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DELAWARE STATE SENATE

143rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SENATE BILL NO. 251

AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 14 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN.

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

1 WHEREAS, Delaware currently mandates a child of kindergarten-eligible age must attend a half-day of kindergarten
2 unless otherwise excepted; and

3 WHEREAS, in June, 2004, the Delaware Joint Finance Committee apportioned funds to establish up to 10 pilot full-
4 day kindergartens for 2004-2005; and

5 WHEREAS, in June, 2005, the University of Delaware, College of Human Services, Education and Public Policy
6 under Professor Michael Gamel-McCormick, undertook an in depth study and analysis of these 10 pilot programs comparing
7 them to part-day kindergarten programs; and

8 WHEREAS, the University of Delaware's analysis revealed that the Delaware students in full-day kindergarten had
9 stronger literacy skills than students in part-day kindergarten; and

10 WHEREAS, the University of Delaware's analysis revealed that students in full-day kindergarten achieved 6 of 8
11 kindergarten standards more often than part-day kindergarten students by the end of the school year; and

12 WHEREAS, the University of Delaware analysis revealed that kindergarten teachers overwhelmingly feel that full-
13 day kindergarten better prepares children for first grade; and

14 WHEREAS, 98% of parents with children in full-day kindergarten and 72% of parents with children in part-day
15 kindergarten indicated they preferred to have their children enrolled in full-day kindergarten; and

16 WHEREAS, 60% of all kindergartners nationwide attend a full-day program; and

17 WHEREAS, several school districts in Delaware, recognizing how important full-day kindergarten is, have on their
18 own struggled to find the money to fund, and indeed, do fund, full-day kindergarten for every child in their district whose
19 parents select it; and

20 WHEREAS, all charter schools that offer kindergarten offer full-day kindergarten; and

21 WHEREAS, it is critical to the State of Delaware that all kindergarten children be provided the opportunity for full-
22 day kindergarten regardless of whether the parent can afford to pay for it.

23 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE:

24 Section 1. This Act shall be referred to as the “Full-day Kindergarten Act.”

25 Section 2. Amend Title 14, Section 1049(1) of the Delaware Code by adding before the word “kindergarten” the
26 words “Beginning at the start of the 2008-2009 school year,”.

27 Section 3. Amend Title 14, Section 1049(1) of the Delaware Code by deleting the words “440 hours” and substituting
28 in lieu thereof the words “1060 hours”.

29 Section 4. Amend Title 14, Section 1049(1) of the Delaware Code by deleting the number “1” after the phrase “The
30 number of hours in a school day for grades” and substituting in lieu thereof the letter “k”.

31 Section 5. Amend Title 14, Chapter 27, Section 2702 of the Delaware Code by inserting a new subsection “c(3)” to
32 read as follows:

33 “(3) The parent, guardian, legal custodian or relative care giver, as defined in Section 202(f)(2) of this Title,
34 of a child who is eligible for admission to kindergarten at age 5 may opt for the child to attend kindergarten for a half-
35 day per day, totaling 440 hours in a school year.”

36 Section 6. This Act shall become effective upon a specific appropriation by the General Assembly to begin funding
37 the costs of full-day kindergarten.

SYNOPSIS

This Act would require school districts by the start of the 2008-2009 school year, to offer any kindergarten-eligible child the option of attending full-day kindergarten if the child’s parent or guardian chooses. If a parent wants to send his or her child for only a half-day, the parent would be permitted to do so. This Act becomes effective upon a specific appropriation by the General Assembly.

Author: Sokola