

Position Paper on Education Governance January 2002

Executive Summary

The Florida Council of 100 enthusiastically supports the recently adopted K-20 system of governance for Florida's education system. Our state now has a system that can achieve the best use of all of the system's resources to reach the highest levels of student performance possible. This innovative K-20 accountability-based system reflects the Council of 100's long-standing principles regarding education governance. As such, the Council strongly opposes any initiatives that would detract from or weaken the unified governance provided by the new K-20 system, including Senator Bob Graham's proposed Constitutional amendment on state university governance.

For several years, the Council of 100 has consistently advocated educational governance reform based upon six principles:

- Establish the Governor as the state's primary education advocate;
- Provide seamless movement of students from one level to the next;
- Encourage collaboration, not competition;
- Provide clear lines of authority and corresponding accountability to governing entities;
- Discourage legislative micromanagement and interference in academic programs; and
- Coordinate the budget process to reflect appropriate priorities throughout all educational levels.

These principles are competently reflected in the new K-20 educational system. Early indications suggest the system is working. It is imprudent and counterproductive to make significant changes at this time. We are confident that the new K-20 structure, designed around the key principles listed above, will soon enable Florida to significantly improve our education system for all students at all levels.

The New K-20 System Has Been in Design for Many Years

The State of Florida has embarked on an unprecedented task to create a seamless K-20 accountability-based education governance system that addresses the needs of all students. The process has involved all the people of Florida, including elected officials and educators at all levels, to create a new education delivery system.

--**1997** – The Governor’s Commission on Education, led by Governor Chiles and then-Florida Progress CEO Jack Critchfield, proposed creation of a more active, strategic and accountable state board of education and an appointed chief state school officer to replace the cabinet as the school board and the elected commissioner of education. The Constitution Revision Commission took that proposal farther and recommended that Florida’s cabinet be reduced from seven independently elected officials to four. The proposal replaced the elected Commissioner of Education with one appointed by a new Board of Education.

--**1998** - Voters approved this amendment to the Constitution to create an “efficient, safe and secure and high-quality” system.

--**1999** - Blue Ribbon Committee evaluated how best to implement the Constitutional changes.

--**2000** - Legislature approved the transition to a new education model by January 2003, when the new cabinet structure comes into existence

--**2000** - Education Governance Reorganization Transition Task Force developed legislative proposals for the transition to the new approach to education governance.

--**2001** – Legislature authorized the implementation of Florida’s new K-20 education governance structure. Senate Bill 1162 required the following:

--Abolished the State University System Board of Regents and established a new governor appointed seven-member Florida Board of Education as of July 1, 2001. This board oversees all state universities, community colleges and primary and secondary schools

--Established Boards of Trustees for each of Florida’s 11 universities, and required the Governor to appoint all trustees; completed in June/July, 2001.

--Required the new Florida Board of Education to:

--Establish devolution of duties

--Commence the reorganization of the Department of Education

--Establish the Commission for Independent Education

--Create the Council for Education Policy Research and Improvement

--Submit proposals for a new school administrative code to the legislature

Over a period of several years, the new K-20 system was developed with inputs from the very best thinkers on education governance, governmental accountability, and student performance, and has been approved by the people of Florida. It will be fully implemented in January 2003. During this implementation period, there is considerable turbulence as is experienced in any restructuring of any organization. We believe that Floridians should embrace the great potential that this K-20 system offers, and should work to help get it implemented. Now, before it is even fully established, is not the time for starting to make changes.

Senator Bob Graham, for example, proposes creating a separate board for the state universities. While no one can question the devotion of our former governor and current US Senator to improving Florida's education system, we believe that the new system being implemented deserves a full opportunity to prove its worth. Unfortunately, our respect for Senator Graham cannot overcome our concern that his proposal will weaken the ability of Florida's education system to improve student performance over the full K-20 system. While change is never an easy process, Florida's education system was in dire need of change to be competitive in the 21st century. We believe that changing the new education governance model now, before it's even fully implemented, is not the direction Florida should head, if we truly want to produce the high-quality graduates so essential for the challenges of the 21st century.

The New Education Governance Structure is an Effective Approach for Florida

As we look strategically at the future of education in Florida, we in the Council of 100 believe the current education governance model is an effective solution for improving Florida's education system for the following reasons:

--The new K-20 system provides essential coordination and collaboration among all education levels. This will ensure that a single education system properly addresses the needs of all students, K-20. Students are at the center of this structure, and Florida is embarking on an extraordinary process that allows the student to move from kindergarten through graduate school in an organized process. In the 21st century, the necessary skills and knowledge to be successful are constantly changing, and communication and collaboration among the K-20 education levels is all the more critical. The new K-20 governance model eliminate past instances of misalignments of curriculum and expectations by connecting learning at every level and bringing all systems together and define learning expectations each step of the way. We must never return to a system in which the various education delivery systems are compartmentalized and uncoordinated. The previous uncoordinated, unwieldy bureaucratic system promoted the institution rather than the student as primary focus. It is time that Florida puts the student at the center of the education system.

