



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 973		DATE: 2/9/2021	
COMMITTEE: Emerging Issues			
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: ANNE MILLER		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: KC PRE-K COOPERATIVE		TITLE: COORDINATOR, KC PRE-K COOPERATIVE	
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THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

Missouri House of Representatives Committee on Emerging Issues Testimony of KC Pre-K Cooperative February 8, 2021 Dear Chairman Griesheimer, Vice-Chairman Patterson, and Committee Members: On behalf of our 12 local education agency (LEA) partners, five early childhood partners, and broad coalition of supporters, thank you to Representative Shields for sponsoring HB973. We are grateful to the Committee for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this legislation. Now more than ever, Missouri families need access to affordable, quality pre-K. Only 34% of Kansas City children have access to free pre-K, and access to pre-K is even more challenging in other parts of the state. Our youngest students need a strong foundation for success in school and in life. The COVID-19 pandemic has drastically impacted the Missouri workforce and child care infrastructure. Increasing access to affordable pre-K allows families to return to work. Pre-K offers a valuable intervention to address learning loss due to the pandemic. HB973 increases equitable access to high-quality pre-K for Missouri children across the state. HB973 modifies the calculation of average daily attendance from 4% of the total number of non-qualifying pupils ages five through 18 who are eligible for free and reduced price lunch to 6% in 2022/23, 8% in 2023/24 and 10% in 2024/25. This legislation builds upon the passage of HB1689 during the 2014 legislative session, which made available state pre-K funding for all Missouri LEAs for the first time in history. Unprecedented state momentum for early childhood is evidenced by the award of a federal Preschool Development Grant in 2019 and recent creation of an Office of Childhood at the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). The KC Pre-K Cooperative commends state leaders for their efforts to improve kindergarten readiness through ensuring equitable access to high-quality pre-K and shares in this mission. HB973 provides an opportunity to build on current state momentum around early childhood to further increase equitable access to high-quality pre-K: Decades of rigorous research indicate that attending pre-K increases opportunity across an individual's lifespan. By fostering cognitive, physical, social, and emotional competencies early in a child's educational career and boosting families' access to supportive resources, high-quality pre-K builds a strong foundation for future success in school and beyond. Missouri's most vulnerable students and families will be able to access pre-K statewide. HB973 increases the number of low-income students that will be able to receive free pre-K because only students that qualify for free or reduced lunch are eligible to be claimed. Furthermore, all Missouri school districts are able to claim pre-K students allowing for students across the state – in rural, suburban, and rural geographies – to benefit. HB973 builds on the Missouri Legislature's past investments in state pre-K. Under the leadership of the Legislature, for the first time in history, state pre-K funding was made available to all Missouri LEAs with the passage of HB 1689 during the 2014 legislative session. According to Missouri statute 163.018.1, as of FY19, school

districts will be reimbursed through the state school funding formula for pre-K students up to 4% of their total free and reduced price lunch student population. This legislation would increase the number of students that LEAs are able to claim for pre-K reimbursement through the state funding formula.o

Over 300 smaller school districts will be able to offer a full pre-K classroom that are currently not able to do so. Currently, over 300 of 550 Missouri public school districts are not able to claim a full classroom of pre-K students (20 students) because of the 4% calculation, which prohibits financial and operational sustainability. Increasing the calculation from 4% to 10% will allow smaller districts across the state to open and operate pre-K classrooms for their students and families. o

A phased-in approach over three years is fiscally responsible by modifying the calculation of average daily attendance from 4% of the total number of non-qualifying pupils ages five through 18 who are eligible for free and reduced price lunch to 6% in 2022/23, 8% in 2023/24 and 10% in 2024/25. Furthermore, this legislation allows increased overall funding for LEAs to provide early childhood.

Often public school districts utilize Title I or general revenue to offset the costs of their pre-K programming; by dedicating increased funding through the state formula, districts are able to re-allocate these funding sources to serve their K-12 student population.o Accountability aligns with DESE academic standards and fiscal regulation. DESE has created rigorous academic standards for state pre-K funding, ultimately ensuring quality and strong student outcomes. Teachers must meet certification requirements, curriculum must align with state early learning standards, and fiscal reporting and expectations align with those of public school districts.o

