

HB 1614 (Dutton)

Promote Pre-K partnerships between public schools and private child care centers by aligning eligibility requirements to reduce administrative burden.



Scope of the Problem

With the passage of HB3 (2019) Independent School Districts were encouraged to expand pre-kindergarten options available to families. Instead of building new buildings for expanded pre-k, HB 3 encouraged ISDs to partner with high-quality child care programs in their communities. The “Pre-K Partnerships” serve children and working parents with wrap-around care for hours outside of the traditional school day.

Pre-K partnerships save taxpayers money, can eliminate the need for school bonds, and open up more options for working parents and employers. Unfortunately, bureaucratic hurdles and slightly different eligibility thresholds have made partnerships logistically difficult at the community level. HB 1614 eases these administrative obstacles and extends Pre-K eligibility only to those children participating in pre-k partnerships with private child care providers.

Policy Recommendations

In order to simplify the enrollment process and expand the possibility for partnerships between school districts and childcare programs, **HB1614 aligns eligibility so all children qualifying for child care subsidies also qualify for free Pre-K when participating in partnership classrooms.**

Currently, eligibility criteria for pre-kindergarten (Free and Reduced Lunch eligibility) and subsidized child care differ slightly. **HB1614 would extend pre-k eligibility only to students enrolled in a pre-k partnership and eligible for child care assistance through the Texas Workforce Commission.**

Fiscal Implications

Pre-kindergarten partnerships are rare in Texas. As a result, very few children will become eligible for pre-kindergarten because of HB 1614. In addition, many of these same children are already pre-k eligible should they choose to attend a public school pre-k program instead of a private child care provider.

FOR QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS, PLEASE CONTACT:

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