

GENERAL



Schools & Learning Council
2008 Committee Oversight Powers
and Responsibilities

Fact Sheet

January 2008

1. Do the committees in the Schools & Learning Council oversee Florida’s education system?	Yes. The committees that make up the Schools & Learning Council have broad power to maintain a continuous review of the work of the Department of Education and the State Board of Education. The committees also have the authority to evaluate the performance of the K-20 education system.
2. Can the committees request reports and recommendations from the Department of Education and other education agencies?	Yes. Section 11.143, F.S., authorizes the committees to request reports concerning the operation of any state agency subject to its jurisdiction, including recommendations by the agency with regard to existing law or proposed education legislation.
3. Do the committees have subpoena power?	Yes. The committees may subpoena any person or compel the production of books, letters, or other documentary evidence, including confidential information.
4. Do the committees review agency rulemaking?	Yes. The committees’ staff reviews proposed administrative rules in conjunction with the staff of the Joint Administrative Procedures Committee, which is primarily responsible for reviewing all administrative rules proposed under Chapter 120, F.S., on behalf of the Legislature.
5. What reports have the committees requested from the Department of Education or State Board of Education?	<p>The committees periodically request reports, statewide education data, bill analyses, and general information from the Department of Education.</p> <p>The Florida Statutes and Laws of Florida also often place report requirements on the Department of Education, State Board of Education, and other education-related entities. The Schools & Learning Council maintains a list of these required reports. The list currently contains over 80 separate reports.</p>
6. What are the applicable statutes and rules?	<p>Section 11.143, F.S. — Standing or select committees; powers.</p> <p>Rule 7.30, Rules of the House of Representatives.</p>
7. Where can I get additional information?	Florida House of Representatives Schools & Learning Council (850) 488-7451



Schools & Learning Council
Education Funding

Fact Sheet

January 2008

<p>1. Is the State the only entity that provides funds for the Early Learning - Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program, K-12 public schools, community colleges, universities, and other educational programs?</p>	<p>No. While the State plays a key role in providing funds to support the education system, federal, local, private, and other sources also provide funding.</p>
<p>2. What types of funds are appropriated for the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program?</p>	<p>General revenue funds are provided to the Department of Education for transfer to the Agency for Workforce Innovation for the administration and delivery of the Early Learning – Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program through local early learning coalitions. (Refer to the Early Learning – Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program Fact Sheet)</p>
<p>3. What types of funds are appropriated for K-12 public schools ?</p>	<p>For the 2007-2008 fiscal year, appropriations for public schools are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 77% from general revenue funds. • 14% from federal funds. • 3% from the Educational Enhancement Trust Fund. • 6% from other trust funds. <p>Though not appropriated, the Legislature does determine the required local effort to be collected from local property taxes.</p>
<p>4. What is the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP)?</p>	<p>The FEFP is the funding formula adopted by the Florida Legislature in 1973 to allocate funds appropriated by the Legislature to school districts for K-12 public school operations. The FEFP implements the constitutional requirement for a uniform system of free public education and is an allocation model based on individual student participation in educational programs. In order to ensure equalized funding, the FEFP is comprised of state and local funds and takes into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The local property tax base. • The costs of educational programs. • District costs of living and the costs of hiring personnel across districts. • Sparsity of student population. <p>(Refer to the Florida Education Finance Program</p>

	Fact Sheet).
<p>5. What are the local funding sources for K-12 public school operations?</p>	<p><u>Nonvoted Millage Rates</u> The Legislature established in the 2007-2008 General Appropriations Act (ch. 2007-72, L.O.F.) the required local effort (RLE) amount of \$7.9 billion to be raised by ad valorem taxes. With the receipt of the certified tax roll in July, the Commissioner of Education calculates a statewide millage rate (4.843) that will generate \$7.9 billion, when applied to each county's tax roll, after each school board's millage rate is adjusted for the county's local level of assessment on ad valorem property and for the requirement that no school board's RLE shall exceed 90% of FEFP funds. School boards must levy the RLE millage rate to receive state FEFP funding.</p> <p>School boards are authorized to levy two nonvoted discretionary millage rates: 1) up to .51 mills; and 2) up to .25 mills but not to exceed the amount of revenue that will generate \$100 per FTE.</p> <p><u>Voted Millage Rates</u> The electors within a school district may approve two millage rates: 1) a millage rate for a period not to exceed two years; and 2) a millage rate for a period not to exceed four years.</p>
<p>6. Is there a limit on the amount of local property taxes that may be collected for school purposes?</p>	<p>Yes. The Florida Constitution limits the amount of ad valorem taxes for school purposes to 10 mills, exclusive of taxes levied for the payment of bonds and taxes levied for periods not longer than two years when authorized by vote of the electors.</p>
<p>7. Are there any state capital outlay funds available to school districts?</p>	<p>Yes. Several state sources provide funds for school district-capital outlay, including the following programs with funding provided for Fiscal Year 2007-2008:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Education Capital Outlay and Debt Service Trust Fund (PECO). • Capital Outlay and Debt Service Fund (CO&DS). • Special Facility Construction Account. • Classrooms First Lottery Bond Program. • Classroom for Kids Program. • Charter School Capital Outlay. <p><u>No funding in Fiscal Year 2007-2008 but still in statute:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effort Index Grant Program. • School Infrastructure Thrift (SIT) Program. • High Growth District Capital Outlay Assistance Grant Program.

