



Texas High-Quality Pre-K HB4 Grant Program: Analysis of Fort Worth Area Participation

UNT | **HEALTH**
SCIENCE CENTER



TEXANS CARE
for **CHILDREN**



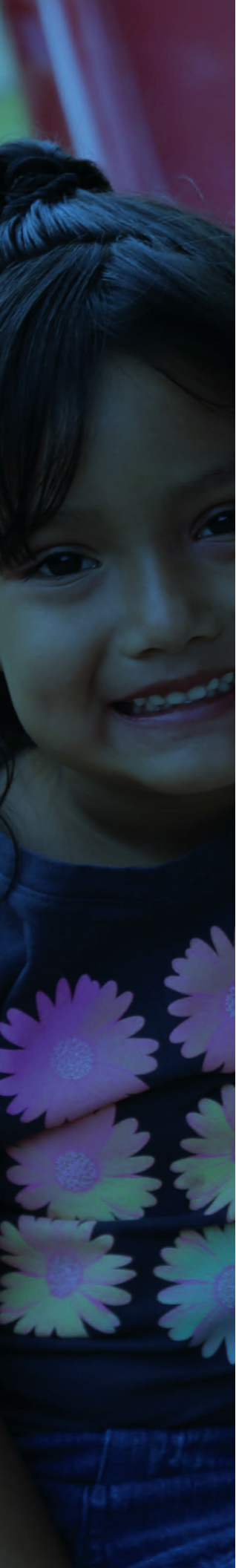


Table of Contents

Executive Summary	2
Pre-K in the Fort Worth Region	4
Community Landscape	4
Enrollment in Region XI	4
Enrollment in Tarrant County	4
Community Support	4
Community Views on Pre-K	5
One Family's Experience in Pre-K	6
Application Profiles	6
Successful Application Profiles	6
Fort Worth ISD	6
Arlington ISD	8
Chapel Hill Academy	9
Did Not Apply/Rejected Grant Profiles	10
Azle ISD	10
Conclusion	11
Acknowledgments	12
Region XI District Application List	13

The research included in this report was produced 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 non-partisan.

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.



Analysis of Fort Worth Area Participation in Texas High-Quality Pre-K HB4 Grant Program

Executive Summary

The Texas Legislature passed House Bill 4 in 2015 in an effort to support families and improve the quality of Pre-K programs across the state of Texas. HB4 funding offers districts multiple avenues for improving Pre-K quality. Specifically, school districts accepting HB4 funding can utilize the grant allocations for professional development opportunities, family engagement programs, full-day Pre-K expansion, and progress monitoring. Within Region XI, there are 94 school districts – 43 of which received funding, 46 that did not apply for funding, and five that were not awarded or did not accept funding.

In the fall of 2016, the University of North Texas Health Science Center partnered with the Early Learning Alliance, Texans Care for Children, and the Texas Education Grantmakers Advocacy Consortium to review perceptions of Pre-K program quality and use of HB4 funding throughout Tarrant County. In addition to administering a survey to understand the community's views of local Pre-K programs, several school districts within the county were interviewed regarding their use of HB4 funding.

The major goals of this report are to describe community perceptions of local Pre-K program quality, to identify how HB4 funding has the capacity to improve Pre-K quality, and to understand any concerns regarding the HB4 funding opportunity. The information in this report may support future decisions related to Pre-K improvement programs, and provide insights regarding local HB4 implementation.

1. Why did districts choose to apply for HB4 funding?

Most districts in the Fort Worth area chose to apply for HB4 funding to improve and enhance existing Pre-K programs. To achieve this goal, funding was used to reduce student-teacher ratios to improve student learning and offer professional development opportunities for teachers, as well as family engagement opportunities.

2. What do districts plan to do with HB4 funding that they would be unable to do otherwise?

- **Professional Development:** HB4 funds were used to develop expanded professional development for Pre-K teachers to improve the quality of Pre-K teaching and increase teacher engagement.
- **Family Engagement:** Funding supported family engagement by allowing districts to offer resources and events to parents to strengthen partnerships between parents, students and school personnel. One district created a pilot program that offered care before and after Pre-K to support working families.
- **Enrichment Opportunities:** HB4 funds primarily served to enrich existing programs in districts. Having a solid foundation upon which to apply the funding facilitated the application and acceptance of this resource.
- **Reducing the Student-Teacher Ratio:** HB4 funds were useful for hiring and training new staff members to teach full- or part-time in Pre-K classrooms.





3. What are some concerns and challenges facing districts in regard to using grant funding to improve the quality of Pre-K programs?

