

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Education

BILL: SB 1456

INTRODUCER: Senator Perry

SUBJECT: Office of Early Learning

DATE: March 25, 2019

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Brick	Sikes	ED	Favorable
2.			AED	
3.			AP	

I. Summary:

SB 1456 establishes professional development standards and career pathways for early childhood teachers and school readiness program providers. The bill requires the Office of Early Learning to:

- Identify early learning career pathways for early childhood teachers;
- Develop professional development training and course standards for school readiness program providers; and
- Integrate early learning professional development pathways into existing preservice and inservice training requirements.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2019.

II. Present Situation:

Office of Early Learning Programs

The Office of Early Learning (OEL) partners with 30 local early learning coalitions to deliver comprehensive early learning services statewide.¹ OEL oversees three programs—the school readiness program, the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program (VPK), and child care resource and referral services.²

Established in 1999,³ the school readiness program provides subsidies for child care services and early childhood education for children of low-income families; children in protective services

¹ Office of Early Learning, *OEL Summary*, <http://www.floridaearlylearning.com/about-us/early-learning-overview> (last visited Mar. 20, 2019).

² *Id.*

³ Ch. 99-357, s. 1 Laws of Fla.

who are at risk of abuse, neglect, or abandonment; and children with disabilities.⁴ The school readiness program offers financial assistance for child care to support working families and children to develop skills for success in school and provides developmental screening and referrals to health and education specialists where needed.

The school readiness program is a state-federal partnership between the OEL⁵ and the Office of Child Care of the United States Department of Health and Human Services.⁶ Early learning coalitions (ELCs) administer the school readiness program at the county or regional level.⁷ The OEL administers the program at the state level, including statewide coordination of the ELCs.⁸ In 2017-2018, 201,608 children received school readiness services from 7,676 providers.⁹

Office of Early Learning Training Modules

OEL establishes preservice and inservice training requirements that address, at a minimum, school readiness child development standards, health and safety requirements, and social-emotional behavior intervention models, which may include positive behavior intervention and support models.¹⁰ OEL's School Readiness Professional Development Initiative offers the following training modules:¹¹

- Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards.
- Florida Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Practitioners.
- Florida Core Competencies for After School Practitioners.
- Florida Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Directors.
- Florida Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Technical Assistance Specialists.
- Outcomes-Driven Training.
- The Pyramid Model for Positive Behavioral Support.

OEL outlines a 5-Tier career pathway with certifications that require different levels of foundational training up to a Bachelor's degree or higher.¹² An educator can apply for tuition assistance for professional development through Florida Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H.). T.E.A.C.H. is a partnership between OEL and the Children's Forum that

⁴ Section 1002.87, F.S.

⁵ In 2013, the Legislature established the Office of Early Learning in the Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice within the Department of Education. The office is administered by an executive director and is fully accountable to the Commissioner of Education but shall independently exercise all powers, duties, and functions prescribed by law, as well as adopt rules for the establishment and operation of the school readiness program and the VPK Program. Ch. 2013-252, s. 1, L.O.F.; and s. 1001.213, F.S.

⁶ See U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Child Care and Development Fund Fact Sheet*, <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/fact-sheet-occ> (last visited Mar. 22, 2019).

⁷ Section 1002.83, F.S.

⁸ Section 1001.213(3), F.S.

⁹ *Id.* at 9.

¹⁰ Section 1002.82(2)(v), F.S.

¹¹ Office of Early Learning, *Professional Development and Training Resources*, <http://www.floridaearlylearning.com/providers/professional-development/professional-development-training-resources> (last visited Mar. 21, 2019).

¹² Office of Early Learning, *Florida Early Care and Education Career Pathway*, available at http://www.floridaearlylearning.com/Content/Uploads/floridaearlylearning.com/files/Career%20Pathway%20Revised_ADA.pdf.

offers scholarships for early childhood education providers to take classes that apply toward various levels of credentials and certification.¹³ According to the T.E.A.C.H. annual report, 3,516 educators participated in more than 60 different training programs.¹⁴

Early Learning Florida, developed in partnership between OEL and the Lastinger Center at the University of Florida, is a statewide professional learning system designed to support the development of early childhood professionals' knowledge and skills in effectively educating and caring for young children.¹⁵ Since 2015, Early Learning Florida has delivered over 400,000 hours of online and blended training to more than 30,000 early childhood practitioners in Florida, at no cost to educators.¹⁶ All Early Learning Florida courses and trainings provide teachers with Continuing Education Units that articulate to national and state credentials.¹⁷

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

SB 1456 establishes professional development standards and career pathways for early childhood teachers and school readiness program providers. The bill requires the Office of Early Learning (OEL) to:

- Identify early learning career pathways for early childhood teachers;
- Develop professional development training and course standards for school readiness program providers; and
- Integrate early learning professional development pathways into existing preservice and inservice training requirements.

OEL must identify both formal and informal early learning career pathways with stackable credentials and certifications to provide early childhood teachers access to specialized professional development that:

- Strengthens knowledge and teaching practices;
- Aligns to established professional standards and core competencies;
- Provides a progression of attainable, competency-based stackable credentials and certifications; and
- Improves outcomes for children to increase kindergarten readiness and early grade success.

To the greatest extent possible, the established credentials and certifications must align with reading instruction training developed by the Just Read, Florida! Office and the Lastinger Center at the University of Florida for K-12 teachers, reading coaches, and school principals.¹⁸

The bill requires OEL to adopt rules to administer the above requirements.

¹³ Office of Early Learning, *Office of Early Learning Annual Report 2017-2018*, at 32 (2018) available at http://www.floridaearlylearning.com/Content/Uploads/floridaearlylearning.com/files/2017-2018%20Annual%20Report_ADA.pdf.

¹⁴ *Id.*; and T.E.A.C.H., *T.E.A.C.H. Annual Report for 2017-2018*, (2018) available at <http://teach-fl.org/index.php/wpdm-package/t-e-a-c-h-annual-report-for-2017-2018/?wpdmdl=1116>.

¹⁵ Early Learning Florida, *Who We Are*, <https://www.earlylearningflorida.com/about> (last visited Mar. 21, 2019).

¹⁶ The Lastinger Center at the University of Florida, *Early Learning Florida*, <https://lastinger.center.ufl.edu/early-learning/early-learning-florida/> (last visited Mar. 21, 2019).

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ Section 1001.215(3), F.S.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

None.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill substantially amends the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 1002.82 and 1002.995.

IX. Additional Information:

- A. **Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:**
(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

- B. **Amendments:**

None.

This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.
