

Measures Affecting Voluntary Prekindergarten:

Impact of 2016 Legislation on VPK Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Enrollment

Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK)
Early Learning Impact Conference
August 2, 2016

Conference Report

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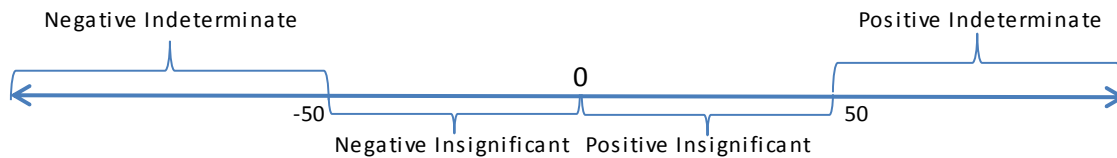
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Introduction

Four bills enacted during the 2016 Regular Session contain provisions that may impact full-time equivalent (FTE) student enrollment for the Voluntary Prekindergarten program. All impacts are the cumulative effects. Cumulative effects means that the estimate for each fiscal year can be applied directly against the adopted forecast. The table below illustrates what is meant by fiscal year cumulative impacts, where FY references to prior years are inclusive of modifications to that specific cohort which reflect the natural passage of time.

Fiscal Year (FY) Cumulative Impacts					
	FY 1	FY 2	FY 3	FY 4	FY 5
FTE Impact	FY 1 Annual Impact	FY 1 Annual Impact + FY 2 Annual Impact	FY 1 Annual Impact + FY 2 Annual Impact + FY 3 Annual Impact	FY 1 Annual Impact + FY 2 Annual Impact + FY 3 Annual Impact + FY 4 Annual Impact	FY 1 Annual Impact + FY 2 Annual Impact + FY 3 Annual Impact + FY 4 Annual Impact + FY 5 Annual Impact

Effects without specific numerical estimates are described as follows:



Wording	Meaning
Indeterminate (+/-)	The impact cannot be estimated as to level and direction, but the level is expected to be larger than or equal to +50 FTE or -50 FTE.
Positive Indeterminate	The impact cannot be estimated, but the level is expected to be positive and larger than or equal to +50 FTE.
Negative Indeterminate	The impact cannot be estimated, but the level is expected to be negative and larger than or equal to -50 FTE.
0 / Positive Indeterminate	The impact may be zero or it may be positive indeterminate.
0 / Negative Indeterminate	The impact may be zero or it may be negative indeterminate.
Insignificant (+/-)	The impact cannot be estimated as to direction, but the level is expected to be smaller than +50 FTE or -50 FTE.
Positive Insignificant	The impact is expected to be positive and the level is expected to be smaller than +50 FTE.
Negative Insignificant	The impact is expected to be negative and the level is expected to be smaller than -50 FTE.
0 / Positive Insignificant	The impact may be zero or it may be positive insignificant.
0 / Negative Insignificant	The impact may be zero or it may be negative insignificant.

Summary Table of Cumulative Impacts

FTE Impact					
	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
CS/CS/HB 7029 - Extension of Ages Eligible for Voluntary Prekindergarten	0 / Positive Insignificant	0 / Positive Insignificant	0 / Positive Insignificant	0 / Positive Insignificant	0 / Positive Insignificant
SB 672, HB 5001, HB 5101 - Personal Learning Scholarship Accounts	0 / Negative Insignificant	0 / Negative Insignificant	0 / Negative Insignificant	0 / Negative Insignificant	0 / Negative Insignificant

Detailed Bill Discussion

Issue: Extension of Ages Eligible for Voluntary Prekindergarten

Bill Number(s): CS/CS/HB 7029

Entire Bill

Partial Bill: CS/CS/HB 7029, Section 6

Sponsor(s): Education Committee and Education Appropriations Subcommittee and Choice & Innovation Subcommittee and Cortes, B. and Diaz, M. (CO-SPONSORS) Adkins; Artiles; Fresen

Effective Date: July 1, 2016

Month/Year Impact Begins: July/2016

Date of Analysis: July 29, 2016

Section 1: Narrative

a. Preexisting Law:

Eligibility and enrollment into the State's Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Program was addressed in s. 1002.53, F.S., as follows:

Each child who resides in this state who will have attained the age of 4 years on or before September 1 of the school year is eligible for the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program during that school year. The child remains eligible until the beginning of the school year for which the child is eligible for admission to kindergarten in a public school under s. 1003.21(1)(a)2 or until the child is admitted to kindergarten, whichever occurs first.

