

BLUEPRINT SUPPORTS SB 286 *PHASED-IN, UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO PRE-K*

Blueprint Louisiana strongly supports Senate Bill 286 by Sen. Duplessis that phases in universal access to Louisiana's successful LA 4 pre-kindergarten (Pre-K) program over the next six years.

Pre-K in Louisiana Today

Currently, there are approximately 65,000 four-year-olds in Louisiana, and approximately 39,000 attend state and federally funded Pre-K programs. The largest public Pre-K program is the Cecil J. Picard LA 4 Early Childhood Program, which is operated by the Louisiana Department of Education through local school districts and charter schools. LA 4 is serving approximately 13,500 low-income children in the 2007-08 school year. LA 4 is state-funded for children whose families qualify for free or reduced lunch (at or below 185% of the federal poverty level guideline).

SB 286 Gradually Achieves Universal Access to Pre-K

The bill would accomplish the following:

- Pre-K for all four-year-olds through a phased-in expansion of LA 4, increasing income eligibility in incremental steps until the 2013-14 school year, when all four-year-olds who want pre-K, regardless of income, have the ability to be served.
- Recognizing that a "diverse delivery model" is considered a best practice on the rise across the country, the bill encourages school districts to collaborate with community providers to ensure that at least 10 percent of the total increase in funding over the amount a school system receives in the 2008-09 school year is used for the provision of LA 4 classrooms in non-school settings, including private child care centers and Head Start programs, while maintaining LA 4's high-quality standards.

Strong Public Support for Greater Pre-K Funding

According to the 2008 Spring Louisiana Survey conducted by LSU's Louisiana Public Policy Research Lab, 87% of Louisianians favor expanding funding so the state's Pre-K programs serve all children.

Investments in High-quality Preschool Pay for Themselves

For every \$1 invested in pre-kindergarten in Louisiana, the state will re-coup an estimated \$2.25 in direct benefits, such as savings in health and welfare budgets, and up to \$8.20 in total, long-term benefits, including higher personal income and increased tax revenues.

Blueprint believes we can enhance the achievement of children immediately and throughout their academic career by increasing access to early childhood education. Children who attend high-quality pre-school do better in school and throughout their lives. They are more likely to graduate from high school and earn money in the workplace. Evaluations of LA 4 show monumental improvements on test scores, fewer referrals to costly special education programs, and a shrinking achievement gap.

Please support SB 286!

Blueprint Louisiana is a citizen-driven effort to identify and implement essential changes to fundamentally improve Louisiana. Established in 2006, the nonpartisan effort is led and supported by community and business leaders from across the state. More than 3,000 citizens and 40 organizations, including a super-majority of legislators, have indicated their support for the Blueprint Agenda.