

High-Quality Prekindergarten Grant Frequently Asked Questions

General

1. **Is a school district that applies for the PreK grant allowed to operate a half-day four-year-old program, or must all grant applicants assert that they will operate a full-day four-year-old PreK program for the 2016-17 school year?**

A school district or charter school may operate a half-day PreK program with grant funding and is not required to assert that the district or charter will operate a full-day program.

2. **Is it possible to use the funding to provide a full-day PreK program?**

Use of the grant funding to support expansion to a full-day PreK program is allowable.

3. **Services must be aimed at improving the quality of the PreK program: does this assume that eligibility applies only to already existing programs or can new programs be implemented?**

The High-Quality PreK Grant program provides supplemental funding to districts and charter schools to implement new or enhance existing PreK programs in addition to the half-day Foundation School Program (FSP) funding that is already received for each eligible four-year-old PreK student.

4. **Can English as a Second Language (ESL)/bilingual support be included in services?**

Yes, if the ESL or bilingual support provides educational services aimed at improving the quality of PreK education to qualifying students.

5. **NEW Will a school district be able to decline the grant if the cost to implement the requirements exceeds the grant funds awarded?**

Yes.

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Teacher Requirements

- 1. There are some teachers that do not have the PreK endorsement because they took extra hours of professional development in order to teach PreK to be in compliance with Texas Education Code (TEC), Chapter 21. Is there then a change to TEC Chapter 21 for PreK or does HB 4 simply require the additional qualification?**

There is not a change in TEC Chapter 21. The HB 4 High-Quality PreK Grant program requires additional teacher qualifications.

- 2. When will teachers be required to meet the qualifications for High-Quality PreK grant?**

A teacher must meet the teacher qualification requirements before the end of the 2016-2017 school year.

- 3. When considering an undergraduate degree, does the undergraduate degree need to read, “bachelor's in early childhood”?**

The degree would not need to have a specific title, but would need to clearly indicate that the degree is in early childhood education in order to meet the requirement. Some examples of appropriate degrees include the following:

- Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Education
- Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood
- Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Development
- Bachelor of Science in Education/Early Children Education

- 4. How will a district or charter school know if a specific degree is allowable?**

The district or charter school should list any specific degrees in the application when addressing the question regarding teacher qualifications. Approval of the grant application will indicate approval of the qualifications included in the application.

- 5. What type of degree meets the teacher requirements?**

A bachelor's degree, master's degree, or PhD in early childhood education or early childhood special education would meet the qualification.

- 6. Can teachers who will be required to have the 150 hours of PD use professional development hours from previous years if they have appropriate documentation?**

Yes.

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7. Will the Children's Learning Institute provide documentation of completion of Texas School Ready (TSR) training?

The Children's Learning Institute should be able to provide documentation to the district or charter school upon request.

8. When can districts offer and pay for professional development out of grant funds?

Professional development enabling a teacher to meet the teacher qualification requirements may be funded by the High-Quality PreK Grant beginning with the notice of grant award and continuing through August 31, 2016.

9. Would any of the six listed qualification requirements be a means to a certificate in early childhood?

At this time, the six teacher requirements are not pathways to a certificate in early childhood.

10. NEW Is there a preference for any of the options for teacher requirements?

No, there is not a preferred teacher requirement.

11. NEW If my degree is in Interdisciplinary Academics or some other area and my area of specialization is early childhood, would that make me qualified under the High-Quality PreK grant?

Yes. If the specialization clearly demonstrates significant coursework in early childhood education, an individual would be qualified.

12. NEW Is a degree in Elementary Education considered an undergraduate degree in early childhood education?

Yes. If the degree clearly demonstrates significant coursework in Early Childhood Education, an individual would be qualified.

13. NEW If a teacher has an associate's degree in early childhood with a bachelor's in elementary education does that meet the teacher qualification?

Yes, if the combination of an associate's degree in early childhood and a bachelor's degree in elementary education clearly demonstrates significant coursework in early childhood education, an individual would be qualified.

14. NEW What are the qualifications for the teacher's aide under this grant?

A teacher's aide must be a high school graduate or hold a General Educational Development (GED) certificate and have experience working with students or parents as approved by the employing superintendent. Experience may include work in church-related schools, day camps, youth groups, private schools, licensed day-care centers, or similar experiences.

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- 15. NEW If a degree is listed as one potential choice for teacher qualification and is not accepted, will that negate the entire grant application?**

No, this would not negate the application. However, a teacher whose degree does not qualify would have to meet another one of the teacher qualifications in order to teach in a high-quality prekindergarten program.

- 16. NEW If a degree is listed as a choice and that degree is not acceptable, would the required professional development meet the teacher qualification?**

Yes.