<p>8. Are there any local capital outlay funds available to school districts?</p>	<p>Yes. Several local sources provide funds for school district capital outlay, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two mill money (non-voted). • Voted millage. • School Capital Outlay Surtax (voted 1/2 cent sales surtax). • Local government infrastructure surtax (voted). • Bond referendum (voted). • Impact fees.
<p>9. What types of funds are available for community colleges?</p>	<p>For the 2007-2008 fiscal year, appropriations for community college operations are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 62% from general revenue. • 10% from the Educational Enhancement Trust Fund. • 28% from student tuition and fees. <p>Although the Legislature controls in-state and out-of-state tuition and fees, the revenues remain at the individual community colleges and are not appropriated in the General Appropriations Act.</p>
<p>10. Are there any capital outlay funds available to community colleges?</p>	<p>Yes. Community colleges derive capital outlay funds from the following state sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Education Capital Outlay and Debt Service Trust Fund (PECO). • Capital Outlay and Debt Service Trust Fund (CO&DS). • General Revenue Fund. • State match for private funds. • Capital improvement funds.
<p>11. What types of funds are appropriated for state universities?</p>	<p>For the 2007-2008 fiscal year, appropriations for state university operations are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 67% from general revenue. • 7% from the Educational Enhancement Trust Fund. • 26% from student tuition and fees. • Less than 1% from other trust funds.
<p>12. In addition to state appropriations and student tuition and fees, are there other funding sources available to state universities?</p>	<p>Yes. The following funding sources may be available for state university operating purposes during the fiscal year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal, state, local and non-governmental contracts and grants. • Gifts and donations. • Concessions. • Self-insurance funds. • Auxiliary enterprises. • Hospital revenues. • Intercollegiate athletic fees.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student financial aid fees. • Faculty practice plans.
<p>13. Are there any capital outlay funds available to state universities?</p>	<p>Yes. State universities derive capital outlay funds from the following sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Education Capital Outlay and Debt Service Trust Fund (PECO). • General Revenue Fund. • Capital Improvement Trust Fund fees. • Building fees. • State match for private funds. • State University Concurrency Trust Fund. • Other trust funds.
<p>14. What are the applicable statutes?</p>	<p>Section 9(a)(2), Art. XII of the State Constitution -- PECO. Section 9(d), Art. XII of the State Constitution -- CO&DS. Section 212.055(2), F.S. -- Local Government Infrastructure Surtax. Section 212.055(6), F.S. -- School Capital Outlay Surtax. Section 1009.23, F.S. -- Community College Student Fees. Section 1009.24, F.S. -- State University Student Fees. Sections 1010.40-1010.59, F.S. -- School District Bonds. Section 1011.62, F.S. -- FEFP Formula. Section 1011.71(2), F.S. -- Two Mill Money. Section 1011.73, F.S. -- District Millage Election. Section 1013.64(1), F.S. -- PECO (maintenance, repair, renovation). Section 1013.64(2)(a), F.S. -- Special Facility Construction Account. Section 1013.65, F.S. -- Allocation of PECO Funds. Section 1013.68, F.S. -- Classrooms First Program. Section 1013.735, F.S. -- Classrooms for Kids Program. Section 1013.737, F.S. -- The Class Size Reduction Lottery Revenue Bond Program. Section 1013.738, F.S. -- High Growth District Capital Outlay Assistance Grant Program.</p>
<p>15. Where can I get additional information?</p>	<p>Florida Department of Education Deputy Commissioner's Office (850) 245-0406 http://www.fldoe.org/</p> <p>State Board of Education (850) 245-9654 http://www.fldoe.org/</p>

