



362598

576-04122-17

Proposed Committee Substitute by the Committee on Appropriations
(Appropriations Subcommittee on Pre-K - 12 Education)

A bill to be entitled

An act relating to a middle school study; requiring the Department of Education to solicit for a contract to conduct a comprehensive study of states with nationally recognized high-performing middle schools in reading and mathematics; specifying areas that must be reviewed in conducting the study; requiring a report to the Governor, the State Board of Education, and the Legislature by a specified time; providing for expiration; providing an effective date.

WHEREAS, since 1998, Florida has seen a continuing trend of reading improvement in the elementary school grades, which has led to an increase of 17 percentage points in reading at or above proficiency for 4th grade students on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, while Florida's 8th grade students achieved only an increase of 7 percentage points, and

WHEREAS, since 2003, Florida's 4th grade students have demonstrated an increase of 11 percentage points in mathematics at or above proficiency on the national assessment, while Florida's 8th grade students have shown an increase of only 3 percentage points, and

WHEREAS, since 2013, Florida's middle school students' proficiencies on the national assessment in both reading and mathematics have remained flat or decreased, and

WHEREAS, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut, and New Jersey are the top performing states in the



362598

576-04122-17

28 percentage of 4th and 8th grade students scoring at or above
29 proficiency in reading on the national assessment, and

30 WHEREAS, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New
31 Jersey, and Washington are the top performing states in the
32 percentage of 4th and 8th grade students scoring at or above
33 proficiency in mathematics on the national assessment, and

34 WHEREAS, Florida's academic expectations for students in
35 both reading and mathematics were raised in 2010 and 2014, and

36 WHEREAS, the performance of Florida's middle school
37 students on the state assessments in reading has remained flat
38 since the state's standards were raised, while their performance
39 in mathematics increased slightly between 2015 and 2016, and

40 WHEREAS, success in the middle school grades is a predictor
41 of academic success in high school and college and career
42 readiness, NOW, THEREFORE,

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

44

45 Section 1. Comprehensive study on middle school
46 performance.-

47 (1) The Department of Education shall issue a competitive
48 solicitation for a contract with private vendors to conduct a
49 comprehensive study of states with high-performing students in
50 grades 6 through 8 in reading and mathematics, based on the
51 states' performance on the National Assessment of Educational
52 Progress.

53 (2) The study must include a review of at least all of the
54 following:

55 (a) Academic expectations and instructional strategies,
56 including:



362598

576-04122-17

- 57 1. Alignment of elementary and middle grades expectations
58 with high school graduation requirements;
- 59 2. Research-based instructional practices in reading and
60 mathematics, including those targeting low-performing and high-
61 performing students;
- 62 3. The rigor of the curriculum and courses and the
63 availability of accelerated courses;
- 64 4. The availability of student support services;
- 65 5. The sequence of courses and the prerequisites required
66 for advanced courses;
- 67 6. The availability of before- and after-school programs,
68 and efforts to address the summer gap between school years,
69 including related funding; and
- 70 7. The availability of other academic and noncore classes,
71 and electives.
- 72 (b) Attendance policies and student mobility issues.
- 73 (c) Teacher quality, including:
- 74 1. Teacher certification and recertification requirements;
75 2. Teacher preparedness to teach rigorous courses;
76 3. Teacher preparation specific to teaching middle school
77 students;
- 78 4. Teacher recruitment and vacancy issues;
- 79 5. Staff development requirements and the availability of
80 effective training;
- 81 6. Teacher collaboration and planning at the school and
82 district levels; and
- 83 7. Student performance data collection and dissemination.
- 84 (d) Middle school administrator leadership and performance.
- 85 (e) Parental and community involvement.



362598

576-04122-17

86 (3) The department shall submit a report on the findings of
87 the comprehensive study and make recommendations to improve
88 middle school student performance to the Governor, the State
89 Board of Education, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker
90 of the House of Representatives by December 2017.

91 (4) This section expires upon submission of the final
92 report.

93 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2017.