

By Senator Baxley

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to early childhood education; creating
3 s. 1002.78, F.S.; requiring schools designated as one
4 of the 300 lowest-performing elementary schools to
5 include an Early Childhood Transition Team in their
6 required school improvement plans; requiring the
7 principal of each school, in consultation with a local
8 early learning coalition, to appoint certain members
9 to the team; requiring the team to develop a
10 transition plan that contains certain elements;
11 providing an effective date.

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

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15 Section 1. Section 1002.78, Florida Statutes, is created to
16 read:

17 1002.78 Early Childhood Transition Team.—

18 (1) Each school designated as one of the 300 lowest-
19 performing elementary schools shall include an Early Childhood
20 Transition Team in its required school improvement plan to
21 assist the school in implementing activities to improve
22 students' transition from prekindergarten to kindergarten.

23 (2) The principal of each school shall, in consultation
24 with its local early learning coalition, appoint all of the
25 following to serve on an Early Childhood Transition Team:

26 (a) A school-based administrator.

27 (b) A kindergarten teacher.

28 (c) The parent of a student in kindergarten.

29 (d) A representative from a Voluntary Prekindergarten

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30 Program (VPK) provider recommended by the early learning
31 coalition.

32 (e) The parent of a child enrolled in VPK.

33 (f) Other community partners recommended by the early
34 learning coalition and the school district.

35 (3) The Early Childhood Transition Team shall develop a
36 transition plan that includes, at a minimum, all of the
37 following:

38 (a) A list of VPK, Head Start, and other early learning
39 provider programs linked to the public school kindergarten
40 programs students are likely to attend.

41 (b) A prekindergarten questionnaire to be completed by a
42 parent which provides the student's name, Department of
43 Education ID, address, parent's name, contact information, and
44 the public school kindergarten the child expects to attend. The
45 providers shall share the list of prospective students with the
46 receiving public schools by March 1 each year.

47 (c) A requirement that the public school provide:

48 1. An opportunity for VPK, Head Start, and other early
49 learning providers, parents, and children to visit the public
50 school and meet with kindergarten teachers;

51 2. An open house for VPK, Head Start, and other early
52 learning providers, parents, and children to participate in a
53 public school activity with kindergarten students before the end
54 of the school year;

55 3. An early registration process for prekindergarten
56 students at the school;

57 4. A welcome packet for parents and incoming kindergarten
58 students, including learning activities to prepare the students

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59 for kindergarten; and

60 5. An implementation plan and schedule to share student
61 data, attendance, assessment results, and records from the VPK,
62 Head Start, and other early learning provider programs with the
63 public school.

64 (d) A plan for professional development which requires all
65 administrators at public schools with prekindergarten or
66 kindergarten programs to have certifications in early childhood
67 education or be engaged in a professional development program,
68 including a minimum of 15 hours of instruction within the first
69 year of becoming an elementary administrator. The professional
70 development instruction must include an emphasis on the social
71 and emotional needs of children in prekindergarten to grade 3
72 programs, and on the age-appropriate use of technology,
73 instructional materials, and learning strategies. The school
74 district and the local early learning coalition shall annually
75 provide one joint professional development course for VPK, Head
76 Start, and other early learning provider teachers and public
77 school kindergarten teachers. The professional development:

78 1. May focus on communication strategies between early
79 learning providers and the public school kindergarten programs;
80 developmentally appropriate teaching strategies; alignment of
81 standards for the transition of children from prekindergarten to
82 kindergarten activities; family and community involvement;
83 emotional, social, and medical needs of children; attendance;
84 data sharing; and other topics as determined by the district and
85 coalition; and

86 2. Must include a focus on the differentiation of standards
87 for children 4 years of age and for children in kindergarten.

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Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2018.