

AN ACT

RELATING TO PUBLIC SCHOOLS; EXTENDING THE KINDERGARTEN PLUS  
PILOT PROJECT; EXPANDING ELIGIBILITY; DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

Section 1. Section 22-2-20 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 2003,  
Chapter 130, Section 1) is amended to read:

"22-2-20. KINDERGARTEN PLUS--PILOT PROJECT--  
ELIGIBILITY--APPLICATION--REPORTING AND EVALUATION--CREATING A  
FUND.--

A. The "kindergarten plus" pilot project is  
created as a six-year study that extends the kindergarten year  
by up to four months for participating students and measures  
the effect of additional time on literacy, numeracy and social  
skills development. The purpose of kindergarten plus is to  
demonstrate that increased time in kindergarten narrows the  
achievement gap between disadvantaged students and other  
students and increases cognitive skills and leads to higher  
test scores for all participants.

B. The pilot project shall be administered by the  
department and shall provide the funding for approved full-day  
kindergarten programs to be extended by at least forty  
instructional days, beginning approximately two months earlier  
and ending approximately two months later than other classes.  
For the first year, the pilot project shall begin July 1 and

run two hundred twenty instructional days; in the second and third years, kindergarten plus may begin or end at any time that provides for the same number of instructional days.

C. Kindergarten plus shall be conducted in the Albuquerque, Gallup-McKinley, Gadsden and Las Cruces school districts and may be conducted in any other school district with high-poverty schools. For the remainder of the pilot project, the original pilot school districts may expand their kindergarten plus programs by adding additional classes or schools or both. Full-day kindergarten programs in high-poverty public schools in those school districts are eligible to apply for kindergarten plus. For the purposes of kindergarten plus, "high-poverty school" means a public school in which eighty-five percent or more of the students are eligible for free or reduced fee lunch.

D. The department shall determine application requirements and procedures and criteria for evaluating applications. An applicant must demonstrate that its kindergarten plus program will meet all department standards and employ only qualified teachers and other staff. The department shall provide additional professional development for kindergarten plus teachers in how young children learn to read. Teachers and educational assistants shall be paid at the same rate and under the same terms for kindergarten plus as teachers and educational assistants are paid for regular

full-day kindergarten programs.

E. Students participating in kindergarten plus shall be evaluated at the beginning of kindergarten plus, and their progress in literacy shall be measured through standardized assessments in kindergarten and in first grade.

F. The department shall establish reporting and evaluation requirements for participating schools, including student and program assessments. The department shall provide interim and final reports annually to the legislature and the governor on the efficacy of the pilot project.

G. In addition to legislative appropriations for the pilot project, the department shall seek public and private grants and donations. Grants and donations shall be deposited in the "kindergarten plus fund", created in the state treasury. Income from investment of the fund shall be deposited in the fund. The department shall administer the fund, and money in the fund is appropriated to the department to carry out the purposes of the pilot project. Money shall be expended in accordance with the terms of the grants and donations. Unless otherwise specified by the terms of a grant or donation, money in the fund at the end of the pilot project shall revert to the general fund. Expenditures from the fund shall be by warrants of the secretary of finance and administration drawn pursuant to vouchers signed by the secretary of public education or the secretary's authorized

representative."

Section 2. EMERGENCY.--It is necessary for the public peace, health and safety that this act take effect immediately.

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