July 18, 2019

House Bill 3 Pre-K

Early Childhood Education

Action Required of LEA: Share with appropriate staff:
- CFO
- School Leadership and other academic Early Childhood staff working with prekindergarten students

House Bill (HB) 3 was passed by the 86th Texas Legislature, 2019, and signed into law by Governor Abbott on June 11, 2019. HB 3 impacts districts and open-enrollment charter schools serving prekindergarten through third grade students. The following areas within HB 3 that relate to prekindergarten specifically are:

- Early education allotment
- Full-day high-quality prekindergarten for eligible four-year-olds
- Expanded early education reporting
- Early learning progress monitoring tools
- Exemptions
- Partnerships

Today, the agency released a HB 3 in 30 Pre-K webinar focusing on the bullets above, along with a PowerPoint and related materials.

Overview of Changes to Prekindergarten Requirements

HB 3 does not change the requirements as to whether a district or charter must offer prekindergarten services from prior law, nor does it change eligibility for prekindergarten funding. It does, however, require that all prekindergarten offered to eligible four-year-olds be full day, and that the prekindergarten meet the high-quality requirements adopted by the legislature four years ago. To support these requirements, HB 3 increases funding in general and creates a new early education allotment.

Districts must convert existing half day prekindergarten services for four-year olds to be full day, effective with the start of the new school year. Recognizing this will create a large number of logistical challenges for some districts given the short amount of time with which to implement this requirement, the legislature created a limited process to obtain an exemption to this requirement, but the process itself requires districts to attempt to engage in partnerships with community-based early learning centers.

The agency has created resources to help districts navigate these new requirements:
Resources to support HB 3 PreK

- HB 3 ECE one-pager
- High-quality prekindergarten components one-pager
- Webinars:
  - High-quality prekindergarten components
  - Public-private partnerships webinars
- Partnership Guidebook
- Partnership one-pagers:
  - Head Start partnerships
  - Early Learning Center partnerships
- Exemption Guidance Document

Full-day Prekindergarten Exemptions (waivers):
An exemption may be applied through the State Waiver Unit for up to three years with one renewal. The prekindergarten exemption for full-day prekindergarten will be available in January 2020. This process is detailed further in the webinar and PowerPoint presentation.

Please note: the waiver will not be accessible on the TEA State Waivers web page until toward the end of the 2019 calendar year. But waivers will be granted as needed to account for the 2019-20 school year.

Questions
If you have any questions related to this TAA on prekindergarten improvements under HB 3, please contact the Division of Early Childhood by phone at (512) 936-2546 or email HB3info@tea.texas.gov. We will be compiling answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs) on the https://tea.texas.gov/hb3 webpage as well as TEA's Early Childhood Education webpage.

Sincerely,

Jacquie Porter,
State Director of Early Childhood Education