

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 200

INTRODUCER: Senator Berman

SUBJECT: Student Retention

DATE: February 2, 2021

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Jahnke	Bouck	ED	Pre-meeting
2.			AED	
3.			AP	

I. Summary:

SB 200 authorizes a parent to request that his or her K-12 public school student be retained, for the 2021-2022 school year, in the grade level to which the student was assigned at the beginning of the 2020-21 school year. Specifically the bill requires:

- Parents to submit a retention request in writing to the school district superintendent by June 1, 2021.
- The superintendent to grant the retention request if timely filed, but authorizes the superintendent to grant a late request.
- School districts to administer a midyear assessment to a student retained under this act to evaluate the student's progress. The student must also participate in the statewide standardized assessments and other assessments required by law.
- That a retained student may qualify for whole-grade or midyear promotion, or subject matter acceleration.
- School districts to report to the Department of Education the number of retained students under this act.

The bill has no impact on state revenues or expenditures.

The bill takes effect upon becoming a law.

II. Present Situation:

Student Progression

Each district school board must establish a plan for student progression from one grade to another based on the student's mastery of the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards.¹ The plan must, among other things:²

- Emphasize student reading proficiency in grades K-3 and provide targeted instructional support for students with identified deficiencies.
- Use results of statewide, standardized assessments and end-of-course assessments to advise high school students of any identified deficiencies and to provide appropriate preparatory instruction.
- Provide for timely information to a student's teacher and parent evaluation results of progress monitoring in grades K-12.
- Provide requirements and notification procedures regarding student participation in whole-grade promotion, midyear promotion, or subject-matter acceleration.

Statewide Standardized Assessments

The primary purpose of the student assessment program is to provide student academic achievement and learning gains data to students, parents, and schools. The program is designed to, in part:³

- Assess the achievement level and annual learning gains of each student in English Language Arts and mathematics and the achievement level in all other subjects assessed.
- Identify the educational strengths and needs of students and the readiness of students to be promoted to the next grade level or to graduate from high school.

Each student must participate in the statewide, standardized assessment program in grades 3 through 10.⁴ Students who do not achieve a Level 3 or above on the statewide, standardized English Language Arts (ELA) assessment, the statewide, standardized Mathematics assessment, or the Algebra I EOC assessment must be evaluated to determine the nature of the student's difficulty, the areas of academic need, and strategies for providing academic supports to improve the student's performance.⁵

Any student in kindergarten through grade 3 who exhibits a substantial deficiency⁶ in reading must be provided interventions immediately following the identification of the reading deficiency.⁷

¹ Sections 1003.41 and 1008.25, F.S. The plan must focus specifically on ELA, math, science, and social studies standards.

² Section 1008.25(2), F.S.

³ Section 1008.22(1), F.S.

⁴ Sections 1008.22, F.S and 1008.25(4)(a), F.S.

⁵ Section 1008.25(4)(a), F.S.

⁶ Determination of a substantial deficiency is based upon screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring, or assessment data; statewide assessments; or teacher observations Section 1008.25(5)(a), F.S. School districts are required determine the criteria used by the district to identify K-3 students with a substantial deficiency in reading. Rule 6A-10.053(9)(c)3., F.A.C.

⁷ Section 1008.25(5)(a), F.S.

Student Retention

Florida law specifies that no student may be assigned to a grade level based solely on age or other factors that constitute social promotion.⁸

To be promoted to grade 4, a student must score a Level 2 or higher on the statewide, standardized ELA assessment required for grade 3.⁹ The student must be retained if the student's reading deficiency is not remedied by the end of grade 3, by scoring a Level 2 or higher on the statewide, standardized assessment required for grade 3.¹⁰

The district school board may only exempt students from mandatory retention in grade 3 for good cause. A student who is promoted to grade 4 with a good cause exemption must be provided intensive reading instruction and intervention. Good cause exemptions are limited to students in grade 3 and relate to limited English proficiency students, students with disabilities, the use of alternative assessments or portfolios, and students previously retained in grades K-3.¹¹

In the 2018-2019 school year, 28,436 students were promoted to grade 4 based on a good cause exemption.¹²

Based on data from the Florida Department of Education,¹³ there was an overall 43 percent reduction in statewide K-12 student retention rates for the 2019-20 school year compared to the previous 5-year average. Students in grade 3 had the most significant reduction in retention rates, with a 77 percent reduction in grade 3 student retentions in 2019-20 compared to the previous 5-year average.

⁸ Section 1008.25(6)(a), F.S.

⁹ Section 1008.25(5)(b), F.S.

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ Section 1008.25(6)(b), F.S.

¹² Pursuant to Florida Department of Education Emergency Order No. 2020-EO-01, spring K-12 statewide assessment test administrations for the 2019-20 school year were canceled. Florida Department of Education, *Emergency Order No. 2020-EO-01, March 23, 2020* available at <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/19861/urlt/DOEORDERNO2020-EO-01.pdf>. Therefore, 3rd grade good cause exemption data are not available for the 2019-20 school year. Florida Department of Education, *3rd Grade Promotions: Good Cause Exemption 2018-19* available at <http://www.fldoe.org/accountability/data-sys/edu-info-accountability-services/pk-12-public-school-data-pubs-reports/students.shtml>, and Florida Department of Education, *3rd Grade Promotions: Good Cause Exemption 2014-15 to 2017-18* available at <http://www.fldoe.org/accountability/data-sys/edu-info-accountability-services/pk-12-public-school-data-pubs-reports/archive.shtml> (last visited Jan. 27, 2021).

