

Office of Independent Education & Parental Choice

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# OFFICE OF INDEPENDENT EDUCATION & PARENTAL CHOICE

*Virginia Gentles, Executive Director*

LEGISLATIVE REGIONAL UPDATE MEETINGS  
May 2006

*Please note: The final presentation will be available on the Department's website on or before May 31, 2006*

[www.floridaschoolchoice.org](http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org)

## *Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice, Office of the Commissioner*

### Scholarship Programs

- Opportunity Scholarship Program (OSP) – students at failing public schools
  - Private OSP declared unconstitutional by FL Supreme Court, January 5, 2006
- McKay Scholarship Program – students with disabilities
- Corporate Tax Credit Program (CTC) – low-income students

### Charter Schools

- 334 in 41 districts in 2005-06

### Virtual Schools

- Florida Virtual school – middle and high school courses
- 2 pilot schools – K-8 students

### Home Education

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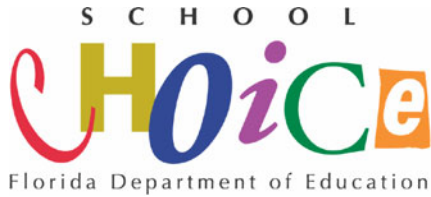
## *Bureau of Public School Options, Division of Public Schools*

*NCLB Choice (including SES), controlled open enrollment plans, magnets, etc.*



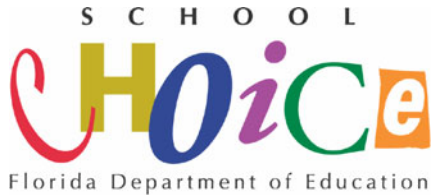
School Choice Program	Participating Students	Participating Schools
OSP	740	55
McKay	16,812	740
CTC	14,084	895
Charter Schools	92,000+	334
Virtual Schools	22,000+	3
Home Education	52,000+	

*Participation in all school choice options growing annually.*



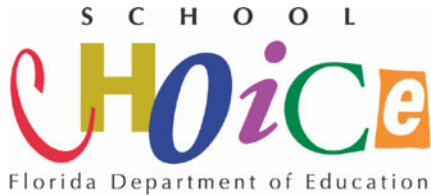
## School Choice Legislation 2006

- Charter school statewide authorizer  
“Florida Schools of Excellence Commission”, HB 135
- Charter accountability  
HB 7103
- Scholarship accountability  
SB 256
- K-8 virtual schools  
SB1282



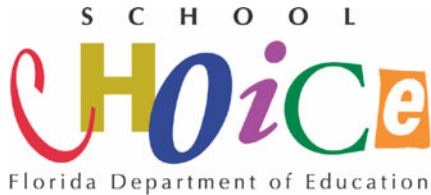
# Charter School Statewide Authorizer HB 135

- Establishes the Florida Schools of Excellence Commission (FSE)
  - Under supervision of the State Board of Education
  - Alternative sponsor of charter schools
  
- Commission members appointed by the SBE
  - Appointments by September 1, 2006
  - First Commission meeting by October 1, 2006
  
- Cities, universities, community colleges and regional educational consortia can apply to co-sponsor charter schools with the Commission
  
- School districts can apply for “exclusive authority” over the charter schools in their district



# Charter School Statewide Authorizer HB 135

- Cosponsor applicant must demonstrate they are able to:
  - Handle administrative responsibilities as a charter school sponsor
  - Develop and maintain charter schools of the highest academic quality
  - Provide financial resources and staff to monitor and support charter schools
  - Serve low income, low performing, gifted or underserved student populations
  - Articulate annual academic and financial goals and expected outcomes for its charter schools
  
- Stringent application and monitoring process to ensure that the cosponsor meets its contractual obligations
  
