

CHAPTER 2024-230

House Bill No. 5101

An act relating to education; amending s. 110.123, F.S.; revising definitions for the state group insurance program; providing for the initial open enrollment period for specified employees; providing requirements for the minimum participation period for specified institutions; amending s. 1002.31, F.S.; providing for certain students to receive a stipend for transportation to certain public schools, subject to legislative appropriation; providing eligibility requirements; providing requirements for the award and distribution of the stipends; providing duties for the Department of Education; providing for the amount of the stipend; providing that each household may only receive one stipend; providing that the stipend is not taxable income; providing liability; amending s. 1002.32, F.S.; revising the list of universities exempt from a certain limitation relating to charter lab schools; deleting the Lab School Educational Facility Trust Fund; conforming provisions to changes made by the act; amending s. 1002.33, F.S.; revising provisions relating to budget projections for charter schools; requiring charter schools to report full-time equivalent student membership rather than student enrollments for funding purposes; providing that a specified funding calculation applies to charter schools sponsored by a school district; authorizing charter schools to receive specified funding under certain circumstances; providing that funding for students enrolled in charter schools sponsored by state universities or Florida College System institutions is provided in the Florida Education Finance Program and General Appropriations Act; providing calculations for such funding; providing for the recalculation of such funding; providing a calculation for such charter school's capital outlay funding; deleting charter school eligibility for a specified incentive program; amending s. 1002.391, F.S.; creating the Bridge to Speech Program for specified purposes, subject to authorization and funding in the General Appropriations Act; providing requirements for the department; amending s. 1002.394, F.S.; revising the authorized uses of funds from the Family Empowerment Scholarship Program; conforming provisions to changes made by the act; amending s. 1002.395, F.S.; revising authorized uses of funds from the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program; conforming provisions to changes made by the act; amending s. 1002.68, F.S.; revising the program year for the Department of Education to adopt a specified methodology for the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program; revising the program year that specified provisions take effect relating to program providers and public schools; deleting provisions relating to program providers and public schools assessment composite scores; amending s. 1002.71, F.S.; revising the percentage of specified funds early learning coalitions may maintain for certain purposes; amending s. 1002.82, F.S.; conforming provisions to changes made by the act; requiring the department to collect specified data and report certain data annually; amending s. 1002.84, F.S.; revising the duties of early learning coalitions; amending s. 1002.89, F.S.;

revising a specified calculation for the school readiness program allocation; amending s. 1002.895, F.S.; revising requirements for the market rate schedule for the school readiness program; deleting requirements for the department to annually collect specified data; conforming provisions to changes made by the act; repealing s. 1002.90, F.S., relating to school readiness cost-of-care information; amending s. 1002.92, F.S.; conforming provisions to changes made the act; creating s. 1003.4206, F.S.; creating the Charity for Change program for specified purposes, subject to authorization and funding in the General Appropriations Act; authorizing the program to use specified providers to deliver certain services; creating s. 1006.042, F.S.; creating the AMIkids, Inc., program for specified purposes, subject to authorization and funding in the General Appropriations Act; amending s. 1006.07, F.S.; requiring district school boards to establish a threat management coordinator for specified purposes; amending s. 1006.27, F.S.; deleting the Driving Choice Grant Program; amending s. 1008.25, F.S.; requiring certain voluntary prekindergarten students to be referred to his or her local school district to receive support through a certain summer bridge program; providing requirements for such program; amending s. 1009.896, F.S.; renaming the Florida Law Enforcement Academy Scholarship Program as the Florida First Responder Scholarship Program; providing and revising definitions; revising the program to include specified first responders; providing eligibility criteria and award requirements for such first responders; amending s. 1009.90, F.S.; requiring the department to have a system to track specified information relating to school bond referenda and debt for school districts; amending s. 1011.62, F.S.; providing that certain charter schools are eligible for the state-funded discretionary contribution; requiring rather than authorizing the Legislature to appropriate funds for the educational enrollment stabilization program; providing requirements for such funding; amending s. 1011.765, F.S.; including specified organizations and foundations as public school district education foundations for specified purposes; amending s. 1012.56, F.S.; revising the requirements for an applicant to be issued a temporary apprenticeship educator certificate; amending s. 1013.62, F.S.; providing that charter schools sponsored by Florida College System institutions and state universities are ineligible for specified funding; conforming a cross-reference; providing that a specified taxable value for the Wakulla County School District shall be used for specified calculations for the 2023-2024 fiscal year; providing that such provisions expire on a specified date; providing effective dates.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Paragraphs (c), (e), (h), (j), and (l) of subsection (2) of section 110.123, Florida Statutes, are amended, and subsection (15) is added to that section, to read:

110.123 State group insurance program.—

(2) DEFINITIONS.—As used in ss. 110.123-110.1239, the term:

(c) “Enrollee” means all state officers and employees, retired state officers and employees, surviving spouses of deceased state officers and employees, eligible former employees, and terminated employees or individuals with continuation coverage who are enrolled in an insurance plan offered by the state group insurance program. The term includes all state university officers and employees, retired state university officers and employees, surviving spouses of deceased state university officers and employees, and terminated state university employees or individuals with continuation coverage who are enrolled in an insurance plan offered by the state group insurance program. The term includes all Florida College System institution officers and employees, retired Florida College System institution officers and employees, surviving spouses of deceased Florida college system institution officers and employees, and terminated Florida College System institution employees or individuals with continuation coverage who are enrolled in an insurance plan offered by the state group insurance program. As used in this paragraph, state employees and retired state employees also include employees and retired employees of the Division of Rehabilitation and Liquidation.

(e) “Full-time state employees” means employees of all branches or agencies of state government holding salaried positions who are paid by state warrant or from agency funds and who work or are expected to work an average of at least 30 hours per week; employees of the Division of Rehabilitation and Liquidation who work or are expected to work an average of at least 30 hours per week; employees paid from regular salary appropriations for 8 months’ employment, including university and college personnel on academic contracts; and employees paid from other-personal-services (OPS) funds as described in subparagraphs 1. and 2. The term includes all full-time employees of the state universities and Florida College System institutions. The term does not include seasonal workers who are paid from OPS funds.

1. For persons hired before April 1, 2013, the term includes any person paid from OPS funds who:

a. Has worked an average of at least 30 hours or more per week during the initial measurement period from April 1, 2013, through September 30, 2013; or

b. Has worked an average of at least 30 hours or more per week during a subsequent measurement period.

2. For persons hired after April 1, 2013, the term includes any person paid from OPS funds who:

a. Is reasonably expected to work an average of at least 30 hours or more per week; or

b. Has worked an average of at least 30 hours or more per week during the person’s measurement period.

(h) “Part-time state employee” means an employee of any branch or agency of state government paid by state warrant from salary appropriations or from agency funds, or an employee of the Division of Rehabilitation and Liquidation, who is employed for less than an average of 30 hours per week or, if on academic contract or seasonal or other type of employment which is less than year-round, is employed for less than 8 months during any 12-month period, but does not include a person paid from other-personal-services (OPS) funds. The term includes all part-time employees of the state universities and Florida College System institutions.

(j) “Retired state officer or employee” or “retiree” means any state, ~~or~~ state university, or Florida College System institution officer or employee, or, beginning with the 2023 plan year, an employee of the Division of Rehabilitation and Liquidation, who retires under a state retirement system or a state optional annuity or retirement program or is placed on disability retirement, and who was insured under the state group insurance program or the Division of Rehabilitation and Liquidation’s group insurance program at the time of retirement, and who begins receiving retirement benefits immediately after retirement from state, ~~or~~ state university, or Florida College System institution office or employment. The term also includes any state officer or state employee who retires under the Florida Retirement System Investment Plan established under part II of chapter 121 if he or she:

1. Meets the age and service requirements to qualify for normal retirement as set forth in s. 121.021(29); or
2. Has attained the age specified by s. 72(t)(2)(A)(i) of the Internal Revenue Code and has 6 years of creditable service.

(l) “State agency” or “agency” means any branch, department, or agency of state government. “State agency” or “agency” includes any state university or Florida College System institution and the Division of Rehabilitation and Liquidation for purposes of this section only.

(15) ENROLLMENT PERIOD FOR FLORIDA COLLEGE SYSTEM INSTITUTIONS.—The initial open enrollment period for employees of Florida College System institutions shall begin as soon as practicable, but coverage must begin during the 2025 plan year no later than July 31, 2025. The minimum participation period for Florida College System institutions must be for at least 3 plan years.

Section 2. Subsection (7) is added to section 1002.31, Florida Statutes, to read:

1002.31 Controlled open enrollment; public school parental choice.—

(7) Contingent upon a legislative appropriation, and on a first-come, first-served basis, a public school student enrolled in kindergarten through grade 8 may receive a stipend from an eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organization, as defined in s. 1002.395(2), for transportation to a Florida

nonvirtual public school that is different from the school to which the student is assigned or to a developmental research school authorized under s. 1002.32.

(a) For an eligible student to receive a stipend, the student's parent must:

1. Submit an application to an eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organization for the specified school year and by the deadline established by the organization.