¹³ Senate staff analysis of Florida Department of Education, *Retention Rates by District 2019-20* available at <http://www.fldoe.org/accountability/data-sys/edu-info-accountability-services/pk-12-public-school-data-pubs-reports/students.shtml>, and Florida Department of Education, *Retention Rates by District 2014-15 to 2018-19* available at <http://www.fldoe.org/accountability/data-sys/edu-info-accountability-services/pk-12-public-school-data-pubs-reports/archive.shtml> (last visited Jan. 27, 2021).

Grade	Total Retained 5-year Average 2014-15 to 2018-19	Percent Retained 5-year Average 2014-15 to 2018-19	Total Retained 2019-20	Percent Retained 2019-20	Percent Reduction in Retained Students 2014-19 to 2019-20
K	6,894	3.40%	4,710	2.33%	32%
1	7,647	3.63%	4,830	2.34%	37%
2	4,941	2.31%	2,862	1.38%	42%
3	16,841	7.55%	3,805	1.74%	77%
4	2,289	1.06%	669	0.32%	71%
5	1,464	0.68%	521	0.24%	64%
6	2,621	1.25%	1,719	0.77%	34%
7	3,525	1.70%	2,370	1.09%	33%
8	5,445	2.61%	4,260	1.94%	22%
9	7,714	3.60%	4,670	2.14%	39%
10	8,776	4.21%	6,115	2.89%	30%
11	7,852	4.06%	4,651	2.36%	41%
12	11,351	5.83%	8,270	4.08%	27%
Total	87,360	3.21%	49,452	1.80%	43%

COVID-19 Public Health Emergency

In response to the COVID-19 emergency, the Florida Department of Education (DOE) issued an Executive Order (EO),¹⁴ which cancelled remaining K-12 state assessments for the 2019-2020 school year.¹⁵ The EO also authorized school districts and other educational entities to evaluate students for promotion, graduation, and final course grades for the 2019-2020 school year as though those assessments which were cancelled did not exist.¹⁶

Resulting guidance¹⁷ relating to the cancellation of state assessments specified that, because the Grade 3 ELA FSA was a key component districts used to make promotion decisions, and such data would not be available due to the cancellation of statewide assessments for the 2019-2020 school year, promotion decisions should be made in consultation with parents, teachers, and school leaders based on the students’ classroom performance and progress monitoring data.

Additionally, state-level guidance¹⁸ suggested that promotion decisions should be made in consultation with parents, teachers, and school leaders based on the students’ classroom performance and progress monitoring data. Therefore, the guidance specified that parents should have the ability to request retention of their child in the current grade for the 2020-2021 year.

¹⁴ Florida Department of Education, *Emergency Order No. 2020-EO-01, March 23, 2020* available at <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/19861/urlt/DOEORDERNO2020-EO-01.pdf>.

¹⁵ *Id.*, Section 4. *Assessment, Accountability and Promotion, March 23, 2020* available at <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/19861/urlt/DOEORDERNO2020-EO-01.pdf>.

¹⁶ Florida Department of Education, *Coronavirus (COVID-19), K-12 Public, Private & Charter Schools, Assessments, Accountability and Promotion* <http://www.fldoe.org/em-response/schools.stml> (last visited Jan. 27, 2021).

¹⁷ <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/19861/urlt/FDOE-COVID-QA1.pdf> at p. 2.

¹⁸ *Id.*

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

SB 200 authorizes a parent to request that his or her K-12 public school student be retained, for the 2021-2022 school year, in the grade level to which the student was assigned at the beginning of the 2020-21 school year.” Specifically the bill requires:

- Parents to submit a retention request in writing to the school district superintendent June 1, 2021.
- The superintendent to grant the retention request if timely filed, but authorizes the superintendent to grant a late request.
- School districts to administer a midyear assessment to a student retained under this act to evaluate the student’s progress. The student must also participate in the statewide standardized assessments and other assessments required by law.
- That a retained student may qualify for whole-grade or midyear promotion, or subject matter acceleration.
- School districts to report to the Department of Education the number of retained students under this act.

The bill specifies that a parent who wishes for his or her student to be retained must submit a retention request in writing to the school district superintendent. Only retention requests received by the superintendent on or before June 1, 2021, must be considered. The superintendent must grant a timely filed retention request; it is at the discretion of the superintendent to grant a late request.

The bill requires school districts to administer a midyear assessment to a student retained under this act to evaluate the student’s progress to mastery of the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards. The student must also participate in statewide standardized assessments and any other assessments required by law.

The bill specifies that a retained student may qualify for whole-grade promotion, midyear promotion, or subject-matter acceleration during the 2021-2022 school year. If the student does qualify the parent may request the school district promote his or her student accordingly or request his or her student be retained pursuant to the parent’s retention request. School districts must grant all such requests.

The bill requires school districts to report to the Department of Education the number of students retained pursuant to this act for all or part of the 2021-2022 school year.

The bill may likely provide parents with greater authority to determine that their child should be retained in the 2021-2022 school year. However, this authority is granted only for the 2021-2022 school year, unless extended by legislative action.

The bill takes effect upon becoming a law.

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:

The bill creates an unnumbered section of Florida Law.

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.
