



HB3: Early education allotment funding

House Bill 3, the school finance bill that passed in the most recent legislative session, established an Early Education Allotment which adds a 10% weight to a K-3rd grade student's basic allotment if that student is educationally disadvantaged or limited English proficient. The added weight would increase that student's basic allotment by \$616. If a K-3rd grade student is both educationally disadvantaged and limited English proficient, the weight doubles to 20%, or \$1,232 per student.

Districts will be able to spend this allotment on practically anything that supports early student proficiency in 3rd grade reading and/or mathematics, so long as the services are catered to students in grade 3 or younger. TSTA expects the funds to be used primarily for funding the second half-day of pre-Kindergarten, implementing various proficiency plans, and paying for teachers and principals to attend required, but otherwise unfunded, Reading Academies.

Full-day pre-K

If a district was previously required to offer half-day pre-K for eligible four-year-olds, HB 3 now mandates that the district transition to full-day pre-K for those students. However, the district will continue to get funding for half-day pre-K only. Districts may continue to provide half-day pre-K for eligible three-year-olds as they did under prior law. Full-day pre-K is subject to the same minutes of operation requirements as other grades, although the requirements did not change for half-day pre-K for three-year-olds. Further, districts are allowed to charge tuition for students who are ineligible for pre-K but wish to attend anyway, and for the second half day of pre-K for three-year-olds who prefer a full day of instruction. The [guidelines for high quality pre-K](#) have not changed, although there are new HB 3 pre-K data reporting requirements for districts.

For students who receive early childhood special education (ECSE) services and are prekindergarten eligible, the admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee will determine how the ECSE services will be implemented during the full instructional day or whether it is appropriate to have a shorter day. For students who receive ECSE services and are not eligible for pre-K, the ARD committee will determine the implementation of services, which may or may not include full-day pre-K.

Exemptions and state waivers

There are two ways that districts may request an exemp-

tion from new full-day pre-K requirements: if the district would need to construct, repurpose, lease or issue a bond to provide adequate facilities or if implementation of the requirement would result in fewer eligible children enrolled in pre-K.

Before applying for an exemption, the district must first seek and receive a proposal from public or private partnerships at a public meeting. TEA will provide more guidance on how to meet this requirement in the future.

TEA has acknowledged that compliance with the new guidelines in year one is going to be difficult, so exemptions will likely be granted for districts that need more time. After year one, exemptions will require a good-faith showing of compliance.

Districts can apply for a one-, two- or three-year waiver depending on what kind of exemption is being solicited. [The waivers will come with ongoing requirements](#) for the district, although ultimately the early education allotment is not based on the pre-K requirement, so if a district does not comply it may still receive the early education allotment.

Public-private partnerships

Public-private partnerships are not new, but with HB 3 actively encourages them. Under the new law, a district is now required to pursue these partnerships even if they are trying to receive an exemption to the requirement to offer full-day pre-K. Districts are also obliged to look to outside partnerships if providing pre-K requires them to expand their facilities. TEA is also encouraging districts to partner with outside organizations, promising additional funding by going this route.

Once a district agrees to a partnership, eligible pre-K students enrolled in both the district and the child care provider, services can be on-site at the LEA or at the early learning center, and either the district or early learning center may employ the teacher(s). Districts can combine funding to provide for pre-K and wrap-around services.

K-2 progress monitoring tools update

HB 3 made some changes to the progress monitoring framework for Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grades, but these will not apply until the 2020-2021 school year. TEA is scheduled to have a deep dive on this topic in September 2019.