. However, this presents real challenges to us that requires we have close communication with the executive branch and with both the House and Senate. It was good to get a commitment here that this is almost a living document. We need to make sure we are doing this right and we look forward to continuing this process. For the sake of the members, I would like Marshall Criser to walk us through the pseudo-governmental process you have for the 12 universities.

Chancellor of the Board of Governors (Marshall Criser)

Mr. Criser explained what the Board of Governors does on an everyday basis. The Board of Governors is responsible for policy oversight and in implementing an accountability system as a whole for the universities. Additionally, the Board establishes certain regulations that govern the day to day operations of the twelve Florida universities. The Board of Trustees of each of those universities take care of the day to day tasks of operating their respective university. Both groups work well together. The Board of Governors has now been working on being intentional in encouraging students to look at the degrees and outcomes of degrees that Florida employers want. This change has been a big deal. Graduation rates have increased by more than 10% and students are now aligning themselves with degrees that employers really want. The Board was able to help students to accomplish all of this because they have received more funding from the legislature. The Board has made tremendous progress and wants to continue with that progress and remain number one.

Q&A

Senator Gruters

Q: Is there anything we can do to put our best foot forward so we capture companies that are leaving California and New York?

A: I believe our state needs to continue the good work it has done to attract businesses. We have done an incredible job but we need a continued partnership with the House and the Senate to be able to do that. We need to keep our focus on what businesses we should attract in the future. What has distinguished Florida is the strong leadership we have.

Closing

Chair Broxson

We need to thoroughly evaluate all funding requests. We are requesting entities that receive current state dollars to provide general information necessary to complete our review. This request for information will be posted on the Senate Appropriations web page. It must be submitted by Friday, February 19th. Because this applies only to entities with recurring dollars, I suggest that as you look through your district you look at the recurring dollars and make sure that those entities are properly represented on the website. The entities must post on the website themselves.

House Early Learning & Elementary Education Subcommittee

Bill Presentation and Discussion of Financial and Academic Support under the CARES Act

Thursday, February 4, 2021

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

Representatives from the Following Organizations Were Present

- Department of Education

Summary

The House Early Learning & Elementary Education Subcommittee held a meeting this week to discuss and debate HB 3 and to go over the financial and academic support aspects provided to children, families, and education providers through the CARES Act. HB 3 is the committee's first bill this session.

HB 3 – Home Book Delivery for Elementary Students (Representative Trabulsky)

HB 3 provides hard copy books to elementary school students on a monthly basis and resources to their parents to help them improve their child's reading performance. This bill requires DOE or a statewide third-party organization to administer the New Worlds Reading initiative. The administrator is responsible for creating an application process for school districts to participate, curating the book list to be distributed, coordinating book delivery, and developing digital tools parents may use to help improve their child's reading skills. Participating school districts must work with local non-profit partners to market and fundraise for the initiative. They are also responsible for identifying participants, which are those who have substantial reading deficiencies or are reading below their grade level on statewide assessments. Students will remain in the initiative until they enter sixth grade, or their parents opt out. Under the bill, books must be provided at no cost to the families, with funding for the initiative shared equally by the statewide administrator and the participating school district on a pro-rata basis.

Q&A

Ranking Member Davis

Q: It feels like this program is designed for K-5th grade. Is there any consideration for extending it to VPK or middle and high schools? I ask that because we do have a partner that partners with our school district that has included VPK and middle and high school. Great bill, but is there any consideration for that.

A: At this time, there is no consideration for that. This is specifically designed for K-5th grade right now.

Q: Your bill focuses on delivery with some of the school districts. Could you take us through the process of how the books are being provided?

A: It is a two-fold program where there is 50% appropriated through general revenue, the other half of the cost is through the school district and their non-profit partners. The way we will choose for the distributor is by putting a bid out, the administrator will do that.

Representative Williams

Q: You spoke about a split on the analysis where you speak of the DOE or a third-party entity. How is that entity chosen?

A: If DOE decides to use a third party, they will choose someone who has best practices in this realm and already have a model they can sustain. Similar programs have been created, just not on the statewide level.

Q: Do we have anything in place that will assist parents in helping their child if they themselves cannot read?

A: There will be video instructions for parents. Also for our digital divide families, there will be take-home materials for them.

Representative Learned

Q: This is a commendable action you are trying to take here. My question is about the opt in opt out situation. What does it take for the school district to opt in, is it true they can opt in or opt out down the road if they are having financial trouble.

A: They can opt in and opt out easily and it will not be in perpetuity.

