



PRE-KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOMS IN FISH CALCULATION

PROPOSAL

Include all Pre-Kindergarten classes and programs in the Department of Education's (DOE) Florida Inventory of School Houses (FISH) calculations to ensure that all students receiving instruction in Florida School Districts are accurately counted by and receive adequate funding from the DOE.

Present Situation and Rationale

- Under current Florida State Statutes and Department of Education rules, Pre-Kindergarten students enrolled at elementary and combination (K-8) schools are not counted in the State's calculations of Capital Outlay Full-Time Equivalent (COFTE) or Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) through the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP). These calculations determine the amount of state funding a School District receives per student for a given year. The pre-kindergarten students are enrolled in District schools, receiving instruction from District employees, and utilizing District resources and nutritional services, yet they are not included in the calculations of State funds for the District. Additionally, as these students are not counted for COFTE, that translates into them not being counted for capacity. Please see the example below:

Capacity Impact Example:

- School X has a capacity of 700 elementary students.
- School and District staff intend to enroll the school with 100 students in each grade level from PK-5 (7 total grades).
- When the State counts the enrollment for COFTE, it only reports 600 out of 700 seats filled. (Pre-kindergarten students are not counted.)
- This results in the District only receiving COFTE funds for 600 students at the school and, from the State's perspective, the school has room for 100 more students.

Impact of Proposed Change

- Amending F.S. 1011.62 and Florida Department of Education Rules (Florida Inventory of School Houses Section 2.1.1b, Note 2: "...No other Pre-K students [other than those with Individual Education Plans] are eligible for consideration or counted among eligible students for any Pre-K capital outlay facilities services.") will allow school districts in Florida to receive the proper amount of funding from the State to account for the totality of the students they serve in their schools.

Historical Perspective

- Enrollment data for the past five years shows the District has enrolled 2,400 - 3,200 pre-kindergarten students each year, with about 50% of the students garnering funding for Exceptional Student Education. The remaining 50% of the students could fill two of our elementary schools while requiring a greater level of staff and resources. Combine the Pre-K data with the District's growth rate of enough new students each year to fill a school, and the result is a situation that makes it difficult to provide seats.

Fiscal Impact

- If permitted to count toward FTE (\$8,553 per student in FY23), 1,200 - 1,600 regular program pre-kindergarten students could generate \$10,263,600 - \$13,684,800 in funding. Counting these students in seat capacity would also factor into the rate at which the District would need to provide space via expanding current sites or building new schools.

Statute Impacted

- F.S. 1011.62

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

**Armor Persons, Board Chair,
District 5**
School Board Legislative Liaison
District Cell: 239.371.6503
Office: 239.337.8303
Armordp@leeschools.net

Angel M. Gomez
Chief Communications and Government
Relations Officer
District Cell: 239-412-3965
Angelm@leeschools.net

Dr. Kim McDougal, Lobbyist
Gray Robinson, P.A.
Office: 850-566-8114
Kim.McDougal@gray-robinson.com