

# Analysis of Rio Grande Valley Participation in the Texas High Quality Pre-K HB 4 Grant Program



Texas Education Grantmakers Advocacy Consortium

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# Preface

The research included in this report was produced by Children’s Defense Fund–Texas with the support of the Texas Education Grantmakers Advocacy Consortium. The Consortium is comprised of foundations and philanthropists from across Texas interested in ensuring that parents, educators, policymakers, media, and the general public have objective data about public education. The research contained in this report is objective and nonpartisan.

Created in 2011, the Consortium is currently comprised of 37 foundations from throughout Texas and focuses its work on leveraging private resources to produce credible and necessary data on the most important educational challenges facing Texas.

For more information on the Texas Education Grantmakers Advocacy Consortium please visit [www.tegac.org](http://www.tegac.org).

## Executive Summary

In 2015, the Texas Legislature passed House Bill 4, with the goal of establishing a Pre-K grant program. The funding was then distributed to eligible school districts in the summer and fall of 2016. Districts receiving the funding demonstrated their ability to meet quality standards related to curriculum, teacher qualifications, progress monitoring, and family engagement.<sup>i</sup> In partnership with Texans Care for Children and the Texas Education Grantmakers Advocacy Consortium (TEGAC), Children’s Defense Fund–Texas gathered information from school districts in the Rio Grande Valley region of South Texas in order to explore their demand for and experience with the HB 4 High Quality Pre-K Grant.

### Our Goal

Our goal in preparing this report is to help policymakers understand the impacts of HB 4 grant funding to Rio Grande Valley schools and the children they serve. We seek to highlight the current state of Pre-K in the Valley; to learn how local school districts plan to spend HB 4 Pre-K dollars to enhance their quality improvement efforts; to understand concerns and challenges related to implementation of HB 4 requirements; and to recommend improvements to the High Quality Pre-K Grant Program.

We hope policymakers will use this study to support reliable, sustainable funding for quality, full-day Pre-K; require districts to limit Pre-K classroom sizes to 22, with student-adult ratios of 11:1; and encourage and support local collaborations among school districts, private child care agencies, and Head Start programs to maximize resources and improve overall Pre-K quality.

## Methodology

The information for this report was gathered through online surveys sent to identified contact persons in each of the 35 school districts and charter schools that have Pre-K programs in the four county area of the Rio Grande Valley. Representatives from 23 school districts responded to the survey. In addition, face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted with administrators in five school districts. School districts were selected for the interviews based on their size, county location and whether or not they applied for HB 4 funding, with the intent of having variation related to all three conditions.

## Key Findings

- Ninety-five percent of the districts that responded to surveys in the Rio Grande Valley Region said that they applied for the grant because they wanted to enhance the plan they already have in place to improve the quality of Pre-K in their districts. An overwhelming majority of the survey respondents will use the funding for professional development and instructional resources, especially technology (e.g. smart-boards, iPads, and digital curriculum) and 74 percent will use it for parental engagement activities.
- All district respondents have Pre-K programs for four-year-olds on 100 percent of the elementary campuses in their districts. Ninety-five percent of those programs are bilingual and 60 percent are full-day programs.
- When asked to rank unmet need on a scale of zero to ten, with zero being no unmet need and ten being a great deal of unmet need, the average ranking among respondents was five. This demonstrates that although over 20,000 local children are attending Pre-K programs, school district personnel are aware that many more children still need services and one reason they for applied for HB 4 monies was to communicate that demand to policymakers.
- The two districts that did not apply for HB 4 funding stated that the amount they would receive was not enough to justify the cost that would be required to meet the conditions of the grant.

# Pre-K in the Rio Grande Valley

The Rio Grande Valley Region is in the southern tip of Texas, bordered by the Gulf of Mexico on the east and the Rio Grande River and Mexico on the south. This report focuses on school districts in four counties in the region: Cameron, Willacy, Hidalgo, and Starr. The information collected and discussed below came from online surveys sent to school district staff directly responsible for their Pre-K programming and/or funding, and from face-to-face interviews with school administrators in five districts.