2. Provide the documentation necessary to verify the student's eligibility for the specified school year.

3. Be responsible for the payment of all transportation-related expenses in excess of the amount of the stipend.

(b) An eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organization shall distribute the stipends to the parents of the eligible students in accordance with the requirements for the organization under this chapter. For the 2024-2025 school year, priority shall be given to households with a student who received a transportation scholarship pursuant to s. 1002.394(4)(a)2. and (12)(a)2., Florida Statutes 2023, or s. 1002.395(6)(d)2.b., Florida Statutes 2023, during the previous school year and is determined eligible for a transportation stipend for the 2024-2025 school year. For the 2025-2026 school year and thereafter, priority shall be given to renewing households with an eligible student. Any remaining stipends shall be provided on a first-come, first-served basis.

(c) The Department of Education shall have the same duties imposed by this chapter upon the department regarding the oversight of scholarship programs administered by an eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organization.

(d) The amount of the stipend for an eligible student shall be as specified in the General Appropriations Act. A household that has more than one eligible student may only receive one stipend.

(e) Upon notification from the eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organization that a student has been determined eligible for a stipend, the department shall release the student's stipend to the organization.

(f) Moneys received pursuant to this subsection do not constitute taxable income to the qualified student or his or her parent.

(g) No liability shall arise on the part of the state based on the stipend or use of the stipend.

Section 3. Subsection (2) and paragraphs (b) through (g) of subsection (9) of section 1002.32, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

1002.32 Developmental research (laboratory) schools.—

(2) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established a category of public schools to be known as developmental research (laboratory) schools (lab schools). Each lab school shall provide sequential instruction and shall be affiliated with the college of education within the state university of closest geographic proximity. A lab school to which a charter has been issued under s. 1002.33(5)(a)2. must be affiliated with the college of education within the state university that issued the charter, but is not subject to the requirement that the state university be of closest geographic proximity. For the purpose of state funding, Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, Florida Atlantic University, Florida State University, the University of Florida, and other universities approved by the State Board of Education and the Legislature are authorized to sponsor a lab school. The limitation of one lab school per university shall not apply to the following legislatively allowed charter lab schools: Florida State University Charter Lab K-12 School in Broward County, Florida State University Charter Lab K-12 School in Leon County, and Florida Atlantic University Charter Lab K-12 School in Palm Beach County, and Florida Atlantic University Charter Lab K-12 School in St. Lucie County. The limitation of one lab school per university does not apply to a university that establishes a lab school to serve families of a military installation that is within the same county as a branch campus that offers programs from the university's college of education.

(9) FUNDING.—Funding for a lab school, including a charter lab school, shall be provided as follows:

~~(b) There is created a Lab School Educational Facility Trust Fund to be administered by the Commissioner of Education. Allocations from such fund shall be expended solely for the purpose of facility construction, repair, renovation, remodeling, site improvement, or maintenance. The commissioner shall administer the fund in accordance with ss. 1013.60, 1013.64, 1013.65, and 1013.66.~~

~~(b)(e)~~ All operating funds provided under this section shall be deposited ~~in a Lab School Trust Fund and shall be~~ expended for the purposes of this section. The university assigned a lab school shall be the fiscal agent for these funds, and all rules of the university governing the budgeting and expenditure of state funds shall apply to these funds unless otherwise provided by law or rule of the State Board of Education. The university board of trustees shall be the public employer of lab school personnel for collective bargaining purposes for lab schools in operation prior to the 2002-2003 fiscal year. Employees of charter lab schools authorized prior to June 1, 2003, but not in operation prior to the 2002-2003 fiscal year shall be employees of the entity holding the charter and must comply with the provisions of s. 1002.33(12).

~~(c)(d)~~ Each lab school shall receive funds for capital improvement purposes in an amount determined as follows: multiply the maximum allowable nonvoted discretionary millage for capital improvements

pursuant to s. 1011.71(2) by 96 percent of the current year's taxable value for school purposes for the district in which each lab school is located; divide the result by the total full-time equivalent membership of the district; and multiply the result by the full-time equivalent membership of the lab school. The amount obtained shall be discretionary capital improvement funds and shall be appropriated from state funds in the General Appropriations Act to the Lab School Educational Facility Trust Fund.

(d)(e) In addition to the funds appropriated for capital outlay budget needs, lab schools may receive specific funding as specified in the General Appropriations Act for upgrading, renovating, and remodeling science laboratories.

(e)(f) Each lab school is designated a teacher education center and may provide inservice training to school district personnel. The Department of Education shall provide funds to the Lab School Trust Fund for this purpose from appropriations for inservice teacher education.

(g) ~~A lab school to which a charter has been issued under s. 1002.33(5)(a) 2. is eligible to receive funding for charter school capital outlay if it meets the eligibility requirements of s. 1013.62. If the lab school receives funds from charter school capital outlay, the school shall receive capital outlay funds otherwise provided in this subsection only to the extent that funds allocated pursuant to s. 1013.62 are insufficient to provide capital outlay funds to the lab school at one-fifteenth of the cost per student station.~~

Section 4. Paragraphs (b) and (c) of subsection (6) and subsections (17) and (19) of section 1002.33, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

1002.33 Charter schools.—

(6) APPLICATION PROCESS AND REVIEW.—Charter school applications are subject to the following requirements:

(b) A sponsor shall receive and review all applications for a charter school using the evaluation instrument developed by the Department of Education. A sponsor shall receive and consider charter school applications for charter schools to be opened at a time determined by the applicant. A sponsor may not charge an applicant for a charter any fee for the processing or consideration of an application, and a sponsor may not base its consideration or approval of a final application upon the promise of future payment of any kind. Before approving or denying any application, the sponsor shall allow the applicant, upon receipt of written notification, at least 7 calendar days to make technical or nonsubstantive corrections and clarifications, including, but not limited to, corrections of grammatical, typographical, and like errors or missing signatures, if such errors are identified by the sponsor as cause to deny the final application.

1. ~~In order to facilitate an accurate budget projection process, a sponsor shall be held harmless for FTE students who are not included in the FTE~~

~~projection due to approval of charter school applications after the FTE projection deadline. In a further effort to facilitate an accurate budget projection, within 15 calendar days after receipt of a charter school application, a sponsor shall report to the Department of Education the name of the applicant entity, the proposed charter school location, and its projected FTE.~~

~~1.2.~~ In order to ensure fiscal responsibility, an application for a charter school shall include a full accounting of expected assets, a projection of expected sources and amounts of income, including income derived from projected student enrollments and from community support, and an expense projection that includes full accounting of the costs of operation, including start-up costs.

~~2.a.3.a.~~ A sponsor shall by a majority vote approve or deny an application no later than 90 calendar days after the application is received, unless the sponsor and the applicant mutually agree in writing to temporarily postpone the vote to a specific date, at which time the sponsor shall by a majority vote approve or deny the application. If the sponsor fails to act on the application, an applicant may appeal to the State Board of Education as provided in paragraph (c). If an application is denied, the sponsor shall, within 10 calendar days after such denial, articulate in writing the specific reasons, based upon good cause, supporting its denial of the application and shall provide the letter of denial and supporting documentation to the applicant and to the Department of Education.

b. An application submitted by a high-performing charter school identified pursuant to s. 1002.331 or a high-performing charter school system identified pursuant to s. 1002.332 may be denied by the sponsor only if the sponsor demonstrates by clear and convincing evidence that:

(I) The application of a high-performing charter school does not materially comply with the requirements in paragraph (a) or, for a high-performing charter school system, the application does not materially comply with s. 1002.332(2)(b);

(II) The charter school proposed in the application does not materially comply with the requirements in paragraphs (9)(a)-(f);

(III) The proposed charter school's educational program does not substantially replicate that of the applicant or one of the applicant's high-performing charter schools;

(IV) The applicant has made a material misrepresentation or false statement or concealed an essential or material fact during the application process; or

(V) The proposed charter school's educational program and financial management practices do not materially comply with the requirements of this section.

Material noncompliance is a failure to follow requirements or a violation of prohibitions applicable to charter school applications, which failure is quantitatively or qualitatively significant either individually or when aggregated with other noncompliance. An applicant is considered to be replicating a high-performing charter school if the proposed school is substantially similar to at least one of the applicant's high-performing charter schools and the organization or individuals involved in the establishment and operation of the proposed school are significantly involved in the operation of replicated schools.

c. If the sponsor denies an application submitted by a high-performing charter school or a high-performing charter school system, the sponsor must, within 10 calendar days after such denial, state in writing the specific reasons, based upon the criteria in sub-subparagraph b., supporting its denial of the application and must provide the letter of denial and supporting documentation to the applicant and to the Department of Education. The applicant may appeal the sponsor's denial of the application in accordance with paragraph (c).

3.4. For budget projection purposes, the sponsor shall report to the Department of Education the approval or denial of an application within 10 calendar days after such approval or denial. In the event of approval, the report to the Department of Education shall include the final projected FTE for the approved charter school.

4.5. A charter school may defer the opening of the school's operations for up to 3 years to provide time for adequate facility planning. The charter school must provide written notice of such intent to the sponsor and the parents of enrolled students at least 30 calendar days before the first day of school.

