



Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program (VPK)

DOE/FAISA/FASA
Curriculum, Instruction, and
Assessment Conference
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Presenters

- Gladys Wilson, Deputy Director, Office of Early Learning, Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI)
- Shan Goff, Director, Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program, Department of Education (DOE)



Topics

- Constitutional Amendment
- Overview of Legislation – HB 1A
 - Governance
 - Student Eligibility
 - Parental Choice/Program Options
- Critical Activities and Timelines
- Questions and Discussion



I'm not telling you it is going to be easy - I'm
telling you it's going to be worth it.

-- Art Williams



Constitutional Amendment

- Passed by Florida's voters in November 2002 and requires for

“Every four-year-old-child in Florida...a high quality pre-kindergarten learning opportunity...which shall be voluntary, high quality, free, and delivered according to professionally accepted standards.”



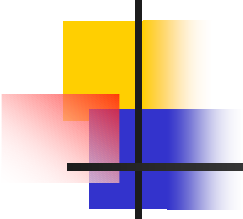
Constitutional Amendment

“An early childhood development and education program means an organized program designed to address and enhance each child’s ability to make age appropriate progress in an appropriate range of settings....”



Constitutional Amendment

“...shall be implemented no later than the beginning of the 2005 school year through funds generated in addition to those used for existing education, health, and development programs.”



Legislation – Governance

- Department of Education
 - Standards, Assessments, and Curricula
 - Accountability
 - Professional Development and Articulation
 - Technical Assistance



Legislation - Governance

- Agency for Workforce Innovation
 - Day-to-Day Operations
 - Early Learning Advisory Committee
 - Early Learning Coalitions
- Department of Children and Families
 - Licensing
 - Awarding of Child-Development Associates (CDAs) and CDA-Equivalents (CDAEs)



Legislation - Governance

- Early Learning Coalitions
 - Reduced to 30 or fewer by April 1, 2005
 - Revised membership
 - Governor appoints chair and two other members
 - Added executive director of regional workforce, president of community college, and representative of programs for children with disabilities



Legislation - Governance

- Early Learning Coalitions (cont.)
 - Included representative of private family day care home providers
 - Deleted members appointed by DCF and district school board; retains a DCF administrator and member appointed by superintendent
 - Specified that superintendent, central agency administrator, Head Start director, and representatives of private child care and faith-based providers are non-voting members



Legislation - Governance

- Early Learning Coalitions (cont.)
 - Clarified applicable portions of the Code of Ethics
 - Single point of entry for VPK enrollment
 - Responsible for local coordination, implementation, and fiscal accountability for school readiness and VPK programs



Legislation – Student Eligibility

- Children who have “attained the age of 4 years on or before September 1 of the school year....”
- Eligible until “...the beginning of the school year for which the child is eligible for admission to kindergarten or...admitted to kindergarten, whichever occurs first.”



Legislation – Program Options

- Prohibits enrollment in more than one program except if child has not completed more than 10 percent of the hours
- Provides for withdrawal due to hardship
- Requires parents to comply with provider's attendance policies and verify attendance



Legislation – Program Options

- School-year program by private prek provider
- School-year program by eligible public schools*
- Summer program by public or private provider



Legislation – Program Options

- School-year by Private Provider
 - Prek classes of at least 4 but not more than 18 children
 - Comprised of at least 540 instructional hours
 - Licensed facility or nonpublic school or family-based exempt provider



Legislation – Program Options

- School-year by Private Provider (cont.)
 - Accredited by a member association 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 Gold Seal designation or be licensed and verified by the local coalition as meeting VPK program requirements



Legislation – Program Options

- School-year by Private Provider (cont.)
 - For classes with 11+, in addition to a qualified prek instructor, one additional adult instructor
 - Have a prek director with a prek director credential that is approved by DOE as meeting requirements (2006-07)



