

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 76

BY SENATOR WALSWORTH

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Department of Education and the Department of Children and Family Services to determine the feasibility of developing an operational plan for the transfer of the Child Care Development Fund to the Department of Education.

WHEREAS, it is imperative that early childhood programs promote kindergarten readiness and sustain lifelong learning and achievement to significantly improve Louisiana child outcomes; and

WHEREAS, publicly-funded early childhood programs should prioritize kindergarten readiness and public monies should fund programs that excel at achieving high levels of kindergarten readiness, or progression towards kindergarten readiness; and

WHEREAS, parents who choose to send their children to publicly-funded early childhood programs should have clear, actionable information on the quality of the program available; and

WHEREAS, providers of publicly-funded early childhood programs should be held accountable for the public monies they receive, but given the autonomy to implement an educational program that promotes and achieves kindergarten readiness without undue regulation; and

WHEREAS, state entities involved in the oversight or provision of early childhood programs should collaborate and integrate processes to the fullest extent possible, set standards for child development and educational achievement for young children that align with standards established for children enrolled in grades kindergarten through twelve, and administer early childhood programs in such a way that ensures the safety, welfare and healthy development of children; and

WHEREAS, Act 3, known as the Louisiana Early Childhood Education Act, of the 2012 Regular Legislative Session directed the State Board of Elementary and Secondary

Education to create a comprehensive and integrated network through which to manage and oversee all programs funded through state or federal resources that provide early childhood care or educational services; and

WHEREAS, the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approved a framework to implement the Early Childhood Care and Education Network which was developed in collaboration with the Department of Children and Family Services, Department of Health and Hospitals, the Louisiana Early Childhood Advisory Council, Nonpublic Schools Council and the Child Care Association of Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, the framework to implement the Early Childhood Care and Education Network included the following:

(a) fair and transparent outcome-based rating system, including letter grades, that rewards high performing programs and intervenes in persistently under-performing programs;

(b) funding based on performance and demand that ensures all parents, regardless of income, have access to higher quality programs that prepare their child for success in school;

(c) clear and easy-to-understand information that allows families to make informed decisions about what program is best for their young children; and

(d) resources and support to improve the quality of care and instruction to ensure all students have access to effective early childhood professionals; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Education, in collaboration with the Department of Children and Family Services, will launch pilot programs during the 2013-2014 fiscal year to test various strategies in practice and use results to fine-tune the use of child and program assessments, coordinate funding at the local level, evaluate the use of new licensing standards and the new Birth–Five Standards, as well as collect consolidated data from the Department of Children and Family Services, Department of Health and Hospitals, and the Department of Education; and

WHEREAS, this work will inform continued integration efforts among state agencies needed to ensure maximum effectiveness of the Early Childhood Care and Education Network, support to child care providers, and appropriate oversight.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Department of Education and the Department of Children and Family Services to determine the feasibility of developing an operational plan for the transfer of the Child Care Development Fund lead agency authority and associated functions to the Department of Education no later than July 1, 2015, and submit any such plan developed to the House and Senate Committees on Education and Health and Welfare no later than sixty days prior to the convening of the 2014 Regular Session.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the state superintendent of education and the secretary of the Department of Children and Family Services.

---

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

---

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES