**South Carolina General Assembly**

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**H. 5205**

**STATUS INFORMATION**

General Bill

Sponsors: Rep. J. Moore

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Currently residing in the House Committee on **Ways and Means**

Summary: High-Quality Prekindergarten Expansion Program

**HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS**

 Date Body Action Description with journal page number

 3/5/2024 House Introduced and read first time (House Journal‑page 24)

 3/5/2024 House Referred to Committee on **Ways and Means** (House Journal‑page 24)

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**VERSIONS OF THIS BILL**

[03/05/2024](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess125_2023-2024/prever/5205_20240305.docx)

A bill

TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ADDING SECTION 59‑139‑100 SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SHALL DEVELOP AND ADMINISTER THE HIGH‑QUALITY PREKINDERGARTEN EXPANSION GRANT PROGRAM.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. Chapter 139, Title 59 of the S.C. Code is amended by adding:

 Section 59‑139‑100. (A) The Department of Education shall develop and administer the High‑Quality Prekindergarten Expansion Grant Program to support the phased development of high quality, district‑wide, full‑day prekindergarten programs for children between the ages of two years and nine months and the age a child becomes eligible for kindergarten in the school district where he resides. The grants must be used to bring to scale a high quality, mixed delivery early education system in order to reduce the achievement gap and improve third grade reading scores.

 (B)(1) The department shall establish requirements for grant applicants which must include, but are not limited to:

 (a) a tracking system for preschool students in the program using the state student identifier system;

 (b) a child to instructor ratio of no more than ten to one;

 (c) tactics to engage families in the enrollment process and implementation of the plan required under subsection (C), and methods to ensure a high level of enrollment by families with three and four year olds;

 (d) teacher qualification and evaluation system requirements and on‑going professional development requirements;

 (e) a full school‑day program;

 (f) a class size of no more than twenty preschool students;

 (g) inclusion of children with disabilities;

 (h) instructional staff salaries and benefits comparable to the corresponding district salaries and benefits for kindergarten to high school staff;

 (i) developmentally and linguistically appropriate instruction;

 (j) evidenced‑based curricula;

 (k) a learning environment aligned with the state early learning and development standards; (l) on‑site access to comprehensive services for children, or convenient access to such services off site;

 (m) partnership with, and promotion of, community service providers for families to support children’s learning and development;

 (n) evidenced‑based health and safety standards;

 (o) a timetable for phasing‑in of facilities, staff development, and other systems to achieve district‑wide implementation;

 (p) program evaluation and data collection systems to ensure continuous improvement;

 (q) a description of the physical structures for the education of the students; and

 (r) a plan to improve or sustain, as appropriate, the development of literacy skills from preschool through third grade.

 (2) Among proposals satisfying the requirements of this subsection, priority in grant awards must be given first to districts that have received grants through the federal preschool expansion grants initiative. The department also shall develop and publish a metric for prioritizing the awarding of grants to qualified applicants based on:

 (a) their accountability level as determined by the department;

 (b) their third‑grade reading proficiency scores; and

 (c) their percentage of students qualifying as economically disadvantaged.

Nothing herein shall require the department to award a grant to a district, regardless of priority status, that it has determined does not meet one or more of the requirements of this subsection.

 (C) Each recipient of the grant shall establish a plan to implement the requirements set forth in subsection (B) and any other requirements as may be prescribed by the department. Each superintendent shall appoint a local governing council to implement and oversee all aspects of the plan; provided however, that the superintendent may utilize a preexisting council for this purpose. Districts shall provide on a quarterly basis a report to the department on all aspects of the plan. The district and the local council shall implement the plan as approved within the period of time approved by the department. Failure to satisfactorily implement the plan within the approved period of time results in the termination of the plan and reversion of the grant funds to the department.

 (D) The department shall promulgate regulations to implement the provisions of this section within six months of the effective date including guidelines for membership to local governing councils in each recipient district and evaluation criteria required in the quarterly reports. A grant awarded pursuant to this subsection requires that recipients undertake ongoing evaluations of the implementation of the plan and all its aspects.

 (E) Subject to appropriations, the department shall establish a dedicated team to provide support, technical assistance, and oversight of programs established under this section. The department annually shall evaluate the effectiveness of programs established under this section, both for feedback and accountability for grant recipients and to inform the replication of such programs throughout this State.

 (F)(1) School districts in this State may submit, by December 31, 2024, to the department a plan to provide for ongoing access to age‑appropriate early education for all students residing within the district. Such a plan must include, where relevant and feasible, the use, expansion, and quality improvement of any previously existing public and private early education delivery systems, including those programs developed and implemented pursuant to this section. No plan submitted to the department pursuant to this section may include user fees for attendance.

 (2) The department shall promulgate regulations to provide for the process of submission, review, and approval of such plans. The department also shall promulgate regulations to provide for monitoring of quality and fidelity of implementation of a district’s plan and a process of probationary status and potential revocation of approval in the event of poor implementation. The department shall provide notice of the regulations to the General Assembly at least ninety days before approval by the department.

 (3) Districts who do not submit such a plan by the aforementioned date may submit a plan after said date. However, any such district may be prioritized after districts whose plans were received by said date.

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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