

AN ACT concerning education.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 5. The School Code is amended by changing Section 2-3.71 as follows:

(105 ILCS 5/2-3.71) (from Ch. 122, par. 2-3.71)

Sec. 2-3.71. Grants for preschool educational programs.

(a) Preschool program.

(1) The State Board of Education shall implement and administer a grant program under the provisions of this subsection which shall consist of grants to public school districts and other eligible entities, as defined by the State Board of Education, to conduct voluntary preschool educational programs for children ages 3 to 5 which include a parent education component. A public school district which receives grants under this subsection may subcontract with other entities that are eligible to conduct a preschool educational program. These grants must be used to supplement, not supplant, funds received from any other source.

(2) (Blank).

(3) Any teacher of preschool children in the program authorized by this subsection shall hold an early childhood

teaching certificate.

~~(4) (Blank) This paragraph (4) applies before July 1, 2006 and after June 30, 2010. The State Board of Education shall provide the primary source of funding through appropriations for the program. Such funds shall be distributed for the benefit of children who because of their home and community environment are subject to such language, cultural, economic and like disadvantages that they have been determined as a result of screening procedures to be at risk of academic failure. Such screening procedures shall be based on criteria established by the State Board of Education.~~

~~(4.5) This paragraph (4.5) applies from July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2010. The State Board of Education shall provide the primary source of funding through appropriations for the program. Such funds shall be distributed to achieve a goal of "Preschool for All Children" for the benefit of all children whose families choose to participate in the program. Based on available appropriations, newly funded programs shall be selected through a process giving first priority to qualified programs serving primarily at-risk children and second priority to qualified programs serving primarily children with a family income of less than 4 times the poverty guidelines updated periodically in the Federal Register by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services under the~~

authority of 42 U.S.C. 9902(2). For purposes of this paragraph (4.5), at-risk children are those who because of their home and community environment are subject to such language, cultural, economic and like disadvantages to cause them to have been determined as a result of screening procedures to be at risk of academic failure. Such screening procedures shall be based on criteria established by the State Board of Education.

Except as otherwise provided in this paragraph (4.5), grantees under the program must enter into a memorandum of understanding with the appropriate local Head Start agency. This memorandum must be entered into no later than 3 months after the award of a grantee's grant under the program, except that, in the case of the 2009-2010 program year, the memorandum must be entered into no later than the deadline set by the State Board of Education for applications to participate in the program in fiscal year 2011, and must address collaboration between the grantee's program and the local Head Start agency on certain issues, which shall include without limitation the following:

(A) educational activities, curricular objectives, and instruction;

(B) public information dissemination and access to programs for families contacting programs;

(C) service areas;

(D) selection priorities for eligible children to

be served by programs;

(E) maximizing the impact of federal and State funding to benefit young children;

(F) staff training, including opportunities for joint staff training;

(G) technical assistance;

(H) communication and parent outreach for smooth transitions to kindergarten;

(I) provision and use of facilities, transportation, and other program elements;

(J) facilitating each program's fulfillment of its statutory and regulatory requirements;

(K) improving local planning and collaboration;
and

(L) providing comprehensive services for the neediest Illinois children and families.

If the appropriate local Head Start agency is unable or unwilling to enter into a memorandum of understanding as required under this paragraph (4.5), the memorandum of understanding requirement shall not apply and the grantee under the program must notify the State Board of Education in writing of the Head Start agency's inability or unwillingness. The State Board of Education shall compile all such written notices and make them available to the public.

(5) The State Board of Education shall develop and

provide evaluation tools, including tests, that school districts and other eligible entities may use to evaluate children for school readiness prior to age 5. The State Board of Education shall require school districts and other eligible entities to obtain consent from the parents or guardians of children before any evaluations are conducted. The State Board of Education shall encourage local school districts and other eligible entities to evaluate the population of preschool children in their communities and provide preschool programs, pursuant to this subsection, where appropriate.

(6) The State Board of Education shall report to the General Assembly by November 1, 2010 and every 3 years thereafter on the results and progress of students who were enrolled in preschool educational programs, including an assessment of which programs have been most successful in promoting academic excellence and alleviating academic failure. The State Board of Education shall assess the academic progress of all students who have been enrolled in preschool educational programs.

On or before November 1 of each fiscal year in which the General Assembly provides funding for new programs under paragraph (4.5) of this Section, the State Board of Education shall report to the General Assembly on what percentage of new funding was provided to programs serving primarily at-risk children, what percentage of new funding

was provided to programs serving primarily children with a family income of less than 4 times the federal poverty level, and what percentage of new funding was provided to other programs.

(b) (Blank).

(Source: P.A. 95-724, eff. 6-30-08; 96-119, eff. 8-4-09.)

Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon becoming law.