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Subject: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Legislation to Account for Prekindergarten Retention in a Disabled Student's Progression Plan Heads to Governor's Desk
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Legislation to Account for Prekindergarten Retention in a Disabled Student's Progression Plan Passed by the Florida Legislature

TALLAHASSEE, Fla – [CS/SB 290](#), **Public School Student Progression for Students with Disabilities**, sponsored by **Representatives Robin Bartleman (D-Weston), Fred Hawkins (R-Orlando)** and **Senator Shevrin D. Jones (D-Miami Gardens)**, has unanimously passed the House and Senate and is ready for **Governor DeSantis'** signature. This legislation has been requested by parents of students with disabilities to expand their options to make the best educational decisions for their children. It allows the parent of a student with disabilities who is enrolled in prekindergarten at the age of 4, and is fully funded through the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP), to retain his or her child in consultation with the individual education plan team. This retention will count towards good cause promotion in the pupil progression plan, the same as if a student is retained in kindergarten, grade 1, grade 2, or grade 3.

Representative Bartleman issued the following statement: "Despite being served in an Exceptional Student Education prekindergarten classroom, many students still have not caught up and do not have the foundation or prerequisite and executive functioning skills needed to be successful in kindergarten. This bill gives parents of students with disabilities the ability to retain their child in Pre-K without risking an additional retention before the fourth grade to ensure that their child has a strong

foundation before entering kindergarten. Studies show that the earlier a retention occurs, the better the educational outcomes for the child. This time gives students the opportunity to strengthen their communication, literacy and fine and gross motor skills. This is another tool in the box for parents of students with a disability or with a global developmental delay. This allows parents in coordination with educators to make the best educational decision for their child. Special education is not a one size fits all, and this option will help students reach their full potential.”

“The benefit of allowing a child to take extra time to learn fundamental skills and knowledge that will help their learning ability beyond prekindergarten is invaluable in their educational journey,” offered **Representative Hawkins**. “With this bill, parents are given the opportunity to do what’s best for their children. We ensure children with disabilities are ready for the next step in their educational career. I am grateful to have worked with Rep. Bartleman and Senator Jones to find a good solution to improve the quality of education for those students in the state of Florida.”

Senator Jones issued the following statement: “Under current Florida Law, all students who are between the ages of three and 21, and have a disability have the right to a free, appropriate public education. SB 290 requires that school districts develop procedures to provide all students with disabilities access to a FAPE in the least restrictive environment. I applaud Rep. Bartleman and Rep. Hawkins for working with me to ensure that we are checking in with students and their parents about their progress and plan accordingly so that no child falls through the cracks.”

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