

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

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

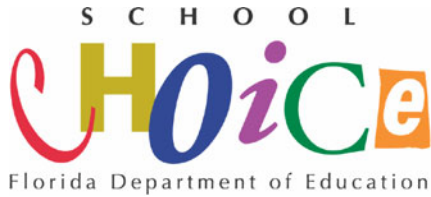
Bureau of Public School Options, Division of Public Schools

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



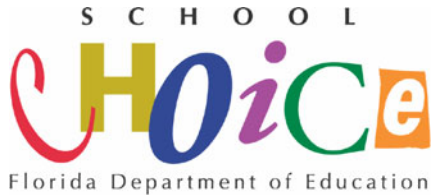
School Choice Program	Participating Students	Participating Schools
OSP	740	55
McKay	16,812	740
CTC	14,084	895
Charter Schools	92,000+	334
Virtual Schools	22,000+	3
Home Education	52,000+	

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



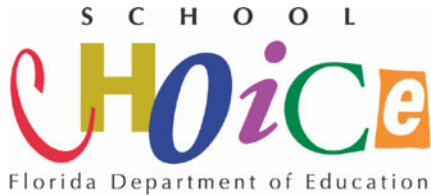
Charter School Statewide Authorizer HB 135

- 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



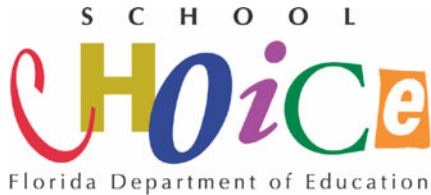
Charter School Statewide Authorizer

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

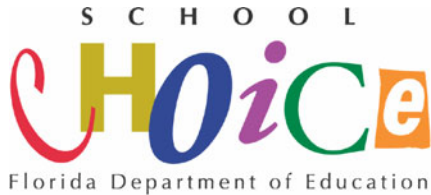
- Commission can revoke the cosponsor's approval



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 Accountability HB 7103

- 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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