Florida Board of Governors
(850) 245-0466
<http://www.flbog.org/>

SMART Schools Clearinghouse
(850) 245-9239
<http://smartschools.state.fl.us>

Florida House of Representatives
Policy & Budget Council
(850) 488-1601

Florida House of Representatives
Schools & Learning Council
(850) 488-7451



Schools & Learning Council

Florida Lottery and Slot Machine Revenues for Education

Fact Sheet

January 2008

<p>1. What is the history of the Florida Lottery?</p>	<p>In 1986, voters amended Florida’s Constitution to allow the State to operate lotteries. The Florida Public Education Lottery Act (Ch. 87-65, L.O.F.) implements the constitutional amendment in a manner that enables the people of the state to benefit from significant additional monies for education and also enables the people of the state to play the best lottery games available. Pursuant to s. 24.102(2), F.S., the intent of the Legislature is to use the net proceeds of the lottery games to support improvements in public education. The lottery proceeds are not to be used as a substitute for existing resources for public education.</p>
<p>2. What is the history of slot machines in Florida?</p>	<p>In 2004, voters amended Florida’s Constitution to allow the operation of slot machines at eligible pari-mutuel facilities located in Miami-Dade County or Broward County, subject to voter approval in those counties. Chapter 2005-362, L.O.F., implements the constitutional amendment and provides for a tax rate of 50 percent on slot machine revenues. Revenues from this tax are used to supplement public education.</p>
<p>3. How are lottery and slot machine revenues distributed?</p>	<p>Lottery revenues are distributed based on variable percentages of gross revenue from the sale of online and instant lottery tickets intended to maximize revenue to the Educational Enhancement Trust Fund. Variable percentages of gross revenue are returned to the public in the form of prizes. A portion of gross revenues is used to pay the expenses of running the Lottery, including the cost of advertising and lottery operations and payments to ticket vendors and lottery retailers. The remainder of the gross revenue and other earned revenue are deposited in the Educational Enhancement Trust Fund.</p> <p>Revenues from the tax on slot machine revenues are deposited in the Educational Enhancement Trust Fund. Other costs associated with regulating slot machine gaming are funded through license fees paid by slot machine facilities.</p>
<p>4. How much lottery prize money goes unclaimed each year?</p>	<p>The amount of unclaimed prizes accumulated each year is variable based on many factors. The following chart details the amount of unclaimed prize money from both online and instant ticket sales from fiscal years 1999-2000 through 2006-2007.</p>

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	Online Games	Instant Games	Total
1999-00	33.3	10.0	43.3
2000-01	32.1	10.9	43.0
2001-02	29.6	11.3	40.9
2002-03	31.2	11.8	43.0
2003-04	59.5	1.7	61.2
2004-05	37.9	18.8	56.7
2005-06	42.0	10.4	52.4
2006-07	33.0	15.5	48.4

Dollars in millions. Totals may not add due to rounding.

<p>5. What happens to unclaimed lottery prizes?</p>	<p>Chapter 2005-84, L.O.F., changed the use of unclaimed prizes. The law requires that 80% of unclaimed prize money be transferred directly to the Educational Enhancement Trust Fund. These funds may be used to match private contributions received under the postsecondary matching grant programs established in ss. 1011.32, 1011.85, 1011.94, and 1013.79, F.S. The remaining 20 percent of unclaimed prize money is added to the pool from which future prizes are to be awarded or used for special prize promotions. Previously, with the exception of an exceptionally large unclaimed prize in 2004, all unclaimed prize money remained with the Lottery to increase prize payouts and occasionally augment initial online game jackpots.</p>
<p>6. What are specific dedicated uses of the Educational Enhancement Trust Fund?</p>	<p>The Educational Enhancement Trust Fund is primarily used for the following:</p> <p>Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program Bright Futures is a merit-based scholarship program designed to provide college scholarships to students who achieve certain academic levels in high school. In 2007-2008, \$387,685,153 was appropriated to the Bright Futures Scholarship Program. (Refer to the Bright Futures Scholarship Program Fact Sheet.)</p> <p>Classrooms First and Classrooms for Kids Programs A portion of revenues in the Educational Enhancement Trust Fund is pledged to pay debt service on bonds issued by the state pursuant to the Classrooms First Program (the 1997 School Capital Outlay Bond Program) and the Classrooms for Kids Program (the Class Size Reduction Bond Program). These funds are used for new construction of schools, maintenance or repair of schools, School Infrastructure Thrift (SIT) Program incentive funds, and Effort Index Grants.</p> <p>Florida School Recognition Program The Florida School Recognition Program is designed to reward individual schools that sustain high performance or demonstrate exemplary improvement. Schools recognized by the program can receive rewards of up to \$100 per student. The 2007 Legislature appropriated \$261.6 million from the Educational Enhancement Trust Fund for the Florida School Recognition Program and for school district enhancement. (Refer to the School Recognition Program</p>