(c)1. An applicant may appeal any denial of that applicant's application or failure to act on an application to the State Board of Education no later than 30 calendar days after receipt of the sponsor's decision or failure to act and shall notify the sponsor of its appeal. Any response of the sponsor shall be submitted to the State Board of Education within 30 calendar days after notification of the appeal. Upon receipt of notification from the State Board of Education that a charter school applicant is filing an appeal, the Commissioner of Education shall convene a meeting of the Charter School Appeal Commission to study and make recommendations to the State Board of Education regarding its pending decision about the appeal. The commission shall forward its recommendation to the state board at least 7 calendar days before the date on which the appeal is to be heard.

2. The Charter School Appeal Commission may reject an appeal submission for failure to comply with procedural rules governing the appeals process. The rejection shall describe the submission errors. The appellant shall have 15 calendar days after notice of rejection in which to resubmit an appeal that meets the requirements set forth in State Board of Education rule. An appeal submitted subsequent to such rejection is

considered timely if the original appeal was filed within 30 calendar days after receipt of notice of the specific reasons for the sponsor's denial of the charter application.

3.a. The State Board of Education shall by majority vote accept or reject the decision of the sponsor no later than 90 calendar days after an appeal is filed in accordance with State Board of Education rule. The State Board of Education shall remand the application to the sponsor with its written decision that the sponsor approve or deny the application. The sponsor shall implement the decision of the State Board of Education. The decision of the State Board of Education is not subject to the provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act, chapter 120.

b. If an appeal concerns an application submitted by a high-performing charter school identified pursuant to s. 1002.331 or a high-performing charter school system identified pursuant to s. 1002.332, the State Board of Education shall determine whether the sponsor's denial was in accordance with sub-subparagraph ~~(b)2.b.~~ (b)3.b.

(17) FUNDING.—Students enrolled in a charter school, regardless of the sponsorship, shall be funded based upon the applicable program pursuant to s. 1011.62(1)(c) ~~as if they are in a basic program or a special program~~, the same as students enrolled in other public schools in a school district. Funding for a charter lab school shall be as provided in s. 1002.32.

(a) Each charter school shall report its full-time equivalent student membership enrollment to the sponsor as required in s. 1011.62(1)(a) ~~s. 1011.62~~ and in accordance with the definitions in s. 1011.61. The sponsor shall include each charter school's full-time equivalent student membership enrollment in the sponsor's full-time equivalent student membership report to the Department of Education of student enrollment. All charter schools submitting full-time equivalent student membership record information required by the department of Education shall comply with the department's Department of Education's guidelines for electronic data formats for such data, and all sponsors shall accept electronic data that complies with the department's Department of Education's electronic format.

(b)1. ~~The basis for the agreement for Funding~~ students enrolled in a charter school ~~sponsored by a school district~~ shall be the sum of the school district's operating funds from the Florida Education Finance Program as ~~defined provided in s. 1011.61(5) s. 1011.62~~ and the General Appropriations Act, including gross state and local funds, ~~discretionary lottery funds~~, and funds from the school district's current operating discretionary millage levy; divided by total funded weighted full-time equivalent students in the school district; and multiplied by the weighted full-time equivalent students for the charter school. Charter schools whose students or programs meet the eligibility criteria in law are entitled to their proportionate share of categorical program funds included in the total funds available in the Florida Education Finance Program by the Legislature, including the student transportation allocation, and the educational enrichment

evidence-based reading allocation. Total funding for each charter school shall be recalculated during the year to reflect the revised calculations under the Florida Education Finance Program by the state and the actual weighted full-time equivalent students reported by the charter school during the full-time equivalent student survey periods designated by the Commissioner of Education. For charter schools operated by a not-for-profit or municipal entity, any unrestricted current and capital assets identified in the charter school's annual financial audit may be used for other charter schools operated by the not-for-profit or municipal entity within the school district. For charter schools operated by a not-for-profit entity, any unrestricted current or capital assets identified in the charter school's annual audit may be used for other charter schools operated by the not-for-profit entity which are located outside of the originating charter school's school district, but within the state, through an unforgivable loan that must be repaid within 5 years to the originating charter school by the receiving charter school. Unrestricted current assets shall be used in accordance with s. 1011.62, and any unrestricted capital assets shall be used in accordance with s. 1013.62(2).

2.a. Funding for students enrolled in a charter school sponsored by a state university or Florida College System institution pursuant to paragraph (5)(a) shall be provided in funded as if they are in a basic program or a special program in the school district. The basis for funding these students is the sum of the total operating funds from the Florida Education Finance Program for the school district in which the school is located as defined provided in s. 1011.61(5) s. 1011.62 and as specified in the General Appropriations Act. The calculation to determine the amount of state funds includes the sum of the basic amount for current operations established in s. 1011.62(1)(s), the discretionary millage compression supplement established in s. 1011.62(5), and the state-funded discretionary contribution established in s. 1011.62(6). Charter schools whose students or programs meet the eligibility criteria in law are entitled to their proportionate share of categorical program funds included in the total funds available in the Florida Education Finance Program. The Florida College System institution or state university sponsoring the charter school shall be the fiscal agent for these funds, and all rules of the institution governing the budgeting and expenditure of state funds shall apply to these funds unless otherwise provided by law or rule of the State Board of Education.

(I) The nonvoted required local millage established pursuant to s. 1011.71(1) that would otherwise be required for the charter schools shall be allocated from state funds.

(II) An equivalent amount of funds for the operating discretionary millage authorized pursuant to s. 1011.71(1) shall be allocated to each charter school through a state-funded discretionary contribution established pursuant to s. 1011.62(6).

(III) The comparable wage factor as provided in s. 1011.62(2) shall be established as 1.000.

b. Total funding for each charter school shall be recalculated during the year to reflect the revised calculations under the Florida Education Finance Program by the state and the actual weighted full-time equivalent students reported by the charter school during the full-time equivalent student survey periods designated by the Commissioner of Education., including gross state and local funds, discretionary lottery funds, and funds from each school district's current operating discretionary millage levy, divided by total funded weighted full-time equivalent students in the district, and multiplied by the full-time equivalent membership of the charter school.

c. The Department of Education shall develop a tool that each state university or Florida College System institution sponsoring a charter school shall use for purposes of calculating the funding amount for each eligible charter school student. The total amount obtained from the calculation must be appropriated from state funds in the General Appropriations Act to the charter school.

~~d.b.~~ Capital outlay funding for a charter school sponsored by a state university or Florida College System institution pursuant to paragraph (5)(a) is determined as follows: multiply the maximum allowable nonvoted discretionary millage under s. 1011.71(2) by 96 percent of the current year's taxable value for school purposes for the district in which the charter school is located; divide the result by the total full-time equivalent student membership; and multiply the result by the full-time equivalent student membership of the charter school. The amount obtained shall be the discretionary capital improvement funds and shall be appropriated from state funds in pursuant to s. 1013.62 and the General Appropriations Act.

(c) Pursuant to 20 U.S.C. 8061 s. 10306, all charter schools shall receive all federal funding for which the school is otherwise eligible, including Title I funding, not later than 5 months after the charter school first opens and within 5 months after any subsequent expansion of enrollment. Unless otherwise mutually agreed to by the charter school and its sponsor, and consistent with state and federal rules and regulations governing the use and disbursement of federal funds, the sponsor shall reimburse the charter school on a monthly basis for all invoices submitted by the charter school for federal funds available to the sponsor for the benefit of the charter school, the charter school's students, and the charter school's students as public school students in the school district. Such federal funds include, but are not limited to, Title I, Title II, and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) funds. To receive timely reimbursement for an invoice, the charter school must submit the invoice to the sponsor at least 30 days before the monthly date of reimbursement set by the sponsor. In order to be reimbursed, any expenditures made by the charter school must comply with all applicable state rules and federal regulations, including, but not limited to, the applicable federal Office of Management and Budget Circulars; the federal Education Department General Administrative Regulations; and program-specific statutes, rules, and regulations. Such funds may not be made available to the charter school until a plan is submitted to the sponsor for approval of the use of the funds in accordance

with applicable federal requirements. The sponsor has 30 days to review and approve any plan submitted pursuant to this paragraph.

(d) Charter schools shall be included by the Department of Education and the district school board in requests for federal stimulus funds in the same manner as district school board-operated public schools, including Title I and IDEA funds and shall be entitled to receive such funds. Charter schools are eligible to participate in federal competitive grants that are available as part of the federal stimulus funds.

