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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 530 Session of 2003

INTRODUCED BY ORIE, RHOADES, HELFRICK, LOGAN, KITCHEN, COSTA, ERICKSON, KUKOVICH, KASUNIC, WONDERLING AND MOWERY, MARCH 24, 2003

REFERRED TO EDUCATION, MARCH 24, 2003

AN ACT

Establishing the Early Childhood Education Fund; providing funding for enhancement of the Head Start Program and other similar programs; and making a repeal.

The General Assembly finds and declares that:

(1) Early childhood research indicates that stimulating activities, as those engaged in while participating in quality early childhood education programs, are important in the development of the brain and have a long-term impact on learning and independent thought.

(2) When compared to their counterparts, children who have been exposed to quality early childhood education:

(i) Exhibit higher measures on reading and social skills in the elementary school years, with benefits lasting into adulthood so that persons who are 21 years of age are more likely to delay parenthood, attend or graduate from college and be gainfully employed.

(ii) Are 25% less likely to be retained a grade, at an estimate of the per-child per-year cost of well over

$5,200 nationally.

(iii) Spend 1.3 fewer years in special education placement, at an average cost of $1,800 more per student per year than the standard curriculum cost.

(iv) Are one-third more likely to graduate from high school, and unemployment rates for high school graduates are 75% lower than those for nongraduates.

(v) Are five times less likely to be arrested repeatedly by 27 years of age, thus reducing concomitant societal costs associated with crime.

(vi) Scored higher and experienced immediate positive effects on their socioemotional development, including self-esteem, achievement motivation and social behavior; and are one-third less likely to have children out of wedlock and 25% less likely to be teenage parents at a cost to society of $16,600,000,000 in Federal support, alone.

(vii) Save the government $2 in special education, unemployment, welfare, incarceration and other intervention costs for every $1 invested in early childhood education.

(viii) Save the Commonwealth the $100,000 long-term cost that results when government does not provide at least two years of early care and education for every child born into poverty.

(ix) Provide the business community with workers with an academic foundation for learning specialized skills, competencies, attitudes and behaviors that will ensure success in a technology-based, competitive economic environment.

(3) This act is enacted in order to ensure a quality early childhood education that maximizes child development and enhances school readiness.

The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania hereby enacts as follows:

Section 1. Short title.

This act shall be known and may be cited as the Early Childhood Education Act.

Section 2. Definitions.

The following words and phrases when used in this act shall have the meanings given to them in this section unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

"Fund." The Early Childhood Education Fund established by this act.

"Owner." The term shall have the meaning given to it in section 1301.1 of the act of April 9, 1929 (P.L.343, No.176), known as The Fiscal Code.

Section 3. Early Childhood Education Fund.

(a) Establishment.--The Early Childhood Education Fund is established in the State Treasury. The moneys of the fund shall be invested in accordance with law and shall be used exclusively for the purposes set forth in this act.

(b) Sources of funding.--

(1) Except for the amount required to be deposited into the separate trust fund designated under section 1301.18(a) of the act of April 9, 1929 (P.L.343, No.176), known as The Fiscal Code, all funds received by the State Treasurer under Article XIII.1 of The Fiscal Code, including the proceeds from the sale of property under section 1301.17 of The Fiscal Code, shall be deposited into the Early Childhood Education

Fund. These moneys shall be designated as the principal of the fund.

(2) An owner who is entitled to make a claim for property that has been transferred to the Early Childhood Education Fund may waive the owner's right, title and interest in the property and make a gift of the property to the fund. The identity of an owner who makes such a donation to the fund shall remain anonymous unless the owner agrees in writing to the release of the owner's name.

(3) The fund may accept donations from any person.

Section 4. Use of fund.

(a) Abandoned and unclaimed property claims.--If the owner of property that has been transferred to the Early Childhood Education Fund makes a claim to the State Treasurer under Article XIII.1 of the act of April 9, 1929 (P.L.343, No.176), known as The Fiscal Code, and the amount in the separate trust fund designated under section 1301.18(a) of The Fiscal Code is insufficient to pay the claim, the State Treasurer shall pay the claim from the interest or, if the interest is insufficient, the principal of the Early Childhood Education Fund.

(b) Enhancement of Head Start Program.--On an annual basis, the interest earned on the fund and so much as the amount transferred to the fund but not to exceed $150,000,000 is hereby appropriated to the Department of Education:

(1) to increase the number of eligible children served by the Head Start Program and any other early childhood program that can demonstrate compliance with Head Start performance standards or any other standards that meet or exceed the Head Start performance standards; and

(2) to increase the hours and days of operation of the

Head Start Program to a full day and a full year which shall include education, parental involvement and access to health, nutrition, dental, mental health and other social services.

(c) Priority for funding.--Priority for funding shall be given to programs located in school districts designated as academically distressed or empowerment districts.

(d) Accountability.--

(1) Each program receiving funding under this act shall prepare an annual report to be provided to the Department of Education no later than August 1 following the end of the fiscal year in which funding was received, to describe the number of children served through the grant and compare it to the number of children funded.

(2) Head Start programs that receive funding under this act must demonstrate that they have met Federal performance standards established in 45 CFR Pt.1304 (relating to program performance standards for the operation of Head Start programs by grantee and delegate agencies), by providing a copy of their latest Federal review to the Department of Education with their annual report. If any areas of deficiency were identified in this review, the grantee must demonstrate that measures to address them are in place.

(3) Early childhood programs not receiving Federal Head Start funds shall be reviewed by the Department of Education during the first year of receiving funds under this act and at least once every three years thereafter to ensure that services comply with Head Start performance standards, unless the program can show that they meet comparable standards such as the accreditation standards of the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Section 5. Repeal.

The provisions of Article XIII.1 of the act of April 9, 1929 (P.L.343, No.176), known as The Fiscal Code, are repealed insofar as they are inconsistent with this act.

Section 6. Effective date.

This act shall take effect in 60 days.