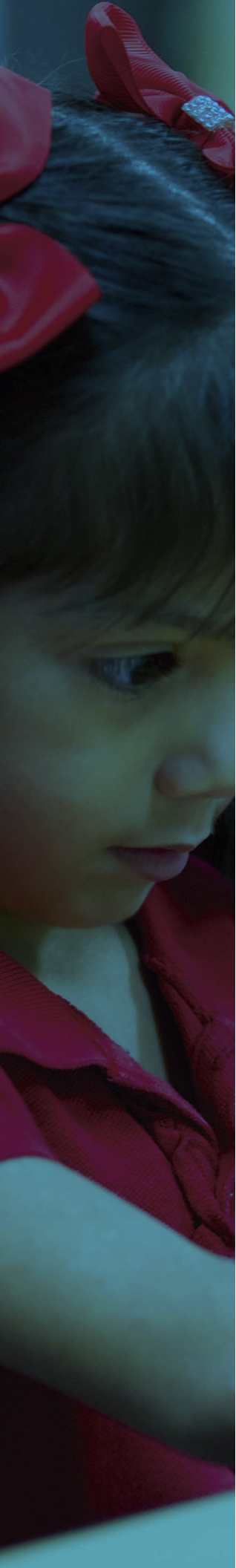
- **Lack of Sustainability:** The short grant period had implications for the development of sustainable programs. Districts had to be cautious not to overcommit to programs, considering that funding had to be expended over a one-year period. In effect, some programs may not be continued in the future without another source of funding to supplement the costs. This also limited the applicability of the funding, so many districts used the funding to enhance existing opportunities rather than invest in substantive quality improvement, such as reducing child/staff ratios and class sizes, expanding to full-day programs, enrolling more children or including 3-year-olds.
- **Relatively Low Funding:** Given the relatively low amount of funding and the uncertain future of the grant program, districts for the most part limited their expenditures to one-time or short-term initiatives rather than implementing more substantive expansion or enhancement.

Recommendations

1. Provide sustainable funding in sufficient amounts to implement full-day Pre-K programs of high quality for all children in all districts.
2. Establish full-day universal Pre-K programs and resources as permanent components of formula funding.
3. Identify funding that supports before- and/or after-school care for Pre-Kindergarten children.
4. Extend the time for execution of the project to allow for effective and efficient planning.
5. Identify and provide more extensive Pre-K opportunities for 3-year-olds.

For more information about this report, contact ELA@EarlyLearningNTX.org or visit the website at EarlyLearningNTX.org





Pre-K in the Fort Worth Region

Community Landscape

Tarrant County is a large and diverse urban region of North Central Texas. The total child population estimate is currently 517,080, and 60% of children cite English as their first language. Financially, 22.1% of all children live below the federal poverty line, and an even greater percent of Tarrant County students - at 52% - are economically disadvantaged. It is estimated that over 20% of students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch do not partake in this service, and 25.5% of students experience food insecurity in Tarrant County.¹

Early education is key to attaining future educational success, but with 25,785 Tarrant County children between the ages of 0-5 living in poverty and not enrolled in an early education program, there are considerable unmet needs in the region. Through the use of HB4 funding, it is expected that the quality of Pre-K programs within Tarrant County can be improved. However, there remains a need for consistent and stable funding that will allow for the expansion of high-quality Pre-K programs so that more children can participate, which will undoubtedly lead to greater educational outcomes for students of all ages in the future.¹

“Early education is actually a ‘purple’ issue – bringing together all Texans to ensure every child arrives ready for success in Kindergarten. Defining and funding high-quality Pre-K are foundational steps toward making this a reality.”

— **Kara Waddell**
President-CEO, Child Care Associates,
and Chair of the Early Learning Alliance in Tarrant County

Enrollment In Region XI

Region XI includes 94 districts, and the region as a whole enrolled 578,910 Pre-K through 12th grade students in the 2015-2016 school year, based on data from 90 districts. Of the 75 districts that provided Pre-K enrollment data, 48 enrolled fewer than 100 Pre-K students in 2016, and 27 districts enrolled more than 100 Pre-K students in 2016. Over the last three years, Pre-K enrollments have remained relatively stable, ranging between 19,462 in 2014 and 19,761 in 2016.²

Enrollment In Tarrant County

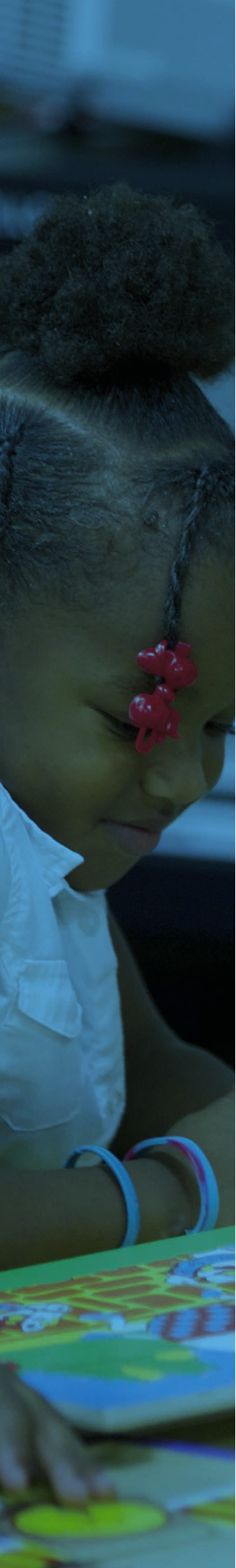
Tarrant County is home to 26 school districts, 25 of which enrolled 356,941 students from Pre-K through 12th grade in the 2015-2016 school year. Within the county, 19 districts provided Pre-K enrollment data from 2014-2016, which ranged between 13,592 and 13,639 over the three years. Fifteen of the 19 schools with enrollment data had more than 100 students enrolled in Pre-K, while four schools had fewer than 100 Pre-K students.²

Community Support

Diverse organizations in Fort Worth and Tarrant County that share a common goal of improving educational outcomes for children comprise The Early Learning Alliance, founded in 2013, that works to align early learning systems so that children from birth to age eight will have the chance to succeed in school and in life. Chief among the Alliance’s priorities is ensuring that more young children have access to high-quality early learning experiences, with families being fully engaged in the process. By defining specific avenues