(e) Sponsors shall make timely and efficient payment and reimbursement to charter schools, including processing paperwork required to access special state and federal funding for which they may be eligible, including the timely review and reimbursement of federal grant funds. Payments of funds under paragraph (b) shall be made monthly or twice a month, beginning with the start of the sponsor's fiscal year. Each payment shall be one-twelfth, or one twenty-fourth, as applicable, of the total state and local funds described in paragraph (b) and adjusted as set forth therein. For the first 2 years of a charter school's operation, if a minimum of 75 percent of the projected enrollment is entered into the sponsor's student information system by the first day of the current month, the sponsor shall distribute funds to the school for the months of July through October based on the projected full-time equivalent student membership of the charter school as submitted in the approved application. If less than 75 percent of the projected enrollment is entered into the sponsor's student information system by the first day of the current month, the sponsor shall base payments on the actual number of student enrollment entered into the sponsor's student information system. Thereafter, the results of full-time equivalent student membership surveys shall be used in adjusting the amount of funds distributed monthly to the charter school for the remainder of the fiscal year. The payments shall be issued no later than 10 working days after the sponsor receives a distribution of state or federal funds or the date the payment is due pursuant to this subsection. With respect to federal grant funds submitted for reimbursement, the sponsor shall have 60 calendar days from the date of the submission to reimburse the charter school if the submission provides all the necessary information to qualify for reimbursement. If a warrant for payment is not issued within 10 working days after receipt of funding by the sponsor or within 60 calendar days after an approved submittal for reimbursement of federal grant funds, the sponsor shall pay to the charter school, in addition to the amount of the scheduled disbursement, interest at a rate of 1 percent per month calculated on a daily basis on the unpaid balance from the expiration of the 10 working days or 60 calendar days for the reimbursement of federal grant funds, until such time as the warrant is issued. The district school board may not delay payment to a charter school of any portion of the funds provided in paragraph (b) based on the timing of receipt of local funds by the district school board.

(f) Funding for a virtual charter school shall be as provided in s. 1002.45(6).

(g) To be eligible for public education capital outlay (PECO) funds, a charter school must be located in the State of Florida.

(h) A charter school that implements a schoolwide standard student attire policy pursuant to s. 1011.78 is eligible to receive incentive payments.

(19) CAPITAL OUTLAY FUNDING.—Charter schools sponsored by a school district are eligible for capital outlay funds pursuant to ss. 1011.71(2) and 1013.62. Capital outlay funds authorized in ss. 1011.71(2) and 1013.62 which have been shared with a charter school-in-the-workplace prior to July 1, 2010, are deemed to have met the authorized expenditure requirements for such funds.

Section 5. Subsection (5) is added to section 1002.391, Florida Statutes, to read:

1002.391 Auditory-oral education programs.—

(5) As authorized by and consistent with funding appropriated in the General Appropriations Act, the Bridge to Speech Program is created to fund auditory-oral education programs required at schools pursuant to this section. Funds shall be provided at the level of the published tuition rates up to the funds available as provided in the General Appropriations Act. The Department of Education must award these funds to eligible recipients no later than September 1 of each year, with subsequent payments monthly thereafter.

Section 6. Paragraph (a) of subsection (4), paragraph (a) of subsection (10), and paragraph (a) of subsection (12) of section 1002.394, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

1002.394 The Family Empowerment Scholarship Program.—

(4) AUTHORIZED USES OF PROGRAM FUNDS.—

(a) Program funds awarded to a student determined eligible pursuant to paragraph (3)(a) may be used for:

1. Tuition and fees at an eligible private school.

~~2. Transportation to a Florida public school in which a student is enrolled and that is different from the school to which the student was assigned or to a lab school as defined in s. 1002.32.~~

~~2.3. Instructional materials, including digital materials and Internet resources.~~

~~3.4. Curriculum as defined in subsection (2).~~

~~4.5. Tuition and fees associated with full-time or part-time enrollment in an eligible postsecondary educational institution or a program offered by the postsecondary educational institution, unless the program is subject to s.~~

1009.25 or reimbursed pursuant to s. 1009.30; an approved preapprenticeship program as defined in s. 446.021(5) which is not subject to s. 1009.25 and complies with all applicable requirements of the department pursuant to chapter 1005; a private tutoring program authorized under s. 1002.43; a virtual program offered by a department-approved private online provider that meets the provider qualifications specified in s. 1002.45(2)(a); the Florida Virtual School as a private paying student; or an approved online course offered pursuant to s. 1003.499 or s. 1004.0961.

5.6. Fees for nationally standardized, norm-referenced achievement tests, Advanced Placement Examinations, industry certification examinations, assessments related to postsecondary education, or other assessments.

6.7. Contracted services provided by a public school or school district, including classes. A student who receives contracted services under this subparagraph is not considered enrolled in a public school for eligibility purposes as specified in subsection (6) but rather attending a public school on a part-time basis as authorized under s. 1002.44.

7.8. Tuition and fees for part-time tutoring services or fees for services provided by a choice navigator. Such services must be provided by a person who holds a valid Florida educator's certificate pursuant to s. 1012.56, a person who holds an adjunct teaching certificate pursuant to s. 1012.57, a person who has a bachelor's degree or a graduate degree in the subject area in which instruction is given, a person who has demonstrated a mastery of subject area knowledge pursuant to s. 1012.56(5), or a person certified by a nationally or internationally recognized research-based training program as approved by the department. As used in this subparagraph, the term "part-time tutoring services" does not qualify as regular school attendance as defined in s. 1003.01(16)(e).

(10) PARENT AND STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PROGRAM PARTICIPATION.—

(a) A parent who applies for program participation under paragraph (3)(a) whose student will be enrolled full time in a private school must:

1. Select the private school and apply for the admission of his or her student.
2. Request the scholarship by a date established by the organization, in a manner that creates a written or electronic record of the request and the date of receipt of the request.
3. Inform the applicable school district when the parent withdraws his or her student from a public school to attend an eligible private school.
4. Require his or her student participating in the program to remain in attendance throughout the school year unless excused by the school for illness or other good cause.

5. Meet with the private school's principal or the principal's designee to review the school's academic programs and policies, specialized services, code of student conduct, and attendance policies before enrollment.

6. Require that the student participating in the scholarship program takes the norm-referenced assessment offered by the private school. The parent may also choose to have the student participate in the statewide assessments pursuant to paragraph (7)(d). If the parent requests that the student participating in the program take all statewide assessments required pursuant to s. 1008.22, the parent is responsible for transporting the student to the assessment site designated by the school district.

7. Approve each payment before the scholarship funds may be deposited by funds transfer pursuant to subparagraph ~~(12)(a)3.~~ ~~(12)(a)4.~~ The parent may not designate any entity or individual associated with the participating private school as the parent's attorney in fact to approve a funds transfer. A participant who fails to comply with this paragraph forfeits the scholarship.

8. Agree to have the organization commit scholarship funds on behalf of his or her student for tuition and fees for which the parent is responsible for payment at the private school before using empowerment account funds for additional authorized uses under paragraph (4)(a). A parent is responsible for all eligible expenses in excess of the amount of the scholarship.

(12) SCHOLARSHIP FUNDING AND PAYMENT.—

(a)1. Scholarships for students determined eligible pursuant to paragraph (3)(a) may be funded once all scholarships have been funded in accordance with s. 1002.395(6)(1)2. The calculated scholarship amount for a participating student determined eligible pursuant to paragraph (3)(a) shall be based upon the grade level and school district in which the student was assigned as 100 percent of the funds per unweighted full-time equivalent in the Florida Education Finance Program for a student in the basic program established pursuant to s. 1011.62(1)(c)1., plus a per-full-time equivalent share of funds for the categorical programs established in s. 1011.62(5), (7)(a), and (16), as funded in the General Appropriations Act.

~~2. A scholarship of \$750 or an amount equal to the school district expenditure per student riding a school bus, as determined by the department, whichever is greater, may be awarded to an eligible student who is enrolled in a Florida public school that is different from the school to which the student was assigned or in a lab school as defined in s. 1002.32 if the school district does not provide the student with transportation to the school.~~

~~2.3.~~ The organization must provide the department with the documentation necessary to verify the student's participation. Upon receiving the documentation, the department shall transfer, beginning August 1, from state funds only, the amount calculated pursuant to subparagraph 1. ~~2.~~ to the organization for quarterly disbursement to parents of participating

students each school year in which the scholarship is in force. For a student exiting a Department of Juvenile Justice commitment program who chooses to participate in the scholarship program, the amount of the Family Empowerment Scholarship calculated pursuant to subparagraph 1. 2. must be transferred from the school district in which the student last attended a public school before commitment to the Department of Juvenile Justice. When a student enters the scholarship program, the organization must receive all documentation required for the student's participation, including the private school's and the student's fee schedules, at least 30 days before the first quarterly scholarship payment is made for the student.

3.4. The initial payment shall be made after the organization's verification of admission acceptance, and subsequent payments shall be made upon verification of continued enrollment and attendance at the private school. Payment must be by funds transfer or any other means of payment that the department deems to be commercially viable or cost-effective. An organization shall ensure that the parent has approved a funds transfer before any scholarship funds are deposited.

4.5. An organization may not transfer any funds to an account of a student determined eligible pursuant to paragraph (3)(a) which has a balance in excess of \$24,000.