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7. How are the remaining funds in the Educational Enhancement Trust Fund used?	<p>After the Bright Futures Scholarship Program, the Classrooms First, and Classrooms for Kids debt service are fully funded, the remaining funds are apportioned as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 70% to public schools. • 15% to the Florida Community College System. • 15% to the State University System.
8. What are acceptable uses of Educational Enhancement Trust Fund dollars?	<p>Public educational programs and purposes funded by the Educational Enhancement Trust Fund may include, but are not limited to the following: endowments, scholarships, matching funds, direct grants, research and economic development related to education, salary enhancement, contracts with independent institutions to conduct programs consistent with the state master plan for postsecondary education, and other educational programs or purposes deemed desirable by the Legislature.</p>
9. How do appropriations from the Educational Enhancement Trust Fund compare to the total amount spent on education?	<p>For 2007-2008, the Legislature appropriated \$1.6 billion from the Educational Enhancement Trust Fund. However, total funding for education is \$33.3 billion (including state, federal, local effort, and student tuition/fees). Therefore, the Educational Enhancement Trust Fund appropriations make up 4.7% of the total funding available for education.</p>
10. What are the applicable laws and statutes?	<p>Chapter 24, F.S. -- Florida Lottery. Section 1008.36, F.S. -- Florida School Recognition Program. Sections 1009.53-1009.538, F.S. -- Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program. Section 1013.68, F.S. -- Classrooms First Program. Section 1013.70, F.S. -- 1997 School Capital Outlay Bond Program. Section 1013.735, F.S. -- Classrooms for Kids Program. Section 1013.736, F.S. -- District Effort Recognition Program. Chapter 551, F.S. -- Slot Machines. Section 1, chapter 2007-72, L.O.F. (General Appropriations Act). Section 1, chapter 2007-326, L.O.F. (Special Appropriations Act).</p>
11. Where can I get additional information?	<p>Florida Department of Education Deputy Commissioner, Finance and Operations Office (850) 245-0406 www.firn.edu/doe/strategy/pdf/lottery.pdf</p> <p>Florida House of Representatives Schools & Learning Council (850) 488-7451</p>



Schools & Learning Council
Early Learning – School Readiness

Fact Sheet

January 2008

<p>1. What is the School Readiness Program?</p>	<p>The School Readiness Program provides early childhood education and child care services for children of low-income families; children in protective services who are at risk of abuse, neglect, or abandonment; and children with disabilities. Funded through a mixture of state and federal funds, the School Readiness Program is a state-federal partnership between Florida’s Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI) and the Child Care Bureau of the United States Department of Health and Human Services.</p> <p>Established in 1999, the School Readiness Program is administered by 31 early learning coalitions (Refer to Question 8) at the county or regional level. AWI provides statewide coordination of the coalitions.</p> <p>For fiscal year 2007-2008, a total of \$664.5 million was appropriated for the School Readiness Program from a mixture of state and federal funds, including \$371.8 million from the federal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) block grant, \$134.5 million from the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant, \$156.0 million from the state’s General Revenue Fund, and \$2.2 million from other fund sources. In addition, AWI was provided \$3.9 million for development of a computerized data system known as the Early Learning Information System (ELIS).</p>
<p>2. Who is eligible for the School Readiness Program?</p>	<p>Federal regulations governing the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), which accounts for 55 percent of the state’s funding for the School Readiness Program, allow the state to use the funds for child care services, if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The child is under 13 years of age or, at the state’s option, under age 19 and physically or mentally incapable of caring for himself or herself, or under court supervision; and• The child:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Resides with a parent or parents who work or attend job training or educational programs and the family income does not exceed 85 percent of the state’s median income for a family of the same size; or○ Receives, or needs to receive, protective services.

Within these broad federal eligibility categories, Florida law specifies that the School Readiness Program is established for children from birth to school entry and requires early learning coalitions to admit children in the School Readiness Program according to two priorities:

- **First priority.** Children from those families that include a parent who receives temporary cash assistance and is required under state or federal law to engage in work activities (e.g., employment, education, and vocational training).
- **Second priority.** Children age 3 years to school entry who are served in child protective services and for whom child care is needed to minimize the risk of further abuse, neglect, or abandonment.

Beyond these two priorities, state law allows each early learning coalition to establish local priorities for admitting children in the School Readiness Program among the following eligibility categories:

- A child under the age of kindergarten eligibility who is:
 - Determined to be at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation who currently is in child protective services.
 - At risk of welfare dependency, including a child whose family income does not exceed 150 percent of the federal poverty level, a child of a participant in the welfare transition program, a child of a migrant farmworker, or a child of a teen parent.
 - A child of a working family whose family income does not exceed 150 percent of the federal poverty level.
 - A child for whom the state is paying a relative caregiver payment.
- A 3-year-old or 4-year-old child:
 - Whose family income exceeds 150 percent of the federal poverty level but who has a disability;
 - Has been served in a “specific part-time or combination of part-time exceptional education programs with required special services, aids, or equipment”; and
 - Was previously “reported for funding part time with the Florida Education Finance Program as [an] exceptional student[.]”

- A child from birth to 4 years of age who is served at home through a home visitor program or intensive parent education program, if:
 - The child's family income does not exceed 150 percent of the federal poverty level;
 - The child has a disability; or
 - The child is at risk of future school failure.
- A child who meets federal and state eligibility requirements for the migrant preschool program and whose family income does not exceed 150 percent of the federal poverty level.

Transitional child care. Through the School Readiness Program, early learning coalitions fund transitional child care for former welfare transition program participants and individuals redirected through up-front diversion (i.e., immediate assistance provided by the state's workforce system to divert an individual away from the need for temporary cash assistance through securing or retaining employment or child support). Florida's Workforce Innovation Act of 2000 authorizes transitional child care for up to 2 years:

- After a participant leaves the welfare transition program due to employment and whose income does not exceed 200 percent of the federal poverty level at any time during the 2 years; or
- For an individual redirected through up-front diversion and whose income does not exceed 200 percent of the federal poverty level at any time during the 2 years.