¹CHILDREN AT RISK (2016). *Growing Up in North Texas 2016: A Community Assessment for Tarrant County*. The North Texas Community Foundation, CHILDREN AT RISK, & Child Care Associates. Retrieved from: http://childrenatrisk.org/content/?page_id=8066

²Texas Education Agency. (2016). *Region 11 dataset*. [Unpublished dataset]. Austin: Texas Education Agency.



for attaining the overall goal of improved outcomes for Fort Worth’s children, the Early Learning Alliance can make an observable impact with longstanding benefits for the children of the community.³

In addition to the Early Learning Alliance, the Education Service Center - Region 11 (ESC Region 11) also serves public school districts and charter campuses in Tarrant County and throughout the region. ESC Region 11 provides professional development, technical assistance, and management of educational programs. The organization has seen an increase in professional development and training participation this year due to HB4 and Texas School Ready* requirements. Although training participation has increased this year, there will be teacher turnover, and without sustained funding new teachers will not receive the same type or amount of training as those who received it through the HB4 grant.

Community Views on Pre-K

To better understand current views regarding Pre-K programs, UNTHSC administered an online survey to community members, including educators, administrators, community advocates, and representatives of early childhood, Head Start, TEA, and nonprofit organizations, among others, with 57 respondents. The results of the survey identified multiple areas of strength, as well as opportunities for Pre-K improvement in the region.

Among the strengths, 68.8% of respondents were satisfied with the current Pre-K curriculum standards, indicating they are “excellent,” “good,” or “adequate.” Similarly, 63.8% of participants reported that the current ratio of staff/teachers to children fell into these three categories. The most frequently recommended teacher/staff-per-student ratio for 3-year-old Pre-K children was 1 teacher/staff member for 6-10 children; more than two-thirds of respondents supported this same ratio for 4-year-old Pre-K children.

While just over 80% of survey respondents indicated that they believe the quality of Pre-K education is already high in this community, the survey results also highlighted several areas where a sizable proportion of respondents rated dimensions of Pre-K education as needing improvement. For example, nearly half of respondents indicated that school readiness of Pre-K graduates, the learning environment and educational resources, and professional development for teachers are either “poor” or “need improvement.” However, the indicators that ranked the most poorly were family engagement (with 73.9% of responses reporting “poor” or “needs improvement”) and highly qualified teachers in Pre-K education (with 64.4% of respondents indicating that this area is “poor” or “needs improvement”).

In terms of Pre-K accessibility, 47.9% of survey responses reported that there are not enough Pre-K education classes for all 3- and 4-year-olds in the community. However, regarding the Pre-K classes that are available, more than two-thirds of respondents (70.8%) believe they are located conveniently throughout the community and 62.5% agree they are accessible for working families. Thus, opening more classes in existing convenient locations could improve accessibility, but other locations should continue to be explored for families that need them.

The survey also explored views regarding expansion of Pre-K programs. While all respondents reported that Pre-K should be available for 4-year-olds, over 90% reported that making Pre-K available for 3-year-olds is either “somewhat important” or “very important.” Fully 98% found it important that Pre-K be offered in full-day programs for families who want it, and the vast majority (90%) also found it important that parents/caregivers choose whether full- or half-days are best for their children.

Finally, the survey was used to gather opinions regarding how future funding should be best utilized in the community to improve Pre-K education. There was considerable variability regarding preferred funding priorities and no particular item was selected by the majority of respondents. When respondents were asked to identify their top priority for funding, the highest-ranked items were:

1. Lower teacher/child ratios
2. Making Pre-K education available for all 3- and 4-year olds
3. Professional development/training for teachers

³Early Learning Alliance. (2016). *North Texas Community Foundation*. Retrieved from: <http://northtexascf.org/initiatives/ela/>
⁴“Texas School Ready is a comprehensive preschool teacher training program combining a research-based, state-adopted curriculum with ongoing professional development and progress monitoring tools. The goal of this program is to help children be better prepared for school.”⁴



One Family's Experience in Pre-K

During a fall 2016 parent conference at Sam Rosen Elementary in the FWISD, a father was touring the learning centers in his daughter's Pre-Kindergarten classroom. He told the teacher that he had not started talking until he was 7 and that school was very hard for him because of his communication challenges. He was worried that his daughter might have similar difficulty in school, and he was happy she had the experience of Pre-K and the chance to learn through playing with real objects and practicing reading and writing for fun with her classmates. He told the teacher that if he had learned in a classroom like his daughter's, he would have learned better and done better in school. This father recognizes the lifelong benefits for his daughter from the Pre-Kindergarten experience.

Application Profiles

To learn more about the implementation of HB4 funding, as well as motives to forgo funding for this HB4 granting period, UNTHSC interviewed districts across Tarrant County regarding their decisions related to HB4. The Fort Worth ISD, the Arlington ISD, and Chapel Hill Academy completed successful applications, as these districts were awarded and accepted HB4 funding. Azle ISD, a district that did not apply for funding, was interviewed as well, and information on its decision not to apply was gathered.