Section 7. Paragraph (b) of subsection (2), paragraphs (d) and (l) of subsection (6), and paragraph (a) of subsection (11) of section 1002.395, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

1002.395 Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program.—

(2) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section, the term:

(b) "Choice navigator" means an individual who meets the requirements of sub-subparagraph (6)(d)2.g. ~~(6)(d)2.h.~~ and who provides consultations, at a mutually agreed upon location, on the selection of, application for, and enrollment in educational options addressing the academic needs of a student; curriculum selection; and advice on career and postsecondary education opportunities. However, nothing in this section authorizes a choice navigator to oversee or exercise control over the curricula or academic programs of a personalized education program.

(6) OBLIGATIONS OF ELIGIBLE NONPROFIT SCHOLARSHIP-FUNDING ORGANIZATIONS.—An eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organization:

(d)1. For the 2023-2024 school year, may fund no more than 20,000 scholarships for students who are enrolled pursuant to paragraph (7)(b). The number of scholarships funded for such students may increase by 40,000 in each subsequent school year. This subparagraph is repealed July 1, 2027.

2. Must establish and maintain separate empowerment accounts from eligible contributions for each eligible student. For each account, the

organization must maintain a record of accrued interest retained in the student's account. The organization must verify that scholarship funds are used for:

a. Tuition and fees for full-time or part-time enrollment in an eligible private school.

~~b. Transportation to a Florida public school in which a student is enrolled and that is different from the school to which the student was assigned or to a lab school as defined in s. 1002.32.~~

b.e. Instructional materials, including digital materials and Internet resources.

~~c.d.~~ Curriculum as defined in s. 1002.394(2).

d.e. Tuition and fees associated with full-time or part-time enrollment in a home education instructional program; an eligible postsecondary educational institution or a program offered by the postsecondary educational institution, unless the program is subject to s. 1009.25 or reimbursed pursuant to s. 1009.30; an approved preapprenticeship program as defined in s. 446.021(5) which is not subject to s. 1009.25 and complies with all applicable requirements of the Department of Education pursuant to chapter 1005; a private tutoring program authorized under s. 1002.43; a virtual program offered by a department-approved private online provider that meets the provider qualifications specified in s. 1002.45(2)(a); the Florida Virtual School as a private paying student; or an approved online course offered pursuant to s. 1003.499 or s. 1004.0961.

e.f. Fees for nationally standardized, norm-referenced achievement tests, Advanced Placement Examinations, industry certification examinations, assessments related to postsecondary education, or other assessments.

f.g. Contracted services provided by a public school or school district, including classes. A student who receives contracted services under this sub-subparagraph is not considered enrolled in a public school for eligibility purposes as specified in subsection (11) but rather attending a public school on a part-time basis as authorized under s. 1002.44.

g.h. Tuition and fees for part-time tutoring services or fees for services provided by a choice navigator. Such services must be provided by a person who holds a valid Florida educator's certificate pursuant to s. 1012.56, a person who holds an adjunct teaching certificate pursuant to s. 1012.57, a person who has a bachelor's degree or a graduate degree in the subject area in which instruction is given, a person who has demonstrated a mastery of subject area knowledge pursuant to s. 1012.56(5), or a person certified by a nationally or internationally recognized research-based training program as approved by the Department of Education. As used in this paragraph, the

term “part-time tutoring services” does not qualify as regular school attendance as defined in s. 1003.01(16)(e).

(l)1. May use eligible contributions received pursuant to this section and ss. 212.099, 212.1832, and 1002.40 during the state fiscal year in which such contributions are collected for administrative expenses if the organization has operated as an eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organization for at least the preceding 3 fiscal years and did not have any findings of material weakness or material noncompliance in its most recent audit under paragraph (o) or is in good standing in each state in which it administers a scholarship program and the audited financial statements for the preceding 3 fiscal years are free of material misstatements and going concern issues. Administrative expenses from eligible contributions may not exceed 3 percent of the total amount of all scholarships and stipends funded by an eligible scholarship-funding organization under this chapter. Such administrative expenses must be reasonable and necessary for the organization’s management and distribution of scholarships funded under this chapter. Administrative expenses may include developing or contracting with rideshare programs or facilitating carpool strategies for recipients of a transportation scholarship. No funds authorized under this subparagraph shall be used for lobbying or political activity or expenses related to lobbying or political activity. Up to one-third of the funds authorized for administrative expenses under this subparagraph may be used for expenses related to the recruitment of contributions from taxpayers. An eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organization may not charge an application fee.

2. Must award for annual or partial-year scholarships an amount equal to or greater than 75 percent of all estimated net eligible contributions, as defined in subsection (2), and all funds carried forward from the prior state fiscal year remaining after administrative expenses before funding any scholarships to students determined eligible pursuant to s. 1002.394(3)(a). No more than 25 percent of such net eligible contributions may be carried forward to the following state fiscal year. All amounts carried forward, for audit purposes, must be specifically identified for particular students, by student name and the name of the school to which the student is admitted, subject to the requirements of ss. 1002.22 and 1002.221 and 20 U.S.C. s. 1232g, and the applicable rules and regulations issued pursuant thereto. Any amounts carried forward shall be expended for annual or partial-year scholarships in the following state fiscal year. No later than September 30 of each year, net eligible contributions remaining on June 30 of each year that are in excess of the 25 percent that may be carried forward shall be used to provide scholarships to eligible students or transferred to other eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organizations to provide scholarships for eligible students. All transferred funds must be deposited by each eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organization receiving such funds into its scholarship account. All transferred amounts received by any eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organization must be separately disclosed in the annual financial audit required under paragraph (o).

3. Must, before granting a scholarship for an academic year, document each scholarship student's eligibility for that academic year. A scholarship-funding organization may not grant multiyear scholarships in one approval process.

Information and documentation provided to the Department of Education and the Auditor General relating to the identity of a taxpayer that provides an eligible contribution under this section shall remain confidential at all times in accordance with s. 213.053.

(11) SCHOLARSHIP AMOUNT AND PAYMENT.—

(a) The scholarship amount provided to any student for any single school year by an eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organization from eligible contributions shall be for total costs authorized under paragraph (6)(d), not to exceed annual limits, which shall be determined as follows:

1. For a student who received a scholarship in the 2018-2019 school year, who remains eligible, and who is enrolled in an eligible private school, the amount shall be the greater amount calculated pursuant to subparagraph 2. or a percentage of the unweighted FTE funding amount for the 2018-2019 state fiscal year and thereafter as follows:

- a. Eighty-eight percent for a student enrolled in kindergarten through grade 5.
- b. Ninety-two percent for a student enrolled in grade 6 through grade 8.
- c. Ninety-six percent for a student enrolled in grade 9 through grade 12.

2. For students initially eligible in the 2019-2020 school year or thereafter, the calculated amount for a student to attend an eligible private school shall be calculated in accordance with s. 1002.394(12)(a).

~~3.—The scholarship amount awarded to a student enrolled in a Florida public school that is different from the school to which the student was assigned, or in a lab school as defined in s. 1002.32, must be an amount equal to the school district expenditure per student riding a school bus, as determined by the department, or \$750, whichever is greater.~~

Section 8. Upon the expiration and reversion of the amendments made to section 1002.68, Florida Statutes, pursuant to section 6 of chapter 2023-240, Laws of Florida, paragraphs (a) and (f) of subsection (4) of section 1002.68, Florida Statutes, are amended, and subsection (5) and paragraph (e) of subsection (6) of that section are republished, to read:

1002.68 Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program accountability.

(4)(a) Beginning with the 2023-2024 ~~2022-2023~~ program year, the department shall adopt a methodology for calculating each private

prekindergarten provider's and public school provider's performance metric, which must be based on a combination of the following:

1. Program assessment composite scores under subsection (2), which must be weighted at no less than 50 percent.
2. Learning gains operationalized as change-in-ability scores from the initial and final progress monitoring results described in subsection (1).
3. Norm-referenced developmental learning outcomes described in subsection (1).

(f) The department shall adopt procedures to annually calculate each private prekindergarten provider's and public school's performance metric, based on the methodology adopted in paragraphs (a) and (b), and assign a designation under paragraph (d). Beginning with the 2024-2025 ~~2023-2024~~ program year, each private prekindergarten provider or public school shall be assigned a designation within 45 days after the conclusion of the school-year Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program delivered by all participating private prekindergarten providers or public schools and within 45 days after the conclusion of the summer Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program delivered by all participating private prekindergarten providers or public schools.

(5)(a) If a public school's or private prekindergarten provider's program assessment composite score for its prekindergarten classrooms fails to meet the minimum program assessment composite score for contracting adopted in rule by the department, the private prekindergarten provider or public school may not participate in the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program beginning in the consecutive program year and thereafter until the public school or private prekindergarten provider meets the minimum composite score for contracting. A public school or private prekindergarten provider may request one program assessment per program year in order to requalify for participation in the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program, provided that the public school or private prekindergarten provider is not excluded from participation under ss. 1002.55(6), 1002.61(10)(b), 1002.63(9)(b), or paragraph (5)(b) of this section. If a public school or private prekindergarten provider would like an additional program assessment completed within the same program year, the public school or private prekindergarten provider shall be responsible for the cost of the program assessment.

(b) If a private prekindergarten provider's or public school's performance metric or designation falls below the minimum performance metric or designation, the early learning coalition shall:

1. Require the provider or school to submit for approval to the early learning coalition an improvement plan and implement the plan.
2. Place the provider or school on probation.