Child Care Executive Partnership. The Child Care Executive Partnership Program allows funding from the School Readiness Program to be used for payment of matching child care funding for a child whose family income does not exceed 200 percent of the federal poverty level. Matching funds are provided as a dollar-for-dollar match from employers, local governments, and other contributors.

School-age children. Florida law specifies that the School Readiness Program is established for children from birth to school entry. However, state law also specifies that an early learning coalition may, subject to approval by AWI, receive subsidized child care funds for all children eligible for any federal subsidized child care program. AWI has interpreted this provision to allow funding from the School Readiness Program to be used for any CCDF-eligible child under the

	<p>broad federal eligibility categories (<i>i.e.</i>, a child under age 13 or under age 19 and physically or mentally incapable of caring for himself or herself, or under court supervision).</p> <p>Once a child is admitted in the School Readiness Program, even if the child’s family income changes, the child remains eligible for the program until entering school. However, if family income changes, the parent’s co-payment would be subject to change under the sliding fee scale (Refer to Question 3).</p>
<p>3. What is a “sliding fee scale?”</p>	<p>Each early learning coalition is required to adopt, subject to approval by AWI, a local sliding fee scale for the School Readiness Program. A sliding fee scale establishes a co-payment charged to a parent based on the parent’s income and family size. A provider receives payment for the School Readiness Program from the early learning coalition and collects the co-payment directly from the parent. A school readiness provider is not prohibited from charging a parent fees beyond the co-payment.</p>
<p>4. What providers participate in the School Readiness Program?</p>	<p>A wide range of public and private providers of early childhood education and child care services participate in the School Readiness Program, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public and private schools; • Licensed child care facilities and large family child care homes; • Licensed and registered family day care homes; • Faith-based child care facilities and after-school programs, which are both exempt from licensure; and • Informal providers (e.g., in-home and relative care).
<p>5. How is a provider selected for a child?</p>	<p>Both federal CCDF regulations and state law give a child’s parent the right to select the provider for his or her child.</p>
<p>6. How do parents apply for the School Readiness Program for their children?</p>	<p>A parent may apply for his or her child’s admission in the School Readiness Program by submitting an application to the early learning coalition (Refer to Question 8).</p>
<p>7. What is a child expected to learn in the School Readiness Program?</p>	<p>AWI adopts child performance standards that describe age-appropriate expectations for what a child in the School Readiness Program should know and be able to do. These standards must be integrated with the performance standards adopted by DOE for the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program. AWI’s performance standards must address a series of school readiness skills described in state law:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with rules, limitations, and routines.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to perform tasks. • Interactions with adults. • Interactions with peers. • Ability to cope with challenges. • Self-help skills. • Ability to express the child’s needs. • Verbal communication skills. • Problem-solving skills. • Following of verbal directions. • Demonstration of curiosity, persistence, and exploratory behavior. • Interest in books and other printed materials. • Paying attention to stories. • Participation in art and music activities. • Ability to identify colors, geometric shapes, letters of the alphabet, numbers, and spatial and temporal relationships.
<p>8. What is an “early learning coalition”?</p>	<p>Formerly called a “school readiness coalition,” an early learning coalition may serve one county or a multi-county region. Depending on the size and number of counties served, a coalition is composed of 18 to 35 members, including a chair and two additional members appointed by the Governor; locally appointed representatives of state and local public agencies; local representatives from the child care industry; and “private-sector business members” appointed by the coalition after receiving nominations from a local chamber of commerce or economic development council.</p> <p>An early learning coalition administers the School Readiness Program, the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program, and the state’s child care resource and referral network in its county or multi-county region. Before administering the programs, an early learning coalition must submit a plan for approval by AWI. There are currently 31 early learning coalitions with approved plans.</p>
<p>9. What are the applicable laws and statutes?</p>	<p>Section 402.27, F.S. – Child Care and Early Childhood Resource and Referral. Section 409.178(3), F.S. – Child Care Executive Partnership Act; Findings and Intent; Grant; Limitation; Rules. Section 411.01, F.S. – School Readiness Programs; Early Learning Coalitions. Section 445.032, F.S. – Transitional Child Care. Section 445.017, F.S. – Diversion. Section 445.024, F.S. – Work Requirements. Part V of chapter 1002, F.S. (sections 1002.51-1002.79,</p>

	<p>F.S.) – Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program.</p> <p>Chapter 99-357, L.O.F. – School Readiness Act. Specific Appropriations 2346-2357, section 6, chapter 2007-72, L.O.F. – General Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2007-2008.</p> <p>Specific Appropriations 488-492, section 6, chapter 2007-326, L.O.F. – Special Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2007-2008.</p> <p>Title 45, Code of Federal Regulations, section 98.20(a) – A Child’s Eligibility for Child Care Services. Title 45, Code of Federal Regulations, section 98.30 – Parental Choice.</p>
<p>10. Where can I get additional information?</p>	<p>Agency for Workforce Innovation Office of Early Learning (850) 921-3180 www.flready.com</p> <p>Florida House of Representatives Schools & Learning Council (850) 488-7451</p>