## Community Landscape

Hidalgo and Cameron Counties reflect a combination of fast-growing urban/suburban areas, mainly along the east-west stretch of Interstate Highway 2, and slower-paced rural areas to the north. Willacy and Starr Counties are almost entirely rural with each having a few small towns where most of the counties' population resides. The Rio Grande Valley is one of the fastest growing areas in the state. Currently, the median household income is less than \$35,000 in all four counties<sup>ii</sup> and the percentage of low income students in districts with Pre-K programs ranges from 61 to 100 percent, with most falling in the 80 to 90 percent range. Most young children in the region qualify for Pre-K<sup>iii</sup> and/or one of the three federally funded Head Start programs in the area due to low household incomes. The region has a large young population with approximately one third of the total population in Hidalgo, Cameron and Starr counties under the age of 18.<sup>iv</sup> Although the region is attracting more and more families from diverse backgrounds, especially in the urban areas of McAllen and Brownsville, Spanish is by far the most common language spoken in households that speak a language other than English.<sup>v</sup>

## Pre-K Enrollment

Total student enrollment for the four county area in the 2015-16 school year was approximately 354,000 students. Eighty-five percent of those students are considered to be economically disadvantaged and thirty-five percent are limited English proficient (LEP). Students from military families make up less than one percent of the total school enrollment. Slightly over 20,000 or about 5.7 percent of the student population are Pre-K students enrolled in public or charter schools the Rio Grande Valley Region.<sup>vi</sup>

## Efforts to improve quality, increase enrollment

School districts in the Rio Grande Valley have demonstrated a desire to improve the quality of their Pre-K programs by offering professional development to teachers, adding

paraprofessionals to high enrollment classrooms and aligning their curriculum with the state approved Pre-K guidelines.

Many districts have increased enrollment by offering a full-day program, considered essential for working families, and offering tuition-based Pre-K slots to children who do not qualify under the state eligibility standards. Some districts have expanded their program to include 3-year-olds. Partnering with high quality child care agencies and with Head Start has allowed the expansion to full day and to 3-year-olds because it would have been prohibitive within existing school facilities.

The partnerships have also helped to improve quality because some of the child care agencies and Head Start Pre-K classrooms are participating in the *Texas School Ready!* project (TSR), a research driven program supported by the Texas Education Agency and the Texas Workforce Commission, that provides teacher training and progress monitoring tools.

## **Relevant policy history affecting region**

In 2006-2008, 21 districts in the region were awarded Pre-K expansion grants. Those grants allowed districts to improve program quality and expand the number of Pre-K students served in half-day programs.

In addition, four districts — Brownsville, Edinburg, Mercedes, and McAllen — received funding through the Texas Literacy Initiative grant program.<sup>vii</sup> Those funds were intended to improve the school readiness skills and later educational success of disadvantaged students in literacy and language competency.

## **Community Support**

Both Cameron and Hidalgo Counties have interagency coalitions that collaborate to improve school readiness in their county. In Cameron County, the *Success by Six* initiative is supported by the United Way of Southern Cameron County and has had an Early Childhood Leadership Team for the past several years. "Our community is fortunate to have stakeholders who believe in collective impact," said the Early Education Director from United Way. "The Early Leadership Team has taken a systems change approach and developed collaborative school readiness strategies...targeted to meet the needs of the community." In Hidalgo County, the *Make the First Five Count* Coalition, led by Easter Seals RGV, focuses on school readiness and works alongside school districts to improve outcomes for children. All of the school districts that participated in the face-to face interviews, reported strong support from their School Boards, their superintendents, and the elementary teachers who eventually have Pre-K graduates in their classrooms.

# Application Profiles

The following five district profiles provide a closer look at Pre-K in the Rio Grande Valley. School district administrators from two large districts, one medium sized district and two small school districts agreed to participate in face-to face interviews to discuss their current Pre-K programs and their experience with and expectations for HB 4 funding. Four of the districts profiled applied for and received funding. One of the districts chose not to submit a grant application. There were no districts in the four-county area that applied but were not funded.

## Successful Application Profiles

Thirty-two of the thirty-five school districts in this region applied for the HB 4 grant. All that applied were successfully awarded the funding. To provide the following profiles of districts in the region we reached out to a number of districts that represent variations in district size and location. In the profiles that follow, Brownsville ISD and Edinburg ISD represent the two largest districts in the region; Weslaco ISD is considered medium-sized for the area, and Raymondville ISD, although the largest school district in Willacy County, is considered small in comparison to the other three. The one profiled district that chose not to apply is San Perlita ISD.