Successful Application Profiles

Tarrant County is home to 26 school districts, and 17 of these districts received HB4 funding. The Fort Worth ISD, the Arlington ISD, and Chapel Hill Academy were contacted regarding their current program strengths, the use of HB4 funds, any challenges or concerns of the funds, and their outlook moving forward to gain an understanding of the implementation of HB4 within the county.

Fort Worth ISD

District Overview

Fort Worth ISD enrolled a total of 5,019 Pre-K students in 2016, many of whom were economically disadvantaged or had limited English proficiency. Specifically, in the 2014-2015 school year, 92% of Pre-K students were classified as economically disadvantaged, and 47% had limited English proficiency. Furthermore, 66% of enrolled Pre-K students were Hispanic/Latino in 2014-2015, 25% were Black or African American, 6% were white, and 3% were another race, displaying the widespread racial and ethnic diversity within this school district. It is evident that FWISD must cater to a wide range of student and family needs and will likely continue to do so as enrollment increases. In just one year (2014-2015), enrollment increased 15.36% over the previous school year. While enrollment is increasing, Fort Worth ISD continues to maintain Pre-K classrooms with a student-to-teacher ratio of 11 to 1, with around 22 children per class.⁵

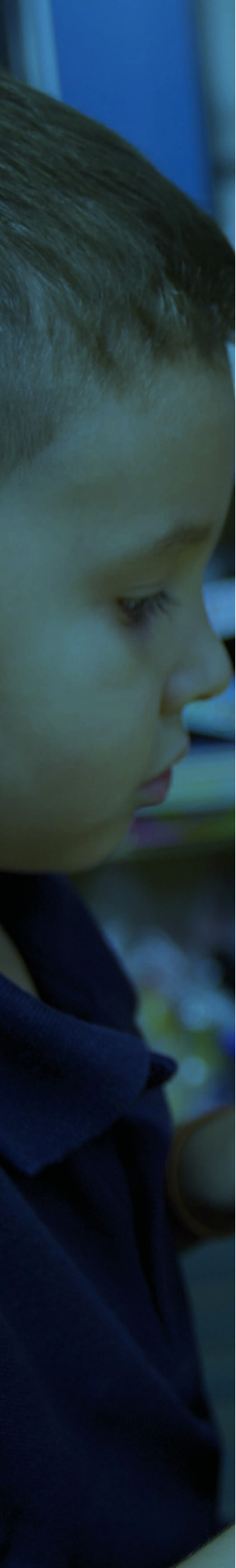
Strengths of Current Pre-K Program

Through FWISD's focus on strengthening Pre-K in the district, which was already underway, the district has expanded Pre-K opportunities. FWISD has a long-standing commitment to Pre-Kindergarten and offers full-day programming. A 2013 bond election included "universal" access to Pre-K by expanding to include spaces for children outside the state's eligibility criteria. Additionally, collaboration between FWISD and nine community-based child care programs and 11 classroom-based Head-Start programs has increased access to Pre-K in the community, maximizing available resources.

"The combination of improving professional development opportunities and increasing teacher salaries will help retain a qualified workforce for our children during the most critical time of their development."

— Community Stakeholder (via survey)

⁵Texas Education Agency. (2015). Texas Public Prekindergarten Programs and Enrollment Ages 3 and 4: District: Fort Worth ISD (220905), Fort Worth, TX. *Texas PK-16 Public Education Information Resource*. Retrieved from: http://www.texaseducationinfo.org/PickList_Vbox.aspx?Page=Prekindergarten+Programs&ReportName=tpeir_pkinder_district_enroll_funds&PickList=District&SubList=School+Year&Title=Texas+Public+Prekindergarten+Programs&Graph=N&from=



In addition to increasing accessibility, FWISD's current Pre-K program has other strengths and community connections. The district has partnered with the mayor of Fort Worth and business leaders to form a literacy partnership with the goal that 100% of third grade students will be able to read on or above grade level by 2025, exhibiting not only the district's focus on literacy, but the city's public and private investment in this endeavor. When it comes to professional development, FWISD's previous investment in training materials and videos has provided a solid foundation of resources on which to base future professional development initiatives. Finally, FWISD has the largest Parents as Teachers program in the nation, allowing for extensive home visits to support early development and family engagement for children prior to their entering kindergarten. The Parents as Teachers program was expanded into underserved neighborhoods in 2015 through a Texas Home Visiting Expansion Grant. The expansion grant also supports a Bookmobile that is used to promote literacy and provide parents with internet access and books outside of schools.

Use of HB4 Funds to Improve Pre-K Quality

FWISD's motive behind applying for HB4 funding was to add quality supports to their existing Pre-K programs. Specifically, FWISD used the funding to support and assist principals and teachers who had limited early childhood experience. With the help of HB4 funds, mentors were hired to work with principals to help them better understand the unique elements of Pre-K that differ from other grades. Overall, 12 mentors and a coordinator were hired for this purpose, as well as to implement professional development programs for Pre-K teachers. Through professional enrichment programs, FWISD expects that Pre-K teacher turnover will be effectively reduced and the quality of the Pre-K programs will be enhanced.

Some funding will be used to pilot an after-school program for Pre-K students at two campuses, working with Camp Fire First Texas. The goal of the after-school program is to remove barriers to enrollment for families that need child care beyond the full school day. Additional plans include training on family engagement for school principals and Pre-K teachers, and special family engagement opportunities in the spring of 2017.

