1   AN ACT establishing the Adaptive Kindergarten Readiness pilot project.

2   *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:*

3   ➔SECTION 1.   A NEW SECTION OF KRS CHAPTER 157 IS CREATED TO

4   READ AS FOLLOWS:

5   *(1)   The General Assembly hereby finds and declares that:*

6   *(a)   During the first five (5) years of life, children experience rapid learning and*

7   *development that have effects that endure their lifetimes;*

8   *(b)   A key milestone in children's development is their transition into and*

9   *readiness for kindergarten;*

10   *(c)   High quality early childhood literacy programs can significantly improve a*

11   *child's readiness for kindergarten and future academic success;*

12   *(d)   Children in Kentucky would benefit from access to varied and effective*

13   *early literacy services; and*

14   *(e)   Developing   new   and   innovative   services   for   the   children   of   the*

15   *Commonwealth can expand access to early literacy services and improve*

16   *kindergarten readiness.*

17   *(2)   For the purposes of this section:*

18   *(a)   "Child-care center" has the same meaning as in KRS 199.894;*

19   *(b)   "Contractor" means the educational technology provider selected pursuant*

20   *to subsection (4) of this section;*

21   *(c)   "Department" means the Kentucky Department of Education; and*

22   *(d)   "Eligible child" means a child who is four (4) or five (5) years old and is*

23   *not currently enrolled in kindergarten in a public school district, but is*

24   *eligible to enroll during the following school year.*

25   *(3)   The Adaptive Kindergarten Readiness Pilot Project is hereby established to*

26   *provide preschool children with access to educational technology programs that*

27   *use family engagement to improve kindergarten readiness. The pilot project shall:*

1   *(a)   During the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 school years, provide a cohort of*

2   *eligible children during each school year with access to an educational*

3   *technology program that:*

4   *1.   Utilizes family engagement to deliver age-appropriate instruction in*

5   *reading that may be implemented in homes or in child-care centers;*

6   *2.   Offers optional instruction in mathematics and science;*

7   *3.   Aligns with relevant state standards for preschool under KRS*

8   *157.3175;*

9   *4.   Assists with the objectives of the Head Start Act, 42 U.S.C. sec. 9801 et*

10   *seq.;*

11   *5.   Assists children with disabilities in preparing for kindergarten; and*

12   *6.   Meets the benchmarks for evidence-based programs established by the*

13   *United States Department of Education;*

14   *(b)   Operate under the oversight of the Kentucky Department of Education;*

15   *(c)   Solicit families to encourage their eligible child's participation in the pilot*

16   *project through public information campaigns, outreach programs, and*

17   *referrals from other educational entities that is partially focused on*

18   *communities and areas of the state encountering persistent poverty;*

19   *(d)   Reserve forty percent (40%) of a cohort's membership for eligible students*

20   *with a household income of no more than two hundred percent (200%) of*

21   *the federal poverty level. However, if a seat reserved under this paragraph*

22   *remains vacant for more than two (2) months, the seat in that cohort may be*

23   *given to any eligible child. The pilot project shall enroll eligible children as*

24   *students in both the reserved and unreserved membership in the order the*

25   *completed applications were submitted. The maximum enrollment for each*

26   *cohort shall be established by the department and provider based on the*

27   *funds available;*

1   *(e)   Use:*

2   *1.   A multisensory reading tutoring program; and*

3   *2.   A validated adaptive reading test that does not require the presence of*

4   *trained adults to administer and that has been demonstrated as an*

5   *accurate indicator of a child's reading readiness; and*

6   *(f)   As needed and at no cost for the student's family, for the duration of the*

7   *student's participation in the pilot project, provide a student with a*

8   *household income of no more than four hundred percent (400%) of the*

9   *federal poverty level with:*

10   *1.   A computer or tablet; and*

11   *2.   Access to internet service.*

12   *(4)   The Kentucky Department of Education shall select a provider to implement the*

13   *pilot project under the department's oversight. In evaluating provider applicants,*

14   *the department shall require an applicant to have:*

15   *(a)   At least three (3) years of experience in implementing similar services;*

16   *(b)   Conducted a randomized controlled trial or other external evaluation that*

17   *support the efficacy of the educational technology program the provider*

18   *implements; and*

19   *(c)   Capabilities to:*

20   *1.   Partner with preschool, head start, and child-care centers to serve*

21   *participating students;*

22   *2.   Communicate with parents and other education professionals involved*

23   *in the pilot project;*

24   *3.   Update the instructional software as needed;*

25   *4.   Validate user access;*

26   *5.   Collect user data;*

27   *6.   Store research data;*

1   *7.   Produce reports for parents, schools, the department, and the*

2   *Legislative Research Commission; and*

3   *8.   Comply with state and federal education and digital privacy laws.*

4 *(5)   The selected provider shall:*

5   *(a)   Develop a recruitment plan to solicit families to participate in the pilot*

6   *project;*

7   *(b)   Implement the pilot project in compliance with subsection (3) of this*

8   *section;*

9   *(c)   Provide administrative and technical support to students, families, and any*

10   *other involved education professionals for the installation and operation of*

11   *the instructional software;*

12   *(d)   Seek the advice and expertise of local stakeholders, such as public and*

13   *private early childhood education professionals, the department, local*

14   *school board members, kindergarten teachers, and parents, on the*

15   *implementation of the pilot project in areas such as:*

16   *1.   Soliciting families to participate in the pilot project;*

17   *2.   Providing training to families and education professionals; and*

18   *3.   Motivating families to regularly use the instructional software; and*

19   *(e)   At the conclusion of each school year, report any data required by the*

20   *department to conduct an evaluation of the pilot project's effectiveness.*

21 *(6)   By December 1, 2025, the department shall submit a report to the Legislative*

22 *Research Commission for referral to the Interim Joint Committee on Education,*

23 *that contains the following:*

24   *(a)   The extent to which the pilot project is accomplishing the objectives*

25   *identified in this section;*

26   *(b)   The number of families:*

27   *1.   Participating in the project;*

1   *2. Who have received technology devices or internet service in the*

2   *project; and*

3   *3. Who have household incomes of no more than two hundred percent*

4   *(200%) of the federal poverty level or who reside in areas of persistent*

5   *poverty;*

6   *(c) The number of private and public educational entities the provider has*

7   *partnered with during the pilot project;*

8   *(d) The frequency of use of the instructional software;*

9   *(e) Obstacles encountered with software usage, hardware, internet access, or*

10   *providing technical assistance; and*

11   *(f) Student performance on any kindergarten entry or exit assessments*

12   *conducted by school districts or public charter schools that compare*

13   *students have participated in the project and students who have not.*

14 *(7) The Kentucky Department of Education shall implement this section to the extent*

15   *that funds are available.*

16   ➔Section 2. Notwithstanding the provider selection requirements in Section 1 of

17 this Act, if by the date this Act becomes law, the Kentucky Department of Education has

18 already entered into a contract with an entity to provide services that are substantially

19 similar to the Adaptive Kindergarten Readiness Pilot Project established in Section 1 of

20 this Act, and that entity substantially meets the eligibility requirements for a "provider"

21 under Section 1 of this Act, the Kentucky Board of Education may vote to select that

22 entity to be the provider for Section 1 of this Act.