

GENERAL



Education Council
2006 Committee Oversight Powers
and Responsibilities

Fact Sheet

January 2006

1. Do the committees in the Education Council oversee Florida's education system?	Yes. The committees that make up the Education Council have broad power to maintain a continuous review of the work of the Department of Education and the State Board of Education. The committees also have the authority to evaluate the performance of the K-20 education system.
2. Can the committees request reports and recommendations from the Department of Education and other education agencies?	Yes. Section 11.143, F.S., authorizes the committees to request reports concerning the operation of any state agency subject to its jurisdiction, including recommendations by the agency with regard to existing law or proposed education legislation.
3. Do the committees have subpoena power?	Yes. The committees may subpoena any person or compel the production of books, letters, or other documentary evidence, including confidential information.
4. Do the committees review agency rulemaking?	Yes, the committees' staff reviews proposed administrative rules in conjunction with the staff of the Joint Administrative Procedures Committee, which is primarily responsible for reviewing all administrative rules proposed under Chapter 120, F.S., on behalf of the Legislature.
5. What reports have the committees requested from the Department of Education or State Board of Education?	<p>The committees periodically request reports, statewide education data, bill analyses, and general information from the Department of Education.</p> <p>The Florida Statutes and Laws of Florida also often place report requirements on the Department of Education, State Board of Education, and other education-related entities. The Education Council maintains a list of these required reports. The list currently contains over 80 separate reports.</p>
6. What are the applicable statutes and rules?	Section 11.143, F.S. — Standing or select committees; powers. Rule 7.30, Rules of the House of Representatives.
7. Where can I get additional information?	Florida House of Representatives Education Council (850) 488-7451



Education Council Education Overview

Fact Sheet

January 2006

1. How is the education system in Florida structured?	Florida has a K-20 (kindergarten through graduate school) education system.
2. What is Florida's system for providing public education?	Public education in Florida is provided by three delivery systems – school districts, community colleges, and state universities.
3. What is the State Board of Education (SBE)?	The SBE is a constitutional body that serves as the chief implementing and coordinating body of public K-12 and community college education in Florida. It is comprised of seven members appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate.
4. What is the role of the Commissioner of Education?	The Commissioner of Education serves as the SBE's primary liaison with all entities involved in the state's K-12 and community college education system. The Commissioner of Education is an officer appointed by the SBE, and is a member of the Board of Governors of the SUS.
5. How are Florida's public schools governed?	The <i>Florida Constitution</i> provides for school districts governed by elected school boards. Each of Florida's 67 counties constitutes a separate school district. Each school district has a school superintendent. The school superintendent may be elected or appointed.
6. How many K-12 public schools are in Florida?	There are 3,879 public schools in Florida with approximately 2.6 million public school students. These include charter schools.
7. How are Florida's community colleges governed?	Community colleges are political subdivisions of the state and are governed by boards of trustees. Each community college board of trustees is vested with the responsibility to operate its community college and with the authority necessary for its proper operation and improvement in accordance with rules of the SBE. Community college boards vary in size from five to nine members. The trustees are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate.
8. How many community colleges exist in Florida?	There are 28 institutions designated as public community colleges in Florida. The community colleges and their respective districts include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brevard Community College (Brevard County)• Broward Community College (Broward County)• Central Florida Community College (Marion, Citrus, and Levy Counties)• Chipola College* (Jackson, Calhoun, Holmes, Liberty,

	<p>and Washington Counties)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Daytona Beach Community College (Volusia, Flagler Counties)• Edison College* (Lee, Charlotte, Collier, Glades, and Hendry Counties)• Florida Community College of Jacksonville (Duval, Nassau Counties)• Florida Keys Community College (Monroe County)• Gulf Coast Community College (Bay, Franklin, and Gulf Counties)• Hillsborough Community College (Hillsborough County)• Indian River Community College (St. Lucie, Indian River, Martin, and Okeechobee Counties)• Lake City Community College (Columbia, Baker, Dixie, Gilchrist, and Union Counties)• Lake-Sumter Community College (Lake, Sumter Counties)• Manatee Community College (Manatee, Sarasota Counties)• Miami-Dade College* (Miami-Dade County)• North Florida Community College (Madison, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lafayette, Suwannee, and Taylor Counties)• Okaloosa-Walton College* (Okaloosa, Walton Counties)• Palm Beach Community College (Palm Beach County)• Pasco-Hernando Community College (Hernando, Pasco Counties)• Pensacola Junior College (Escambia, Santa Rosa Counties)• Polk Community College (Polk County)• St. Johns River Community College (Putnam, Clay, and St. Johns Counties)• St. Petersburg College * (Pinellas County)• Santa Fe Community College (Alachua, Bradford Counties)• Seminole Community College (Seminole County)• South Florida Community College (Highlands, DeSoto, and Hardee Counties)• Tallahassee Community College (Leon, Gadsden, and Wakulla Counties)• Valencia Community College (Orange, Osceola Counties) <p>*Note: The 2001 Legislature designated St. Petersburg Junior College as St. Petersburg College. The 2004 Legislature designated Chipola Junior College as Chipola College, Edison Community College as Edison College, Miami-Dade Community College as Miami-Dade College and Okaloosa-Walton Community College as Okaloosa Walton College for purposes of granting Bachelor of Arts degrees.</p>
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<p>9. How are Florida's state universities governed?</p>	<p>State universities are governed by a 17-member statewide board of governors composed of 14 members appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate; the Commissioner of Education; a faculty representative; and a student representative. The board of governors is a constitutionally created body required to operate, regulate, control, and be fully responsible for all eleven state universities.</p> <p>In addition, each institution is administered by a 13-member board of trustees comprised of six members appointed by the Governor, five members appointed by the statewide board of governors, a faculty representative, and a student representative. Appointed members must be confirmed by the Senate.</p>
<p>10. How many state universities exist in Florida?</p>	<p>There are eleven institutions designated as state universities in Florida.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Florida (UF) • Florida State University (FSU) • Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University (FAMU) • University of South Florida (USF) • Florida Atlantic University (FAU) • University of West Florida (UWF) • University of Central Florida (UCF) • University of North Florida (UNF) • Florida International University (FIU) • Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) • New College of Florida, a residential liberal arts honors college, located in Sarasota County
<p>11. What are the applicable statutes?</p>	<p>Chapter 1001, Florida Statutes</p>
<p>12. Where can I get additional information?</p>	<p>Florida Department of Education State Board of Education (850) 245-0466</p> <p>Florida Department of Education Board of Governors (850) 245-0466</p> <p>Florida House of Representatives Education Council (850) 488-7451</p>



