

SENATE BILL 1822

By Robinson

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 4,  
Chapter 51 and Title 49, relative to pre-  
kindergarten education.

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

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-6-102, is amended by deleting the section and substituting instead the following:

Sections 49-6-103 - 49-6-110 shall be known and may be cited as the "Teach Me Now Act."

SECTION 2. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-6-103, is amended by deleting the section and substituting instead the following:

(a) It is the legislative intent that, based on the success of Tennessee's existing pilot pre-kindergarten program and the former voluntary pre-kindergarten program, LEAs expand pre-kindergarten programs to provide the opportunity for any child residing in the LEA who is four (4) years of age by September 30 of a school year quality, tuition-free early childhood education and pre-kindergarten experiences, while meeting standards for kindergarten readiness, during such school year through either a pilot pre-kindergarten program pursuant to § 49-6-101 or a program under this section and §§ 49-6-104 - 49-6-110.

(b) Nothing in this section and §§ 49-6-104 - 49-6-110 makes a child's enrollment in a pre-kindergarten program mandatory.

SECTION 3. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-6-104, is amended by deleting subsection (a) and substituting instead the following:

(a) Each LEA shall provide opportunity for enrollment in a pre-kindergarten program, either through a pilot pre-kindergarten program or a program under §§ 49-6-103 - 49-6-110, to any child residing in the geographic area served by the LEA who is four (4) years of age by September 30 and who is not enrolled in or has not attended kindergarten.

SECTION 4. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-6-104, is amended by adding the following as a new subsection:

(c) A student who qualifies to enroll in a pilot pre-kindergarten program under § 49-6-101(f) may choose to instead enroll in a pre-kindergarten program under §§ 49-6-103 - 49-6-110.

SECTION 5. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-6-105(a), is amended by deleting the subsection and substituting instead the following:

(a) An LEA may apply to the department of education for funding of pre-kindergarten programs. An LEA may contract and enter into collaborative agreements for operation of pre-kindergarten programs required by §§ 49-6-103 - 49-6-110 with non-school system entities in the geographical area served by the LEA, including, but not limited to, nonprofit and for-profit child care providers and Head Start programs. An LEA shall not contract or collaborate with any child care provider licensed by the department of human services, unless that provider has attained the highest designation under the rated licensing system administered by the department of human services, pursuant to title 71, chapter 3, part 5.

SECTION 6. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-6-105(b), is amended by deleting the subsection and substituting instead the following:

(b) As part of the application process, the LEA must include a statement that it will serve all children who are four (4) years of age by September 30 of a school year within the geographical area served by the LEA, except those enrolled in private pre-kindergarten programs, home school pre-kindergarten programs, or who opt to not

participate in a pre-kindergarten program. The application must include the proposed sources of local matching funds required under §§ 49-6-103 - 49-6-110. Where applicable, the LEA is encouraged to include a resolution of support from the local governing body indicating intent to appropriate the required local matching funds. LEAs are encouraged to collaborate with non-school system entities where such collaboration provides an efficient means for expansion of pre-kindergarten classrooms authorized under §§ 49-6-103 - 49-6-110.

SECTION 7. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-6-105, is amended by deleting subsection (c).

SECTION 8. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-6-105(d), is amended by deleting the word "voluntary" wherever it appears.

SECTION 9. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-6-106(a), is amended by deleting the first sentence of the subsection and substituting instead the following:

Each LEA shall create and appoint a community pre-k advisory council.

SECTION 10. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-6-110, is amended by deleting the section in its entirety and substituting instead:

For the programs authorized by §§ 49-6-103 - 49-6-110, an appropriation from excess net education lottery proceeds available under the provisions of title 4, chapter 51 and chapter 4, part 9, of this title must be made annually in the general appropriations act.

SECTION 11. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-6-101(f)(1), is amended by deleting the language "Voluntary Pre-K for Tennessee Act of 2005" and substituting instead the language "Teach Me Now Act".

SECTION 12. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.