

SENATE BILL 50

By Gresham

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 6, Part 1, relative to early learning programs.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 6, Part 1, is amended by adding the following language as a new section:

(a) The department of education shall create a three-year, early learning pilot program to begin in the 2019-2020 school year and to conclude at the end of the 2021-2022 school year. The purpose of the pilot program is to identify early learning programs or models that provide opportunities for quality early childhood education and improvement in student outcomes.

(b) The pilot program must be funded through a system of competitive grants utilizing voluntary pre-kindergarten funding available under § 49-6-107.

(c) The department of education shall develop a grant application and establish a system for submitting applications and for awarding grants.

(d) Grants shall be awarded by the department of education to no more than five (5) LEAs that create a program as approved by the department of education that implements an early learning program to serve economically disadvantaged students from birth through the third grade, in lieu of the LEA operating a voluntary pre-kindergarten program. The grants awarded pursuant to this subsection (d) are subject to available funding.

(e) The department of education shall study the impact of the pilot program on student outcomes.

(f) At the conclusion of the pilot program, the department of education shall report its findings and recommendations to the education committees of the house of representatives and senate no later than March 1, 2023.

(g) This section is repealed on March 1, 2023.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.