Education Council
Education Funding

Fact Sheet

January 2006

<p>1. Is the State the only entity that provides funds for the Early Learning - Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program, K-12 public schools, community colleges, universities, and other educational programs?</p>	<p>No. While the State plays a key role in providing funds to support the education system, federal, local, private, and other sources also provide funding.</p>
<p>2. What types of funds are appropriated for the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program?</p>	<p>In Fiscal Year 2005-06, general revenue funds were provided to the Department of Education for transfer to the Agency for Workforce Innovation for the administration and delivery of the Early Learning - Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program through local early learning coalitions.</p> <p>(Refer to the Early Learning – Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program Fact Sheet)</p>
<p>3. What types of funds are appropriated for K-12 public schools ?</p>	<p>For the 2005-2006 fiscal year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 78% of public school appropriations are funded from general revenue funds;• 19% from federal funds;• 3% from the lottery; and• less than 1% from other trust funds.
<p>4. What is the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP)?</p>	<p>The FEFP is the funding formula adopted by the Florida Legislature in 1973 to allocate funds appropriated by the Legislature to school districts for K-12 public school operations. The FEFP implements the constitutional requirement for a uniform system of free public education and is an allocation model based on individual student participation in educational programs. In order to ensure equalized funding, the FEFP is comprised of state and local funds and takes into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The local property tax base.• The costs of educational programs.• District costs of living and the costs of hiring personnel across districts.• Sparsity of student population. <p>(Refer to the Florida Education Finance Program Fact Sheet.)</p>

<p>5. What are the local funding sources for K-12 public school operations?</p>	<p><u>Nonvoted Millage Rates</u> The Legislature established in the General Appropriations Act the required local effort (RLE) amount of \$6.3 billion to be raised by ad valorem taxes. With the receipt of the tax roll in July, the Commissioner of Education calculates a statewide millage rate (5.239) that will generate \$6.3 billion, when applied to each county's tax roll, after each school board's millage rate is adjusted for the county's local level of assessment on ad valorem property and for the requirement that no school board's RLE shall exceed 90% of FEFP funds. School boards must levy the RLE millage rate to receive FEFP state funding.</p> <p>School boards are authorized to levy two nonvoted discretionary millage rates: 1) up to .51 mills; and 2) up to .25 mills but not to exceed the amount of revenue that will generate \$100 per FTE.</p> <p><u>Voted Millage Rates</u> The electors within a school district may approve two millage rates: 1) a millage rate for a period not to exceed two years; and 2) a millage rate for a period not to exceed four years.</p>
<p>6. Is there a limit on the amount of local property taxes that may be collected for school purposes?</p>	<p>Yes. The Florida Constitution limits the amount of ad valorem taxes for school purposes to 10 mills, exclusive of taxes levied for the payment of bonds and taxes levied for periods not longer than two years when authorized by vote of the electors.</p>
<p>7. Are there any state capital outlay funds available to school districts?</p>	<p>Yes. Several state sources provide funds for school district—capital outlay, including the following programs with funding provided for Fiscal Year 2005-2006:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Education Capital Outlay and Debt Service Trust Fund (PECO) • Capital Outlay and Debt Service Fund (CO&DS) • Special Facility Construction Account • Classrooms First Lottery Bond Program • Classroom for Kids Program • High Growth District Capital Outlay Assistance Grant Program <p><u>No funding in Fiscal Year 2005-2006 but still in statute:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effort Index Grant Program • School Infrastructure Thrift (SIT) Program <p>(Refer to the Educational Facilities Resources Fact Sheet.)</p>

