

Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Funding



Program Information

- Constitutionally mandated prekindergarten program, **free to every four year old in Florida.**
- Program has served approximately **654,000 children since it began in 2005** and is the second largest prekindergarten program in the nation.
- Consists of quality indicators including **developmentally appropriate curriculum, teacher credentials and ratios.**
- **Children that participate in the VPK program consistently perform better** on the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener than children that did not participate in VPK.
- In 2009-2010, it is estimated that the program will serve approximately **70% of all four year olds in Florida.** The total projected to be served is 160,555.
- Program growth is estimated to continue. Current estimates anticipate the program to serve **75% of all four year olds by 2010-2011.**

Funding Information

- The Florida Legislature establishes the Base Student Allocation (BSA) annually during the legislative session. **Current BSA is \$2,575 for the school year program and \$2,190 for the summer.**
- Due to projected growth and a \$8.2 million shortfall from 2008-2009 paid out of 2009-2010 funds, **the total needed for 2009-2010 is approximately \$28 million:**
 - Approximately \$8m for 2008-2009 deficit (paid out of 2009-2010 allocation)
 - Approximately \$20m for estimated enrollment increase.
- Due to projected growth in 2010-2011 and the need to replace \$38 million of nonrecurring ARRA funds, **the program needs approximately \$80 million:**
 - Approximately \$38m in nonrecurring ARRA funds
 - Approximately \$42m for estimated enrollment increase

Recommendation

Increase Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) program funding to \$411.5 million -

- Allow the budget to provide **funding for all current year (2009-2010) and subsequent year (2010-2011) anticipated growth and shortfalls.**
- **Maintains BSA at current levels** in order to continue to ensure the high-quality programs Florida voters envisioned.
- Provides \$2 million to continue the work on the Early Learning Information System (ELIS). ELIS will replace the current Enhanced Field System (EFS), an outdated data collection system, and **provide estimated savings, related to administrative efficiencies, of approximately \$28 million annually.**