### Local Interest in Quality Pre-K

Brownsville ISD already has many of the requirements of HB 4 in place. The district felt that the additional goals of this funding opportunity would support continued quality improvement. Strong partnerships have developed over the years with organizations such as local HEB grocery stores, Neighbors in Need of Services, Inc. (NINOS) Head Start, the United Way of Southern Cameron County ('Success by 6' project), and several private child care agencies. These collaborations have facilitated solutions to address community concerns with school readiness. One member of the Brownsville ISD interview panel shared that the district's School Board of Trustees "is very proud and supportive of Pre-K."

She went on to note that goals specifically addressing pre-literacy are included in the district-wide strategic plan.

### **Local Pre-K Program Highlights**

Of the 5 districts interviewed for this report, Brownsville ISD appears to have the most resources and the ability to build on past grant experiences. Previous major grant awards include a multi-million dollar 2006-2008 Pre-K Expansion Grant and a multi-year Texas Literacy Initiative grant (\$25,000,000) that was awarded in 2011. Both grants supported district implementation of their now well-established progress monitoring process. Using the results of their progress monitoring, district staff conduct data analysis meetings several times throughout the school year to review the progress data and make changes as necessary.

Brownsville ISD offers a full-day 4-year-old, bilingual program with enrollment reported at nearly 3,400 in 2016. In addition, the district serves 3-year-olds in a half day program of two split sessions on 13 of their campuses. They also collaborate with Head Start at 5 sites to provide services to their 3-year-old population. Finally, BISD offers tuition-based Pre-K for those who do not qualify through the state guidelines with priority given to Brownsville residents and BISD employees. Teachers receive regular training in classroom management and additional district staff are available to assist with students who have specific behavioral needs. All early childhood teachers with Bachelor's degrees are required to have a minor or an endorsement in early childhood and a bilingual endorsement or certification.

Enrollment in Pre-K has remained fairly stable over the past 3 years. However, when asked about the unmet need in their district, the interview panel reported that there is still a moderate amount of unmet need for 4-year-olds and an increased amount of unmet need for 3-year-olds, based on current eligibility requirements.

### **Value of HB 4**

Brownsville ISD plans to use the grant funding to enhance the quality of the program they already have in place by supplementing their curriculum, continuing progress monitoring three times a year and broadening their parent engagement activities. The HB 4 funding will be used to purchase products, (classroom computers for student assessment and learning centers; and family literacy packs with age appropriate books), that will add to the infrastructure and carry over for several years.



## **Concerns and Challenges of HB 4**

The grant application posed no problems for Brownsville ISD as the district has an ongoing grant submission process in place and employs seasoned grant writers. The only challenge that the Brownsville ISD interview panel could identify, when pressed during the interview, was having to modify the current progress monitoring format to include a new platform and to provide teacher training to address the changes. But, they also characterized the process as an opportunity to learn something new and improve current skills.

Another challenge in Brownsville is that the city has a very young population. According to the Brownsville ISD employee who was interviewed, 29 is the median age, which means that many of the Pre-K parents are quite young, with some under age 21. This reality comes into play when planning parental engagement strategies that must appeal to a young generation of parents.

The BISD interview panel shared concerns that HB 4 has certain limitations. For example, the district could use additional monies for salaries and for the facility improvements required for upgrading restrooms and playgrounds to accommodate the needs of Pre-K students. However, those types of investments will not take place until more sustained funding is made available.

## **Moving Forward**

Thinking about the growth and success of the community, the interview panel was quick to point out that if all children attended public Pre-K, some local child care businesses would not survive. Brownsville ISD envisions a continued and broadening collaboration with local child care agencies and Head Start in order to meet all of the community's Pre-K needs.

In the future, Brownsville ISD would like to reduce class size or add additional support staff to classrooms to improve the adult-to-child ratio. There are often 18 students to one teacher in a classroom; and some classrooms have reached a ratio of 22 students to one teacher. Pre-K teachers do not always have a paraprofessional assisting in their classroom. In fact, it is common for 2 teachers to share one paraprofessional.

Brownsville ISD already monitors progress of their Pre-K students three times each school year. Therefore, the process and the expectation for monitoring is already in place and teachers will only need training to learn the new format required by HB 4.