<p>8. Are there any local capital outlay funds available to school districts?</p>	<p>Yes. Several local sources provide funds for school district capital outlay, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two mill money (non-voted) • Voted millage • School Capital Outlay Surtax (voted 1/2 cent sales surtax) • Local government infrastructure surtax (voted) • Bond referendum (voted) • Impact fees <p>(Refer to the Educational Facilities Resources Fact Sheet.)</p>
<p>9. What types of funds are appropriated for community colleges?</p>	<p>For the 2005-2006 fiscal year, community college appropriations are funded as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 61% from general revenue • 7% from lottery, and • 32% from student tuition and fees. <p>Although the Legislature controls in-state and out-of-state tuition and fees, the revenues remain at the individual community colleges and are not included in the annual General Appropriations Act.</p>
<p>10. Are there any capital outlay funds available to community colleges?</p>	<p>Yes. Community colleges derive capital outlay funds from the following state sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Education Capital Outlay and Debt Service Trust Fund (PECO) • Capital Outlay and Debt Service Trust Fund (CO&DS); • General Revenue funds • State match for private funds • Capital improvement funds
<p>11. What types of funds are appropriated for state universities?</p>	<p>For the 2005-2006 fiscal year, state university appropriations are funded as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 66% from general revenue • 4% from lottery • 29% from student fees • 1% from other trust funds <p>The 2005 Legislature reinstated the appropriation of student tuition and fees budget authority. Although the Legislature maintains control of in-state undergraduate tuition and fees, and authorizes flexibility for all other types of students, all tuition and fee revenue remain at the individual universities.</p>
<p>12. In addition to state appropriations and student tuition and fees, are there other funding sources available to state universities?</p>	<p>Yes. The following funding sources may be available for state university operating purposes during the fiscal year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal, state, local and non-governmental contracts and grants • Gifts and donations

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concessions • Self-insurance funds • Auxiliary enterprises • Hospital revenues • Intercollegiate athletic fees • Student financial aid fees • Faculty practice plans
<p>13. Are there any capital outlay funds available to state universities?</p>	<p>Yes. State universities derive capital outlay funds from the following sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Education Capital Outlay and Debt Service Trust Fund (PECO) • General Revenue Funds • Capital improvement fees • State-match for private funds • Other trust funds.
<p>14. What are the applicable statutes?</p>	<p>Section 9(a)(2), Art. XII of the State Constitution -- PECO. Section 9(d), Art. XII of the State Constitution -- CO&DS. Section 212.055(2), F.S. -- Local Government Infrastructure Surtax. Section 212.055(6), F.S. -- School Capital Outlay Surtax. Section 1009.23, F.S. -- Community College Student Fees. Section 1009.24, F.S. -- State University Student Fees. Sections 1010.40-1010.59, F.S. -- School District Bonds. Section 1011.62, F.S. -- FEFP Formula. Section 1011.71(2), F.S. -- Two Mill Money. Section 1011.73, F.S. -- District Millage Election. Section 1013.64(1), F.S. -- PECO (maintenance, repair, renovation). Section 1013.64(2)(a), F.S. -- Special Facility Construction Account. Section 1013.65, F.S. -- Allocation of PECO Funds. Section 1013.68, F.S. -- Classrooms First Program. Section 1013.735, F.S. -- Classrooms for Kids Program. Section 1013.737, F.S. -- The Class Size Reduction Lottery Revenue Bond Program. Section 1013.738, F.S. -- High Growth District Capital Outlay Assistance Grant Program.</p>
<p>15. Where can I get additional information?</p>	<p>Florida Department of Education Deputy Commissioner's Office (850) 245-0456 http://www.firn.edu/doe/</p> <p>State Board of Education (850) 245-9654 http://www.fldoe.org/</p>

