

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION STAFF NOTE

Topic: 2022-2023 Preschool Grant Allotment System and Funding Rates
Date: June 2022
Action Requested: Review Action/Consent Action/Discussion
Held In: Full Board Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Operations

SUMMARY OF ISSUE BEFORE THE BOARD:

Review and approval of the 2022-2023 Preschool Grant Allotment System and Funding Rates.

COMMISSIONER’S RECOMMENDATION:

The Commissioner recommends that the board approve the preschool per-child rates for 2022-2023. The rates are based upon the budget approved by the 2022 General Assembly.

APPLICABLE STATUTE OR REGULATION:

KRS 157.3175, 702 KAR 3:250

BACKGROUND:

Existing Policy:

The state-funded preschool program is available to 3- and 4-year-old children with disabilities and 4-year-olds whose household income falls within 160% of federal poverty guidelines. Children who do not meet eligibility requirements may still participate if space is available. Established in 1990, preschool services are designed to provide children with developmentally appropriate teaching and learning experiences, as well as access to medical, mental health and social services. The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) administers this program through a non-competitive state grant allocation process.

A formula is used to distribute funding to school districts. Amounts are based on the average number of children served on December 1 and March 1 of the previous academic year. The sum of this average is multiplied by per-child rates approved by the Kentucky Board of Education for the new school year. There is a standard “per-child” rate for three enrollment categories: speech, developmental delay and income eligible children. There is a weighted category for children with severe/multiple disabilities. While funding is based upon a “per-child” rate, funds may be used to support any allowable preschool expenditure in school districts.

Between December 1, 2020, and December 1, 2021, total enrollment of preschool students increased. While this is an improvement, many children who didn’t enroll in preschool during the height of COVID-19, may need additional academic support when they enroll in kindergarten next year.

Summary of Issue:

Each spring, the Kentucky Board of Education establishes the per-child rates for the Kentucky Preschool Program for the upcoming school year based on the appropriation provided by the General Assembly. The following preschool rates for at-risk children and children with

disabilities are recommended for the 2022-2023 school year:

At-Risk: \$4,395
Speech: \$4,395
Developmental Delay: \$4,395
Severe: \$8,349

Budget Impact:

The General Assembly appropriated \$84,481,100 to the state-funded preschool program for each year of the 2022-204 fiscal biennium. The preschool program is level funded for 2022-2023. However, additional funding for the Early Childhood Regional Training Centers (RTCs) was not included in the final enacted budget.

According to the National Institute of Early Education Research (NIEER), preschool enrollment declined in nearly every state during 2020-2021. The following states experienced more than a 30 percent decline: Alaska, Arizona, California, Connecticut, Kentucky and Nevada.

This year Kentucky's enrollment grew over the previous year. The average number of children enrolled on December 1 and March 1 increased from 15,898 in school year 2020-2021 to 18,333 in school year 2021-2022.

GROUPS CONSULTED AND BRIEF SUMMARY OF RESPONSES:

Staff communicate regularly with multiple stakeholder groups, including the Governor's Office of Early Childhood, the Early Childhood Advisory Council, the Child Care Advisory Council, the Cabinet for Health and Family Services and other advocacy groups such as the Prichard Committee, about action needed to increase quality and access to early learning environments.

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Commissioner of Education

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<input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District Support