

**Comprehensive Analysis of the Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 50**  
**Developed by the Office of Senator Judith Zaffirini**  
**March 19, 2007**

**Specifically, SB 50 would**

- I. Extend the integration model of early childhood education services by providing opportunities for private entities to offer free prekindergarten classes in school districts.
- II. Ensure the quality of Texas Early Education Model (TEEM) partnerships.
  - A. Require the TEEM partnerships maintain existing services and expenditures for state pre-k, Head Start, or state-licensed child care programs;
  - B. uphold existing health and safety standards; and
    - A. promote the cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development of young children.
- III. Authorize funding for additional TEEM sites throughout Texas and expand the integration model to include additional child care settings.
- IV. Improve the School Readiness Certification System by raising quality standards.
  - A. In addition to being well-grounded in the cognitive, social, and emotional development of children,
  - B. the system will consider the *physical* development of children.
    1. (This is to address concerns raised by program providers who say that some children served in TEEM are at risk of not having enough food at home and are underweight.)
    2. (Adding physical development, coupled with social and emotional development, ensures a comprehensive approach in promoting early childhood education.)

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- V. Increase reimbursement rates for child care providers that demonstrate quality
  
- VI. Direct the Department of Family and Protective Services to work with early childhood education experts to develop or seek proposals to create model pre-service training modules.
  - A. The model trainings will include
    - 1. on-line training modules and curricula
    - 2. to be used by child care providers to ensure their employees meet minimum training standards.
  
  - B. Ensure that pre-service training
    - 1. is aligned with the core knowledge and skills identified by experts in the field of early childhood education and
    - 2. uses a postassessment to determine whether the child care professional demonstrates an acceptable level of learning.
  
- VII. Improve the delivery of training for staff in licensed child care and regulated family day homes.
  - A. Require that training is provided by
    - 1. individuals registered in the State Trainer Registry;
    - 2. state agency staff;
    - 3. instructors of higher education;
    - 4. persons with recognized credentials, such as CPR/First Aid, and licensed health care credentials; or
    - 5. or any person approved by the Texas Council on Early Education Career Development.

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- VIII. Provide additional transparency for the State Center for Early Childhood Development.
- A. Require the State Center to report to the Senate Finance Committee and House Appropriations Committee like other state agencies; and
  - B. Apply all contracting guidelines for state agencies to the State Center.
- IX. Create the Texas Advisory Committee on Early Care and Education Career Development to recommend strategies to improve the recruitment, retention, and quality of early childhood education professionals, while establishing the field as a multi-level career path.
- A. The committee will continue the efforts of the existing, voluntary Advisory Council for Early Childhood Career Development at the Head Start State Collaboration Office.
  - B. The advisory committee will include representatives from
    - 1. Texas Education Agency;
    - 2. Texas Workforce Commission;
    - 3. Office of Early Childhood Coordination (at the Health and Human Services Commission);
    - 4. Department of Family and Protective Services Child Care Licensing Division;
    - 5. statewide associations of early childhood education professionals;
    - 6. statewide organizations that certify or provide credentials to early childhood education professionals;
    - 7. child-care resources and referral agencies;
    - 8. Texas two-year and four-year colleges and universities; and

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9. public school districts that offer secondary programs of study in the area of early childhood education.
  10. The Advisory Committee also shall include administrators from early childhood education programs, including
    - a. Head Start,
    - b. programs provided by school districts;
    - c. licensed day-care centers; and
    - d. family homes; and
  11. parents with children receiving services through early childhood programs;
- X. The Advisory Committee will develop a model career path that delineates educational and training requirements to enable early childhood education professionals to build a portfolio of credits and identify the steps necessary to progress within the system.
- A. The career path will serve as a resource for professionals and program directors.
  - B. Child care professionals would be encouraged voluntarily to increase their skills along the career path, which would improve levels of trainings, lower turnover rates, and improve the quality of care.
  - C. The career path must
    1. specify progressive levels, with educational and experience requirements applicable at each level;
    2. emphasize training provided at each level;
    3. recognize that a diverse range of training opportunities exist;
    4. encourage and assist professionals to pursue higher education degrees;

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5. include best practices recognizes by national early childhood education organizations; and
  6. be consistent with any other legal requirements related to trainings for early childhood education professionals.
- XI. Establish partnership projects of regional early childhood education stakeholders to facilitate increased participation in professional development, as well as encourage early childhood professionals to seek additional higher education opportunities.
- A. Partnership projects may include interested persons, including employers and employees involved in early childhood education services, such as
    1. school districts,
    2. licensed child-care facilities,
    3. registered family homes,
    4. Head Start program providers, and
    5. resource and referral agencies.
  - B. Other participants may include providers of early childhood education training programs, such as
    1. public high schools,
    2. community colleges,
    3. universities,
    4. regional education service centers,
    5. cooperative extensions, and
    6. local P-16 councils.

