

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Early Learning Draft Released

The 87-page bill addresses numerous issues. Among others, it:

- requires OEL to develop a statewide VPK provider contract;
- requires public school VPK providers to execute the statewide provider contract;
- maintains current school readiness eligibility standards, but includes provision of services to parents transitioning off of TANF into work in the highest priority;
- requires OEL to develop a uniform chart of accounts for budgeting and reporting purposes; and
- requires ELCs to annually monitor school readiness providers.

Some of the most important to Florida's United Ways and early learning advocates are:

- **Quality** – The bill is still being refined vis-à-vis school readiness quality components.
- **Governance** – The bill creates the Office of Early Learning in the Department of Education to be administered by an Executive Director accountable to the Commissioner of Education. The bill states that the Office “shall not be construed as part of the K-20 education system” and provides that the State Board of Education has authority only to accept or disapprove rules developed by the Office.
- **Coalition Caps** – The bill requires that at least 82 percent of funds be spent on children in care, caps Early Learning Coalition administrative costs to five percent, and caps total administrative costs, quality activities, and non-direct services to 18 percent.
- **Coalition Scorecards** – Each ELC will be evaluated based on a “scorecard” reflecting a number of issues.

Advocates met with Representative O’Toole’s Education Committee staff for more than two hours this morning to review the issues above, among others, and hammer out language that will ensure the School Readiness program remains on solid footing. The continuous dialogue that Chair O’Toole and staff have facilitated since the beginning of session looks like it will result in a good bill that will balance slots with quality, and address important issues relating to accountability, transparency, fraud reduction, and governance. The Proposed Committee Bill will be posted late this afternoon.