“Principals also need to understand early childhood education in order to adequately support Pre-K in their schools.”
— Community Stakeholder (via survey)

Concerns and Challenges of HB4

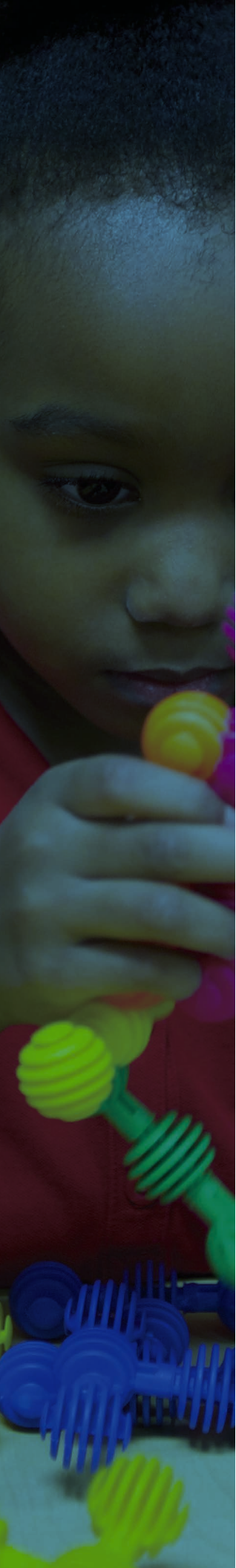
FWISD received funding later than expected and, as a result, is requesting a no-cost extension to allow full implementation of all the plans they proposed. An additional challenge that FWISD faces – one that was echoed by other districts – is the unsustainability and lack of predictability of this grant program, as it may not be renewed. Such a grant program does not fully allow for effective and efficient use of funding, as planning is difficult without assurance of continuity. The district recommends a five-year grant period or rolling the quality improvement funding into the funding formula.

Moving Forward

In the future, FWISD hopes to expand options for 3-year-olds while simultaneously improving options for 4-year-olds. The district aims to expand family engagement through the use of academic, social, and emotional enrichment programs provided through home visitation or other localized activities. It is identifying areas of need throughout the city with the help of Cook Children's Hospital and the Early Learning Alliance (ELA). Once these areas are identified, FWISD will work with ELA and other organizations to reduce duplication of effort and better serve families in need by providing a broader array of services. The implementation of these types of family-focused programs will require sustainable funding.

FWISD also is seeking more ways to expand teacher professional development. The district sees value in requiring additional training and certifications to ensure that teachers are able to meet the highest standards. In fact, the district initially believed teacher certification would be a large component of the HB4 grant, but instead opted to hire mentors for professional development because of the unpredictability of funding and because research has established the effectiveness of mentoring in improving teacher's skills. If the state does not renew HB4 funding, the district will not be able to support mentors in the future. Sustainability can be ensured if HB4 quality support becomes part of formula funding.





The district also has noticed that young teachers tend to be uncomfortable interacting with parents face-to-face. Initiatives to train new teachers on best practices for parent engagement could improve parent-teacher relationships. In addition to teachers, FWISD recognizes that it is important to support good leadership of principals to help them expand their focus beyond STAAR testing and other measures. District officials note that, while test achievement is important, the success of principals should also be driven by leadership goals, understanding the needs of children all along the developmental continuum, and long-term community impact.

“We would love to see options for 3-year-old programs and more family-type engagement programs.”

— Focus group participant

Finally, FWISD recognizes that given the changing demographics within the district, students need education in more than one language. More dual-language teachers are needed to maintain ratios with well qualified staff. The district is hoping to find funding solutions that allow for flexibility in addressing its unique needs. Overall, FWISD understands that strong state support for Pre-K is essential, but any initiatives should be undertaken without assuming that one size fits all district needs.

Arlington ISD

District Overview

Arlington ISD enrolled 3,723 Pre-K students in 2016, but its enrollment has been decreasing slightly since 2014. Of enrolled students in 2014-2015, 80% were economically disadvantaged and 51% had limited English proficiency. Like other districts in the region, Arlington ISD caters to a wide demographic of students, as 55% of Pre-K students are Hispanic/Latino and 27% are Black or African American. Of 54 elementary schools, 50 provided half-day Pre-K in the 2014-2015 school year, and parents can pay for full-day options at a handful of campuses. Currently, there is a student-teacher ratio of 15:1 in Pre-K classrooms serving 3-year-olds and 18:1 for Pre-K classrooms serving 4-year-old students across the district.⁶

Strengths of Current Pre-K Program

Arlington ISD's Pre-K program has recently begun to expand to full-day offerings for families who are willing to pay for the program. Although only five full-day Pre-K classes are available at the 54 elementary campuses, these classes are already helping to meet the needs of working parents, as full-day Pre-K runs from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. in alignment with the elementary school day. Arlington already uses progress monitoring tools and readiness assessments to oversee the success of Pre-K students.

The district also has been successful in community collaborations, as it currently has 21 community-based Pre-K programs through partners such as the YMCA, Head Start, and other community child care centers. These programs have been in place since 1994, and they have attracted the interest of other districts regarding Arlington ISD's model. These opportunities have afforded Arlington ISD families extended and after-school care at the community-based programs, which also has resulted in increased Pre-K enrollment. Arlington ISD emphasizes parent engagement efforts with a dedicated department of five to six people funded through Title I, local funds, and other grants.