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- C. An approved partnership project must develop a plan that includes
1. systems to ensure that participating early childhood professionals are able to receive appropriate college credit or professional training;
  2. measurable objectives similar to *Closing the Gaps*;
  3. training programs and courses for which workforce certification and college credits may be awarded;
  4. training content aligned with national standards for early childhood education;
  5. practices to allow teachers to observe classrooms and centers considered by the council to be excellent;
  6. reliable and valid preassessments and postassessments that indicate an acceptable level of teacher learning; and
  7. opportunities for participating students to earn three semester credit hours for an initial course towards an associates degree by
    - a. passing an assessment,
    - b. submitting sample materials, and
    - c. completing 48 contact hours of approving training by a registered trainer.
  8. The plans also must include agreements by participating colleges and universities to grant as much credit as possible for students who complete
    - a. early childhood education programs in high school and
    - b. associated of applied science child development degree;

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9. A program evaluation component that demonstrates the extent to which
  - a. training programs have been enhanced;
  - b. professional development opportunities have increased;
  - c. professionals participating in the partnership demonstrate core knowledge and skills compared to a control group; and
  - d. learning and development outcomes of students have improved compared to a control group.
  
- D. Early childhood education professionals who participate in the projects must
  1. complete at least 48 contact hours of training within the first 18 months of their participation in the partnership.
  2. A professional with no previous training must complete at least 16 contact hours of pre-service training and an additional 32 contact hours.
  3. Training hours received during the first 18 months must equal three or four semester credit hours in a participating accredited institution.
  
- E. A partnership project shall provide a stipend for each professional who
  1. participated in the project,
  2. pursues a higher education degree, and
  3. indicates an intent to remain in the field of early childhood education.
  
- F. The Texas Education Agency, based on the recommendation of the Advisory Committee, shall initiate a competitive bidding process to

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select and contract with an organization to manage the partnership projects.

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**Generally, the committee substitute differs from the bill as filed by**

- I. Directing school districts to report reading assessment data to the State Center for Early Childhood Development for determining whether or not an early childhood program offers a sufficient level of “quality” to its children.
  - A. This provision will allow the State Center to use TPRI and Tejas Lee outcome data in the School Readiness Certification System [created by Senator Zaffirini's SB 23 (2005).]
  - B. Under existing law, reading assessment data must be reported to school districts and parents.
- II. Encouraging school districts who cannot provide prekindergarten classes to partner with a private entity in the district that is able to provide the program.
- III. Changing throughout the bill the statutory definition of the integration child care model from "demonstration projects" to "school readiness integration projects."
  - A. SB 76 (2003) by Zaffirini initially authorized the Texas Early Education Model (TEEM) as pilot projects.
  - B. Because there currently are 1,145 TEEM sites operating throughout Texas, they no longer should be described as "demonstration projects."
- IV. Changing throughout the bill the name of the "Department of Protective and Regulatory Services" to the "Department of Family and Protective Services" to reflect changes made by the health and human services reorganization in 2003.
- V. Making school readiness integration projects eligible for incentive grants. The grants may be used to
  - A. create a prekindergarten program;
  - B. expand a prekindergarten program to serve children who are three years of age;

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- C. increase income eligibility levels for prekindergarten;
  - D. increase half-day prekindergarten to full-day prekindergarten; or
  - E. add a teacher's aide to existing prekindergarten classes.
  - F. Partners eligible for incentive grants include both School Ready Certified and non-Certified partners; however, funding priority will be awarded to those integrated partners that also are School Ready Certified.
  - G. Currently, unused pre-k expansion dollars are reallocated to either quality pre-k projects (e.g., TEEM) or back to districts that may or may not be focused on high quality school readiness. The language in SB 50 makes the intent of the legislature clear: TEEM dollars are to be used only for quality school readiness programs.
- VI. Requiring the State Center to develop an information management tool to implement the school readiness certification system.
- A. The tool will be used to plan, monitor, and evaluate the system; and
  - B. may be used by each school district to fulfill the requirement to report readiness assessments to students' parents.
  - C. The State Center is required to provide the information management tool free-of-charge to districts.
  - D. TEA will assist the State Center in developing and adopting the school readiness certification system; and
  - E. provide the State Center with access to data necessary to implementing the system.
- VII. Establishing criteria for an early childhood education provider to be eligible for school readiness certification. In order to be certified, a provider must
- A. be in good standing with the Department of Family and Protective Services;