## **Local Interest in Quality Pre-K**

Edinburg Consolidated ISD leaders immediately saw the benefit that HB 4 funding could provide to their district. Having received Pre-K expansion monies for only two of the 3 years it was available and in a rapidly growing district, the grant would help them improve program quality and support curriculum writing for Pre-K. “We understand that a good education starts at the bottom, where it makes the most difference,” the administrator for Curriculum and Instruction said.

Edinburg also received a Texas Literacy Grant in 2012-13, which was used to support literacy development in Pre-K classrooms on 23 campuses. The HB 4 grant will allow them to spread this initiative to the remaining campuses in the district. For the past several summers, district staff have been attending summer curriculum writing sessions to align their curriculum to the Pre-K guidelines.

One of the team members shared at the interview that “. . . our Board and superintendent are committed to early education; it is their emphasis...” and in July 2016, the ECISD Board demonstrated their support by approving a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Hidalgo County Head Start Program. The MOU will allow school district employed Pre-K teachers to teach in Head Start classrooms during the 2016-17 school year.

## **Local Pre-K Program Highlights**

Edinburg offers a full-day bilingual Pre-K 3 program, currently serving only about 50 students, and a half-day bilingual Pre-K 4 program offered in split sessions at every one of their 31 campuses. They have watched as Pre-K 4 enrollment has remained fairly stable over the past two years, falling slightly from the 2014 enrollment high of 1,561, possibly due to the growing enrollment in nearby charter schools. In every Pre-K classroom, there are two adults — a teacher and a paraprofessional — who receive annual training including training in behavior management. Individual Pre-K classroom enrollment ranges from 12-25 students. Student assessment to monitor progress is already being done three times a year and results are reviewed on a regular basis.

## **Value of HB 4**

District leaders saw the grant as an opportunity for professional development in reading, writing and technology, for guidance regarding parental engagement, and as a funding source to be used to bring additional technology to Pre-K classrooms. With a focus on technology and professional development, they are hoping that the investment they make now will carry over to future years. "The grant is allowing us to go above and beyond what we already have in place and we already have a strong Pre-K program," commented one district official.

## **Concerns and Challenges of HB 4**

Edinburg school district staff are not concerned about implementation of the requirements of HB 4. As stated earlier, they already have a progress monitoring process in place, they have a strong parental involvement program, and they have a technology specialist on every campus. They will use those resources to ensure compliance with grant.

## **Moving Forward**

The district continues to build new elementary campuses and with each new campus, new Pre-K classrooms will be added. During the interview, administrators expressed a desire for full-day Pre-K for all children who qualify, but they realize that would require more facilities and more personnel, which in turn would demand a more sustained and secure funding source than HB 4 currently provides. For now, improving technology in the classrooms and strengthening their collaboration with Head Start are the main Pre-K focus areas for Edinburg Consolidated Independent School District.



Rich in History, Anchored in Excellence

## Local Interest in Quality Pre-K

Continuing to expand and improve Pre-K programming is written into the campus improvement plans in Raymondville ISD. The district's high interest in quality Pre-K was further piqued after administrative staff read research conducted by Hart and Risley which demonstrated significant discrepancies in language interactions between parents and children from middle- or high-income families as compared to those from families receiving public assistance. Those discrepancies were shown to influence children's academic success later on.<sup>viii</sup> The Raymondville ISD Board of Directors and the Superintendent are extremely supportive of investments in Pre-K and Kindergarten. Recently the School Board voted to purchase iPads for all Kindergarten and Pre-K students and also purchased an e-book app with a focus on literacy called *Footsteps2Brilliance* that was made available to anyone living in the Raymondville zip code area.

## Local Pre-K Program Highlights

In 2016, Raymondville served 140 Pre-K students, nearly a 50 percent increase over the year before. They have a full-day, bilingual four-year-old program and a half-day three-year-old program with classrooms located on both elementary campuses in the district. The three-year-old program is fairly new, beginning in school year 2015-16. During the 2016-17 school year, Raymondville ISD will offer tuition-paid Pre-K slots for the first time to employees in the district, whether or not their children qualify under the state guidelines. There are no collaborative agreements with Head Start or private child care centers and single classroom enrollment has fluctuated from 15 to as high as 27. The district did not receive Pre-K expansion funding in 2006-2008, when many other area districts did, nor did they have a Texas Literacy Initiative Grant. When asked about unmet need in the district, the district Curriculum and Instruction Director estimated that there still are four-year-old children who need the services and the unmet need for three-year-olds is very high.

