

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
86R13001 CAE-D

S.B. 1679
By: West
Education
3/21/2019
As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The brain undergoes the majority of its development when a child is between the ages of 0 and 5. Participating in high-quality early learning programs can significantly improve a young student's long-term academic achievement.

Attending a prekindergarten (pre-K) program significantly increases school readiness and third grade literacy outcomes.

Public school districts in Texas are required to offer free, half-day pre-K for eligible four-year-olds. Some school districts offer free pre-K for both three- and four-year-olds, recognizing the benefits that two consecutive years of high-quality early learning can have on long-term academic outcomes.

While providing free pre-K to eligible children eliminates a major barrier to accessing pre-K, obstacles to participation still exist, including the requirement that families who are deemed eligible for three-year-old pre-K are required to re-establish their eligibility to attend four-year-old pre-K.

Proving eligibility is a cumbersome and often confusing process for families, as they are required to complete time-intensive paperwork and compile a lengthy list of documents that most families do not have immediate access to.

S.B. 1679 provides for automatic eligibility for these students, eliminating an often unnecessary burden on families who wish to re-enroll their child in four-year-old pre-K.

As proposed, S.B. 1679 amends current law relating to eligibility of certain children for free prekindergarten programs in public schools.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 29.153, Education Code, by adding Subsection (g) to provide that a child who is eligible for enrollment in a prekindergarten class at the age of three remains eligible for enrollment at the age of four.

SECTION 2. Provides that this Act applies beginning with the 2019–2020 school year.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2019.