

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2nd Session of the 49th Legislature (2004)

HOUSE BILL HB2273:

Coleman

AS INTRODUCED

An Act relating to children; amending Section 4, Chapter 121, O.S.L. 2003 (10 O.S. Supp. 2003, Section 640.2), which relates to the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness Board; modifying responsibilities of the Board; and declaring an emergency.

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

SECTION 1. AMENDATORY Section 4, Chapter 121, O.S.L. 2003 (10 O.S. Supp. 2003, Section 640.2), is amended to read as follows:

Section 640.2 A. The Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness Board may:

1. Establish guidelines for the disbursement of funds received from any public or private source or otherwise made available to the Board for the purpose of supporting community initiatives that are consistent with the goals of the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness Act and direct such other expenditures as may be necessary in the performance of its duties;

2. Establish other guidelines as necessary to carry out the duties and responsibilities assigned to the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness Board;

3. Receive funds from any public or private source;

4. Enter into contractual agreements to assist with the administration of the Board and to provide technical assistance to communities upon request; and

5. Appoint subcommittees which may include persons who are not Board members. Such persons shall not be entitled to compensation but may be reimbursed, upon approval by the Director of the Department of Human Services, for necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties in accordance with the State Travel Reimbursement Act; and

~~6. The Board shall ensure, to the greatest extent possible, that the needs and values of all parents are respected and protected and that voluntary participation is the basis for delivering all school readiness programs. The Board shall act in ways which are sensitive to the diverse religious and other values of Oklahomans.~~

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

1. Conduct a thorough assessment of existing public and private programs to determine their effectiveness and to maximize the efficient use of current state funds;

2. Implement a public engagement campaign and establish a structure to facilitate communication between communities;

3. Provide leadership at the state level to encourage communities to develop and improve school readiness opportunities at the local level to encourage and empower local communities;

4. Encourage public and private programs, services, and initiatives be brought together to provide coordinated, community-based, effective and cost-efficient programs;

5. Maximize the extent to which private sector funding is leveraged and federal, state, and local funds are coordinated with private funds;

6. Establish standards of accountability in school readiness programs and policy and recognize and promote the best practices; and

7. Submit an annual report to the Governor and the Legislature no later than November 1 of each year. The report shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- a. preparedness level of children entering kindergarten,
- b. status and results of the effort of the Board to engage the public regarding the care and education of children under the age of five (5) years and of the efforts of the Board to develop and promote private sector programs and voluntary parental involvement,
- c. detailed summary of community initiatives and programs funded in whole, or in part, by the Board,
- d. availability and cost of quality child care for children under five (5) years of age needing care outside their home,
- e. number, location, and status of quality prekindergarten programs in the state, and
- f. percentage of third-grade students reading at or above grade level;

8. Develop an evaluation component for the activities of the Board and those of its grantees to determine the extent to which the goals of the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness Act are being achieved;

9. Contract periodically for evaluations to be conducted. Copies of the evaluations shall be submitted to the Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate; and

10. Ensure, to the greatest extent possible, that the needs and values of all parents are respected and protected and that voluntary participation is the basis for delivering all school readiness programs. The Board shall act in ways which are sensitive to the diverse religious and other values of Oklahomans.

C. The Department of Human Services shall be the lead public agency for general administration and monitoring of programs and activities related to the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness Act.

D. Each of the following agencies shall make staff available to the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness Board for the purpose of providing professional consultation and staff support to assist in the implementation of this act:

1. State Department of Education;
2. State Department of Health;
3. Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services;
4. Department of Human Services; and
5. Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth.

SECTION 2. 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.

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