

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

S.B. 23  
By: Zaffirini  
Human Services  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

Current state law, enacted by S.B. 76 during the 78th Legislature, Regular Session, allows certain agencies to work with the State Center for Early Childhood Education to integrate and coordinate pre-kindergarten, Head Start, and after school child care programs, and to streamline eligibility and registration procedures for such programs. In addition, S.B. 76 authorized the coordination of agencies and service providers in a coordination of resources demonstration project. Preliminary findings from the 11 Texas Early Education Model (TEEM) demonstration projects established by S.B. 76 show substantial and often significant growth for children in many areas of literacy and language within two to three months.

S.B. 23 builds on the S.B. 76 integration model by requiring the commissioner of education to coordinate early childhood education services and by authorizing the commissioner to establish financial incentives for early childhood education providers that provide coordinated services. In addition, the bill authorizes the development of integration demonstration projects by an early childhood education program provider.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the commissioner of education in SECTION 1 of this bill.

### **ANALYSIS**

The bill authorizes the commissioner of education by rule to establish a program to award grants to providers of early childhood care and education programs that, to the greatest extent practicable, provide coordinated services authorized under Section 29.158(c), Education Code.

The bill authorizes certain educational institutions, local governments, and other entities to develop one or more coordination-of-resources demonstration projects under which government-funded child care and certain early education services are operated in a coordinated and integrated manner. Approval of a project must be made contingent on development of a memorandum of understanding regarding the child-care and early education coordination and integration that conforms to certain criteria that are described in detail in the bill.

The bill requires a demonstration project to include a program evaluation component that includes certain specifically defined evaluation criteria and outcomes.

The bill requires the State Center for Early Childhood Development (Center), in conjunction with the P-16 Council, to develop and adopt a school readiness certification system for use in certifying the effectiveness of certain programs in preparing children for kindergarten. The system is to be made available on a voluntary basis to program providers seeking to obtain certification as evidence of the quality of the program provided. The bill further requires the Center, in developing and adopting the system, to seek the active participation of all interested stakeholders, including parents and program providers. The bill sets forth certain required elements of the system.

The bill reenacts and amends a certain provision of the Education Code to require the P-16 Council, in conjunction with the State Center for Early Childhood Development, to develop and adopt a school readiness certification system as required by the bill, and further requires that the school readiness certification system be adopted not later than September 1, 2006.

**EFFECTIVE DATE**

September 1, 2005