

CHAPTER 65

(HB 695)

AN ACT establishing the Adaptive Kindergarten Readiness pilot project.

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

➔SECTION 1. A NEW SECTION OF KRS CHAPTER 157 IS CREATED TO READ AS FOLLOWS:

- (1) *The General Assembly hereby finds and declares that:*
- (a) *During the first five (5) years of life, children experience rapid learning and development that have effects that endure their lifetimes;*
 - (b) *A key milestone in children's development is their transition into and readiness for kindergarten;*
 - (c) *High quality early childhood literacy programs can significantly improve a child's readiness for kindergarten and future academic success;*
 - (d) *Children in Kentucky would benefit from access to varied and effective early literacy services; and*
 - (e) *Developing new and innovative services for the children of the Commonwealth can expand access to early literacy services and improve kindergarten readiness.*
- (2) *As used in this section:*
- (a) *"Child-care center" has the same meaning as in KRS 199.894;*
 - (b) *"Contractor" means the educational technology provider selected pursuant to subsection (4) of this section;*
 - (c) *"Department" means the Kentucky Department of Education; and*
 - (d) *"Eligible child" means a child who is four (4) or five (5) years old and is not currently enrolled in kindergarten in a public school district, but is eligible to enroll during the following school year.*
- (3) *The Adaptive Kindergarten Readiness Pilot Project is hereby established to provide preschool children with access to educational technology programs that use family engagement to improve kindergarten readiness. The pilot project shall:*
- (a) *During the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 school years, provide a cohort of eligible children during each school year with access to an educational technology program that:*
 - 1. *Utilizes family engagement to deliver age-appropriate instruction in reading that may be implemented in homes or in child-care centers;*
 - 2. *Offers optional instruction in mathematics and science;*
 - 3. *Aligns with relevant state standards for preschool under KRS 157.3175;*
 - 4. *Assists with the objectives of the Head Start Act, 42 U.S.C. sec. 9801 et seq.;*
 - 5. *Assists children with disabilities in preparing for kindergarten; and*
 - 6. *Meets the benchmarks for evidence-based programs established by the United States Department of Education;*
 - (b) *Operate under the oversight of the Kentucky Department of Education;*
 - (c) *Solicit families to encourage their eligible child's participation in the pilot project through public information campaigns, outreach programs, and referrals from other educational entities that is partially focused on communities and areas of the state encountering persistent poverty;*
 - (d) *Reserve forty percent (40%) of a cohort's membership for eligible students with a household income of no more than two hundred percent (200%) of the federal poverty level. However, if a seat reserved under this paragraph remains vacant for more than two (2) months, the seat in that cohort may be given to any eligible child. The pilot project shall enroll eligible children as students in both the reserved and unreserved membership in the order the completed applications were submitted. The*

maximum enrollment for each cohort shall be established by the department and provider based on the funds available;

- (e) *Use:*
 - 1. *A multisensory reading tutoring program; and*
 - 2. *A validated adaptive reading test that does not require the presence of trained adults to administer and that has been demonstrated as an accurate indicator of a child's reading readiness; and*
- (f) *As needed and at no cost for the student's family, for the duration of the student's participation in the pilot project, provide a student with a household income of no more than four hundred percent (400%) of the federal poverty level with:*
 - 1. *A computer or tablet; and*
 - 2. *Access to internet service.*
- (4) *The Kentucky Department of Education shall select a provider to implement the pilot project under the department's oversight. In evaluating provider applicants, the department shall require an applicant to have:*
 - (a) *At least three (3) years of experience in implementing similar services;*
 - (b) *Conducted a randomized controlled trial or other external evaluation that support the efficacy of the educational technology program the provider implements; and*
 - (c) *Capabilities to:*
 - 1. *Partner with preschool, head start, and child-care centers to serve participating students;*
 - 2. *Communicate with parents and other education professionals involved in the pilot project;*
 - 3. *Update the instructional software as needed;*
 - 4. *Validate user access;*
 - 5. *Collect user data;*
 - 6. *Store research data;*
 - 7. *Produce reports for parents, schools, the department, and the Legislative Research Commission; and*
 - 8. *Comply with state and federal education and digital privacy laws.*
- (5) *The selected provider shall:*
 - (a) *Develop a recruitment plan to solicit families to participate in the pilot project;*
 - (b) *Implement the pilot project in compliance with subsection (3) of this section;*
 - (c) *Provide administrative and technical support to students, families, and any other involved education professionals for the installation and operation of the instructional software;*
 - (d) *Seek the advice and expertise of local stakeholders, such as public and private early childhood education professionals, the department, local school board members, kindergarten teachers, and parents, on the implementation of the pilot project in areas such as:*
 - 1. *Soliciting families to participate in the pilot project;*
 - 2. *Providing training to families and education professionals; and*
 - 3. *Motivating families to regularly use the instructional software; and*
 - (e) *At the conclusion of each school year, report any data required by the department to conduct an evaluation of the pilot project's effectiveness.*
- (6) *By December 1, 2025, the department shall submit a report to the Legislative Research Commission for referral to the Interim Joint Committee on Education, that contains the following:*
 - (a) *The extent to which the pilot project is accomplishing the objectives identified in this section;*

- (b) *The number of families:*
 - 1. *Participating in the project;*
 - 2. *Who have received technology devices or internet service in the project; and*
 - 3. *Who have household incomes of no more than two hundred percent (200%) of the federal poverty level or who reside in areas of persistent poverty;*
 - (c) *The number of private and public educational entities the provider has partnered with during the pilot project;*
 - (d) *The frequency of use of the instructional software;*
 - (e) *Obstacles encountered with software usage, hardware, internet access, or providing technical assistance; and*
 - (f) *Student performance on any kindergarten entry or exit assessments conducted by school districts or public charter schools that compare students who have participated in the project and students who have not.*
- (7) *The Kentucky Department of Education shall implement this section to the extent that federal funds are available.*

➔Section 2. Notwithstanding the provider selection requirements in Section 1 of this Act, if by the date this Act becomes law, the Kentucky Department of Education has already entered into a contract with an entity to provide services that are substantially similar to the Adaptive Kindergarten Readiness Pilot Project established in Section 1 of this Act, and that entity substantially meets the eligibility requirements for a "provider" under Section 1 of this Act, the Kentucky Board of Education may vote to select that entity to be the provider for Section 1 of this Act.

Signed by Governor April 4, 2024.