

Committee on Education

CS/HB 7165 — Early Learning

by Appropriations Committee; and Rep. O'Toole and others (CS/CS/SB 1722 by Appropriations Committee; Education Committee; and Senator Legg)

The bill changes the governance structure of the Office of Early Learning by establishing the Office of Early Learning within the Department of Education's Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice. The Office of Early Learning must be administered by an executive director who is fully accountable to the Commissioner of Education. The bill requires that the Office of Early Learning independently exercise all power, duties, and functions prescribed by law and must not be construed as part of the K-20 education system.

The bill increases accountability and transparency in the administration of early learning programs by:

- Requiring the Office of Early Learning to:
 - o Adopt a list of approved curricula and a process for reviewing and approving provider's curriculum that meets the performance standards.
 - o Identify a preassessment and postassessment for school readiness program participants.
 - o Adopt a statewide, standardized contract to be used by coalitions with each school readiness program provider.
 - o Coordinate with other agencies to perform data matches on individuals or families participating in the School Readiness program.
- Revising procurement and expenditure requirements for early learning coalitions.
- Revising the methodology for calculating the market rate schedule to require that the Office of Early Learning biennially calculate the market rate at the average of the market rate by program care level and provider type in a predetermined geographic market.
- Revising the eligibility criteria for the enrollment of children in the School Readiness program.
- Requiring the Office of Early Learning and each early learning coalition to limit expenditures to no more than 22 percent of funds for any combination of administrative costs, nondirect services, and quality activities in any fiscal year.
- Including provisions for fraud investigations and penalties for early learning coalitions, providers, and parents who submit false information.
- Requiring private providers to maintain a minimum level of general liability insurance, any required workers' compensation, and any required reemployment assistance or unemployment compensation.
- Requiring the Early Learning Advisory Council to periodically analyze and provide recommendations to the office on the effective and efficient use of local, state, and federal funds; the content of professional development training programs; and best practices for the development and implementation of coalition plans.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2013.

Vote: Senate 38-0; House 115-0