

SUBJECT: Establishing a prekindergarten class partnership grant program

COMMITTEE: Public Education — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 9 ayes — Buckley, Allen, Allison, Cunningham, Cody Harris, Hefner, K. King, Longoria, Talarico

3 nays — Harrison, Hinojosa, Schaefer

1 absent — Dutton

WITNESSES: For —Kimberly Kofron, Children at Risk; Sharon Perry, Kids R Kids; David Fincher, NCCC; Rebekah Calahan, Philanthropy Advocates; Chuck Cohn; Charles Zemanek (*Registered, but did not testify*); Kathryn Kizer, Access Education RRISD; Arianna Hampton, Austin PBS; Andrea Sparks, Buckner International; Cindy Najera, CCDF USA Travis County; Victoria Mannes, ChildCareGroup; Nadia Islam, City of San Antonio; Garry Jones, DFER TX; Kathlyn McHenry, Early Care and Education Consortium; Wendy Uptain, Early Matters; Sandy Dochen, Early Matters Greater Austin/United Way; Chandra Villanueva, Every Texan; Amanda Pecina, Kindercare Learning Centers; Brian Gutman, Learning Care Group; Molly Sprenger, Libertforkids; Christine Yanas, Methodist Healthcare Ministries; Melanie Rubin, North Texas Early Education Alliance; Cathy McHorse, Success By 6 Coalition Austin/ Travis County; Michael Lee, TARS; David Feigen, Texans Care for Children; Christine Broughal, Mara LaViola, Texans for Special Education Reform; Cody Summerville, Texas Association for the Education of Young Children; Justin Yancy, Texas Business Leadership Council; Stephanie Battaglia, Texas CASA; Paige Williams, Texas Classroom Teachers Association; Linda Litzinger, Texas Parent to Parent; Suzi Kennon, Texas PTA; Bryce Adams, Texas Public Charter Schools Association; Kelsey Streufert, Texas Restaurant Association; Dee Carney, Texas School Alliance; Laura Atlas Kravitz, Texas Women’s Foundation; Brittney Taylor-Ross, TexProtects; Seth Winick, The Learning Experience, Childcare Network, and Primrose Schools; Iris Calles Acosta, Katie Wagner, Todos Juntos; Samantha Brown, Bill Butler, United Way for Greater Austin; Ashley

Harris, United Ways of Texas; Quynh-Huong Nguyen, Woori Juntos; and 21 individuals)

Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Seven individuals)

On — Bryan Daniel, Texas Workforce Commission (*Registered, but did not testify*: Kristin Brown, Lyford CISD; Eric Marin, Monica Martinez, Texas Education Agency; Carrie Griffith, Texas State Teachers Association)

BACKGROUND: Some have suggested that expanding eligibility for free prekindergarten classes offered through school-provider partnerships to more families could help save taxpayer money, reduce the need for school bonds, and provide more options for working parents and employers.

DIGEST: CSHB 1614 would require the commissioner of education to establish and administer a grant program to support school districts and open-enrollment charter schools in increasing partnerships with community-based child-care providers to provide prekindergarten classes. A district or charter school could apply for a grant in partnership with a community-based child-care provider. A district or charter school would be required to use grant money received under the program to fund enrollment of eligible children in prekindergarten classes through a partnership between the district or charter school and a community-based provider. A child would be eligible for enrollment in such a class using grant money if the child was at least three years old and received subsidized child-care services through the Texas Workforce Commission's child-care services program.

The commissioner could provide grants under the program for the enrollment in each school year of no more than 3,500 children in a prekindergarten class. The bill would require the Texas Education Agency to report annually to the Legislature regarding the number of children enrolled in a prekindergarten class.

The bill would apply beginning with the 2023-2024 school year.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2023.

NOTES:

According to the Legislative Budget Board, the bill would have negative impact to general revenue related funds of \$20,218,364 through fiscal 2024-25.