Therefore, a student may attend VPK only for the school year in which they are 4 years old on or before September 1st.

b. Change:

CS/CS/HB 7029 expands the age eligibility requirements for a child in Florida's VPK program under s. 1002.53(2), F.S. The change allows a child to either be 4 or 5 on or before September 1 of the school year. However, the child remains eligible until they are either admitted to kindergarten or will have attained the age of 6 by February 1 of the school year.

The possible configurations for VPK may be:

- Age 4 on or before September 1st
- Age 5 on or before September 1st, but not 6 by February 1st (those children born from February 2nd through September 1st)

Section 2: Description of Data and Sources

Data was requested from the Florida Department of Education's Office of Early Learning (OEL) and Division of Accountability, Research, and Measurement (ARM). OEL data showed the number of 5-year-old kindergarten children in the 2015-16 school year that participated in 2014-15 VPK by delayed enrollment eligibility (Attachment A). However, this data did not match 6-year-old kindergarten children with VPK participation in 2013-14. ARM data showed the number of first-time kindergarten children that were age 6 or age 5 by grade promotion status from the final 2013-14 survey 5 and the preliminary 2014-15 survey 5 data (Attachment B).

Section 3: Methodology (Include Assumptions and Attach Details)

After review of the data, the methodology utilized the following assumptions:

- Kindergarteners are born proportionately in the eligible and non-eligible calendar timeframes for delayed enrollment for VPK.

- The number of 6-year-old students that enter kindergarten for the first time, or delay their enrollment, is rather stable.

Section 4: Analysis

According to OEL data, there were 190,424 five year-olds (on or by September 1st) enrolled in kindergarten during the 2015-16 school year that were matched with VPK enrollment records. Of these children, 133,836, or 70.3%, participated in VPK in 2014-15. Additionally, 32,625 children, or 17.1%, did not participate in VPK and were eligible to delay their participation based on age.

According to ARM data, the number of children in kindergarten for the first time at age 6 was 2,115 in 2013-14 and 2,164 in 2014-15. Using kindergarten membership from Survey 2 for 2013-14 and 2014-15, this represents approximately 1.5% of kindergarten students in each year. It is unknown if these students participated in VPK at age 4 and/or if they would have taken advantage of the new delayed age for eligibility.

Based on these data, it cannot be estimated if more children would participate in VPK due to the option of delayed VPK enrollment or simply shift their year of entry into the VPK program.

Therefore, the change in policy to allow 5-year-olds to enter Voluntary Prekindergarten is anticipated to have a 0 / Positive Insignificant effect on VPK participation or result in a shift of the year of participation.

Section 5: Cumulative VPK FTE Enrollment Impacts

	Cumulative Impact
	FTE
2016-17	0 / Positive Insignificant
2017-18	0 / Positive Insignificant
2018-19	0 / Positive Insignificant
2019-20	0 / Positive Insignificant
2020-21	0 / Positive Insignificant

Attachment A – Extension of Ages Eligible for Voluntary Prekindergarten

2015-16 Kindergarten within 2014-15 VPK Cohort Age by Eligibility for Delayed Enrollment					
	2014-15 VPK Participants		Did Not Participate in 2014-15 VPK		Grand Total
	September 2 through February 1 Birthdays	February 2 through September 1 Birthdays	September 2 through February 1 Birthdays	February 2 through September 1 Birthdays	
Kindergarteners* in 2015-16	58,052	75,784	23,963	32,625	190,424
Percent of Total	30.5%	39.8%	12.6%	17.1%	100.0%

