



Summary of Committee Substitute Language for Senate Bill 50

The overarching goals of C.S.S.B.50 include:

- 1) Expand and improve voluntary quality pre-k services;
- 2) Increase reimbursement rates paid to child care providers participating in voluntary quality improvement programs; and
- 3) Improve the recruitment, retention, and quality of early childhood education professionals, while establishing the field as a multi-level career path.

GOAL 1: Expand and Improve Voluntary Pre-k Services

This bill would authorize funds to expand an integrated model of providing quality pre-k services in partnership with Independent School Districts, Head Start providers, and Child Care centers. The bills requires school readiness integration projects to maintain existing services and expenditures for state pre-k, Head Start, and licensed child care; to uphold existing health and safety standards; and to promote the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of young children.

School Readiness Certification System

All providers of early childhood education services are encouraged to participate in the School Readiness Certification System that will assess both classroom environments, key indicators of program quality as well as child outcome data from kindergarten assessments.

A school readiness integration partnership that participates in the School Readiness Certification System will be eligible for additional funding to 1) create a pre-k program; 2) expand a pre-k program to serve three year olds; 3) increase income eligibility levels for pre-k; 4) increase half-day pre-k to full day pre-k; or 5) add a teacher's aide to existing pre-k classes to increase staff: child ratios.

GOAL 2: Increase child care reimbursement rates for providers serving young children

This bill would authorize funds to increase reimbursement rates for child care providers serving children younger than six years of age who are participating in a school readiness integration project, the Texas Rising Star Certification program, or the School Readiness Certification System.

GOAL 3: Improve the recruitment, retention, and quality of early childhood education professionals, while establishing the field as a multi-level career path.

Pre-Service Training Hours

This bill directs the Department of Family and Protective Services in partnership with the State Center for Early Childhood Development and the Texas Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education Career Development to develop or seek proposals to create model pre-service training modules. This proposal would ensure that the 8 required hours of pre-service is aligned with the core knowledge and skill areas and uses a post assessment to ensure the professional has demonstrated an acceptable level of learning.

Annual Training Hours

This bill requires that annual training hours for child care professionals in licensed child care centers and regulated family day homes are provided by 1) individuals registered in the State Trainer Registry; 2) instructors of higher education; 3) state agency staff; 4) physician, psychologist, licensed professional counselor, social worker, or registered nurse; 5) persons with recognized credentials, such as CPR/First Aid, 6) a family home care provider or director of a child care center in good standing; or 7) an individual approved by the Texas Council on Early Childhood Education Career Development.

Texas Advisory Council on Early Care and Education Career Development

This bill would create a statewide advisory committee to recommend strategies to improve the recruitment, retention, and quality of early childhood education professionals. This committee would also take a role in managing the early childhood education partnership projects established at the local level.

Early Childhood Education Partnership Projects

The bill authorizes the establishment of several partnership projects in diverse regions of the state to facilitate increased participation in professional development, as well as encourage early childhood professionals to seek additional higher education opportunities. The Texas Education Agency, based on the recommendation of the Texas Early Childhood Education Career Development shall initiative a competitive bidding process to select and contract with an organization to manage the partnership projects.

General Oversight Recommendations Included in the Bill

This bill requires that the same contracting requirements applied to state agencies are also applied to the State Center for the Early Childhood Development. The bill requires the State Center to prepare and submit a report by December 1 of each even-numbered year to both the Senate Finance and House Appropriations committees detailing the use of all state funds provided for early childhood education services. In addition, the bill requires that an external evaluation be done in each even-numbered year regarding the management and implementation of school readiness integration projects. The organization completing the external evaluation must be selected through a competitive process developed by the Texas Education Agency.