Florida Board of Governors
(850) 245-0466
<http://www.fldoe.org/>

SMART Schools Clearinghouse
(850) 245-9239
<http://smartschools.state.fl.us>

Florida House of Representatives
Fiscal Council
(850) 488-6204

Florida House of Representatives
Education Council
(850) 488-7451



Education Council Florida Lottery

Fact Sheet

January 2006

<p>1. What is the history of the Florida Lottery?</p>	<p>In 1986, voters amended Florida's Constitution to allow the State to operate lotteries. The 1987 Legislature enacted the Florida Public Education Lottery Act (Ch. 87-65, L.O.F.) to implement the constitutional amendment in a manner that enabled the people of the state to benefit from significant additional monies for education and also enabled the people of the state to play the best lottery games available.</p>
<p>2. What was the intent of the Legislature in enacting the Lottery Act?</p>	<p>Pursuant to s. 24.102(2), F.S., the intent of the Legislature is to use the net proceeds of the lottery games to support improvements in public education. The lottery proceeds are not to be used as a substitute for existing resources for public education.</p>
<p>3. How are lottery revenues distributed?</p>	<p>Lottery revenues are distributed based on variable percentages of gross revenue from the sale of on-line and instant lottery tickets intended to maximize revenue to the Education Enhancement Trust Fund. Variable percentages of gross revenue are returned to the public in the form of prizes. A portion of gross revenues is used to pay the expenses of running the Lottery, including the cost of advertising and lottery operations and payments to ticket vendors and lottery retailers. The remainder of the gross revenue and other earned revenue are deposited in the Educational Enhancement Trust Fund.</p>
<p>4. What are specific dedicated uses of lottery funds?</p>	<p>Lottery funds deposited in the Education Enhancement Trust Fund are primarily used for the following:</p> <p>Bright Futures Scholarship Program Bright Futures is a merit-based scholarship program designed to provide college scholarships to students who achieve certain academic levels. In 2005-06, \$312 million was appropriated to the Bright Futures Scholarship Program. (Refer to the Bright Futures Scholarship Program Fact Sheet.)</p> <p>Classrooms First and Classrooms for Kids Programs A portion of lottery revenues is pledged to pay debt service on bonds issued by the state pursuant to the Classrooms First Program (the 1997 School Capital Outlay Bond Program) and the Classrooms for Kids Program (the Class Size Reduction Bond Program). These funds are used for new construction of schools, maintenance or repair of schools, School Infrastructure Thrift (SIT) Program incentive funds, and Effort Index Grants. (Refer to the Educational Facilities Resources K-12 Fact Sheet.)</p> <p>Florida School Recognition Program The Florida School Recognition Program is designed to reward individual schools that sustain high performance or</p>

	<p>demonstrate exemplary improvement. Schools recognized by the program can receive rewards of up to \$100 per student. The 2005 Legislature appropriated \$263.5 million in order to fund the Florida School Recognition Program and for school district enhancement. The Department of Education reports that \$134 million was distributed to 1502 schools in 2005, and the districts were able to use the balance of \$129.3 million to enhance education. (Refer to the School Recognition Program Fact Sheet.)</p>																								
<p>5. How much lottery prize money goes unclaimed each year?</p>	<p>The following chart details the amount of unclaimed prize money from both on-line and instant ticket sales from fiscal years 1999-2000 through 2003-04.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="678 625 1463 737"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>99-00</th> <th>00-01</th> <th>01-02</th> <th>02-03</th> <th>03-04</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>On-Line Games</td> <td>33.3</td> <td>32.1</td> <td>29.6</td> <td>31.2</td> <td>59.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Instant Games</td> <td>10.0</td> <td>10.9</td> <td>11.3</td> <td>11.8</td> <td>1.7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>43.3</td> <td>43.0</td> <td>40.9</td> <td>43.0</td> <td>61.2</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>According to OPPAGA, the total amount of both on-line and instant unclaimed prizes for the 2004-2005 fiscal year was \$56.72 million. The amount of unclaimed prizes accumulated each year is variable based on many factors.</p>		99-00	00-01	01-02	02-03	03-04	On-Line Games	33.3	32.1	29.6	31.2	59.5	Instant Games	10.0	10.9	11.3	11.8	1.7	Total	43.3	43.0	40.9	43.0	61.2
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<p>6. What happens to unclaimed lottery prizes?</p>	<p>Chapter 2005-84 changed the use of unclaimed prizes. The law requires that 80% of unclaimed prize money be transferred directly to the Education Enhancement Trust Fund. These funds may be used to match private contributions received under the postsecondary matching grant programs established in ss. 1011.32, 1011.85, 1011.94, and 1013.79. The remaining 20 percent of unclaimed prize money is added to the pool from which future prizes are to be awarded or used for special prize promotions. Previously, with the exception of an exceptionally large unclaimed prize in 2004, all unclaimed prize money remained with the Lottery to increase prize payouts and occasionally augment initial on-line game jackpots.</p>																								
<p>7. How are the remaining lottery funds in the Educational Enhancement Trust Fund used?</p>	<p>After the Bright Futures Scholarship Program is fully funded, the remaining lottery funds are apportioned among public schools, community colleges, and state universities, generally 70% to public schools, 15% to the Florida Community College System, and 15% to the State University System.</p>																								
<p>8. What are acceptable uses of lottery dollars?</p>	<p>Public educational programs and purposes funded by the Educational Enhancement Trust Fund may include, but are not limited to the following: endowment, scholarship, matching funds, direct grants, research and economic development related to education, salary enhancement, contracts with independent institutions to conduct programs consistent with the state master plan for postsecondary education, and other educational programs or purposes deemed desirable by the Legislature.</p>																								
<p>9. How does lottery revenue compare to the total amount spent on education?</p>	<p>For 2005-06, the Legislature appropriated \$1.1 billion for lottery revenues. However, total funding for education is \$27.6 billion (including state, federal, local effort, and student tuition/fees). Therefore, the lottery dollars make up 4% of the total funding available for education.</p>																								

10. What are the applicable statutes?	Chapter 24, F.S. -- Florida Lottery. Section 1008.36, F.S. -- Florida School Recognition Program. Sections 1009.53-1009.538, F.S. -- Bright Futures Scholarships. Section 1013.68, F.S. -- Classrooms First Program. Section 1013.70, F.S. -- 1997 School Capital Outlay Bond Program. Section 1013.735, F.S. -- Classrooms for Kids. Section 1013.736, F.S. -- District Effort Recognition Program.
11. Where can I get additional information?	Florida Department of Education Deputy Commissioner, Finance and Operations Office (850) 245-0456 www.firn.edu/doe/strategy/pdf/lottery.pdf Florida House of Representatives Education Council (850) 488-7451