Q: How do we target the people who need it the most, with those struggling with their reading? The books can't read themselves.

A: The way these students will be identified is through teachers and counselors as well as through seeing how they perform on their statewide assessments. Moreover, part of this bill encompasses parental engagement and it's not anything encumbering to the parents or family.

Representative Nixon

Q: Part of the issue with some children is in regards to diversity – as it relates to the books are going to be offered?

A: As far as books selection and diversity is concerned, the child can choose a genre that appeals to them most because we want them to be excited about learning. As for the books in general there will be diversity in the books they can select, mostly relating to what is appropriate to what is on the child's age and reading level.

Appearance Forms on the Bill

Edward Briggs, representing the Helios Education Foundation and RCMA: Waiving in support.

Christopher Dudley, representing the Florida State Alliance of YMCA: Waiving in support.

David Serdar, Statesman for Environmental Change: (crazy rant as always).

Debate on the Bill

Representative Hunschofsky

I think this bill is so great. Broward County Public Schools sent us a letter demonstrating their support of HB 3. I also think the local decision-making component is important. I look forward to many children struggling with reading feeling seen when they get books coming to their home.

Representative Hawkins

Thank you for making this bill happen. I think this is going to work out nicely for the students.

Closing on the Bill (Representative Trabulsky)

Thank you, Members, for taking the time to be excited about this bill.

The bill is reported favorably by the committee, with an 18-0 vote.

Senior Chancellor for the Department of Education (Dr. Eric Hall)

Dr. Hall gave a presentation on the financial and academic supports provided to families, students, and early learning providers under the CARES Act. He talked about the work the Department has been doing to support Florida's early learning system during the pandemic, particularly with the money provided through the CARES Act. The Department has focused heavily on the gaps, known as achievement gaps, to make sure that children do not lose their early foundational skills during this time. He emphasized continually throughout his presentation the important of quality education and access to education. In order to change the trajectory for children, it starts with the work from before kindergarten into third grade. Dr. Hall believes that there will be a lot of work to do coming out of this pandemic but that Florida will be a leader in this space.

Q&A

Vice Chair Fetterhoff

Q: I want to better understand the Department's goals for distributing CARES funds. Will you clarify what the goal of these funds are?

A: When we started to make the initial shift last spring, we had two primary focuses. One was, how do we ensure safety and health? And the other was how are we going to make sure we are creating the conditions to address gaps. In the childcare funding, that was focused on supporting childcare centers that remained open. We had to make sure we supported them first. As we moved into the additional phase, we helped those centers to re-open and expand access to the system. It was about supporting and sustaining as well as building the capacity for those that were closed to re-open. We wanted to get out families back to work and our children in a safe environment.

Q: Can we talk about the 90,000 students that have disappeared? And what can we do to figure out how to help them? I think it's probably mostly consisting of Kindergartners and VPK students.

A: We did start seeing those trends. But because we recognized that we started moving into VPK and we moved into our next emergency order, where one of the components of that plan was to look at what districts were doing locally to help identify some of those missing students not showing up to VPK or Kindergarten so we could build the capacity to get those children back in school. We did see that as a critical element which is why we made that an explicit aspect of emergency order 7.

Representative Roach

Q: I want to discuss early learning for kindergartners. It looks like almost 50% are not ready for kindergarten, and that seems to be data that pre-dates the pandemic. Can you talk about what impact the pandemic has had on that number?

A: We are working on the data collection at the state level for the first time. Assessment protocols have changed because we don't have all the elements to be able to assess these children.

Ranking Member Davis

Q: We received some information about the rising kindergarten program. How is the success of that program being measured?

A: Part of it is going to be looking at the participation and completion as well as building the access. Our goal is, how are we going to use that progress monitoring data that we have right now to see what we can glean from that data to see how those students are performing. Hopefully we will get some data we can learn from to help us move forward.

Q: Can you explain how the children are being assessed in the kindergarten year?

A: Right now we are using the Renaissance Star literacy assessment. That is our progress monitoring tool and the vendor the Department is using.

Q: So it is to be done all year not in particular intervals?

A: It is done at intervals throughout the year.

Q: You were given funding for this program. It looks like \$18 million for this program and 34 of the school districts participated. Is there any funding left over?

A: Based on what has been allocated out, it is a total of 37 districts that have applied to be a part of it. A total of \$10.9 million has been allocated out to those districts to support this initiative.

Q: You talked about an overall dollar amount but in response to the Rising Star kindergarten program, are those funds leftover going to be used for that program and are we looking at doing that program again?