Schools & Learning Council
Early Learning - Voluntary
Prekindergarten Education Program

Fact Sheet

January 2008

<p>1. What is the Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Program?</p>	<p>In 2002, Florida voters approved Amendment No. 8 to the State Constitution, which required the Legislature, by 2005, to establish an early childhood development and education program for every 4-year-old child in the state. The program must be voluntary, high quality, free, and delivered according to professionally accepted standards. In 2004, the Legislature created the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education (VPK) Program, which allows a parent to enroll his or her child in a voluntary, free prekindergarten program offered during the school year or summer before the child is eligible for admission to kindergarten.</p> <p>In 2005-2006, the VPK program enrolled 105,896 children, of which 93,574 enrolled for the school-year and 12,322 enrolled for the summer. For 2006-2007, total enrollment increased to more than 124,000 children, of which approximately 114,000 enrolled for the school year and 10,000 enrolled for the summer. The 2006-2007 enrollment represents approximately 55 percent of the state's eligible 4-year-old children.</p>
<p>2. Who is eligible for the VPK program?</p>	<p>A child who lives in Florida and who will be 4 years old, but not yet 5 years old, on September 1 of the school year is eligible for the VPK program during that school year. The child remains eligible until the beginning of the school year for which the child is eligible for kindergarten in a public school (<i>i.e.</i>, the child is 5 years old by September 1 of the school year) or is admitted to kindergarten, whichever occurs first.</p> <p>A child may not attend the summer VPK program earlier than the summer immediately before the school year that the child is eligible for kindergarten.</p>
<p>3. What choices do families have?</p>	<p>The parent of an eligible child may choose among three types of VPK programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A 540-instructional-hour school-year VPK program delivered by a private provider that has a director with a prekindergarten director credential, with classes of at least 4 and not more than 18 students, that has for each class at least one instructor who holds at least a child development associate (CDA) or equivalent state-

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	<p>approved credential and who completes a 5-clock-hour course in emergent literacy training, and that, for classes of 11 or more students, has a second instructor who is not required to have those credentials or training;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If offered in a school district that meets class-size reduction requirements, a 540-instructional-hour school-year VPK program delivered by a public school with classes of at least 4 and not more than 18 students, that has for each class at least one instructor who holds at least a CDA or equivalent state-approved credential and who completes a 5-clock-hour course in emergent literacy training, and that, for classes of 11 or more students, has a second instructor who is not required to have those credentials or training; or • A 300-instructional-hour summer VPK program delivered by a public school or private provider with classes of at least 4 and not more than 10 students, and that has for each class at least one Florida-certified teacher or an instructor who holds a bachelor's or higher degree in specified early learning degree programs.
<p>4. How are children enrolled in the VPK program?</p>	<p>A parent may register his or her child in the VPK program by submitting an application to the early learning coalition (Refer to Question 13). After registration, the parent must choose a school-year or summer program and must select among the eligible private providers and public schools. A child's enrollment is complete when the private provider or public school selected by the child's parent notifies the early learning coalition that the child is admitted.</p> <p>Early learning coalitions must coordinate with school districts in developing procedures for enrolling children in public school VPK programs.</p> <p>A pilot project allows a parent, instead of registering with the early learning coalition, to register a child directly with the private provider or public school in 21 counties: Baker, Bradford, Clay, Collier, Gadsden, Glades, Hendry, Jefferson, Lee, Leon, Liberty, Madison, Marion, Nassau, Okaloosa, Orange, Osceola, Wakulla, Walton, St. Lucie, and Taylor.</p>
<p>5. How can families make informed choices?</p>	<p>Early learning coalitions must provide parents with a profile of each private provider and public school. The profile must include information regarding the provider's or school's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services, curriculum, instructor credentials, and instructor-to-student ratio; and

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kindergarten readiness rate based upon the most recent available results of the statewide kindergarten screening.
<p>6. What requirements must private providers meet to offer the VPK program?</p>	<p>School-year programs. To offer a VPK school-year program, a private provider must register with the early learning coalition and must be a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Licensed child care facility; Licensed family day care home; Licensed large family child care home; Nonpublic school exempt from licensure; or Faith-based child care provider exempt from licensure. <p>In addition, a private prekindergarten provider must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be accredited by an accrediting association that is a member of the National Council for Private School Accreditation, the Commission on International and Trans-Regional Accreditation, or the Florida Association of Academic Nonpublic Schools; Hold a current Gold Seal Quality Care designation; or Be licensed and demonstrate to the early learning coalition that the provider meets the VPK program’s statutory requirements. <p>Unlicensed (registered) family day care homes and informal child care providers are not eligible to offer the VPK program.</p> <p>Summer programs. To offer a VPK summer program, a private provider must meet each requirement for the school-year program.</p>
<p>7. What requirements must public schools meet to offer the VPK program?</p>	<p>School-year programs. A public school may only offer the school-year VPK program if the district school board certifies that the school district:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complies with the current-year requirements for class-size reduction; and Has sufficient, satisfactory educational facilities and capital outlay funds to achieve full compliance with the class-size reduction requirements. <p>In addition, the Commissioner of Education must certify his or her agreement with the school district’s class-size certifications.</p> <p>Each eligible school district determines which public schools in the district, if any, may offer the school-year program. To participate, each public school must register with the early</p>