Education Council
Early Learning – School Readiness

Fact Sheet

January 2006

<p>1. What is the school readiness program?</p>	<p>The 1999 Legislature established the school readiness program (s.411.01, F.S.) for the state’s economically disadvantaged and at-risk birth-to-kindergarten population. The program was substantially amended during the 2004 special session as part of the implementation of the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program (VPK). (Refer to the VPK Fact Sheet.) The program is designed to be an integrated service delivery system for all publicly funded school readiness and child care programs. The program is administered by the Office of Early Learning in the Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI) through local early learning coalitions established at the county or regional level. The goal of the school readiness program is to enhance the progress of each child in the development of school readiness skills as measured by the standards and outcomes adopted by AWI, and the statewide kindergarten screening adopted by the Department of Education.</p>
<p>2. Who is eligible to participate in the school readiness program?</p>	<p>Priority for participation in the school readiness program must be given to children ages three years to school entry who are served by the Family Safety Program Office of the Department of Children and Family Services or a community-based lead agency and for whom child care is needed in order to minimize risk of further abuse, neglect, or abandonment. Other children who are eligible to participate in the school readiness program include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Those who are at risk of welfare dependency, including economically disadvantaged children, children of parents in welfare transition programs, children of parents who are migrant farm workers, and children of teen parents.• Those who are from working families with incomes below 150% of federal poverty level.• Those for whom the state is paying a relative caregiver. <p>Local early learning coalitions may also establish priorities for participation by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children with disabilities who are not economically disadvantaged but are served in an exceptional student education program.• Children who are economically disadvantaged or disabled and served by a home visitor program.• Children of parents who are migrant farm workers but

Early Learning - School Readiness

	are not economically disadvantaged.
3. What is meant by “economically disadvantaged?”	An “economically disadvantaged” child is one whose family income is below 150% of the federal poverty level. Once in the program, an economically disadvantaged child may remain until kindergarten without regard to family income level, subject to adjustment to the family’s co-payment on the sliding fee scale.
4. How does a child enroll in the school readiness program?	Parents enroll their children in the school readiness program by submitting their application to the local early learning coalition (See Question 6) through the coalition’s “single point of entry” system (See Question 5). Contact information for each local coalition is available from AWI (See Question 14).
5. What is the “single point of entry system?”	The single point of entry system is an integrated information system that allows a parent to enroll his or her child in the school readiness program at various physical locations; by telephone or online; and uses a unified waiting list to track eligible children waiting for enrollment.
6. What is an “early learning coalition?”	Formerly called “school readiness coalitions,” early learning coalitions administer both the VPK and school readiness programs, under the guidance and administration of AWI. Providers and families work through their local coalitions to register to provide or receive services. The law permits 30 or fewer coalitions, each serving a minimum of 2,000 children.
7. Who serves on the local early learning coalitions?	As prescribed in s.411.01(5)(a)4.-7., F.S., local coalitions consist of 18 to 35 members, with more than 1/3 of the membership from the private sector. The Governor appoints the chair of the coalition. Neither the members nor their families may have a substantial financial interest in the early education and child care industry. Each member is subject to three sections of the Code of Ethics for public officers and employees.
8. What are AWI’s responsibilities for the school readiness program?	AWI administers and monitors school readiness funds, plans, and policies; provides final approval and an annual review of coalitions and their plans; safeguards the effective use of resources to achieve the highest possible level of school readiness for participating children; and develops and adopts performance standards and outcome measures for school readiness programs, which must be integrated with the standards for children in the VPK program.
9. What is the Early Learning Advisory Council?	The Early Learning Advisory Council submits recommendations to AWI and the Department of Education on the state’s early learning policy, including the VPK and school readiness programs. It is composed of the chair, appointed by the Governor; the chair of each early learning coalition; one member appointed by the President of the Senate; and one member appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives. The members appointed by the presiding officers of the Legislature must each have a

	background in early learning.
<p>10. What is the local school readiness plan?</p>	<p>Each coalition must implement a plan, approved by AWI, that includes a comprehensive program of school readiness services that enhance the cognitive, social, and physical development of eligible children to achieve the performance standards and outcome measures specified by AWI. The local school readiness plan must provide for extended-day and extended-year services when needed and provide for a single point of entry and unified waiting list. The plan must include provisions for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developmentally appropriate curricula. • Character development. • Age-appropriate assessment of each child’s development. • Pretest upon entering and posttest upon leaving each program. • Appropriate staff-to-children ratios. • A healthy and safe environment. • A resource and referral network to assist informed parental choice. • Parental co-payment through a sliding fee scale. • Parental choice of settings and locations. • Trained instructional staff. • Eligibility priority for at-risk and economically disadvantaged children. • Payment rates developed by the coalition and approved by AWI. • Systems support and direct enhancement services. • Articles of incorporation and bylaws, if an established business entity. • Strategies to meet the needs of unique populations. • A contract with a fiscal agent if the coalition is not organized as a business entity.
<p>11. What is the Early Learning Programs Estimating Conference?</p>	<p>The Early Learning Programs Estimating Conference develops estimates and forecasts of the number of children eligible for the school readiness program and the VPK program. These estimates and forecasts are used to support the state planning, budgeting and appropriations processes.</p>
<p>12. How are school readiness program funds allocated?</p>	<p>The AWI administers school readiness program funds. Administrative costs must be kept to the minimum necessary for efficient and effective administration of the plan. The total administrative expenditures must not exceed 5% unless specifically waived by AWI. Funding is distributed as a single grant award to each coalition to assist them in integrating services and funding to develop a quality service delivery system. State funds appropriated for the school readiness program may not be used for the construction of new facilities or the purchase of buses. All cost-savings and all revenues received through</p>