A: We are working on deciding a strategy. I don't know if we are committed 100%. We are focusing on the data and are in the development stage. We are deciding how to use the balance of CARES Act I and how we will use CARES Act II. This program definitely could be part of the strategy but again we have to look at where the data takes us.

Q: You said 58 districts are below 59% and I want my colleagues to look at this. As a body, how do we make sure that that screen is more blue than it is red.

A: We need to work on how to make strategic investments and support access by having providers open and we need support these businesses and workers. We need to create the right environment and conditions so we can serve families in all counties.

Representative Learned

Q: Is this the percentage of providers that are open currently and did you lose providers during the pandemic?

A: I can get you some more detailed data than what we have on this slide.

Q: These are small businesses that have face to face instruction. My question is mainly by helping these providers through this. Please do follow up with me, the question is really about, what are the other levels of relief these businesses are being provided? What is working/not working? And how can we help these small businesses

A: I think part of the conversation is that we need to keep a strong read on what is happening so we can be prepared when this next round of funding comes. Hopefully that will build some of the capacity you've expressed.

Chair Aloupis

Q: I think it is a massive win that 98.45 of SR and VPK programs are open but I would qualify that with, how many of these providers are barely open? It seems that many of these providers are operating at reduced ratios and the margins we have in childcare are so slim, how do we keep them open? There needs to be a conversation about, whether it's a look at capacity, is the Department looking at moving to capacity? Or if we need to keep ratios at 12:1 now, what are we doing to ensure that the 98.4% of providers are open and thriving?

A: You bring up the exact question we want to continue to navigate. We are looking at the capacity of the system. I think tracking the data is what we need to stay focused on right now so we can figure out how to allocate the funds from the second round of the CARES Act.

Representative Trabulsy

Q: How is the Department planning on supporting providers who offer high quality learning opportunities so there is enough childcare infrastructure to support working families and our economic recovery?

A: We are going to use those CARES Act dollars and other funds that will help us hopefully address supporting these providers you are speaking about. But again, we are looking at the data so we can invest these dollars strategically while we have them to help service providers sustain and grow, while also balancing that with the quality we know is necessary.

Representative Williams

Q: How are VPK providers chosen?

A: It was open for providers to apply to be a part of the pilot. We can get you a copy of what the data says.

Q: Will any of the providers be penalized during this period of time?

A: Are you referring to the use of the pilot assessment? It is not for accountability purposes during this time. It is to learn lessons and to collect data.

Representative Chaney

Q: Have you all learned anything so far that may help you project how you will shift funding once there are vaccines available. And, what kind of training are these providers getting here?

A: Training for our early learning system goes through our Office of Early Learning which has a variety of tools to help teachers know what strategies they need to deploy during this time and close gaps at an accelerated rate.

Representative Hawkins

Q: Do we know where these children are that are not being tested?

A: That could be natural attrition of students that are leaving the state, there are a number of factors. But a lot of that is a result of student attrition.

Representative Nixon

Q: How is operating the rising kindergarten summer program?

A: The districts are operating the programs.

Q: What does the instructional time look like in those programs?

A: I would happy to get you the flier that has all the details.

Representative Hunschofsky

Q: I have a question regarding the 98.4%. I have spoken to many early learning providers in my community and they are wondering how they are going to stay open.

A: Even in this first round of funding, we tried to strategically target certain programs and providers. Our funding model was about supporting our school readiness and VPK and then support those licensed through DCF so we could help those who are high quality providers.

Chair Aloupis

Q: I think it is so important today that we had Representative Trabulsy's bill around literacy. I think it is important to identify the number not ready for kindergarten. You and I both know that if a child isn't ready for that, it is very difficult to help them catch up. So we are a state that has 53% of our children ready for kindergarten. Half of our students are not ready. Why is that so? How are we ensuring that 8 years from now, students are ready and prepared to go into kindergarten?

A: It cannot be one single thing that is going to change that. I think we need to build up the quality of our child care centers and create the right environment that helps the students enter that VPK program. Across the board we have to balance accountability and drive quality.

Closing (Chair Aloupis)

The children sitting in our third-grade classrooms today, those are the children that will be going into our state college and university system or the workforce in 2030. Those students that will be in third grade in 2030 are going to be born next year. There is an opportunity for us here to get the right to ensure that the future of Florida is bright.

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 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)

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)

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)

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)

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 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.

HB0355 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 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 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.

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)

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)

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 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.

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.

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.

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.

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 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.