Source: Florida Department of Education Office of Early Learning

*Does not include six year old kindergarteners

Attachment B – Extension of Ages Eligible for Voluntary Prekindergarten

	First Time Kindergarten - Age 5		First Time Kindergarten - Age 6	
	Final FY 2013-14 Survey 5	Preliminary FY 2014-15 Survey 5	Final FY 2013-14 Survey 5	Preliminary FY 2014-15 Survey 5
Total Students	143,780	140,368	2,115	2,164
Percent of Total	98.6%	98.5%	1.4%	1.5%

Source: Florida Department of Education Division of Accountability, Research, and Measurement

Issue: Florida Personal Learning Scholarship Accounts/Gardiner Scholarship

Bill Number(s): SB 672, HB 5001, HB 5101

Entire Bill

Partial Bill: SB 672 Sections 5 and 10; HB 5001 Section 19, and HB 5101 Section 33

Sponsor(s): Gaetz; (CO-INTRODUCERS) Hukill / Appropriations Committee; Corcoran / Health Care Appropriations Subcommittee; Hudson

Effective Date: July 1, 2016

Month/Year Impact Begins: July/2016

Date of Analysis: July 29, 2016

Section 1: Narrative

a. Preexisting Law:

Eligibility into Florida's Personal Learning Scholarship Account (PLSA) and authorized use of funds is addressed in s. 1002.385, F.S., as follows:

Florida residents who are eligible to enroll in kindergarten through grade 12 in a public school with a qualifying disability and are the subject of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or have received a diagnosis of a disability from a licensed physician or psychologist are eligible to request from the state a Florida Personal Learning Scholarship Account (PLSA). Funds can be put towards instructional materials, curriculum, specialized services by approved providers, enrollment in eligible private schools, assessment fees, and Florida Prepaid College Program contributions.

In Special Session 2015A, the eligibility requirements were amended, for FY 2015-16 only, through the budget implementing bill to increase eligibility by expanding the definition of autism, adding muscular dystrophy to the definition of disabilities, and including 3- and 4- year olds with a specified disability. The implementing bill also specifically added tuition and part-time tutoring services to the list of specialized services that the scholarship could be used for.

b. Change:

Section 5 of SB 672 renames the Florida Personal Learning Scholarship Account program to the Gardiner Scholarship. It also makes permanent the changes that were in the Special Session 2015A Implementing Bill in addition to the following: expanding the list of possible purposes that the Gardiner Scholarship program funding may be used for to include tuition and fees associated with programs offered by Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program (VPK) providers and school readiness providers.

Therefore, students in a VPK classroom could receive funds either through the VPK program or through a Gardiner Scholarship, if eligible and approved.

Section 33 of HB 5101 also expanded the list of conditions that qualify as a disability to include Phelan-McDermid syndrome.

Section 10 of SB 672 appropriates \$71.2 million in recurring funds from the General Revenue Fund for FY 2016-17 to DOE for scholarship awards under the Gardiner Scholarship Program. In addition to the scholarships, \$2,136,000 in recurring funds from GR is appropriated for administrative expenses, not to exceed 3 percent of the amount of each scholarship award. Also, Section 19 of HB 5001 reverts and re-appropriates the unexpended balance of funds from the FY 2015-16 Personal Learning Scholarship Accounts in FY 2015-16 to the Gardiner Scholarship Program for FY 2016-17. As a result, the total appropriation for the Gardiner Program for FY 2016-17 is higher than the appropriation for FY 2015-16

(\$55 million - \$53,398,058 for scholarship awards & \$1,601,942 for administrative expenses), allowing for increased participation.

Another change that may also increase participation is that the awards will be tiered based on the date that the student is initially determined eligible. The new phase in of awards is outlined below. Students determined eligible by the organizations by:

- September 1 shall receive 100 percent of the total awarded funds.
- November 1 shall receive 75 percent of the total awarded funds.
- February 1 shall receive 50 percent of the total awarded funds.
- April 1 shall receive 25 percent of the total awarded funds.