Early Learning - School Readiness

	a mandatory sliding fee scale must be used to help fund the local school readiness program.
13. What are the applicable statutes?	Section 216.136(8), F.S. -- Early Learning Programs Estimating Conference. Section 411.01, F.S. -- School readiness programs; early learning coalitions. Section 411.011, F.S. -- Records of children in school readiness programs. Section 1002.69, F.S. -- Statewide kindergarten screening; kindergarten readiness rates.
14. Where can I get additional information?	Agency for Workforce Innovation Office of Early Learning (850) 921-3180 Department of Children and Families Child Care Program Office (850) 488-4900 Florida House of Representatives Education Council (850) 488-7451



Education Council
Early Learning - Voluntary
Prekindergarten Education Program

Fact Sheet

January 2006

<p>1. What is the Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Program?</p>	<p>In 2002, the electors of Florida approved Amendment No. 8 to the State Constitution. Amendment No. 8 required the Legislature to establish a new early childhood development and education program for every four-year-old child in the state by the 2005 school year. The amendment requires the program to be voluntary, high quality, free, and delivered according to professionally accepted standards. The 2004 Legislature created the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education (VPK) Program, which allows a parent to enroll his or her child in a voluntary, free prekindergarten program offered during the year before the child is eligible for admission to kindergarten.</p>
<p>2. Who is eligible to enroll in the VPK program?</p>	<p>Each child living in the state who will have attained four years of age on or before September 1 of the school year is eligible for the VPK program during that school year. A child remains eligible until the beginning of the school year for which the child is eligible for admission to kindergarten in a public school (i.e., the child attains the age of five years on or before September 1 of the school year) or is admitted to kindergarten, whichever occurs first.</p> <p>A child may not attend the summer VPK program earlier than the summer immediately before the school year when the child is eligible for admission to kindergarten in a public school.</p>
<p>3. What choices do families have?</p>	<p>The bill allows the parent of each child eligible for the VPK program to choose among three distinct programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• School-year VPK program delivered by a private prekindergarten provider (540 instructional hours);• Summer VPK program delivered by a public school or private prekindergarten provider or (300 instructional hours);• School-year VPK program delivered by a public school, if offered by a school district that meets certain class-size reduction requirements (540 instructional hours).
<p>4. How are children enrolled in the VPK program?</p>	<p>Parents enrolling their children in the VPK program submit their applications to the local early learning coalition (See Question 5) through the coalition's "single point of entry" system. Coalitions must coordinate with the school districts in developing procedures for enrolling children in school-based VPK programs. Contact information for each local coalition is available from the Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI) (See Question 19).</p>

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<p>5. What is an “early learning coalition?”</p>	<p>Formerly called “school readiness coalitions,” early learning coalitions administer both the VPK and school readiness programs, under the guidance and administration of AWI. Early learning coalitions are the single point of entry into the VPK program. Providers and families work through their local coalitions to register to provide or receive services. Coalitions are composed of at least 18 but not more than 35 members, with specific membership required by statute. More than one third of the members of each early learning coalition must be private-sector business members who do not have, and who do not have a relative that has, a substantial financial interest in the design or delivery of either the VPK or school readiness program.</p>
<p>6. How can families make informed choices?</p>	<p>Each early learning coalition must provide parents with a profile of each private prekindergarten provider and public school in a format prescribed by the AWI. The profile must include the provider’s or school’s:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services, curriculum, instructor credentials, and instructor-to-student ratio; and • Kindergarten readiness rate based upon the most recent available results of the statewide kindergarten screening.
<p>7. What are the requirements for public school participation?</p>	<p>School-year program: A public school may only offer the school-year VPK program if the school’s local school board certifies that the school district:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is in compliance with the statutory schedules for class-size reduction; and • Has sufficient satisfactory educational facilities and capital outlay funds to achieve full compliance with the class-size reduction requirements. <p>The Commissioner of Education must certify to the State Board of Education that the Department of Education has reviewed the school district’s educational facilities, capital outlay funds, and projected student enrollment, and agrees with the school district’s certification of compliance with class-size requirements.</p> <p>Each eligible school district may determine which public schools are eligible to deliver the school-year VPK program. To participate in the school-year program, each public school must register with the early learning coalition.</p> <p>Summer program: The summer VPK program delivered by public schools is administered at the district level by the school districts, who may determine which public schools are eligible to deliver the summer VPK program. School districts may limit the number of students admitted to the summer program in a particular public school but every school district must provide for the admission of every eligible student enrolling in the summer VPK program.</p>