Funding

- 1. Will there be a deadline for using all grant funds or will districts be allowed to roll forward any unused funds to the following year?**

The grant end date is August 31, 2017, with no carryover.

- 2. How long will the funding last?**

The grant funds are available through August 31, 2017. Future funding is contingent upon future appropriations from the legislature.

- 3. Can a district apply for the grant for just a select group of campuses or does it have to apply for all campuses in the district?**

A district or charter may apply on behalf of only a portion of its campuses. If the district or charter intends to apply for some, but not all campuses, the application must list the campuses that would receive funding if the district or charter is deemed eligible.

- 4. How is the grant funding calculated for awards?**

Funding will be based on the number of eligible applicants and the number of eligible four-year-old students enrolled in PreK at the time of the 2015-2016 snapshot data report.

- 5. If a district or charter school receives less than \$1,500 per student, is the district or charter still required to meet all of the grant requirements?**

Districts and charter schools will be required to meet all of the grant requirements as a condition of receiving the grant funding.

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6. **If I have 22 eligible PreK students according to 2015-2016 data, but next year (2016-2017), I only have 12 eligible students, will I still get the funding for 22?**

A change in enrollment from the 2015-2016 school year to the 2016-2017 school year will not change the award amount.

7. **NEW Are there any projections available with regards to district and charter school awards?**

Projected grant funding amounts will be made available to districts and charter schools in mid-April.

8. **NEW Can grant funds be used to hire a PreK aide to meet the 11:1 ratio?**

Yes, a district or charter school may use grant funds to hire a PreK aide to lower their student-to-staff ratios.

9. **NEW How specific does the budget portion of the grant application need to be?**

The grantee does not need to complete the budget information. The Texas Education Agency will assign funding amounts as appropriate.

10. **NEW If funding is based on the 2015-2016 snapshot data and the district specifies in the grant application that it is serving certain campuses, will the funding be based on all eligible four-year-olds or just the campuses indicated?**

If a district applies for funding for specific campuses, funding will be based on eligible four-year-olds for the campuses included in the grant application.

Curriculum

1. **Will a TEA-approved list of instructional materials be provided and/or posted on the TEA website?**

The instructional materials currently adopted by the State Board of Education may be viewed at https://tea4avfaulk.tea.texas.gov/ematevi/EMATREPORTS/RptInst/EM_CURR_ADPN.pdf.

2. **Our PreK curriculum is written by the district, but our adoption is Pearson OWL. Is that what would be listed as our PreK curriculum?**

A school district or charter school must select and implement a curriculum for a High-Quality PreK Grant program that addresses the *Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines (Updated 2015)*. The district should list all curriculum that will be used to address the prekindergarten guidelines including district-developed curriculum and purchased curriculum and instructional materials, as applicable.

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Family Engagement

1. Is there a list of TEA-approved Family Engagement programs?

TEA does not have a list of approved family engagement programs. However, administrative rules include suggested strategies for each component of the required family engagement plan.

2. NEW How extensive or specific does the family engagement plan have to be?

A district or charter school must provide sufficient detail to describe the strategies that will be used to address each of the required components.

Prekindergarten Instruments

1. NEW We currently use the Children’s Learning Institute’s CLI Engage for PreK Progress Monitoring. Is it on the Commissioner's List?

Yes, CLI's CIRCLE Progress Monitoring System is on the Commissioner's List of Approved Prekindergarten Progress Monitoring Instruments.

2. NEW Which instruments meet the qualifications of a kindergarten readiness instrument for reading?

The Commissioner’s List of Reading Instruments may be accessed at [http://tea.texas.gov/uploadedFiles/Curriculum/English - Language Arts/attachments/Commissioner's%20List%20of%20Reading%20Instruments%202014-2015.pdf](http://tea.texas.gov/uploadedFiles/Curriculum/English_-_Language_Arts/attachments/Commissioner's%20List%20of%20Reading%20Instruments%202014-2015.pdf). A district or charter is not limited to this list and may include any kindergarten readiness instrument that is currently being used or that will be identified in the grant application.

3. NEW If a district-developed assessment is used, will the district be able to submit that for approval for the grant?

District-developed instruments for prekindergarten need to be submitted for review under the [Request for Prekindergarten Progress Monitoring Instruments](#). The deadline for submission of instruments for review is March 25, 2016.

4. NEW If an assessment instrument is included with the curriculum, can that assessment instrument be considered an appropriate progress monitoring tool?

Only instruments included on the Commissioner’s List of Approved Prekindergarten Monitoring Instruments will be allowable.

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Reporting

- 1. Is the Kindergarten Readiness data mentioned in the grant the same reading assessment data that is already reported every fall to TEA?**

Yes, this is the same data.