Use of HB4 Funds to Improve Pre-K Quality

Arlington ISD quickly identified that HB4 aligned with their previous goal of increasing the quality of Pre-K. Given their focus on initiatives involving professional learning and parent engagement, the district knew that this grant would be a proper fit for advancing their objectives.

The majority of HB4 funding has been used to increase professional learning offerings for Pre-K teachers. Although the foundations of professional learning were previously in place, HB4 has allowed AISD to offer more sessions and to provide incentives for teachers to attend programs. The sessions were branded as Pre-K institutes to appeal to Pre-K teachers and raise the standard and quality of Pre-K teaching. Three institutes will be scheduled, and by providing incentives and bringing in nationally recognized expertise, high attendance rates are expected.

⁶Texas Education Agency. (2015). *Texas Public Prekindergarten Programs and Enrollment Ages 3 and 4: District: Arlington ISD (220901), Arlington, TX. Texas PK-16 Public Education Information Resource*. Retrieved from: http://www.texaseducationinfo.org/PickList_Vbox.aspx?Page=Prekindergarten+Programs&ReportName=tpeir_pkinder_district_enroll_funds&PickList=District&SubList=School+Year&Title=Texas+Public+Prekindergarten+Programs&Graph=N&from=



HB4 funding also helped AISD supplement its family engagement program. Although a parent engagement department is already in place, through HB4 funding the department partnered with Pre-K teachers on each campus to reinstate Parent Learning Night – an event that is held in the fall and spring and focuses on literacy and numeracy, respectively. At Literacy Night, teachers will provide parents with skills to support their child’s literacy and provide books to parents to take home for their children.

Concerns and Challenges of HB4

Arlington ISD found it restrictive that the funds could not be used to support 3-year-olds. They also noted that the limited grant amount and lack of sustained funding did not permit the district to commit to long-term projects.

Moving Forward

Professional learning opportunities and parent engagement activities will continue to be priorities for AISD regardless of whether HB4 funding is continued. However, the enhancements made through this funding source may not be sustained if HB4 funding is not renewed.

Furthermore, Arlington ISD will seek to expand full-day Pre-K programs for parents who want them. Currently, the five parent-pay Pre-K classrooms are in high demand, but additional state support is needed to ensure all families can access full-day Pre-K.

Similarly, any after-school care is currently off-site and parents are responsible for acquiring and accessing these services. Arlington ISD believes that state funding for full-day Pre-K for both 3- and 4-year-olds would greatly help to keep Pre-K classrooms at full capacity and meet the needs of children and families – which in turn would help to boost student learning. Currently, Arlington’s half-day Pre-K 4 classes are not at capacity, while Pre-K 3 is completely full. Of course, there are fewer Pre-K 3 classrooms than Pre-K 4 classrooms. The district is confident that expansion to full-day would increase Pre-K enrollment and reduce the stress of working parents.

Additionally, Arlington ISD will continue to advocate for Pre-K to be part of formula funding. The district believes that, given the emphasis placed on Pre-K as the backbone for future educational outcomes, increasing Pre-K access for 3- and 4-year-olds is critical. High-quality Pre-K education will remain a key priority for Arlington because it is an integral part of their strategic plan for 2016-2021.

Chapel Hill Academy

School Overview

Chapel Hill Academy is a charter school in Tarrant County that enrolled 32 Pre-K students in 2016. Of the 4-year-olds in their Pre-K classrooms, 88% of students were economically disadvantaged in the 2014-2015 school year. In 2014-2015, Chapel Hill Academy’s enrolled students were predominantly African American (72%) and Hispanic/Latino (16%).⁷

“The availability of before- and after-school care is a huge need for families.”
—Community Stakeholder (via survey)

Strengths of Current Pre-K Program

Despite Chapel Hill Academy’s small size, the school’s Pre-K program is already strong with a clear intention to “serve the children as best as we can, regardless of money.” Specifically, Chapel Hill Academy has made a conscious effort to offer full-day Pre-K to all 4-year-old students, even though state funding only supports a half-day program. Overall, the school environment is consistent with stable enrollment counts and low teacher turnover.

Recognizing the importance of social emotional learning (SEL) to early education success, Chapel Hill places a heavier emphasis on SEL than on student performance. Extensive professional development in SEL is offered to staff, including Handle with Care training, which is a “de-escalation of physical aggression or potential verbal and physical aggression” preparedness; an Olweus Bullying Prevention Program for teaching staff and paraprofessionals; and Second Step training.

⁷Texas Education Agency. (2015). *Texas Public Prekindergarten Programs and Enrollment Ages 3 and 4: District: Chapel Hill Academy (220815), Fort Worth, TX. Texas PK-16 Public Education Information Resource*. Retrieved from: http://www.texaseducationinfo.org/PickList_Vbox.aspx?Page=Prekindergarten+Programs&ReportName=tpair_pkinder_district_enroll_funds&PickList=District&SubList=School+Year&Title=Texas+Public+Prekindergarten+Programs&Graph=N&from=



Use of HB4 Funds to Improve Pre-K Quality

Chapel Hill Academy's applied for the HB4 grant in order to decrease its student-to-teacher ratio. The school's original ratio was at 36 students for 3 teachers, but through HB4 funding Chapel Hill was able to hire a Pre-K assistant to work part-time, reducing its ratio to 36 students per 4 teachers when the part-time assistant is in the classroom.