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<p>8. What are the requirements for private provider participation?</p>	<p>School-year program: To participate in the program, a private provider must register with the early learning coalition and must be a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Licensed child care facility;• Licensed family day care home;• Licensed large family child care home;• Nonpublic school exempt from licensure; or• Faith-based child care provider exempt from licensure. <p>In addition, a private prekindergarten provider must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be accredited by an accrediting association that is a member of the National Council for Private School Accreditation, the Commission on International and Trans-Regional Accreditation, or the Florida Association of Academic Nonpublic Schools;• Hold a current Gold Seal Quality Care designation; or• Be licensed and demonstrate to the early learning coalition that the provider meets each of the statutory requirements of the VPK program. <p>Unlicensed family day care homes and informal child care providers are not eligible.</p> <p>Summer program: The summer VPK program delivered by private providers must be administered at the county or regional level by the early learning coalitions. Each private provider who chooses to offer the summer program must meet each requirement for delivering the school-year VPK program (see above).</p>
<p>9. What instructor credentials are required in the VPK program?</p>	<p>A public school or private provider delivering the school year VPK program must employ for each class at least one instructor with the following credentials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A child development associate (CDA) credential issued by the National Credentialing Program of the Council for Professional Recognition;• A credential approved by the Department of Children and Family Services as being equivalent to or greater than the national CDA; or• One of the following:<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Bachelor's or higher degree in early childhood education, prekindergarten or primary education, preschool education, or family and consumer science;➤ Bachelor's or higher degree in elementary education, if the instructor has been certified to teach children any age from birth through sixth grade, regardless of whether the educator certificate is current;➤ Associate's or higher degree in child development;➤ Associate's or higher degree in an unrelated field, at least six credit hours in early childhood education or

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child development, and at least 480 hours experience in teaching or providing child care services for children any age from birth through eight years of age; or

- Educational credential approved by the Department of Education as being equivalent to or greater than any of these educational credentials.

A public school or private provider delivering the Summer VPK program must employ for each class at least one instructor with the following credentials:

- Bachelor's or higher degree in early childhood education, prekindergarten or primary education, preschool education, or family and consumer science; or
- Bachelor's or higher degree in elementary education, if the instructor has been certified to teach children any age from birth through sixth grade, regardless of whether the educator certificate is current.

Each instructor must also receive five hours of training in emergent literacy (**See Question 10**). Each instructor must be of good moral character and cannot be an instructor if he or she is ineligible to teach in a public school because his or her educator certificate is suspended or revoked. Each provider or school must conduct background screenings of each prekindergarten instructor. These screenings must be conducted before hiring an instructor and at least once every five years using screening standards, which entail fingerprinting, statewide criminal and juvenile records checks through the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, and federal criminal records checks through the Federal Bureau of Investigation. A provider or school may not employ a prekindergarten instructor who has been found guilty of, regardless of adjudication, or entered a plea of nolo contendere or guilty to any one of the 47 criminal offenses cited in s. 435.04(2), F.S.

The VPK program also includes the following aspirational goals:

By the 2010-2011 school year (five years after the scheduled beginning of the VPK program):

- Each class will have at least one instructor who holds an associate's or higher degree in the field of early childhood education or child development; and
- Each class composed of 11 or more students will have an instructor with an associate's or higher degree and a second instructor who has a child development associate (CDA) or state-approved equivalent credential.

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	<p>By the 2013-2014 school year (eight years after the scheduled beginning of the VPK program):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each class will have at least one instructor who holds a bachelor's or higher degree in the field of early childhood education or child development.
<p>10. What is emergent literacy, and why is it emphasized in this program?</p>	<p>Before they start school, children need certain skills so they are ready to learn to read. Emergent literacy includes skills in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral communication; • Knowledge of print and letters; • Phonemic and phonological awareness - knowing that every spoken word is a sequence of units of sound represented by letters; understanding letter-sound relationships in order to learn phonics and spelling; and • Vocabulary and comprehension development.
<p>11. What are the instructor to child ratios in the VPK program?</p>	<p>In the 540 instructional-hour program classes must have a minimum of four and a maximum of 18 students. Each class must have at least one instructor who holds at least a child development associate (CDA) or equivalent state-approved credential and who completes a 5-clock-hour course in emergent literacy training. Classes with 11 or more students must have a second adult.</p> <p>In the 300 instructional-hour summer program, classes must have a minimum of four and a maximum of ten students. Each class must have at least one Florida-certified teacher or an instructor who holds a bachelor's or higher degree in specified early learning degree programs.</p>
<p>12. What are the curriculum requirements in the VPK program?</p>	<p>Each private prekindergarten provider and public school may select or design its own curriculum, which must be developmentally appropriate and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designed to prepare a student for early literacy; • Enhance the age-appropriate progress of students in attaining the DOE's adopted VPK performance standards; and • Prepare students to be ready for kindergarten based upon the statewide kindergarten screening. <p>If a private prekindergarten provider or public school is placed on probation because the kindergarten readiness rate (i.e., percentage of the students assessed as ready for kindergarten) falls below the minimum satisfactory rate established by the State Board of Education for two consecutive years, the provider or school must use a curriculum approved by the DOE. The bill requires DOE to maintain a list of approved curricula for these providers and schools on probation.</p>
<p>13. What is the accountability system for this program?</p>	<p>Fiscal Accountability: AWI's Inspector General is responsible for overseeing the integrity of the program and compliance by the providers. Providers and local coalitions</p>