## **Value of HB 4**

When the HB 4 funding became available, “we saw an opportunity to invest in what we already have in place and help it grow. Why not apply? It can only help children and teachers,” said the district Director. The HB 4 funds will be used for professional development, parental engagement activities and to purchase additional classroom materials. “What this all boils down to is educational equity” the Director added. She feels applying for HB 4 funding communicates to state policymakers that the support for Pre-K programming and improvements is important.

## **Concerns and Challenges of HB 4**

The district’s biggest challenge is updating and improving the way they engage with families. They are focusing on technology and social media, hoping to entice a young parent population to become more involved with their children’s education. In addition, Raymondville would like to meet the state recommendation of 22 students to 2 adults in each classroom, but without sustained funding, that will be difficult, if not impossible. “It is difficult to know what all of the challenges will be with HB 4 until we get into it; I hope we have the opportunity for feedback in the future,” the Director added.

## **Moving Forward**

The district will look to larger districts, with more experience and more resources, as models for implementation of quality Pre-K programming. Specifically, they have identified San Antonio as a successful model for them. Although excited about the HB 4 resources to invest in technology, materials and professional development that would have been prohibitive without the funding, district officials say they are cautious about the effect it will have in the long term. They see it as a ‘quick fix’ that will surely become outdated without continued funding. If the funding is not continued, it will be “two steps forward, and then one step back”, commented the Director.



## **Local Interest in Quality Pre-K**

Weslaco ISD administrators see Pre-K as the foundation for everything that comes after. “Funding that we invest there will influence test results in third grade. Pre-K is the key if we want kids to do well later. Funding at the Pre-K level makes a huge impact,” said a school administrator during the district interview. Weslaco has demonstrated an interest in school readiness beyond just Pre-K. In 2013, Weslaco ISD partnered with Easter Seals RGV to collect district-wide school readiness data. The results showed variations in school readiness by neighborhood and by campus. When the district implemented an e-book app for all students, they also extended access to child care agencies in their community, hoping to encourage pre-literacy. Recently Weslaco partnered with the HEB Read-3 program to offer parent training on nutrition and literacy.

## **Local Pre-K Program Highlights**

In 2016, Pre-K enrollment in Weslaco increased over 50 percent from the year before and that trend is expected to continue. The four-year-old Pre-K program is a half-day bilingual program and all 12 of the elementary campuses in the district have Pre-K classrooms with split sessions. The program also admits a few children tuition-free, who do not qualify under the state guidelines, but only a few families take advantage of this opportunity because working families in the community need full-day preschool settings. There is no district supported three-year-old Pre-K program. Weslaco is unique in that it has an Early Learning Foundation (ELF) Academy, where nine Pre-K teachers are housed along with their principal. The teachers go to the Head Start Centers and to private child care centers in the community to implement a project-based curriculum modeled after a program developed at the University of Pennsylvania. “Head Start had the space and we had the certified teachers,” said the Executive Director for Curriculum and Instruction. Weslaco wants to expand collaboration with Head Start in the future and is looking at nearby Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD, as a model.

## **Value of HB 4**

Weslaco is in the process of developing a specific plan to improve Pre-K quality and HB 4 helps to accomplish this. The district will use HB 4 monies to upgrade their curriculum

with a new digital component, improve parental engagement and add technology to Pre-K classrooms.

### **Concerns and Challenges of HB 4**

“The requirements for parental engagement in HB 4 will be tough,” said the Director. Weslaco plans to use their campus parental involvement staff but “we don’t have the staff or administration to stay on top of that.” Although Weslaco administration wholeheartedly supports monitoring student progress, there is concern that if districts are not allowed to use what they already have in place, it may require additional time from teachers or be a duplication of effort. Weslaco ISD administrators would like to see training offered for implementation of the parental engagement and progress monitoring components of HB 4.

### **Moving Forward**

The funding they received from HB 4 will have an impact for several years, but “eventually everything has to be replaced; technology is always changing.” If the Pre-K funding is not renewed, “we would lose half of what we have just implemented,” warned the Executive Director for Curriculum and Instruction.

Currently, Weslaco has one paraprofessional for every two Pre-K teachers and the class size limit is 22. They would like to improve their student to adult ratio to the grant recommended 11:1. Right now, their budget does not support that, but they are examining ways to make it a reality. “And”, added the Executive Director, “we would love to offer services to three-year-olds in the future,” perhaps through additional partnerships with Head Start and child care.