Section 2: Description of Data and Sources

Data was obtained from a variety of sources to evaluate the possibility of inclusion in the analysis. These included the following:

- Personal Learning Scholarship Account program data for funded students as of June 23, 2016 and July 27, 2016 by grade was obtained from Step Up for Students for FY 2015-16 and FY 2016-17 (Attachment A).
- Voluntary Prekindergarten Estimating Conference estimated enrollment as of January 11, 2016, for the 2015-16 program year was 169,591 students.

Section 3: Methodology (Include Assumptions and Attach Details)

After review of the data, the methodology utilized the following assumptions:

- The Scholarship Funding Organization (SFO), Step Up For Students, will continue to manage nearly all of the Gardiner Scholarships as they have done in the past. Additionally, the minimal number of scholarships managed by the other SFO, AAA Scholarship Foundation, will reflect similar trends as found in the data from Step Up for Students.
- It is unknown whether the program will reach capacity in FY 2016-17, since it had not reached capacity in FY 2015-16 and was appropriated additional funds from new and reverted sources. In addition, it is unknown whether behavior will change due to the tiered award schedule, increased availability of providers, etc.

Section 4: Analysis

As of June 23, 2016, there were 227 VPK-eligible 4-year-old students participating in the 2015-16 Florida Personal Learning Scholarship Account/Gardiner Scholarship program. The total number of students awarded a scholarship in FY 2015-16 was 4,692 according to Step Up for Students data.

The number of VPK-eligible 4-year-old students participating in the Gardiner Scholarship program is likely to increase as the program matures due to scholarship availability, expansion of the authorized use of funds towards tuition and fees at VPK and school readiness providers, and the permanency of Special Session 2015A budget implementing bill language pertaining to the Florida Personal Learning Scholarship/Gardiner Scholarship. However, the number of 4-year-old participants each year is a function of last year's 3-year old renewals and the number of new 4-year-olds. The most recent data from Step Up for Students show 320 awards for 4-year-olds for 2016-17 compared to 227 in 2015-16. The awards are relatively equally split between new and renewals for this age group. In addition, these data also indicate a renewal rate of 77.5% for this age group.

The attractiveness of the Specialized Instructional Services Program (SISP), part of the VPK Program may also play into a parent's decision as whether or not to enroll their child in the Gardiner Program. One possible reason for opting to enroll a child in VPK SISP is to become eligible for the McKay Scholarship Program as a kindergartener, as VPK SISP may meet the prior year requirement of the McKay Scholarship Program. However, the largest impact on VPK, is the VPK SISP as parents may opt to enroll their child in the Gardiner Scholarship program.

It is unknown how many of the 2015-16 and the already enrolled 2016-17 4-year-old participants would have opted to attend Voluntary Prekindergarten (Regular or SISP). Thus, the change in policy to allow Gardiner Scholarship funds to be used at VPK and school readiness providers in addition to codifying Special Session 2015A Implementing Bill language is anticipated to have a 0 / Negative Insignificant effect on VPK participation.

Section 5: Cumulative VPK FTE Enrollment Impacts

	Cumulative Impact
	FTE
2016-17	0 / Negative Insignificant
2017-18	0 / Negative Insignificant
2018-19	0 / Negative Insignificant
2019-20	0 / Negative Insignificant
2020-21	0 / Negative Insignificant

Attachment A – Personal Learning Scholarship Account/Gardiner Scholarship

PLSA/Gardiner Scholarship Participation for Three and Four Year Olds		
Parent Reported Student Grade	Count of Funded Students in FY 2015-16 ¹	Count of Awarded Students in FY 2016-17 ²
3 years old	209	212
4 years old	227	<u>320</u>
New		158
Renewal		162

Source: Step Up For Students Data Request received:
¹June 23, 2016 and ²July 27, 2016

Notes

The pre-Conference report will have the Proposed Impact. The final document will have the Adopted Impact.