

HB 419 - Early Learning and Early Grade Success Overview of Key Changes

Coordinated Screening and Assessment:

- Creates a PreK-3rd grade progress monitoring system, which must be in place for implementation beginning with the 2022-2023 program year.
- Creates a Council for Early Grade Success made up of stakeholders and experts to review the coordinated screening & assessment tools, data, and methodologies for calculating child readiness and provider performance metrics.
- Provides teachers and parents with progress monitoring data, within 14 days of completion, to better inform timely interventions and supports.
- Allows for children who have a substantial deficiency in early literacy skills to access interventions upon Kindergarten entry, utilizing the district's research-based reading instruction allocation.

VPK Accountability:

- Requires VPK providers to participate in an annual program assessment, beginning with the 2022-23 program year.
- Modifies VPK readiness rates to "performance metric," calculated beginning with the 2022-2023 program year. Methodology for calculating the performance metric shall include:
 - Child pre- and post- assessment learning gains
 - Final achievement score (child post-assessment, measure of child readiness)
 - Program assessment score
- Provides increased funding through VPK BSA differential (up to 15%, subject to available appropriations) to support higher performing providers (subject to legislative appropriation).
- Requires low performing providers to submit an improvement plan that includes use of approved curricula AND staff development.
- Adds exceptions for providers serving children with special needs.
- Requires enhanced professional development for VPK providers/staff:
 - Increasing the competency of teacher-child interactions
 - 3 courses on emergent literacy (currently only 1) for all instructors; must also complete an emergent literacy course at least once every 5 years thereafter
 - Additional training for VPK Directors on curricula implementation and use of student level data to inform delivery of instruction
- Indication of whether the provider implements a curriculum approved by DOE and the name of the curriculum, if applicable.
- If provider fails to comply with requirements of the VPK program, the early learning coalition or school district (as applicable) shall remove the provider from eligibility to deliver the program for a period of at least 2 years but no more than 5 years.

Governance:

- Shifts OEL fully under DOE and under the authority of the State Board of Education as a Division overseen by a Chancellor of Early Learning, fully accountable to the Commissioner of Education.
- The Commissioner and DOE would be responsible for aligned integration of birth through 5 in its approach to work and policy by:
 - Requiring DOE to develop an integrated early learning-20 information (data) system.
 - Submitting a unified budget to the legislature.
 - Adds ELCs to oversight jurisdiction of the State Board of Education.
 - Requiring DOE to develop performance standards for coalitions and provide programmatic and fiscal monitoring biennially.

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- Requires development of the market rate schedule to include market rates that take into consideration provider rates for Gold Seal providers that adhere to accrediting group sizes and ratios.
- Requires payment schedule to take into consideration the prevailing market rate or alternative model approved by the ACF-OCC.

Gold Seal Accreditation:

- Moves oversight of the Gold Seal Quality Designation program from DCF to DOE.
- Increases accountability measures for approved accrediting associations.
- Sets the Gold Seal differential at a minimum of 20%.
- Requires an entity to provide onsite monitoring every five years with an annual reporting process that requires risk-based on-site monitoring.
- Dictates that an accrediting body fraudulently accrediting early learning programs or not conducting onsite verifications shall be liable for the repayment of any rate differentials paid to providers.

Early Learning Coalition Accountability:

- Sets number of coalitions at 30 instead of 31 (currently 30 in the state).
- Increases transparency and limits conflicts of interest for board members.
- Requires ELC executive directors to provide reports as requested by the SBOE.
- Requires annual submission (by August 30th) of the Executive Director's performance evaluation, on forms adopted by the department.
- Allows for the Commissioner to appoint an interim board chair in the absence of a gubernatorial appointment.
- Removes requirement that one-third of board must be private sector.
- Requires creation of statistically valid customer service surveys for:
 - Customers who utilize CCR&R services
 - Parents, annually, at time of eligibility determination
 - Providers who participate in SR or VPK programs (at time of contract execution)
 - Board members to measure coalition performance
- Surveys will be deployed beginning with the 2022-2023 fiscal year.
- Results of survey must be based on statistically significant sample size of completed surveys and calculated annually. If a coalition receives a 59% or lower on the survey, they will be put on a corrective action plan for a year.
- Allows DOE to remove an ELC from eligibility to offer School Readiness and VPK or merge the coalition as a result of noncompliance with performance standards.

School Readiness Program Changes:

- Includes additional system improvements, i.e., clarifying that military child care programs are eligible to participate in SR and VPK and allowing use of contracted slots to support children at greatest risk of school failure.
- Allows HS and EHS enrollment as an allowable scenario for waiving parent copayments

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Child Care Resource and Referral – Enhanced Provider Profile:

- Revises requirements for creation of an early learning provider performance profile to include the following elements:
 - Type of program
 - Hours of service
 - Ages of children served
 - Number of children served
 - Program information
 - Fees and eligibility for services
 - Availability of transportation
 - Participation in the Child Care Food Program, if applicable.
 - A link to licensing inspection reports, if applicable.
 - The components of the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program performance metric which must consist of the program assessment composite score, learning gains score, achievement score.
 - The School Readiness Program assessment composite score and program assessment care level composite score results delineated by infant classrooms, toddler classrooms, and preschool classrooms results, if applicable.
 - Gold Seal Quality Care designation, if applicable.