



The Texas Early Childhood Education Coalition Strongly Supports House Bill 2327

House Bill 2327, by Representative Villarreal would appoint a special blue-ribbon committee to study early childhood education and development resource needs and financing options to secure adequate funding and identify barriers to the integration of preschool delivery systems.

Background:

The early care and education system in Texas is complex and fragmented including numerous providers (Child Care, Head Start, and Pre-k), various funding streams, and diverse program standards and policies. The system is also severely under funded serving only a portion of eligible children. The challenge is how to optimize dollars and identify flexibility of funding streams including federal, state and local resources. In addition, the state of Texas made a critical investment in 2003 with bi-partisan support and passage of Senate Bill 76 and the Texas Early Education Model under the auspices of the State Center for Early Childhood Development (SCECD). The results of this historic statewide demonstration project show that it is possible to close the preparation gap that is the gap between those children that enter school ready to succeed and those that do not. HB2327 would pave the way for expanding the TEEM model and identify fiscal barriers for integration of resources in order to serve more children in high quality early childhood education and development.

Talking Points:

- The appointment of a special blue-ribbon committee will ensure maximization and optimization of limited public resources for early care and education programs.
- The blue-ribbon committee will analyze the flexibility of funding streams for increased coordination of quality early care and education programs including Child Care (for profit, non profit, faith based, home based), Head Start and Prekindergarten. Identifying fiscal barriers for integration of resources paves the way for the expansion of the Texas Early Education Model (TEEM), a statewide demonstration project under the auspices of the State Center for Early Childhood Development (SCECD).
- The committee will study and prepare a detailed report on preferred mechanisms to provide long-term and stable funding for early childhood education and development in Texas.
- The blue-ribbon committee will enable Texas to develop a common set of high standards and eligibility criteria at the state level in order to ensure successful partnerships between school districts and early care and education programs at the community level.
- The blue-ribbon committee would allow the State to pull together the best program characteristics of the three major sectors of early care and education and recommend methods to strengthen the school readiness standards for early education programs.
- Although other states have conducted similar initiatives, no high-level study of this nature has occurred in Texas. The landmark study that is proposed through HB2327 has the potential to identify ways for increased systems coordination and building a *system* of early childhood education that supports high quality.
- HB2327 is revenue neutral incurring no fiscal note.