Concerns and Challenges of HB4

Chapel Hill Academy is concerned that, without sustained HB4 funding, it will not be able to support the additional staff person that was hired to reduce the teacher-student ratio. The school has invested time, money, and effort training and mentoring the part-time teaching assistant, and the improved teacher-student ratio will be temporary unless grant funding continues. With increased funds, the school would be able to hire a full-time Pre-K teaching assistant.

Moving Forward

Chapel Hill Academy's goal is to permanently adhere to an 11:1 student-to-teacher ratio, and it will continue to seek avenues to achieve this objective. The school would like additional funding to reduce its long wait list, as 120 children are currently waiting for placement in a Pre-K classroom.

Chapel Hill Academy believes the state-wide kindergarten readiness assessment is a step in the right direction, and is advocating for one comprehensive tool that can follow progress over time. Alongside new readiness assessments, Chapel Hill Academy understands the need for specific professional development programs for teachers on using the new instruments.

Chapel Hill Academy also recommends funding so that staff development offerings could focus specifically on Pre-K and kindergarten readiness. Furthermore, if Pre-K guidelines could include concrete details of what Pre-K readiness looks like, teachers would be better able to monitor their students' development. Although the school follows the Pre-K guidelines, it believes that a shared understanding among all stakeholders across the state as to what should be accomplished by the end of a child's time in Pre-K would be a substantial benefit to children.

Similar to other districts in the county, Chapel Hill Academy supports formula funding for full-day Pre-K programs. The school will continue to see other funding sources to offer full-day Pre-K in the absence of state funding.

Did Not Apply/Rejected Grant Profiles

Of Tarrant County's 26 school districts, eight did not apply for funding from HB4, while one district was not awarded or did not accept the funding. Azle ISD was contacted regarding their decision to forgo the HB4 grant application.

Azle ISD

Decision to Forgo HB4 Grant Program in 2015-2017

Azle ISD made the decision to forgo the 2016-2017 HB4 grant program because it is currently trying to address the growth-related needs of the district. Instead, Azle ISD is relying on a bond election that will help to build a new Pre-K through 4th grade campus. Walnut Creek Elementary will receive a new campus, allowing for the old campus to be repurposed and the Rock School building to be used for administration. The bond also will expand Silver Creek Elementary, an existing Pre-K through 4th grade campus, while all 10 campuses will receive improved safety measures.⁸

.....
⁸Stutsman, C.N. (2016, Aug. 17). AISD calls \$59.5M bond election for Nov. *The Azle News Online*. Retrieved from: <http://azlenews.net/front-page/aISD-calls-59-5m-bond-election-for-nov/>



“Since 90% of brain development occurs before the age of 5, the Texas legislature’s investment in Pre-K puts resources where they have the biggest bang for the buck. We now know that inadequate funding and the lack of predictability about whether these funds will be available to districts over the long term jeopardize our ability to achieve the maximum return on this investment. Getting it right will pay dividends for generations to come.”

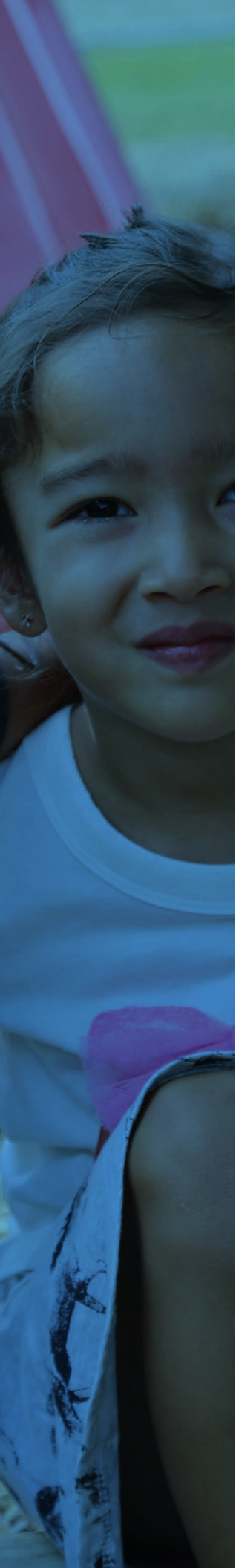
— **Rose Bradshaw**
Executive Vice President, North Texas Community Foundation

Conclusion

Community and district perspectives gathered for this report confirm that districts providing Pre-K programs in Tarrant County continue to aspire to be high-quality, as each district has its own strengths that elevate its Pre-K program’s standards – as well as goals for further improvement in both Pre-K access and quality. Through the use of HB4 funding, districts are pursuing their high-quality Pre-K goals through parent engagement programs, professional development, and expanded services.

Overall, Tarrant County school districts are dedicated to improving the quality of existing programs. Although HB4 has provided funding to enrich existing Pre-K programs, districts in Tarrant County continue to advocate for more sustainable and expanded funding opportunities that are dedicated solely to Pre-K quality improvement, which will inevitably provide longstanding benefits to building a strong future for all children and the state.