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	<p>learning coalition.</p> <p>Summer programs. Each school district must offer a summer VPK program, although the district determines which public schools in the district will offer the program. School districts may limit the number of students in a particular public school but must provide for the admission of every eligible student enrolling in the summer program.</p>
<p>8. What instructor credentials are required for the VPK program?</p>	<p>School-year programs. A private provider or public school offering a school-year VPK must have for each class at least one instructor with the following credentials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A child development associate (CDA) credential issued by the National Credentialing Program of the Council for Professional Recognition; • A credential approved by the Department of Children and Family Services (DCF) as being equivalent to or greater than the national CDA; or • One of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bachelor’s or higher degree in early childhood education, prekindergarten or primary education, preschool education, or family and consumer science; ○ Bachelor’s or higher degree in elementary education, if the instructor has been certified to teach children any age from birth through grade 6, regardless of whether the teaching certificate is current; ○ Associate’s or higher degree in child development; ○ Associate’s or higher degree in an unrelated field, at least 6 credit hours in early childhood education or child development, and at least 480 hours experience in teaching or providing child care services for children any age from birth through eight years of age; or ○ An educational credential approved by the Department of Education (DOE) as being equivalent to or greater than any of these educational credentials. <p>Summer programs. A private provider or public school offering a summer VPK program must have for each class a Florida-certified teacher or at least one instructor with the following credentials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor’s or higher degree in early childhood education, prekindergarten or primary education, preschool education, or family and consumer science; or • Bachelor’s or higher degree in elementary education, if

	<p>the instructor has been certified to teach children any age from birth through grade 6, regardless of whether the teaching certificate is current.</p> <p>Emergent Literacy Training Course. Each VPK instructor that does not have a bachelor’s or higher degree in specified early learning degree programs must receive 5 hours of training in emergent literacy (Refer to Question 9).</p> <p>Background screening. Each VPK instructor must be of good moral character, cannot be ineligible to teach in a public school because of a suspended or revoked teaching certificate, and must have a background screening conducted before employment, which must be repeated at least once every 5 years.</p> <p>Background screening requires fingerprinting, statewide criminal and juvenile records checks through the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, and federal criminal records checks through the Federal Bureau of Investigation.</p> <p>A private provider or public school may not employ a VPK instructor who has been found guilty of, regardless of adjudication, or entered a plea of nolo contendere or guilty to any one of the 47 criminal offenses listed in s. 435.04(2), F.S.</p> <p>The VPK program also includes the following aspirational goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By the 2010-2011 school year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Each VPK class will have at least one instructor who holds an associate’s or higher degree in the field of early childhood education or child development; and ○ Each VPK class composed of 11 or more students will have an instructor with an associate’s or higher degree and a second instructor who has a child development associate (CDA) or state-approved equivalent credential. • By the 2013-2014 school year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Each VPK class will have at least one instructor who holds a bachelor’s or higher degree in the field of early childhood education or child development.
<p>9. What is emergent literacy?</p>	<p>Before starting kindergarten, children need certain skills so they are ready to learn to read. Emergent literacy includes:</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral communication; • Knowledge of print and letters; • Phonemic and phonological awareness (recognition that words are made up of sounds); and • Vocabulary and comprehension development.
<p>10. What are the curricular requirements for the VPK program?</p>	<p>Each private provider and public school may select or design its own curriculum, which must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be developmentally appropriate; • Be designed to prepare a student for early literacy; • Enhance the age-appropriate progress of students in attaining DOE’s adopted VPK performance standards; and • Prepare students to be ready for kindergarten based upon the statewide kindergarten screening. <p>However, if a low-performing private provider or public school is placed on probation because its kindergarten readiness rate (<i>i.e.</i>, percentage of students assessed as ready for kindergarten) falls below the minimum satisfactory rate established by the State Board of Education for 2 consecutive years, the provider or school must use a curriculum approved by DOE.</p>
<p>11. What is the statewide kindergarten screening?</p>	<p>Within the first 30 school days of the school year, each school district must annually administer a screening of each kindergarten student’s readiness for kindergarten. DOE currently prescribes the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener (FLKRS) for statewide screening. FLKRS is composed of two screening instruments, the Early Childhood Observation System (ECHOS), which measures a child’s learning development, and the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), which measures a child’s early literacy development.</p> <p>The 2006 FLKRS scores showed the following statewide results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On ECHOS, 42 percent of students consistently demonstrated readiness, 44 percent were emerging or progressing, and 14 percent were not yet demonstrating progress. • On DIBELS Letter Naming, 56 percent of students demonstrated above average readiness, 14 percent were at low risk, 14 percent were at moderate risk, and 16 percent were at high risk. • On DIBELS Initial Sound, 44 percent of students demonstrated above average readiness, 19 percent were at low risk, 19 percent were at moderate risk, and