- Commission can revoke the cosponsor's approval



# Charter School Statewide Authorizer

## HB 135

- District school board shall retain the authority to reauthorize and oversee any charter school that it has authorized
  - Except a charter school that converts to an FSE school
- District school board may seek to retain **exclusive authority** to authorize charter schools within its boundaries
  - Present to the SBE, on or before **March 1**, a written resolution indicating intent to retain exclusive authority
- SBE may grant exclusive authority to district school board if it meets criteria outlined in statute including:
  - Fair & equitable treatment to charter schools during prior 4 years
  - No district moratorium regarding charter schools or enrollment limits
  - Assistance with facilities needs
  - Fairly distributed share of federal & state grants to charter schools

- Charter school governance and academic and financial accountability
- Sponsor duties, responsibilities, and administrative services:
  - Timing of district payments and disbursement of funds to charter schools
  - Facilities requirements for conversion charter schools
  - Charter school application deadline, renewal and appeals process
- Department of Education responsibilities:
  - Provide training and technical assistance to applicants and struggling schools
  - Develop an automated uniform accountability report
  - Develop a standard charter and charter renewal format
  - Regularly convene the Charter School Review Panel

- The bill **strengthens academic accountability** by requiring:
  - “D” performance grade and schools on probation appear before the sponsor at least once a year
  - Sponsor must communicate the services they will provide
  - Probation for schools that not improve performance from previous year
  - School improvement plans for charters with “D” for 2 years or an “F”
  
- The legislation **strengthens fiscal accountability**:
  - Details procedures the charter school, the sponsor and the charter governing body must follow
  - Requires response to state of financial emergency

- Provides the DOE with clear programmatic oversight and enforcement responsibility and authority including:
  - Random site visits to private schools
  - Annual report to the Governor and Legislature on accountability efforts
  - Commissioner’s authority to enforce the provisions of the law
  - Review sample of endorsed warrants after each payment
  
- Participating Private School Requirements:
  - Maintain physical location where scholarship students regularly attend classes
  - Employees and contracted personnel with direct student contact to undergo background screening
  - Annually complete and submit a notarized scholarship compliance statement
  - Demonstrate fiscal accountability (operation at least 3 school years, surety bond or letter of credit)

- John M. McKay Scholarships for Students with Disabilities Program
  - Requires school districts to provide annual program eligibility notices to parents by **April 1 and within 10 days of IEP meetings**
  - Prohibits scholarship recipients from receiving funds from more than one state-funded scholarship program
  
- Corporate Tax Credit Scholarship Program (CTC)
  - Students currently participating in the **Opportunity Scholarship Program** can qualify for a CTC scholarship, if meet low-income criteria
  - Scholarship funding organization requirements increased to include background screening, audit requirements, and submission of quarterly reports
  - All participating students must annually take a **standardized exam**
  - Maximum scholarship amount is increased from \$3,500 per year to \$3,750

- Establishes the **Kindergarten through Grade 8 Virtual School Program** in the Department of Education
  - Two current pilot schools will continue during the 2006-07 (Florida Virtual Academy and Florida Connections Academy)
  - Application will be available for prospective schools to apply for the 2007-08 school year
  - 3-year initial contract subject to annual department review and legislative appropriation.
  
- Funding is based on total program enrollment and amount per FTE established annually by the General Appropriations Act
  - For 2006-07: \$7.2M at \$5200 per student

- **School eligibility requirements**
  - Provide a full-time, 180-day program to students in grades K-8
  - Administrative offices and staff in Florida
  - No tuition or fees; nonsectarian; comply with anti-discrimination provisions
  - Provide all necessary instructional materials to each student (computer, printer and an allowance for Internet access per household)
  
- **Assessment and Accountability**
  - Must participate in the State’s performance accountability system
  - “D” or an “F” school must file a school improvement plan
  - Contracts terminated for virtual school receiving a “D” or an “F” for 2 school years in a 4-year period

- Partner to provide school choice for Florida's students
- Collaborate to share essential information to parents
- Commit to efficient communication

*Increase the quantity and improve the quality of education options*

# Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice

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## CONTACT INFORMATION

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