## Did not Apply/Rejected Grant profiles

In the Rio Grande Valley Region, only three school districts, two public and one charter, chose not to apply for the HB 4 funding. There were no school districts that applied for the grant, but were declined funding. San Perlita ISD in Willacy County and San Isidro ISD in Starr County each reported an enrollment of nine Pre-K students for the 2015-16 school year. Vanguard Academy Charter School reported an enrollment of 178 Pre-K students for the same time period. All three completed and returned a survey for this study and the face-to-face interview with fiscal staff from San Perlita provided information for the district profile that follows.

### **SAN PERLITA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**



#### **Decision to Forgo HB 4 Grant Program in 2015-2017**

San Perlita ISD decided not to apply for the HB 4 Pre-K monies because they felt that the cost to implement the requirements exceeded the grant funds that would be awarded based on their enrollment of only nine students. Their greatest concerns were the cost of teacher training for their only Pre-K teacher and implementation of the progress monitoring system.

#### **Local Pre-K Program Highlights**

Of the nine students in Pre-K in San Perlita ISD, seven are children that qualify through the state guidelines; the other two are enrolled in the program, tuition free, because even with the extra students the student to teacher ratio remains low. Enrollment in the program was less in 2015-16 than in the previous two years, but for this small rural community, a slight change in enrollment is common. "Some years there are just more four-year-olds living here than others," but over a three to four year timespan, the enrollment remains fairly constant. San Perlita's full-day program is only for four-year-olds. Because the district is rural and isolated from other small towns in Willacy County, there is little opportunity to collaborate with a Head Start center or with child care programs. Currently there is no class size limit, but the district hires paraprofessionals, as needed, depending on enrollment, to keep student-teacher ratios reasonable. In the past, San Perlita received Pre-K expansion grant funding, nearly \$100,000 over three years, and currently Title I and local funding are used to fund program costs.



## **Moving Forward**

There are no plans to expand the program in San Perlita as there appears to be very little unmet need. The Pre-K program serves children from families in the surrounding area who make their living ranching or fishing. The sole Pre-K teacher attends regular curriculum and behavior management training, usually at the Education Service Center. At 72 percent, the district percentage of low income students is below the area average of 84 percent. "We are like a family out here. Everyone knows everyone else and we take care of and support each other. We make sure our kids graduate," said the Federal Programs Consultant for the district. San Perlita would appreciate funds to help cover the cost of their full-day Pre-K program, but they would like to see funding that is not based solely on enrollment. When state funding is determined by student enrollment, the cost of implementation can be significantly more than the funding amount granted to a small district.

## **Conclusion**

All elementary campuses in the Rio Grande Valley region have Pre-K classrooms and 60 percent of them are full-day programs. Because of the high percentage of low-income families in the region, many of the four-year-olds qualify for state funded Pre-K. Districts that have been able to provide full-day Pre-K programs are often able to do so only through partnerships with child care agencies and Head Start programs that help provide the necessary facilities and support staff.

School districts in the Rio Grande Valley that received HB 4 funding will use it primarily to enhance programs they already have in place through more focused family engagement activities, professional development opportunities, and technology resources for classrooms. They are appreciative for the resources offered through HB 4, but they recognize the need for a more reliable, sustained funding stream that would give them the confidence to hire additional personnel and build the facilities required to expand services and meet the need that still exists and is expected to grow.

Finally, small districts in the Rio Grande Valley would like the opportunity to improve the quality of their Pre-K programs with funding that is not based entirely on student enrollment.

## Recommendations

In order to improve the quality of Pre-K in the Rio Grande Valley, and based on information collected from school districts through interviews and surveys, Children's Defense Fund-Texas recommends the following:

1. Provide full day Pre-K for all four-year-olds who qualify under existing state eligibility requirements
2. Provide reliable, sustained funding which gives districts more certainty with which to make long term investments than they have with grant funded programs
3. Establish a limit on Pre-K class size of no more than 22 children per class, and a student-teacher ratio of one full-time adult per every 11 children, as recommended by national standards and a 2016 study commissioned by TEA
4. Support and encourage collaboration between local school districts, high quality child care programs, and federally funded Head Starts. Working together improves quality, maximizes resources, and strengthens community
5. Provide funding opportunities not solely based on student enrollment in order to encourage greater participation and allow smaller districts to benefit from state funding intended to improve quality and expand services of Pre-K programs
6. Identify opportunities for additional Pre-K improvements and share best practices of successful Pre-K programs across the state as a model, using program characteristics and other data districts will submit to TEA under new HB 4 requirements
7. Utilize the expertise at the Regional Education Service Centers to provide professional development, to help with grant applications, and to offer guidance on family engagement activities that are culturally and linguistically appropriate for local populations

School District	Applied & Received Grants	Rejected Grants	Did Not Apply
Brownsville ISD	✓		
Donna ISD	✓		
Edcouch-Elsa ISD	✓		
Edinburg CISD	✓		
Excellence in Leadership Academy	✓		
Harlingen CISD	✓		
Hidalgo ISD	✓		
Horizon Montessori Public Schools	✓		
IDEA Public Schools	✓		
La Feria ISD	✓		
La Joya ISD	✓		
La Villa ISD	✓		
Lasara ISD	✓		
Los Fresnos ISD	✓		
Lyford CISD	✓		
McAllen ISD	✓		
Mercedes ISD	✓		
Mission CISD	✓		
Monte Alto ISD	✓		
Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD	✓		
Point Isabel ISD	✓		
Progreso ISD	✓		
Raymondville ISD	✓		
Rio Grande City CISD	✓		
Rio Hondo ISD	✓		
Roma ISD	✓		
San Benito ISD	✓		
San Isidro ISD			✓
San Perlita ISD			✓
Santa Maria ISD	✓		
Santa Rosa ISD	✓		
Sharyland ISD	✓		
Valley View ISD	✓		
Vanguard Academy			✓
Weslaco ISD	✓		

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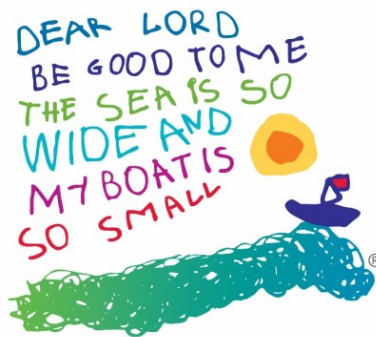
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- M.R. and Evelyn Hudson Foundation (Dallas)
- North Texas Community Foundation (Fort Worth)
- Powell Foundation (Houston)
- Rainwater Charitable Foundation (Fort Worth)
- Raise Your Hand Texas (Austin)
- RGK Foundation (Austin)
- San Antonio Area Foundation (San Antonio)
- Sid W. Richardson Foundation (Fort Worth)
- Simmons Foundation (Houston)
- Still Water Foundation (Austin)
- Tapestry Foundation (Austin)
- Texas Pioneer Foundation (Texarkana)
- The Dallas Foundation (Dallas)
- T.L.L. Temple Foundation (Lufkin)
- Trull Foundation (Palacios)
- TG TX Student Loan Corporation (Austin)
- United Way of Metropolitan Dallas (Dallas)
- United Ways of Texas (Austin)
- Waco Foundation (Waco)
- Webber Family Foundation (Austin)
- Wright Family Foundation (Austin)

# References

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- <sup>i</sup> Texas Education Agency. House Bill 4 High-Quality Prekindergarten Grant Program: [http://tea.texas.gov/Curriculum and Instructional Programs/Special Student Populations/Early Childhood Education/House Bill 4 High-Quality Prekindergarten Grant Program/](http://tea.texas.gov/Curriculum_and_Instructional_Programs/Special_Student_Populations/Early_Childhood_Education/House_Bill_4_High-Quality_Prekindergarten_Grant_Program/); accessed September 2016.
- <sup>ii</sup> United States Census Bureau. Quick Facts. Income and Poverty, Median Household Income (2010-21014). <http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/48215>
- <sup>iii</sup> A child must be at least three years of age and either be limited English proficient, be educationally disadvantaged, be homeless, be the child of a parent who is active-duty military or died during military service, or be in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services. <http://tea.texas.gov/ece/eligibility.aspx>
- <sup>iv</sup> United States Census Bureau. Quick Facts. Age and Sex, Persons under 18 years, July 1, 2015. <http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/AGE135215/48427,48061,48215>
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