

Prekindergarten Grant History

Description and Background: The grant provides funding for programs to develop the skills necessary for eligible at-risk 3- and 4-year-olds to succeed in the regular public school curriculum, including language, especially the development of cognitive skills, with a focus on pre-reading and language, and mathematics. Funds were appropriated for the purpose of implementing or expanding kindergarten and prekindergarten programs by expanding half-day programs to full-day programs or implementing a new prekindergarten program.

Among the reforms generated by the 68th Texas Legislature in 1983 was the emerging recognition of the importance of early childhood education for certain high-risk kindergarten students. Summer 1984 brought a special session and the housekeeping measures of House Bill 72. At that time, the legislature mandated prekindergarten education for high-risk four-year-olds in public schools. The law for prekindergarten education, enacted in May 1985, became effective with the 1985-1986 school year. Under TEC §29.153(a), school districts shall offer prekindergarten classes if the district identifies 15 or more eligible children who are at least four years of age. A school district may offer prekindergarten classes if the district identifies 15 or more eligible children who are at least three years of age. A child is eligible for free prekindergarten if at least three years of age and: is unable to speak and comprehend the English language; is educationally disadvantaged; is homeless; is the child of an active duty member of the U.S. armed forces; is the child of a member of the U.S. armed forces who was injured or killed while on active duty; or is or ever has been in foster care.

1999-2000 First Prekindergarten Expansion Grants (PKX) Awarded (\$200 million appropriated for the biennium)

- Legislation gave priority to LEAs with low 3rd grade test scores, but if funds were sufficient all applicants received grant funding
- Grantees received an average of \$2300 per student to expand to full-day prekindergarten.
- Many districts did not apply because they were not ready to implement full-day prekindergarten

Cycle 1: Funds to operate full-day prekindergarten

- 138 Districts and 17 Open-Enrollment Charter Schools: 25,656 students served and \$21.3 million expended

Cycle 2: Funding changed allowing grantees to plan for or facilitate conversion to full-day prekindergarten or kindergarten

- One-time planning and facility grant implemented to encourage applicants
- 113 Planning Grants funded at \$6.1 million
- 162 Facilities Improvement Grants funded at \$17.7 million

2000-2003 Grant Cycles 3-7 (\$200 million appropriated for each biennium)

- Funds used to operate full-day prekindergarten
- Cycles continue giving priority to previous year grantees on a continuation basis
- Number of grantees increased steadily each grant year, serving more students

2004 Grant Cycle 8 (\$185 million appropriated for the biennium)

- Due to decreased funding, a formula "funding factor" was instituted to equitably reduce funding to all grantees, and closing the competition to new grantees
- Began using Cycle 7 student enrollment to determine funding; grantees could not serve any additional students per year
- Example: District X had 100 prekindergarten students in Cycle 7 (2002-03) and by Cycle 14 they had 1000 prekindergarten students, but the grantee could only base their funding request on the 100 students served in Cycle 7. (They could serve the same number of students or less in Cycle 7 but never more than that cycle.)

2004-2005 Grant Cycle 10 (\$185 million appropriated for the biennium)

- Competition opened to add additional grantees, the majority of which were charter schools

2005-2009 (\$183.6 million appropriated for each biennium)

- 46,000 students served/year; 2008-09—final year of PKX grant

2009-2010 Prekindergarten Early Start (PKES) Grant Program (\$208.6 million appropriated for biennium)

Program restructured in 2008 and Commissioner's Rule §102.1002 (amended 2011) established to align program goals with statute and to identify a new group of eligible districts/open-enrollment charter schools to implement program as described in rule.

- \$99,300,482 awarded to grantees; 95,352 students served (as reported by grantees)
- Tier 1: \$32,216,131 to 100 grantees: 154 LEAs; 219 partnerships
- Tier 2: \$21,094,373 to 93 grantees: 110 LEAs; 97 partnerships
- Tier 3: \$45,989,978 to 70 grantees: 91 LEAs; 175 partnerships

2010-2011 Prekindergarten Early Start (PKES) Grant Program (\$208.6 million appropriated for biennium)

- \$99,023,501 awarded to grantees; 101,252 students served (as reported by grantees)
- Tier 1: \$32,009,350 to 96 grantees: 151 LEAs
- Tier 2: \$21,094,373 to 93 grantees: 110 LEAs
- Tier 3: \$45,919,778 to 69 grantees: 90 LEAs

Eligibility: Priority is given to districts and open-enrollment charter schools in which students' 3rd grade assessment performance is substantially below the state average.

Authority: Texas Education Code §29.155. Eligibility Authority: TEC §29.153, Free Kindergarten for Certain Children

Funding: General Appropriations Act, Article III, Rider 45, 2009 and Foundation School Program Funding: based on ADA