3. Require the provider or school to take certain corrective actions, including the use of a curriculum approved by the department under s. 1002.67(2)(c) and a staff development plan approved by the department to strengthen instructional practices in emotional support, classroom organization, instructional support, language development, phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, and mathematical thinking.

(c) A private prekindergarten provider or public school that is placed on probation must continue the corrective actions required under paragraph (b) until the provider or school meets the minimum performance metric or designation adopted by the department. Failure to meet the requirements of subparagraphs (b)1. and 3. shall result in the termination of the provider's or school's contract to deliver the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program for a period of at least 2 years but no more than 5 years.

(d) If a private prekindergarten provider or public school remains on probation for 2 consecutive years and fails to meet the minimum performance metric or designation, or is not granted a good cause exemption by the department, the department shall require the early learning coalition to revoke the provider's eligibility and the school district to revoke the school's eligibility to deliver the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program and receive state funds for the program for a period of at least 2 years but no more than 5 years.

(6)

(e) A private prekindergarten provider or public school granted a good cause exemption shall continue to implement its improvement plan and continue the corrective actions required under paragraph (5)(b) until the provider or school meets the minimum performance metric.

Section 9. Subsection (7) of section 1002.71, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1002.71 Funding; financial and attendance reporting.—

(7) The department shall require that administrative expenditures be kept to the minimum necessary for efficient and effective administration of the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program. Administrative policies and procedures shall be revised, to the maximum extent practicable, to incorporate the use of automation and electronic submission of forms, including those required for child eligibility and enrollment, provider and class registration, and monthly certification of attendance for payment. A school district may use its automated daily attendance reporting system for the purpose of transmitting attendance records to the early learning coalition in a mutually agreed-upon format. In addition, actions shall be taken to reduce paperwork, eliminate the duplication of reports, and eliminate other duplicative activities. Each early learning coalition may retain and expend no more than 5.0 ~~4.0~~ percent of the funds paid by the coalition to private prekindergarten providers and public schools under

paragraph (5)(b). Funds retained by an early learning coalition under this subsection may be used only for administering the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program and may not be used for the school readiness program or other programs.

Section 10. Paragraph (d) of subsection (2) of section 1002.82, Florida Statutes, is amended, and subsections (10) and (11) are added to that section, to read:

1002.82 Department of Education; powers and duties.—

(2) The department shall:

(d) Establish procedures for the annual calculation of the prevailing market rate and procedures for the collection of data to support the calculation of the cost ~~data of care~~ pursuant to subsection (10) s. 1002.90.

(10) The department shall establish procedures to annually collect cost data. Such data must include, but are not limited to:

(a) Data from the Department of Commerce's Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research on the average salary for child care personnel, including, at a minimum, child care instructors and child care directors.

(b) Data from child care providers, including, at a minimum, the average annual cost of materials and curriculum, the average cost of any regulatory fees, the average annual cost of salaries and benefits, and the average annual cost of all other operational costs per child.

(11) By November 1, 2024, and annually thereafter, the department shall submit the following data to the Legislature:

(a) The current fiscal year reimbursement rates, by county, by provider type, and by care level.

(b) The cost data collected in subsection (10).

(c) The market rate survey data collected pursuant to s. 1002.895.

(d) The narrow costs analysis data required by 45 C.F.R. s. 98.45.

Section 11. Subsections (9) and (17) of section 1002.84, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

1002.84 Early learning coalitions; school readiness powers and duties. Each early learning coalition shall:

(9) Implement Establish a parent sliding fee scale, that increases in relation to family income, as established in rule by the State Board of Education that provides for the calculation of a parent copayment at the time of the eligibility determination and for an annual eligibility

redetermination thereafter that is not a barrier to families receiving school readiness program services. A coalition may waive the copayment for an at-risk child or temporarily waive the copayment for a child whose family's income is at or below the federal poverty level or whose family experiences a natural disaster or an event that limits the parent's ability to pay, such as incarceration, placement in residential treatment, or becoming homeless, or an emergency situation such as a household fire or burglary, or while the parent is participating in parenting classes or participating in an Early Head Start program or Head Start Program. A parent may not transfer school readiness program services to another school readiness program provider until the parent has submitted documentation from the current school readiness program provider to the early learning coalition stating that the parent has satisfactorily fulfilled the copayment obligation.

(17)(a) Distribute the school readiness program funds as allocated in the General Appropriations Act to each the eligible provider based upon the reimbursement rate by county, by provider type, and by care level. All instructions to early learning coalitions for distributing the school readiness program funds to eligible providers shall emanate from the department in accordance with the policies of the Legislature. providers using the following methodology:

~~1. For each county in the early learning coalition, multiply the cost of care by care level as provided in s. 1002.90 by the county's comparable wage factor provided in s. 1011.62(2).~~

~~2. If a county enacted a local ordinance before January 1, 2022, that establishes the county's staff-to-children ratio for licensed child care facilities below the ratio established in s. 402.305(4), multiply the provider reimbursement rates for that county by the adjustment factor specified in the General Appropriations Act.~~

~~3. Apply the weight established pursuant to s. 1002.90 for each provider type to calculate the minimum provider reimbursement rates by care level.~~

~~4. Multiply the weighted provider reimbursement rates by 22 percent to determine the amount of the school readiness allocation an early learning coalition is eligible to retain pursuant to s. 1002.89(4).~~

(b) ~~Distribute to each eligible provider the minimum provider reimbursement rate, by provider type and care level, regardless of the provider's private pay rate. All minimum provider reimbursement rates shall be charged as direct services pursuant to s. 1002.89.~~

Each early learning coalition with approved prior year minimum provider reimbursement rates for the infant to age 5 care levels that are higher than the minimum provider reimbursement rates established in this subsection may continue to implement its approved prior year minimum provider reimbursement rates until the rates established in this subsection exceed its prior year approved rates.

Section 12. Paragraph (a) of subsection (1) of section 1002.89, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1002.89 School readiness program; funding.—

(1) DETERMINATION OF EARLY LEARNING COALITION SCHOOL READINESS PROGRAM FUNDING.—Funding for the school readiness program shall be used by the early learning coalitions in accordance with this part and the General Appropriations Act.

(a) School readiness program allocation.—If the annual allocation for the school readiness program is not determined in the General Appropriations Act or the substantive bill implementing the General Appropriations Act, it shall be determined as follows:

1. For each county in the early learning coalition, the total number of unweighted full-time equivalent school readiness children eligible population, as adopted by the Early Learning Programs Estimating Conference pursuant to s. 216.136(8), shall be multiplied by the appropriate care level factor to calculate the weighted full-time equivalent school readiness children. For purposes of this subparagraph, the term “care level factor” means the adjustment made based on the relative differences in reimbursement rates associated with the eligible school readiness children pursuant to s. 1002.87 ~~county’s comparable wage factor provided in s. 1011.62(2).~~

2. The total weighted full-time equivalent school readiness children shall be multiplied by the rate index to calculate the adjusted weighted full-time equivalent school readiness children. For purposes of this subparagraph, the term “rate index” means the adjustment made based on the impact of geographic location on reimbursement rates ~~If a county passed a local ordinance before January 1, 2022, that establishes the county’s staff-to-children ratio for licensed child care facilities below the ratio established in s. 402.305(4), multiply the product calculated in subparagraph 1. by the adjustment factor specified in the General Appropriations Act.~~

3. The school readiness program funds shall be distributed ~~Each county’s school readiness allocation shall be based on each the county’s proportionate share of the total adjusted weighted full-time equivalent school readiness children eligible school readiness population.~~

Section 13. Subsections (8) and (9) of section 1002.895, Florida Statutes, are renumbered as subsections (6) and (7), respectively, and subsections (1), (2), (3), (4), (6), and (7) of that section are amended, to read:

1002.895 Market rate schedule.—The school readiness program market rate schedule shall be implemented as follows:

(1) The department shall establish procedures for the adoption of a market rate schedule. The schedule must include, at a minimum, county-by-county rates and:

(a) the market rate, to include including the minimum and the maximum rates for child care providers that hold a Gold Seal Quality Care designation under s. 1002.945 and adhere to its accrediting association's teacher-to-child ratios and group size requirements and;

~~(b) The market rate for child care providers that do not hold a Gold Seal Quality Care designation.~~

(2) The market rate schedule must differentiate rates by provider type, including, but not limited to:

~~(a) Child care providers that hold a Gold Seal Quality Care designation under s. 1002.945 and adhere to their accrediting association's teacher-to-child ratios and group size requirements.~~

~~(a)(b) Child care providers licensed under s. 402.305, faith-based child care providers exempt from licensure under s. 402.316 that do not hold a Gold Seal Quality Care designation, and large family child care homes licensed under s. 402.3131 that do not hold a Gold Seal Quality Care designation.~~

~~(b)(e) Public or nonpublic schools exempt from licensure under s. 402.3025.~~

~~(c)(d) Family day care homes licensed or registered under s. 402.313.~~

~~(e) Large family child care homes licensed under s. 402.3131.~~

(3) The market rate schedule must differentiate rates by care level that includes the type of child care services provided for children with special needs or risk categories, infants, toddlers, 2-year-old children, 3-year-old children, 4-year-old children, 5-year-old children, and school-age children.