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- B. demonstrate a teacher to student ratio of 1-18 within six months of applying for certification; and
  - C. use ongoing child assessment tools to guide lesson planning and instructional approaches.
- VIII. Making licensed child-care providers that are school readiness certified or that are Texas Rising Star Providers eligible for enhanced reimbursement rates.
- A. The enhanced rates shall be used for services provided to children under six years-old and
  - B. be determined by each local workforce development board.
  - C. The enhanced rates also cannot be lower than rates currently received by quality providers as designated by the Texas Workforce Commission.
  - D. Texas Rising Star Providers that receive enhanced reimbursement rates are encouraged to use the additional funding to obtain school readiness certification.
  - E. Directing local workforce development boards to use Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and child care development funds, to the extent they are available, to provide the enhanced reimbursement rates.
    - 1. The Health and Human Services Commission shall distribute increased federal funds directly to local workforce development boards.
    - 2. This is the same process by which child care development fund quality improvement money is distributed.
- IX. Authorizing the Department of Family and Protective Services to develop or seek proposals for

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- A. the development of one or more training modules made available via the Internet and hard copy for child care employees to meet initial training requirements;
  - B. the development and maintenance of a statewide bilingual training portal that connects child care providers with training resources; and
  - C. the development and implementation of a marketing strategy to publicize the availability and importance of training to all providers of early childhood education.
  - D. The initial training also must be consistent with applicable core knowledge and skills, as identified by early childhood education experts; and
  - E. include a common postassessment that indicates an acceptable level of learning by the employee.
- X. Adding to the list of persons authorized to provide the initial training child care center directors in good standing with the Department of Family and Protective Services.
- XI. Clarifying that the Council on Early Childhood Education Career Development is an "advisory council" and cannot make policy nor regulate child care providers.
- XII. Providing additional transparency for the State Center for Early Childhood Development by

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- A. requiring center staff to appear before the Senate Education and House Public Education Committees upon request by the committee chair; and
  - B. requiring an external evaluation of the center to be completed every-other-year regarding the management and implementation of school readiness integration projects.
    - 1. TEA shall select through a competitive process
    - 2. an organization to completed the evaluation.
- XIII. Adding additional representatives to the Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education Career Development. The additional persons include representatives from
- A. the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board;
  - B. the State Center for Early Childhood Development;
  - C. the Texas Head Start State Collaboration Office;
  - D. the Texas Cooperative Extension;
  - E. charter schools that offer secondary programs in early childhood education;
  - F. nonprofit and for-profit licensed day-care centers;
  - G. early childhood education intervention and special education services; and
  - H. community-based organizations.
  - I. Change the agency that appoints the representatives from the Health and Human Services Commission to the Texas Education Agency.
- XIV. Clarifying that participation in the professional development partnerships is not contingent upon participation in a school readiness integration project.

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- XV. Authorizing the stipend and reimbursement for the professional development partnership to be provided to
- A. professionals that stay in the field of early childhood education for two years; and
  - B. participating child-care facilities if their employees are required to complete contact hours during regular business hours of the center.
- XVI. Creating an Advisory Committee for the State Center for Early Childhood Development.
- A. The committee will include representatives of
    - 1. the Office of Early Childhood Coordination;
    - 2. the Texas Workforce Commission;
    - 3. the Texas Education Agency;
    - 4. the Department of Family and Protective Services;
    - 5. community colleges or universities that provide a degree in early childhood education;
    - 6. independent school districts;
    - 7. local workforce development boards;
    - 8. child-care development fund contractors;
    - 9. Head Start program providers;
    - 10. the Head Start Association;
    - 11. the Head Start Collaboration Office;
    - 12. nonprofit and for-profit child care providers;

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13. administrators of government-funded child-care programs; and
  14. parents of children receiving government-funded child-care services.
- B. The committee shall advise the State Center regarding the implementation and management of
1. school readiness integration projects; and
  2. the school readiness certification system.