Legislation - Program Options

- School-year by Private Provider (cont.)
 - Prek instructor with
 - a CDA or CDA-Equivalent who has completed an emergent literacy training course*
 - a bachelor's degree or higher in early childhood ed., prek or primary ed., prek ed., or family and consumer science
 - a bachelor's degree in elementary ed., if the instructor has been certified to teach any age from birth –grade 6



Legislation – Program Options

- School-year by Private Provider (cont.)
 - an associate's degree or higher in child development
 - an associate's degree or higher in an unrelated field with at least 6 credit hours in early childhood or child development and at least 480 hours of experience
 - an educational credential approved by the DOE as being equivalent or greater



Legislation – Program Options

- School-year by Public Schools
 - School boards determine which school is eligible to deliver program based on certification by school board that the school district “has reduced the average class size in each classroom in accordance with s. 1003.03 and the schedule in s. 1(a), Art. IC of the State Constitution and



Legislation – Program Options

- School-year by Public Schools (cont.)
 - has sufficient educational facilities and capital outlay funds to continue reducing the average class size in each classroom in the district's elementary schools for each year in accordance with the maximum class sizes..."



Legislation – Program Options

- School-year by Public Schools (cont.)
 - DOE reviews district's educational facilities, capital outlay funds, and projected student enrollment and concurs with school board's certification
 - Commissioner certifies the above to the State Board of Education



Legislation – Program Options

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Legislation – Program Options

- Summer Program by Public Schools and Private Providers
 - Not begin earlier than May 1 of the school year
 - Not delivered earlier than the summer immediately before the school year for which the child is eligible for admission to kindergarten



Legislation – Program Options

- Summer Program by Public Schools and Private Providers (cont.)
 - School boards determine which schools will deliver the summer program and will use educational facilities available in the summer



Legislation – Program Options

- Summer Program by Public Schools and Private Providers (cont.)
 - Private providers must meet each requirement specified for the school-year program



Legislation – Program Options

- Summer Program by Public Schools and Private Providers (cont.)
 - Comprised of at least 300 instructional hours
 - Prek instructor must be a certified teacher* or one who holds one of the educational credentials specified for the school-year program (bachelor's degree or higher)



Legislation – Program Options

- Summer Program by Public Schools and Private Providers (cont.)
 - Certified teacher means one with a valid educator certificate who has the qualifications required by the district school board to instruct students in the summer prek program
 - School districts shall give priority to teachers who have experience or coursework in early childhood



Critical Activities and Timelines

- AWI/Local Coalitions
 - Early Learning Advisory Council
 - Determining eligibility of providers
 - Creation of provider profiles
 - Enrollment and determining eligibility of children
 - Creation of attendance policies and procedures for verification



Critical Activities and Timelines

- AWI/Local Coalitions
 - Verifying compliance of providers
 - Paying providers
 - Procedures for reconciling advance payments
 - Reenrollment procedures
 - ...



Critical Activities and Timelines

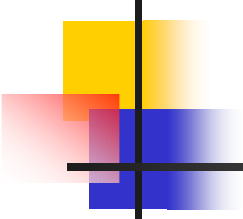
- DOE
 - SBE adoption of VPK performance standards – April 1, 2005
 - Creation of curricula standards and review of curricula
 - Approval of emergent literacy courses – April 1, 2005



Critical Activities and Timelines

- DOE

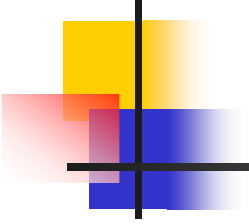
- Approval of equivalent credential for school-year program
- Setting of readiness rates for 2005-06
- Creation of prek director credential – July 1, 2006
- ...



*Great things are done
by people who think
great thoughts and
then go out into the
world to make their
dreams come true.*

Ernest Holmes





*Example is not the main
thing in influencing
others. It is the ONLY
thing.*

Albert Schweitzer







Questions and Discussion

Voluntary Prekindergarten
Education Program
(VPK)