

AN ACT

RELATING TO PUBLIC SCHOOLS; CREATING THE K-3 PLUS PILOT PROJECT TO PROVIDE EXTENDED TIME FOR STUDENTS IN KINDERGARTEN THROUGH THIRD GRADE IN HIGH-POVERTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS; PROVIDING AN APPLICATION PROCESS; REQUIRING REPORTING; DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

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

Section 1. A new section of the Public School Code is enacted to read:

"K-3 PLUS--PILOT PROJECT--ELIGIBILITY--APPLICATION--REPORTING AND EVALUATION.--

A. "K-3 plus" is created as a six-year pilot project that extends the school year for kindergarten through third grade by up to two months for participating students and measures the effect of additional time on literacy, numeracy and social skills development. The purpose of K-3 plus is to demonstrate that increased time in kindergarten and the early grades narrows the achievement gap between disadvantaged students and other students and increases cognitive skills and leads to higher test scores for all participants.

B. K-3 plus shall be administered by the department and shall provide the funding for approved full-day kindergarten and grades one through three to be extended by at least twenty-five instructional days, beginning up to two

months earlier than other classes.

C. K-3 plus shall be conducted in high-poverty public schools. For the purposes of K-3 plus, "high-poverty public school" means a public school in which eighty-five percent or more of the students are eligible for free or reduced-fee lunch at the time the public school applies for the program.

D. The department shall determine application requirements and procedures and criteria for evaluating applications. In evaluating applications for K-3 plus, the department shall grant priority to those schools with kindergarten plus programs that have received one or more satisfactory annual evaluations. An applicant shall demonstrate that its K-3 plus program will meet all department standards and employ only qualified teachers and other staff. The department shall provide additional professional development for K-3 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 K-3 plus as teachers and educational assistants are paid for regular educational programs.

E. Students participating in K-3 plus shall be evaluated at the beginning of K-3 plus, and their progress shall be measured through standardized assessments as follows:

(1) in literacy, the dynamic indicator of

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basic early literacy skills in kindergarten and in grades one through three; and

(2) in numeracy, in grades three and four.

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 K-3 plus.

G. The department may use up to four percent of any appropriation made by the legislature for the K-3 plus pilot project for professional development for participating educators and department administrative costs."

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

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