

Duplicates/Conflicts with/Companion to/Relates to: SB298, relates to HJR1
Duplicates/Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act

SECTION III: NARRATIVE

BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis:

SB22/a, as amended by the Senate Education Committee, establishes the Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD) and transfers certain early childhood functions from the Children, Youth, and Families Department and Department of Health to the new department. While SB22/a removes the transfer of the PreK programs in public schools to the new department, it requires significant collaboration and cooperation between the two departments to develop and implement statewide voluntary pre-kindergarten. The two departments will collaborate on promulgating rules, state policies, and standards. The ECECD and PED will continue the practice of creating a joint annual report covering all PreK programs. Each department will monitor their programs to ensure the effectiveness of child-centered, developmentally appropriate practices and outcomes. The amendment clarifies that both the ECECD and the PED jointly share responsibility for the state's pre-kindergarten program.

SB22/a amends the Pre-Kindergarten Act to include three-year-olds and changes the definition of pre-kindergarten to include both three and four-year-olds, eliminating the term "early pre-kindergarten" for programs for three-year-old children.

The Senate Rules Committee Substitute removed the option to fund half-day programs. This amendment restores the option to fund half-day programs.

This amendment also eliminates the tying the "per child" rate to the per child rate paid to public schools designated as Title 1 schools in that locality where the services are provided. The ECECD and PED will collaborate to set the "per child" rate.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

As SB22/a eliminates the requirement for the PED to "access" funds from the ECECD for public school programs whose applications met the criteria established by the new department. Appropriations for public school PreK programs will be transferred directly to PED as has occurred in the past. Applications will be reviewed and approved or denied by PED based on compliance with PreK requirements.

SB22/a preserves the Public Pre-Kindergarten Fund.

SB22/a requires that any money appropriated for pre-kindergarten be divided equally between the ECECD and the PED.

SB22/a also removes the changes to the procurement act that were in the original bill and Rules Committee Substitute to exempt pre-kindergarten providers funded by the new department.

The amendment removes the PED from the statements that the accounts and financial control that will belong to the new department continue to be performed by the existing department until

July 1, 2020.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

SB22/a establishes that the PED and the ECECD will each publish a request for proposals or applications that contain the same requested information. Eligible providers will submit proposals or applications to the appropriate department. This is a change from SB22 and the Rules Committee Substitute in which it appeared that public schools would apply and be approved/disapproved for funding by the ECECD.

The original SB22 included a provision that “powers and duties under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act” (IDEA) would be transferred to the new department. The amendment removes this statement. SB22/a does keep the provision that the Family Infant Toddler program from the Department of Health will be transferred to the new department. As IDEA includes those age 3 to 22 with delays and disabilities, and services for those persons are mandated by law to be the responsibility of public schools, it is appropriate that this clause is removed.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

While collaborating with the new department, PED will be able to maintain the high standards set in its PED FOCUS: Essential Elements of Quality QRIS (Quality Rating and Improvement System), that include the requirements that all teachers have a minimum of a bachelor’s degree and state licensure in early childhood education, and that educational assistants have, or be taking coursework towards an AA in early childhood education. PED will continue to offer the quality professional development tailored to educational assistants, licensed early childhood teachers and administrators in developmentally appropriate early literacy strategies, best practices for children who are dual language learners and their families, and supporting social-emotional development. PED will collaborate with the new department to share professional development opportunities. PED will continue to require inclusive settings that allow districts to meet the requirements of IDEA to implement best practices to educate all young children in quality inclusive settings.

PED will be able to use PreK funds to maintain PreK staff, and to improve the robust reporting functions of the Early Childhood Observation Tool (ECOT), an online observational assessment application used by preschool and kindergarten teachers in public schools.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

PED will administer the PreK programs in the public schools, while collaborating and cooperating with the new department to ensure that all PreK programs funded by both departments meet high standards. PED will work with the new department to carry out the provisions of the federal Preschool Development Grant awarded to CYFD, PED, and DOH to develop the infrastructure and the early childhood workforce.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

SB298

TECHNICAL ISSUES

None

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

ALTERNATIVES

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL?
PED, CYFD, and DOH will continue to operate early childhood programs.

AMENDMENTS
One as of 2-25-2019