

By: Ellis

S.B. No. 1756

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to a kindergarten-plus pilot project for certain children.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

Article I. Definitions.

(1) The "commissioner" means the Texas Education Commissioner.

(2) The "agency" means the Texas Education Agency.

(3) "Economically disadvantaged" means:

(A) Students from a family with an annual income at or below the official poverty line; or,

(B) Students eligible for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families or other public assistance; or,

(C) Students who received a Pell Grant or comparable state program of need-based financial assistance; or,

(D) Students eligible for programs assisted under Title II of the Job Training Partnership Act; or,

(E) Students eligible for Benefits under the Food Stamp Act of 1977.

Article II. Kindergarten-Plus Program Pilot Project.

Subchapter E, Chapter 29, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 29.162 to read as follows:

SECTION 1. Duties of the Commissioner of Education.

(a) The commissioner shall:

(1) Establish a three-year study that extends approved

1 full-day kindergarten programs by 40 instructional days for certain  
2 students in eligible school districts;

3 (2) Award grants to eligible school districts from  
4 funds appropriated for the purpose;

5 (3) Adopt rules necessary to administer this section,  
6 including campus application requirements, procedures for  
7 evaluating applications for grants;

8 (4) Provide standards and a curriculum for the  
9 Kindergarten-Plus program;

10 (5) Establish district reporting and evaluation  
11 requirements.

12 SECTION II. Eligible Districts.

13 (a) This act applies to districts which reported to the  
14 agency more than 56,000 students enrolled in 2005-2006, and,

15 (b) Who reported more than 81 percent of the student  
16 population as economically disadvantaged or eligible for free or  
17 reduced lunch in 2005-2006.

18 (c) A district may use funds received under this subsection  
19 only for the purpose of the district's Kindergarten-Plus program.

20 (d) A school district Kindergarten-Plus program must, at a  
21 minimum, consist of:

22 (1) twenty additional instruction days for an eligible  
23 child during the summer before the child will begin kindergarten;  
24 and,

25 (2) twenty additional instruction days for an eligible  
26 child during the summer after the child completes kindergarten.

27 (3) a curriculum based on improving numeracy, literacy

1 and social skills in students.

2 (e) A school district receiving funds under this section  
3 shall:

4 (1) Demonstrate that its Kindergarten-Plus program  
5 will meet all state standards and employ only qualified teachers  
6 and other staff.

7 (2) Compensate teachers at the same rate and under the  
8 same terms for Kindergarten-Plus as teachers are paid for regular  
9 full-day kindergarten programs.

10 (3) A teacher who teaches a Kindergarten-Plus program  
11 is entitled to two additional professional development days each  
12 school year.

13 (4) Employ a sufficient number of teachers as provided  
14 by Section 25.112 of this section.

15 (5) Notify the population in the district whose  
16 children are eligible for enrollment in Kindergarten-Plus of the  
17 availability of the class. The system must include public notices  
18 issued in English and Spanish.

19 SECTION III. Student eligibility.

20 (a) A child is eligible to participate in a school  
21 district's Kindergarten-Plus program if the:

22 (1) Child's parent or guardian has applied for the  
23 child to participate in the kindergarten-plus program in the time  
24 and manner required by the district and the district has accepted  
25 the child's application;

26 (2) Child qualified for a pre-kindergarten program  
27 under Section 29.153 of this section prior to reaching school

1 eligibility under Section 25.001 of this section; or,

2 (3) Child is entitled to attend school in the district  
3 under Section 25.001 of the Education Code; and the child is:

4 (A) Unable to speak and comprehend the English  
5 language; or,

6 (B) Educationally disadvantaged as established  
7 under 42 U.S.C.S. Section 1751 et seq.; or,

8 (C) Homeless, as defined by 42 U.S.C Section  
9 11302 regardless of the residence of the child, of either parent of  
10 the child, or of the child's guardian or other person having lawful  
11 control of the child.

12 (b) A child enrolled in Kindergarten-Plus remains eligible  
13 for the duration of the program, regardless of financial status.

14 SECTION 2. As soon as practicable after the effective date  
15 of this Act, the commissioner shall adopt rules relating to the  
16 kindergarten-plus program provided for by Section 29.1511,  
17 Education Code, as added by this Act.

18 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
19 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as  
20 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
21 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
22 Act takes effect September 1, 2007.