

ENGROSSED SENATE
BILL NO. 1597

By: Fisher, Williams, Dunlap
and Williamson of the
Senate

and

Boyd and Thornbrugh of the
House

[schools - Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness
Act - codification - effective date -
emergency]

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 10-110.1 of Title 70, unless
there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Oklahoma
Partnership for School Readiness Act".

SECTION 2. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 10-110.2 of Title 70, unless
there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

The purpose of this act is to create a system of school
readiness that assures that all children enter school healthy and
ready to learn, and that early childhood health care, child care,
early learning, and education of children from birth to five (5)
years of age or until the child attains school readiness, whichever
is later, become a top priority in Oklahoma.

SECTION 3. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 10-110.3 of Title 70, unless
there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

For purposes of this act:

1. "Child care" includes formal and informal arrangements, including but not limited to child care centers, day care homes, private providers, and relative care;

2. "Health care" includes perinatal care, immunizations, screenings, well-baby care, and other preventive mental health and health maintenance care measures;

3. "Early learning" includes the acquisition of skills and abilities that enhance a child's development and capacity to learn; and

4. "Education" includes public and private pre-kindergarten and other organized educational programs.

SECTION 4. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 10-110.4 of Title 70, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

Membership of the Board of Directors for the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness shall include the following or their designee:

1. Governor of the State of Oklahoma;
2. State Superintendent of Public Instruction;
3. President Pro Tempore of the Oklahoma State Senate;
4. Speaker of the Oklahoma State House of Representatives;
5. Chancellor of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher

Education;

6. Director of the Oklahoma Department of Vocational and Technical Education;

7. State Commissioner of Health;
8. Commissioner of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services;
9. Director of the Oklahoma Department of Commerce;
10. Director of the Department of Human Services;
11. Director of the Oklahoma Health Care Authority; and
12. Director of the Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth.

SECTION 5. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 10-110.5 of Title 70, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

The Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness shall be organized as a public-private nonprofit organization and have the principal responsibility of organizing for the enhancement of the school readiness of Oklahoma's children. The Partnership shall:

1. Make the development and funding of local councils for school readiness the number one priority for the expenditure of funds allocated for the purposes of implementing this act in at least four pilot counties, two urban and two rural;

2. Have the power to receive and accept appropriations from the Legislature, through a designated state agency, grants or advances of funds from any public or private agency, and to receive and accept from any source contributions of money, property, labor, or any other thing of value, to be used for the purposes of this section;

3. Designate a state agency as its financial agent to handle the finances of the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness;

4. Be an independent nonpartisan body, independent of any one state agency, and address issues across all state agencies that serve children and families, and prepare children for learning and being ready for school;

5. Have specific responsibility for implementing policies developed by the Board of Directors for the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness for:

- a. monitoring progress toward achievement of the goals,
- b. assessing gaps in current early childhood services,
- c. recommending quality standards and monitoring their implementation,
- d. approving local School Readiness Plans prepared by local councils for school readiness,

- e. facilitating local implementation of school readiness plans,
- f. providing technical assistance to local councils, and
- g. recommending common eligibility requirements; and

6. Receive assistance from the following state agencies during the first year of operation or until permanent staff positions are funded, to develop and implement a State School Readiness Plan: Oklahoma Department of Commerce; State Department of Education; Oklahoma Department of Human Services; Oklahoma Health Care Authority; State Department of Health; Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services; Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth; State Board of Regents for Higher Education; and Oklahoma Department of Vocational and Technical Education.

SECTION 6. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 10-110.6 of Title 70, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

A. The goal of the Partnership for School Readiness shall be to improve and promote child and family well-being in the state of Oklahoma which will further school readiness among young children from birth to five (5) years of age.

B. The duties of the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness shall be to:

1. Develop the capacity for long-range planning, evaluation, and review of the state system of services and resources for children and families including submission of an annual progress report to the Legislature;

2. Identify research findings on approaches to preparing children for school and indicators of school readiness, and review successful reforms in other states for increasing school readiness for children from birth to five (5) years of age;

3. Review the missions, mandates, programs, practices and budgets of all state agencies which impact children and families,

and make recommendations for any changes required to better provide school readiness programs and maximize federal, local, and private revenue;

4. Identify and implement methods for innovative, flexible funding such as interagency funding, joint funding pools, interagency reimbursement, and funding through communities;

5. Develop a process of increasing school readiness for children birth to five (5) years of age by implementing local Councils for School Readiness in four to six pilot counties, both urban and rural;

6. Facilitate the development and provision of high quality early childhood school readiness services by local partnerships in the counties of Oklahoma;

7. Require a single or simplified point of entry to school readiness program services in each county; and

8. Produce an annual Oklahoma Plan for School Readiness for submission to the Governor and Legislature beginning October 1, 2000, and every year thereafter.

SECTION 7. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 10-110.7 of Title 70, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

The Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness shall establish local councils for school readiness. The Partnership shall work with local councils for school readiness to provide, by contractual agreement, school readiness program services and payment of service arrangement to carry out the provisions of this act.

Local councils for school readiness may be an existing community based council, such as a school-linked services partnership, a community partnership, or some other similar group concerned with children's health, child care, early learning, early childhood education, family support or preventative programs, and may be broadened or merged to meet the intent of this section. The local

unit of government, or governments where more than one county is included in the local council's service area, in consultation with local school board(s), may certify an existing council or a combination of existing councils to function as a community school readiness council.

Local councils for school readiness may select a lead agency, which may be a school district, county government, municipality, or city/county department of health in counties with a population above 200,000; provided, that the lead agency shall not receive monies to deliver direct school readiness programs and services approved by the local council for school readiness. The lead agency shall have a demonstrated capacity for fiscal management and shall serve as fiscal agent for receipt of funding for the local Council.

Local councils for school readiness shall develop a plan and a grant proposal to be submitted to the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness for consideration.

SECTION 8. This act shall become effective July 1, 2000.

SECTION 9. It being immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is hereby declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

Passed the Senate the 28th day of February, 2000.

President of the Senate

Passed the House of Representatives the ____ day of _____,
2000.

Speaker of the House of
Representatives