

Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 840

An act relating to early childhood education; amending s. 402.3017, F.S.; authorizing the Agency for Workforce Innovation to contract for the administration of the Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (TEACH) scholarship program; providing for rulemaking; deleting provisions that limit agency administration of the program to the 2005-2006 fiscal year; amending s. 411.01, F.S.; requiring the Agency for Workforce Innovation to recommend a school readiness equity allocation formula; providing for changes in the allocation of funds to be specified in the General Appropriations Act; eliminating approval of the allocation formula by the Legislative Budget Commission; eliminating an obsolete provision; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Section 402.3017, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

402.3017 Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (TEACH) scholarship program.—

(1) The Legislature finds that the level of early child care teacher education and training is a key predictor for determining program quality. The Legislature also finds that low wages for child care workers prevent many from obtaining increased training and education and contribute to high turnover rates. The Legislature therefore intends to help fund a program which links teacher training and education to compensation and commitment to the field of early childhood education.

(2) The Agency for Workforce Innovation ~~Department of Children and Family Services~~ is authorized to contract for the administration of the Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (TEACH) scholarship program, which provides educational scholarships to caregivers and administrators of early childhood programs, family day care homes, and large family child care homes.

(3) The agency department ~~department~~ shall adopt rules as necessary to implement this section.

~~(4) For the 2005-2006 fiscal year only, the Agency for Workforce Innovation shall administer this section. This subsection expires July 1, 2006.~~

Section 2. Subsection (9) of section 411.01, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

411.01 School readiness programs; early learning coalitions.—

(9) FUNDING; SCHOOL READINESS PROGRAM.—

(a) It is the intent of this section to establish an integrated and quality seamless service delivery system for all publicly funded early childhood education and child care programs operating in this state.

(b)1. The Agency for Workforce Innovation shall administer school readiness funds, plans, and policies and shall prepare and submit a unified budget request for the school readiness system in accordance with chapter 216.

2. All instructions to early learning coalitions for administering this section shall emanate from the Agency for Workforce Innovation in accordance with the policies of the Legislature.

(c) The Agency for Workforce Innovation shall recommend ~~adopt~~ a formula for the allocation among the early learning coalitions of all state and federal school readiness funds for children participating in public or private school readiness programs based upon equity and performance. The allocation formula must be submitted to the Governor, and the chair of the Senate Ways and Means Committee or its successor, and the chair of the House Fiscal Council or its successor no later than January 1 of each year. The Legislature shall specify in the annual General Appropriations Act any changes from the allocation methodology for the prior fiscal year which must be used by the Agency for Workforce Innovation in allocating the appropriations provided in the General Appropriations Act ~~Legislative Budget Commission. Upon approval, the Legislative Budget Commission shall authorize the Agency for Workforce Innovation to distribute funds in accordance with the allocation formula. For fiscal year 2004-2005, the Agency for Workforce Innovation shall allocate funds to the early learning coalitions consistent with the fiscal year 2003-2004 funding allocations to the school readiness coalitions.~~

(d) All state, federal, and required local maintenance-of-effort or matching funds provided to an early learning coalition for purposes of this section shall be used by the coalition for implementation of its school readiness plan, including the hiring of staff to effectively operate the coalition's school readiness program. As part of plan approval and periodic plan review, the Agency for Workforce Innovation shall require that administrative costs be kept to the minimum necessary for efficient and effective administration of the school readiness plan, but total administrative expenditures must not exceed 5 percent unless specifically waived by the Agency for Workforce Innovation. The Agency for Workforce Innovation shall annually report to the Legislature any problems relating to administrative costs.

(e) The Agency for Workforce Innovation shall annually distribute, to a maximum extent practicable, all eligible funds provided under this section as block grants to the early learning coalitions.

(f) State funds appropriated for the school readiness program may not be used for the construction of new facilities or the purchase of buses. The Agency for Workforce Innovation shall present to the Legislature recommendations for providing necessary transportation services for school readiness programs.

(g) All cost savings and all revenues received through a mandatory sliding fee scale shall be used to help fund each early learning coalition's school readiness program.

Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2006.

Approved by the Governor May 25, 2006.

Filed in Office Secretary of State May 25, 2006.