

Committee on Early Grade Success SB 806/ HB 1229

Florida has made significant strides in increasing reading proficiency, but there are still a considerable number of students that are not reading at proficient levels.

While key state leaders are focused on identifying additional supports in the early elementary school grades that will impact and improve student outcomes, there is need for increased focus on other key system elements that would also impact student outcomes, such as early learning system development.

With limited resources, there is considerable benefit and need to streamline and refine assessment practices. This work would not add to existing child assessment protocols, but rather be used to develop a coordinated child assessment approach within a larger accountability system.

Florida would be well positioned to coordinate efforts to solidify the use of fewer assessments and focus on related teacher professional development.

The Committee on Early Grade Success would be charged with developing a proposal for establishing protocols and considerations related to the implementation of a coordinated child assessment approach for the School Readiness, Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program, and Kindergarten Readiness Assessment.

Implementing a unified and coordinated system of child assessment across multiple funding streams and programs offers many benefits:

- Policy makers and funders are able to evaluate the impact of different initiatives using consistent, developmentally appropriate measures.
- Collecting the same data across programs enables teachers to differentiate instruction for children and share data (with appropriate parental permission) as children transition to new programs.
- Initiatives can also share aggregated data across funding streams to inform broader program and policy decisions and opportunities for improved coordination and children's success in early grades.

The Committee will be responsible for working in 2017 to develop specific recommendations on the design and implementation of a coordinated child assessment system. Given this work involves numerous stakeholders and multiple state agencies, a determination was made that the Committee would best be staffed by a university with relevant knowledge and expertise, but no potential conflict for the outcome, the Lastinger Center of the University of Florida.

Because the Helios Education Foundation is highly respected in the education realm and because this is an area of considerable focus for the Foundation, the organization has agreed to provide \$100,000 in funding for the Committee if the proposed legislation passes.