(4) The market rate schedule must differentiate rates between full-time and part-time child care services and consider discounted rates for child care services for multiple children in a single family.

~~(6) The department shall establish procedures to annually collect data regarding the cost of care to include, but not be limited to:~~

~~(a) Data from the Department of Economic Opportunity's Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research on the average salary for child care personnel to include, at a minimum, child care instructors and child care directors.~~

~~(b) Data from child care providers as part of data collected under s. 1002.92(4) to include, at a minimum, the average annual cost of materials and curriculum, the average annual cost of food and maintenance costs, and the average annual cost of any regulatory fees or operational costs per child.~~

~~(7) The department shall provide all applicable data collected in this section to the Early Learning Programs Estimating Conference established pursuant to s. 216.136(8).~~

Section 14. Section 1002.90, Florida Statutes, is repealed.

Section 15. Paragraph (e) of subsection (4) of section 1002.92, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1002.92 Child care and early childhood resource and referral.—

(4) A child care facility licensed under s. 402.305 and licensed and registered family day care homes must provide the statewide child care and resource and referral network with the following information annually:

~~(e) Data required under s. 1002.895.~~

Section 16. Section 1003.4206, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

1003.4206 Charity for Change program.—As authorized by and consistent with funding appropriated in the General Appropriations Act, the Charity for Change program is created to implement the character education standards required pursuant to s. 1003.42(2)(t). The program may use third-party providers to deliver after-school and summer services that empower students with an evidence-based curriculum that integrates character education, service learning, charitable and community engagement, and academics.

Section 17. Section 1006.042, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

1006.042 AMIkids, Inc., program.—As authorized by and consistent with funding appropriated in the General Appropriations Act, the AMIkids, Inc., program is created to provide alternatives to institutionalization or commitment for young men and women by providing services, including, but not limited to, education, behavior modification, skills development, mental health, workforce development, family functioning, and advocacy.

Section 18. Paragraph (j) of subsection (7) of section 1006.07, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1006.07 District school board duties relating to student discipline and school safety.—The district school board shall provide for the proper accounting for all students, for the attendance and control of students at school, and for proper attention to health, safety, and other matters relating to the welfare of students, including:

(7) **THREAT MANAGEMENT TEAMS.**—Each district school board and charter school governing board shall establish a threat management team at each school whose duties include the coordination of resources and assessment and intervention with students whose behavior may pose a threat to the safety of the school, school staff, or students.

(j) Each district school board shall establish a threat management coordinator to serve as the primary point of contact regarding the district's coordination, communication, and implementation of the threat management program and to team shall report quantitative data on its activities to the Office of Safe Schools in accordance with guidance from the office.

Section 19. Subsection (3) of section 1006.27, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1006.27 Pooling of school buses and other vehicles and related purchases by district school boards; transportation services contracts.—

~~(3) The Driving Choice Grant Program is created within the department to improve access to reliable and safe transportation for students participating in public educational school choices pursuant to s. 1002.20(6)(a) and to support innovative solutions that increase the efficiency of public school transportation.~~

~~(a) Grant proposals may include:~~

~~1. Transportation resource planning and sharing among school districts and local governments.~~

~~2. developing or contracting with rideshare programs or developing carpool strategies.~~

~~3. Developing options to reduce costs and increase efficiencies while improving access to transportation options for families.~~

~~4. Developing options to address personnel challenges.~~

~~5. Expanding the use of transportation funds under ss. 1002.394, 1002.395, and 1011.68 to help cover the cost of transporting students to and from school.~~

~~(b) the department shall publish on its website, by December 31, 2023, an interim report and by December 31, 2024, a final report that includes:~~

~~1. The best practices used by grant recipients to increase transportation options for students, including any transportation barriers addressed by grant recipients.~~

~~2. The number of students served by grant recipients, including the number of students transported to a school that is different from the school to which the student is assigned.~~

Section 20. Paragraph (b) of subsection (5) of section 1008.25, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1008.25 Public school student progression; student support; coordinated screening and progress monitoring; reporting requirements.—

(5) READING DEFICIENCY AND PARENTAL NOTIFICATION.—

(b) A Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program student who exhibits a substantial deficiency in early literacy skills based upon the results of the administration of the final coordinated screening and progress monitoring under subsection (9) shall be referred to the local school district and may be eligible to receive instruction in early literacy skills before participating in kindergarten. A Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program student who scores below the 10th percentile on the final administration of the coordinated screening and progress monitoring under subsection (9) shall be referred to the local school district and is eligible to receive early literacy skill instructional support through a summer bridge program the summer before participating in kindergarten. The summer bridge program must meet requirements adopted by the department and shall consist of 4 hours of instruction per day for a minimum of 100 total hours. A student with an individual education plan who has been retained pursuant to paragraph (2)(g) and has demonstrated a substantial deficiency in early literacy skills must receive instruction in early literacy skills.

Section 21. Section 1009.896, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1009.896 Florida First Responder Law Enforcement Academy Scholarship Program.—

(1) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section, the term:

(a) “Commission” means the Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission within the Department of Law Enforcement.

(b) “Department” means the Department of Education.

~~(c) “Employing agency” has the same meaning as provided in s. 943.10(4).~~

(c) “Emergency medical technician” has the same meaning as provided in s. 401.23(12).

(d) “Firefighter” has the same meaning as provided in s. 633.102(9).

~~(e)(d)~~ “Law enforcement officer” has the same meaning as provided in s. 943.10(1).

(f) “Paramedic” has the same meaning as provided in s. 401.23(18).

(g) “Postsecondary institution” means a Florida College System institution under s. 1000.21(5) or a career center under s. 1001.44.

~~(h)(e)~~ “Scholarship program” means the Florida First Responder Law Enforcement Academy Scholarship Program.

(2) ESTABLISHMENT; ADMINISTRATION.—

(a) Beginning with the 2024-2025 ~~2022-2023~~ academic year, the Florida First Responder Law Enforcement Academy ~~Scholarship Program~~ is created to assist in the recruitment of law enforcement officers, emergency medical technicians, paramedics, and firefighters within the state by providing financial assistance to trainees who enroll in an approved a-commission-~~approved law enforcement officer basic recruit training~~ program.

(b)(3) The department shall administer the scholarship program, in consultation with the Department of Law Enforcement, the Department of Health, and the Department of Financial Services, as applicable, according to the rules and procedures established by the State Board of Education.

(c)(4) The scholarship shall be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis based on the date the department receives each completed application, and is contingent upon an appropriation by the Legislature.

(3) LAW ENFORCEMENT.—

(a)(5) To be eligible for the scholarship award a law enforcement trainee must:

1.(a) Be enrolled in a commission-approved basic recruit training program at a postsecondary institution ~~Florida College System institution or school district technical center~~ for the purposes of meeting the minimum qualifications under s. 943.13(9) for employment or appointment as a law enforcement officer.

2.(b) Not be sponsored by an employing agency under s. 943.10(4) that is already covering the cost of a basic recruit training program.

(b)(6) The award to eligible trainees shall be an amount equal to any costs and fees described in this subsection which are necessary to complete the basic recruit training program, less any state financial aid received by the trainee. The award to trainees shall cover:

1.(a) The cost of tuition.

2.(b) Any applicable fees required by ss. 1009.22(3), (6), (7), and (8), and 1009.23(3), (4), (7), (8), (10), and (11); however, any award for a nonresident trainee may ~~shall~~ not include the out-of-state fee.

3.(c) Up to \$1,000 for eligible expenses, including:

a.1. The officer certification examination fee established pursuant to s. 943.1397.

b.2. Textbooks.

c.3. Uniforms.

d.4. Ammunition.

e.5. Required insurance.

f.6. Any other costs or fees for necessary consumable materials required to complete the basic recruit training program.

(4) EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIANS.—

(a) To be eligible for the scholarship award an emergency medical technician trainee must:

1. Be enrolled in an emergency medical technician training program under s. 401.2701 that is approved by the Department of Health as equivalent to the most recent Emergency Medical Technician-Basic National Standard Curriculum or the National EMS Education Standards of the United States Department of Transportation.

2. Not be sponsored by an employer that is already covering the cost of the training program.

(b) The award to eligible trainees shall be an amount equal to any costs and fees described in this subsection which are necessary to complete the emergency medical technician training program, less any state financial aid received by the trainee. The award to trainees shall cover:

1. The cost of tuition.

2. Any applicable fees required by ss. 1009.22(3), (6), (7), and (8), and 1009.23(3), (4), (7), (8), (10), and (11); however, any award for a nonresident trainee may not include the out-of-state fee.

3. Up to \$1,000 for eligible expenses, including:

a. The National Registry Emergency Medical Test (NREMT).

b. Textbooks.

c. Uniforms.

d. Required equipment, such as a stethoscope.

e. Required insurance.

f. Any other costs or fees for necessary consumable materials required to complete the emergency medical technician training program.

