

**Response to Request for Information
Committee on Public Education
Texas House of Representatives**

Interim Charge 1A: Implementation of House Bill 3

- **Monitor TEAs implementation and rule making process and broad unintended consequence authority of the commissioner.**

Review of Purpose of House Bill 3 (HB 3)

In the 86th Legislative Session, the Texas Legislature passed House Bill 3 (Huberty et. al).¹ The public school finance bill provides full-day Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) to all eligible 4-year-old children. Additionally, among many other things, HB 3 focused on early learning changes such as: reading standards for K-3rd grade, early childhood literacy and mathematics proficiency plans, and funding for an extended school year.

Background on Pre-Kindergarten Partnerships in Texas

Historically, the state funded and required only half-day programs and any school district wishing to offer full-day Pre-K had to allocate additional resources to provide this service. HB3 was a great victory for children, early care and education (ECE) advocates, and many others because full-day Pre-K is an invaluable resource for children from low-income families. However, many child care providers feared that public Pre-K would drive them out of business. Often, child care providers use the income they make from the 4-year-old children to offset the losses it takes to provide care for infants and toddlers due to the lower number of children cared for by one educator in the younger age groups. Removing 4-year-old children from child care settings removes this critical source of income.

Pre-Kindergarten Partnerships (Pre-K Partnerships), are collaborative efforts between the public and private sector to minimize or eliminate gaps in the quality of child care provided to early learners. Within a Pre-K Partnership, a privately funded child care center contracts with a public institution to provide additional seats for Pre-K children. This innovative solution not only allocates funding to the private child care center, but also moves towards the state's goal of providing full day Pre-K opportunities to low-income children. In essence, both the public and private sectors benefit. The private child care centers have the potential to receive more funding based on the increased enrollment, which supports the retention of qualified educators and higher percentages of kindergarten readiness. This provides an opportunity to strengthen the ECE system and kindergarten readiness without having to invest in new buildings.

In Texas, since the children eligible for public Pre-K are often eligible for subsidized child care assistance provided by TWC, these Pre-K Partnerships allow districts and child care providers to access combined funding that is mutually beneficial. However, only about one-third of the LWDB members interviewed stated that they were aware of Pre-K Partnerships in their areas, and very few of them were actively involved in establishing those relationships. To address this, TWC has made a concerted effort to focus on Pre-K Partnership expansion by allocating \$10 million dollars towards this initiative.

For questions please contact:

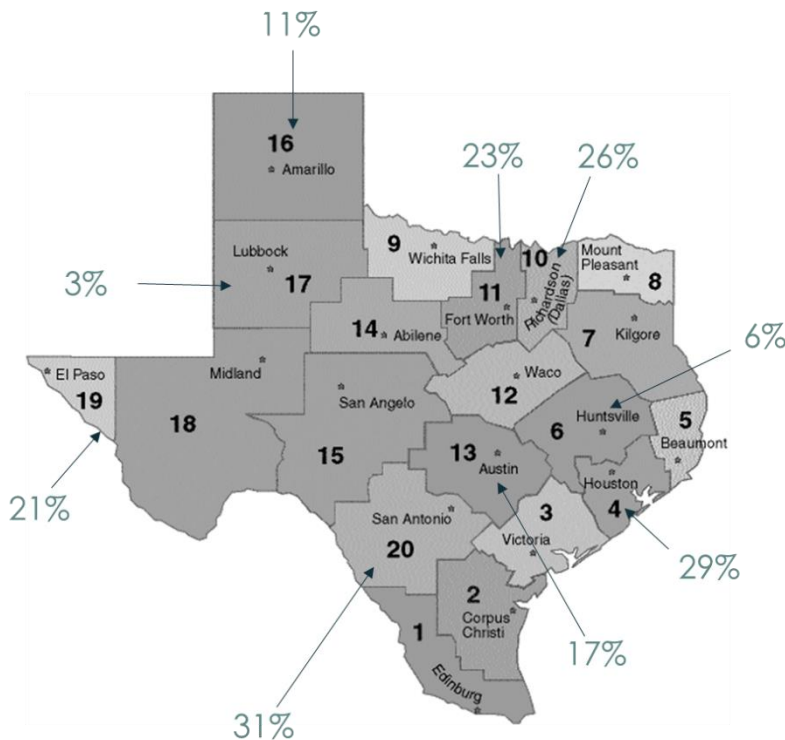
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Fortunately, Texas legislators considered the potential harm Pre-K expansion might have on child care providers. HB3 requires school districts to explore partnering with high-quality (i.e., Texas Rising Star (TRS)-certified, nationally accredited, Head Start, or Texas School Ready) child care providers to offer Pre-K programming before constructing a new classroom space or submitting a waiver.² These Pre-K Partnerships can take different forms and involve coordination among child care providers and school districts to provide Pre-K in a child care center or in a public school building. Between January 2020 and June 2020, the state granted 192 waivers from school districts. See Figure 1 and Table 1 below.