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	<p>are held accountable through direct oversight from AWI and monthly verification of attendance for funding purposes. Every month, each parent must certify that the child attended the VPK provider and plans to stay with that provider. These certified attendance records can be audited, and must be kept by providers for at least two years. Early learning coalitions are subject to audits by the Auditor General, and every member of an early learning coalition is subject to ethics provisions related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Standards of conduct;• Employment of relatives; and• Voting conflicts, including abstaining when a voting conflict exists. <p>Program Accountability: All providers must keep an accurate school profile and make the information available to parents. The profile includes information about the school, the curriculum, the qualifications of the teachers, and the overall performance of the students. The DOE sets performance standards, and uses results from the new kindergarten screening to annually set a required “readiness rate” for each provider. Providers that do not meet the kindergarten readiness rate are subject to increased DOE Involvement in curriculum selection and approval, as well as probation or dismissal from the program.</p> <p>AWI must determine each provider’s eligibility and fiscal soundness before making them available for parents to choose. In addition, AWI may remove a provider or school which persistently fails to meet the kindergarten readiness rates or due to misconduct or other good cause.</p>
<p>14. What agency will administer the VPK program?</p>	<p>The DOE governs standards, assessments, and curricula, while AWI governs the day-to-day operations of both the VPK program and the school readiness system. To achieve this, the Office of Early Learning was established within AWI. Early learning coalitions administer both VPK and School Readiness at the local level. AWI’s oversight duties for the early learning coalitions include enrolling children, reporting attendance, providing payment to providers and schools, and monitoring providers and schools for compliance with program requirements. AWI has adopted a statewide system allowing for a single point of entry, a unified waiting list and birth-to-three-year-old standards for School Readiness which integrate into VPK standards adopted by DOE.</p> <p>DOE is responsible for adopting performance standards defining what our four-year-olds should learn, approving emergent literacy training courses and VPK director credentials, and specifying CDA credentials that qualify for articulation into college credit. DOE is also responsible for</p>

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	<p>the Statewide Kindergarten Screening. The screening must measure student performance on VPK standards and readiness for kindergarten. Each year the DOE will figure a readiness rate for each provider and school. The State Board of Education will periodically set the minimum satisfactory readiness rate. DOE will develop an approved curricula list that must be used by any provider or school that does not meet the State Board of Education's minimum satisfactory readiness rate.</p>
<p>15. How does funding work?</p>	<p>AWI adopts payment procedures and a uniform attendance policy to be used only for funding purposes. Funds are distributed each month to Early Learning Coalitions for monthly payments to providers and schools. Each early learning coalition is advanced funds based on projected attendance. Once school begins, parents certify attendance each month for the prior month. Subsequent funds are reconciled based on actual attendance.</p> <p>A base student allocation is set annually in the general appropriations act. The base student allocation for the 05-06 Fiscal Year is \$2,500. Each county's allocation is calculated by multiplying the number of FTE times the base student allocation times the district cost differential.</p>
<p>16. Are there required fees?</p>	<p>No. A provider or school cannot require any additional fees, and cannot require a child to pay for any extra services as a condition of enrolling.</p>
<p>17. Is transportation provided?</p>	<p>The constitutional amendment does not require transportation, and the law does not provide funding for transportation. However, the law specifically allows a school or provider to use some of their VPK funds to provide transportation. Many schools already provide transportation as part of their programs, and each school board and superintendent will decide whether to allow four-year-olds in public school programs to ride a school bus. Economically disadvantaged children participating in school readiness programs remain eligible for the services they currently receive, which may include transportation assistance. By including private, faith-based, and public school providers, the chances are greatly increased that there is a provider in a location convenient to parents.</p>
<p>18. What are the applicable statutes?</p>	<p>Part V of Chapter 1002, Florida Statutes, is entitled "Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program" and consists of the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 1002.51, 1002.53, 1002.55, 1002.57, 1002.59, 1002.61, 1002.63, 1002.65, 1002.67, 1002.69, 1002.71, 1002.73, 1002.75, 1002.77, 1022.78 and 1002.79. Other applicable sections include 11.45, 20.50, 125.901, 216.133, 216.136, 402.3016, 411.01, 411.011, 411.226, 411.227, 1001.23, 1002.22, 1003.54, and 1007.23, Florida Statutes.</p>

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19. Where can I get additional information?

Florida Department of Education
Office of Early Learning
(850) 245-0509

Agency for Workforce Innovation
Office of Early Learning
(850) 921-3180

Department of Children and Families
Child Care Program Office
(850) 488-4900

Florida House of Representatives
Education Council
(850) 488-7451