(5) PARAMEDICS.—

(a) To be eligible for the scholarship award a paramedic trainee must:

1. Be enrolled in a paramedic training program under s. 401.2701 that is approved by the Department of Health as equivalent to the most recent

EMT-Paramedic National Standard Curriculum or the National EMS Education Standards of the United States Department of Transportation.

2. Not be sponsored by an employer that is already covering the cost of the training program.

(b) The award to eligible trainees shall be an amount equal to any costs and fees described in this subsection which are necessary to complete the paramedic training program, less any state financial aid received by the trainee. The award to trainees shall cover:

1. The cost of tuition.

2. Any applicable fees required by ss. 1009.22(3), (6), (7), and (8), and 1009.23(3), (4), (7), (8), (10), and (11); however, any award for a nonresident trainee may not include the out-of-state fee.

3. Up to \$1,000 for eligible expenses including:

a. The National Registry Emergency Medical Test (NREMT).

b. Textbooks.

c. Uniforms.

d. Required equipment, such as a stethoscope.

e. Required insurance.

f. Any other costs or fees for necessary consumable materials required to complete the paramedic training program.

(6) FIREFIGHTERS.—

(a) To be eligible for the scholarship award a firefighter trainee must:

1. Be enrolled in a Firefighter Minimum Standards Course training program at a Florida Certified Training Center approved by the Division of State Fire Marshal for the purpose of meeting the minimum qualifications under s. 633.408.

2. Not be sponsored by an employer that is already covering the cost of the training program.

(b) The award to eligible trainees shall be an amount equal to any costs and fees described in this subsection which are necessary to complete the Firefighter Minimum Standards Course training program, less any state financial aid received by the trainee. The award to trainees shall cover:

1. The cost of tuition.

2. Any applicable fees required by ss. 1009.22(3), (6), (7), and (8), and 1009.23(3), (4), (7), (8), (10), and (11); however, any award for a nonresident trainee may not include the out-of-state fee.

3. Up to \$1,000 for eligible expenses, including:

a. The Firefighter Minimum Standards Course examinations required under s. 633.408(4)(b) for certification as a firefighter.

b. Textbooks.

c. Uniforms.

d. Required equipment and gear.

e. Required insurance.

f. Any other costs or fees for necessary consumable materials required to complete the Firefighter Minimum Standards Course training program.

(7) RULEMAKING.—The State Board of Education shall adopt rules necessary to administer this section.

Section 22. Subsection (13) is added to section 1009.90, Florida Statutes, to read:

1009.90 Duties of the Department of Education.—The duties of the department shall include:

(13) The department shall have a system to track all school bond referenda and debt incurred by a school district via referendum for capital outlay or operational purposes. The department shall have a database of bonds not yet retired, present bonds in effect, as well as any future referendum being considered by a school district. At a minimum, the database system must keep ballot language from bond referenda and project lists, be updated in near real-time, provide support services, and provide data reporting and customizable alerts to the department on all school bond issued debt.

Section 23. Subsections (6) and (18) of section 1011.62, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

1011.62 Funds for operation of schools.—If the annual allocation from the Florida Education Finance Program to each district for operation of schools is not determined in the annual appropriations act or the substantive bill implementing the annual appropriations act, it shall be determined as follows:

(6) STATE-FUNDED DISCRETIONARY CONTRIBUTION.—The state-funded discretionary contribution is created to fund the nonvoted discretionary millage for operations pursuant to s. 1011.71(1) and (3) for developmental research schools (lab schools) established in s. 1002.32,

charter schools sponsored by a Florida College System institution or a state university pursuant to s. 1002.33(5), and the Florida Virtual School established in s. 1002.37.

(a) To calculate the state-funded discretionary contribution for lab schools, multiply the maximum allowable nonvoted discretionary millage for operations pursuant to s. 1011.71(1) and (3) by the value of 96 percent of the current year's taxable value for school purposes for the school district in which the lab school is located; divide the result by the total full-time equivalent membership of the school district; and multiply the result by the full-time equivalent membership of the lab school. The amount obtained shall be appropriated in the General Appropriations Act ~~to the Lab School Trust Fund established pursuant to s. 1002.32(9).~~

(b) To calculate the state-funded discretionary contribution for a charter school sponsored by a Florida College System institution or a state university and the Florida Virtual School, multiply the maximum allowable nonvoted discretionary millage for operations pursuant to s. 1011.71(1) and (3) by the value of 96 percent of the current year's taxable value for school purposes for the state; divide the result by the total full-time equivalent membership of the state; and multiply the result by the full-time equivalent membership of the Florida Virtual School.

(18) EDUCATIONAL ENROLLMENT STABILIZATION PROGRAM.

(a) The educational enrollment stabilization program is created to provide supplemental state funds as needed to maintain the stability of the operations of public schools in each school district and to protect districts, including charter schools, from financial instability as a result of changes in full-time equivalent student enrollment throughout the school year. ~~This program shall be implemented to the extent funds are available.~~

(b) The Legislature shall ~~may~~ annually appropriate funds in the General Appropriations Act to the Department of Education for this program in an amount necessary to maintain a projected minimum balance of \$250 million at the beginning of the upcoming fiscal year. The Department of Education shall use funds as appropriated to ensure that based on each recalculation of the Florida Education Finance Program pursuant to paragraph (1)(a), a school district's funds per unweighted full-time equivalent student are not less than the greater of either the school district's funds per unweighted full-time equivalent student as appropriated in the General Appropriations Act or the school district's funds per unweighted full-time equivalent student as recalculated based upon the receipt of the certified taxable value for school purposes pursuant to s. 1011.62(4).

(c) Notwithstanding s. 216.301 and pursuant to s. 216.351, the unexpended balance of funds appropriated pursuant to this subsection which is not disbursed by June 30 of the fiscal year in which the funds are appropriated may be carried forward for up to 10 years after the effective date of the original appropriation.

Section 24. Subsection (1) of section 1011.765, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1011.765 Florida Academic Improvement Trust Fund matching grants.

(1) **MATCHING GRANTS.**—The Florida Academic Improvement Trust Fund shall be utilized to provide matching grants to the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind Endowment Fund and to any public school district education foundation that meets the requirements of this section. For purposes of this section, a public school district education foundation includes each district school board direct-support organization established pursuant to s. 1001.453 and the education foundation established by the Florida Virtual School established pursuant to s. 1002.37 and is recognized by the local school district as its designated K-12 education foundation. Donations, state matching funds, or proceeds from endowments established pursuant to this section shall be used at the discretion of the public school district education foundation or the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind for academic achievement within the school district or school, and shall not be expended for the construction of facilities or for the support of interscholastic athletics. No public school district education foundation or the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind shall accept or purchase facilities for which the state will be asked for operating funds unless the Legislature has granted prior approval for such acquisition.

Section 25. Paragraph (d) of subsection (7) of section 1012.56, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1012.56 Educator certification requirements.—

(7) **TYPES AND TERMS OF CERTIFICATION.**—

(d) The department shall issue a temporary apprenticeship certificate to any applicant who:

1. meets the requirements of paragraphs (2)(a), (b), and (d)-(f).

~~2. Completes the subject area content requirements specified in state board rule or demonstrates mastery of subject area knowledge as provided in subsection (5).~~

At least 1 year before an individual's temporary certificate is set to expire, the department shall electronically notify the individual of the date on which his or her certificate will expire and provide a list of each method by which the qualifications for a professional certificate can be completed.

Section 26. Paragraph (b) of subsection (1) of section 1013.62, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1013.62 Charter schools capital outlay funding.—

(1) Charter school capital outlay funding shall consist of state funds when such funds are appropriated in the General Appropriations Act and revenue resulting from the discretionary millage authorized in s. 1011.71(2).

(b) A charter school is not eligible to receive capital outlay funds if:

1. It was created by the conversion of a public school and operates in facilities provided by the charter school's sponsor for a nominal fee, or at no charge, or if it is directly or indirectly operated by the school district;

2. It is a developmental research (laboratory) school that receives state funding for capital improvement purposes pursuant to s. 1002.32(9)(d); ~~s. 1002.32(9)(e)~~; or

3. A member of the governing board, or his or her family member as defined in s. 440.13(1)(b), has an interest in or is an employee of the lessor, excluding charter schools operating pursuant to s. 1002.33(15); or

4. It is a Florida College System institution or state university sponsored charter school that receives state funding for capital improvement purposes pursuant to s. 1002.33(17)(b)2.d.

Section 27. The taxable value for the Wakulla County School District that was provided by the Department of Revenue by January 1, 2024, to the Department of Education shall be used for the remaining calculations of the fiscal year 2023-2024 Florida Education Finance Program and for use in the Prior Period Funding Adjustment Millage calculation. This section is effective upon this act becoming a law and expires July 1, 2025.

Section 28. Except as otherwise expressly provided in this act and except for this section, which shall take effect upon this act becoming a law, this act shall take effect July 1, 2024.

Approved by the Governor June 12, 2024.

Filed in Office Secretary of State June 12, 2024.