Figure 1
Percentage of School Districts that Received Waiver Exemptions



Note. The bold black number refers to the regional location listed in Table 1. The percentages displayed are examples of a few regions. To see percentages for all regions, refer to Table 1.

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Table 1
Waiver Exemptions by Region

	Total Waivers	Number of Districts	% of total Waivers	% of 1yr Waivers	% of 2yr Waivers	% of 3yr Waivers
Region 1	11	46	24%	7%	2%	15%
Region 2	8	45	18%	4%	2%	11%
Region 3	6	39	15%	10%	0%	5%
Region 4	26	90	29%	17%	1%	11%
Region 5	3	37	8%	3%	0%	5%
Region 6	4	62	6%	3%	0%	3%
Region 7	6	102	6%	1%	2%	3%
Region 8	5	46	11%	0%	2%	9%
Region 9	7	37	19%	11%	5%	3%
Region 10	30	116	26%	12%	4%	9%
Region 11	22	94	23%	9%	1%	14%
Region 12	6	81	7%	5%	0%	2%
Region 13	13	75	17%	11%	0%	7%
Region 14	5	43	12%	9%	0%	2%
Region 15	10	43	23%	12%	0%	12%
Region 16	7	62	11%	3%	2%	6%
Region 17	2	61	3%	0%	0%	3%
Region 18	6	36	17%	8%	0%	8%
Region 19	4	19	21%	11%	0%	11%
Region 20	11	36	31%	14%	3%	14%
Statewide	192	1170	16%	7%	1%	8%

Specific Policy Recommendation #1: Use Incentives and Data to Develop Paths to Provide Public School Pre-K

- Collect data to track the number and type of Pre-K Partnerships.** Currently, there is little to no information about providers and school districts who have formed Pre-K Partnerships. Current legislation does not mandate the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to report to the Texas Workforce Commission about which Independent School Districts (ISDs) formed partnerships with child care providers. Requiring TEA to report the provider operation ID would provide information about the type of partnerships, children being served, and gaps that remain in making Pre-K Partnerships successful.
- Offer alternative paths for high-quality child care providers to offer public school Pre-K:** Most child care providers rely on the revue from their Pre-K children to sustain

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their business and help offset the cost of providing care to infants and toddlers. In some instances, a school district may not want to partner with a child care provider. Providing an alternative path for child care providers to offer public school Pre-K will increase their revenue while still providing Pre-K to 4-year-olds.

- **Provide incentives to districts that partner with child care providers.** School districts and child care providers have been hesitant to form Pre-K Partnerships. Offering additional information and incentives to each entity would help mitigate the fear related to revenue and partnerships.

Pre-K Partnerships are a critical innovative solution to improving the quality of ECE for children from low-income families because they focus on creating access to additional quality seats through the partnership with TRS providers.

¹ H.B. 3, 2019 Leg., 86th Sess. (Tex. 2019). Retrieved from <https://capitol.texas.gov/BillLookup/History.aspx?LegSess=86R&Bill=HB3>

² H.B. 3, 2019 Leg., 86th Sess. (Tex. 2019). Retrieved from <https://capitol.texas.gov/BillLookup/History.aspx?LegSess=86R&Bill=HB3>

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