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	<p>18 percent were at high risk.</p>
<p>12. What agencies administer the VPK program?</p>	<p>At the state level, the Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI) governs the day-to-day operations of both the VPK program and the school readiness system. DOE sets standards, administers assessments, and approves curricula.</p> <p>Early learning coalitions administer both the VPK program and School Readiness Program at the local level. AWI's oversight duties for the early learning coalitions include enrolling children, reporting attendance, providing payments to private providers and public schools, and monitoring providers and schools for compliance with program requirements.</p> <p>DOE adopts performance standards defining what 4-year-old children should know and be able to do; approves emergent literacy training courses and VPK director credentials; and specifies CDA credentials that qualify for articulation into college credit. DOE is also responsible for the statewide kindergarten screening (Refer to Question 11).</p> <p>DCF administers the state's child care licensing program. As part of this program, DCF awards VPK director credentials on behalf of DOE. In addition, DCF provides profiles of private providers and public schools for the VPK on its website (Refer to Question 5).</p>
<p>13. What is an "early learning coalition?"</p>	<p>Formerly called a "school readiness coalition," an early learning coalition serves one county or a multi-county region. Depending on the size and number of counties served, a coalition is composed of 18 to 35 members, including a chair and two additional members appointed by the Governor; locally appointed representatives of state and local public agencies; local representatives from the child care industry; and "private-sector business members" appointed by the coalition after receiving nominations from a local chamber of commerce or economic development council.</p> <p>An early learning coalition administers the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program, the School Readiness Program, and the state's child care resource and referral network in its county or multi-county region. Before administering the programs, an early learning coalition must submit a plan for approval by AWI. There are currently 31 early learning coalitions with approved plans.</p>

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<p>14. What funding is provided for the VPK program?</p>	<p>AWI adopts payment procedures and a uniform attendance policy used for funding purposes. Funds are distributed each month to the early learning coalitions for monthly payments to private providers and public schools. Each early learning coalition is advanced funds based on projected attendance. Once school begins, parents certify attendance each month for the prior month. Subsequent funds are reconciled based on actual attendance.</p> <p>For fiscal year 2007-2008, the Legislature appropriated \$350,446,171 for the VPK program. Funds are provided to DOE, which are transferred to AWI for disbursement to the early learning coalitions.</p> <p>A base allocation per student in the VPK program is set annually in the General Appropriations Act. The base student allocation for the 2007-2008 fiscal year is \$2,677. Each county's allocation is calculated by multiplying the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) students by the product of the base student allocation multiplied by the district cost differential (formula that adjusts for county-by-county price-level differences).</p>
<p>15. Are there required fees?</p>	<p>No. A private provider or public school is prohibited from charging any fees for the VPK program or from requiring a child to pay for any additional services as a condition of enrolling in the VPK program.</p>
<p>16. Is transportation provided?</p>	<p>The State Constitution does not require the VPK program to provide transportation for students, and current law does not earmark funding for transportation. However, a private provider or public school is permitted to use part of its VPK funding for student transportation.</p>
<p>17. What are the applicable statutes?</p>	<p>Section 1(b) and (c), Article IX of the State Constitution – Public Education (Prekindergarten Program).</p> <p>Section 411.01, F.S. – School Readiness Programs; Early Learning Coalitions. Section 435.04, F.S. – Level 2 Screening Standards. Part V of ch. 1002, F.S. (ss. 1002.51-1002.79, F.S.) – Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program.</p> <p>Specific Appropriation 85, s. 2, ch. 2007-072, L.O.F. – General Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2007-2008. Specific Appropriation 32, s. 2, ch. 2007-326, L.O.F. – Special Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2007-2008.</p> <p>Rule 6A-6.040, F.A.C. – Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Director Endorsement for Private Providers. Rule 60BB-8.2015, F.A.C. – VPK Child Registration Pilot</p>

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	Project.
18. Where can I get additional information?	<p>Agency for Workforce Innovation Office of Early Learning (850) 921-3180 www.floridajobs.org/VPK/index.html</p> <p>Department of Education Office of Early Learning (850) 245-0445 www.fldoe.org/earlylearning/</p> <p>Department of Children and Family Services Child Care Services Program Office (850) 488-4900 www.myflorida.com/childcare</p> <p>Florida House of Representatives Schools & Learning Council (850) 488-7451</p>