--The new K-20 system places accountability and responsibility in one state board. The establishment of the seven-member Board of Education and Boards of Trustees at each of the 11 universities, along with the existing boards of community colleges and school districts, has reduced the bureaucracy evident in the previous education governance model. A separate bureaucracy, such as the former Board of Regents for the state universities, only added to the complexity of managing a total system in which students achieve the highest levels of achievement. We would argue that a single Florida Board of Education will have *greater visibility* than separate boards, making it more difficult for lawmakers to politicize the process and override decisions made by the Florida Board of Education. We believe the K-20 governance model will help to break down government barriers within the education system so that education delivery systems can operate more efficiently and effectively.

--The new K-20 system promotes sound management principles. One of the key components of any system is ensuring solid management goals and policies. The idea of a single education leader (the Governor) with a Board of Directors (Florida Board of Education) and a CEO (Secretary of Education) makes sound management sense. This seamless, coordinated system enables greater communication among all management levels, creates a better understanding of how each level of the education system is linked, and ensures accountability for

student learning at all levels of education. Because there is greater connection among each level of the education system, those involved with the education system at all management levels will be able to pursue their roles and responsibilities as leaders more effectively and efficiently. This will only benefit the student and ensure that all students receive the highest quality of education they deserve.

--The new K-20 system provides authority at the local level. A key component of the K-20 education governance model is to empower the Boards of Trustees at each of the 11 universities with the same level of authority and responsibility enjoyed by our school districts and top-notch community colleges. This will include the authority to make critical decisions affecting each university, including financial and human resources matters. Empowering each university to make its own decisions can only improve the quality and research capabilities of Florida's universities. As the University of Florida President Charles Young argued in the *Tallahassee Democrat* (December 15, 2001), the new system will allow each university to pursue "excellence in accord with its particular mission while operating under common policies designed to meet the needs of the state."

--The new K-20 system will reduce the competition for resources. Previously, the three levels of education (K-12, community colleges, state universities) worked as separate, independent entities that competed directly with the legislature for limited resources. Many people at every level felt that this competition resulted in an unequal distribution of those resources, creating resentment and inequity. As Sanford Shugart, the President of Valencia Community College noted in the *Orlando Sentinel* (December 15, 2001), "the old system also gave us bitter competition for resources among the three systems of education, unequally matched to influence the political process." The new K-20 model will bring the three systems together under a single board that governs them all and will strategically determine resource needs for all K-20 systems.

Conclusion

The Florida Council of 100 enthusiastically supports the recently adopted K-20 system of governance for Florida's education system. There are overwhelming benefits to this new system as outlined above, and we believe the K-20 model will advance Florida's education system toward a higher level of quality and increase its ability to serve Florida's needs. The Council of 100 strongly opposes any initiatives, including that by Senator Bob Graham, which would contradict the solid education governance principles embodied in the new education governance system. We offer our support to the Florida Board of Education as it embarks on the incredibly important task to implement a seamless, K-20 education governance system.

About The Florida Council of 100

The Florida Council of 100, formed in 1961, is comprised of 100 of Florida's top business leaders. The Council of 100 is a private, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that exists to promote the economic growth of Florida and to improve the economic well-being and quality of life of its citizenry. In concert with ex-officio members, such as non-elected state government officials and university presidents, the Council of 100 works to provide nonpartisan solutions to quality of life issues, such as education, transportation and government efficiency. The Council of 100 was the first of its kind in the United States and works in close harmony with the Governor, the Chief Justice, the Legislature, as well as with private organizations, to achieve quality of life improvements for the citizens of Florida.

The Florida Council of 100 has had a long-standing interest in Florida's education systems and knows the importance of a high quality education for both the graduates and the businesses of Florida. The Council of 100 established an Education Governance Task Force, chaired by Len Miller, Chairman of the Lennar Corporation, to provide strategic concepts for improving education governance to the Florida Board of Education as it develops its strategic plan.

The Education Governance Task Force, chaired by Len Miller, Chairman, Lennar Corporation, consists of the following Council of 100 members:

Lee Arnold	Chairman & CEO, Arnold Companies
Dick Beard	President, R.A. Beard Company
Travis Bowden	President, Gulf Power Company
Marshall Criser	Ret. Partner, McGuire Woods LLP
O'Neal Douglas	Ret. Chairman, American Heritage Life Insurance Company
Llwyd Ecclestone	Chairman, PGA Resorts Company
Phil Frost	Chairman & CEO, IVAX Corporation
Leerie Jenkins	Chairman & CEO, Reynolds, Smith and Hills, Inc.
Steve Halverson	President & CEO, The Haskell Company
Frank Helsom	President & CEO, The Bessemer Group, Inc.
Joe Lacher	President-Florida, BellSouth Telecommunications, Inc.
Bob Morris	Chairman, Ramar Group Companies
Dick Nunis	Ret. Chairman, Disney Attractions
Bill Proctor	Executive Director, CEPRI
Charlie Rice	Ret. Vice Chairman, Bank of America
Jim Rippe	Founder & Director, Rippe Lifestyle Institute
David Ruberg	Former Chair, President and CEO, Intermedia Communications
Donna Shalala	President, University of Miami
Bob Taylor	Chairman, Mariner Group, Inc.
John Temple	President & CEO, Temple Development Companies