Acknowledgments

The Early Learning Alliance, UNT Health Science Center, and Texans Care for Children would like to thank these members of the Texas Education Grantmakers Advocacy Consortium for their support:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Amarillo Area Foundation (Amarillo) | MR and Evelyn Hudson Foundation (Dallas) |
| Andy Roddick Foundation (Austin) | North Texas Community Foundation (Fort Worth) |
| Austin Community Foundation (Austin) | Powell Foundation (Houston) |
| Beau and Kathryn Ross Foundation (Austin) | Rainwater Charitable Foundation (Ft Worth) |
| RGK Foundation (Austin) | Raise Your Hand Texas (Austin) |
| Bernard & Audre Rapoport Foundation (Waco) | RGK Foundation (Austin) |
| Buena Vista Foundation (Austin) | San Antonio Area Foundation (San Antonio) |
| Carl B and Florence King Foundation (Dallas) | Simmons Foundation (Houston) |
| Communities Foundation of Texas/ Educate Texas (Dallas) | Still Water Foundation (Austin) |
| Cooper Foundation (Waco) | Tapestry Foundation (Austin) |
| Entrepreneurs Foundation of Central Texas (Austin) | Texas Pioneer Foundation (Texarkana) |
| Genevieve and Ward Orsinger Foundation (San Antonio) | The Dallas Foundation (Dallas) |
| George and Fay Young Foundation (Dallas) | T.L.L. Temple Foundation (Lufkin) |
| Greater Texas Foundation (Bryan/College Station) | Trull Foundation (Palacios) |
| Harold Simmons Foundation (Dallas) | TG TX Student Loan Corporation (Austin) |
| KDK-Harman Foundation (Austin) | United Way of Metropolitan Dallas (Dallas) |
| Meadows Foundation (Dallas) | United Ways of Texas (Austin) |
| Morris Family Foundation (Fort Worth) | Waco Foundation (Waco) |
| | Webber Family Foundation (Austin) |
| | Wright Family Foundation (Austin) |

We would also like to thank Lena Pope, Child Care Associates, and Camp Fire First Texas for the photos featured in this report.



Region XI District Application List

School District	Applied & Received Grants	Rejected Grants	Did Not Apply
Aledo ISD			✓
Alvarado ISD	✓		
Alvord ISD		✓	
Argyle ISD	✓		
Arlington Classics Academy			✓
Arlington ISD	✓		
Aubrey ISD			✓
Azle ISD			✓
Birdville ISD	✓		
Bluff Dale ISD	✓		
Boyd ISD	✓		
Brazos River Charter School			✓
Bridgeport ISD	✓		
Brock ISD			✓
Burleson ISD	✓		
Callisburg ISD			✓
Carroll ISD	✓		



School District	Applied & Received Grants	Rejected Grants	Did Not Apply
Castleberry ISD	✓		
Chapel Hill Academy	✓		
Chico ISD			✓
Cleburne ISD	✓		
Crosstimbers Academy			✓
Crowley ISD	✓		
Decatur ISD	✓		
Denton ISD	✓		
Dublin ISD	✓		
Eagle Mt-Saginaw ISD	✓		
East Fort Worth Montessori Academy	✓		
Era ISD			✓
Erath Excels Academy Inc			✓
Everman ISD	✓		
Fort Worth Academy Of Fine Arts		✓	
Fort Worth ISD	✓		
Gainesville ISD		✓	
Garner ISD			✓
Glen Rose ISD	✓		



School District	Applied & Received Grants	Rejected Grants	Did Not Apply
Godley ISD	✓		
Gordon ISD			✓
Graford ISD			✓
Granbury ISD			✓
Grandview ISD	✓		
Grapevine-Colleyville ISD	✓		
High Point Academy			✓
Huckabay ISD			✓
Hurst-Euless-Bedford ISD	✓		
Joshua ISD	✓		
Kauffman Leadership Academy			✓
Keene ISD			✓
Keller ISD	✓		
Kennedale ISD			✓
Krum ISD			✓
Lake Dallas ISD	✓		
Lake Worth ISD	✓		
Lewisville ISD	✓		
Lindsay ISD			✓
Lingleville ISD			✓



School District	Applied & Received Grants	Rejected Grants	Did Not Apply
Lipan ISD		✓	
Little Elm ISD			✓
Mansfield ISD	✓		
Millsap ISD			✓
Mineral Wells ISD	✓		
Morgan Mill ISD			✓
Muenster ISD			✓
Newman International Academy of Arlington	✓		
North Texas Collegiate Academy			✓
Northwest ISD	✓		
Palo Pinto ISD			✓
Paradise ISD	✓		
Peaster ISD	✓		
Pilot Point ISD	✓		
Ponder ISD			✓
Poolville ISD			✓
Premier High Schools			✓
Rio Vista ISD	✓		
Sanger ISD			✓



School District	Applied & Received Grants	Rejected Grants	Did Not Apply
Santo ISD	✓		
Sivells Bend ISD	✓		
Slidell ISD			✓
Springtown ISD		✓	
Stephenville ISD	✓		
Strawn ISD			✓
Texas School of The Arts			✓
Three Way ISD			✓
Tolar ISD			✓
Treetops School International			✓
Trivium Academy			✓
University Of North Texas			✓
Uplift Education-Summit International			✓
Valley View ISD			✓
Venus ISD			✓
Walnut Bend ISD			✓
Weatherford ISD			✓
Westlake Academy Charter School			✓
White Settlement ISD	✓		

For more information about this report, contact
ELA@EarlyLearningNTX.org
or visit the website at **EarlyLearningNTX.org**

UNT | **HEALTH**
SCIENCE CENTER



 **TEXANS CARE**
for **CHILDREN**