The Missouri Legislature has created a pathway for a mixed delivery system. A mixed delivery early childhood system provides a path for LEAs to work with community organizations that meet rigorous quality criteria to delivery pre-K services for students and families. Legislation was passed in July 2019 and regulation has been written by DESE validating the opportunity for LEAs to contract with community-based early childhood education providers to utilize state pre-K funding. In addition to allowing for preservation and enhancement of the early childhood ecosystem, partnerships with community-based providers often allow for families to receive the flexible child care they need to be able to participate in the workforce. About the KC Pre-K Cooperative Created in 2019, the KC Pre-K Cooperative is an innovative partnership between community-based early childhood education centers and K-12 public schools that works to improve kindergarten readiness through ensuring equitable access to high-quality pre-K. The Cooperative's five early childhood providers and twelve K-12 partners leverage their shared resources and expertise to promote program quality, maximize public pre-K funding, and advocate for a stronger early childhood system. Together, the Cooperative serves 230 students across 13 pre-K classrooms in the 2020-2021 school year. All classrooms have received Missouri Accreditation and are led by Missouri certified teachers. In accordance with state legislation, all of the children enrolled in the Cooperative are eligible for free-and reduced -price lunch. To fuel program quality, the Cooperative partners are investing in teacher development and building data systems that support student growth. Aligning on curriculum, assessments and quality standards allows them to drive programmatic excellence, spark innovation in the early education landscape, and fuel a more consistent educational experience for students as they move from pre-K to Kindergarten and beyond. Respectfully submitted, Anne Miller KC Pre-K Cooperative anne@edstrategiesconsulting.com kcpkprekcooperative.org



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WITNESS NAME: CRAIG STEVENSON		PHONE NUMBER: 573-397-1274	
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WITNESS NAME: DOUGLAS THAMAN		PHONE NUMBER: 3142613657	
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Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Representative Shield's House Bill 973. My name is Douglas Thaman. I serve as Executive Director for the Missouri Charter Public School Association. The Missouri Charter Public School Association serves Missouri's 37 charter public school LEAs and the 25,426 students enrolled. Twelve of these LEAs provide early childhood education via collaborative partnerships with early childhood partners in both Kansas City and St. Louis. HB973 increases equitable access to high-quality pre-K for Missouri children across the state. HB973 modifies the calculation of average daily attendance from 4% of the total number of non-qualifying pupils ages five through 18 who are eligible for free and reduced price lunch to 6% in 2022/23, 8% in 2023/24 and 10% in 2024/25. HB973 builds on 2014 legislation (House Bill 1689) which, for the first time, made early childhood funding available for all LEAs in Missouri. This Bill takes important steps forward increasing early childhood access for all children regardless of their socioeconomic status and/or zip code. The importance of early childhood education can't be overstated. A child's early years are the foundation for his or her future development. They provide a strong base for lifelong learning and learning abilities, including cognitive and social development. The research regarding the importance of early childhood education as an essential building block of a child's future success is voluminous noting, in addition to other benefits, an early childhood education assists with brain development, reduces learning delays, and leads to greater levels of achievement. The passage of HB973 is a 'win-win' for the State of Missouri increasing opportunity for Missouri's children to receive a quality early childhood education increasing. We appreciate your consideration and support of this important bill.



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Missouri House of Representatives Committee on Emerging Issues Testimony of Dr. Jovanna Rohs, Director of Early Learning February 8, 2021, Dear Chairman Griesheimer, Vice-Chairman Patterson, and Committee Members: It is with great pleasure that I submit written testimony in support of House Bill 973. This bill, sponsored by Representative Shields, seeks to increase equitable access to high-quality pre-K in Missouri. Having seen the benefits of the initial state-funded pre-K through the foundation formula firsthand, I am optimistic about the potential of expanding the number of children eligible to be served. One of the Mid-America Regional Council's Department of Early Learning roles is to serve as the Head Start grantee for Clay, Jackson and Platte Counties. In this role, we support our Head Start Network of 17 partner agencies that range from small community-based providers to Local Education Agencies (LEAs). These partners serve over 1,900 children through Head Start, which accounts for only 13% of eligible children. Our MARC Head Start Network also maintains a wait list of at least 10%, and typically has many more children and families waiting to receive access. Our waitlists indicate that there are not enough funded pre-K slots in our region. The introduction of state funding for pre-K through implementation of HB 1689 has provided a mechanism for 3 community-based partners and 5 LEAs in the MARC Head Start network to expand the number of 4-year-olds they are able to serve. Our high-quality community-based partners collaborating with LEAs to provide pre-K has supported the expansion of no-cost pre-K services through a mixed delivery system. This mixed delivery system of community-based providers collaborating with LEAs not only ensures that infant-toddler services continue to be available and viable while more state funded pre-K opportunities are provided, it also supports programs' ability to layer both federal and state funding sources to ensure equitable access to programming. HB 973 fits with the renewed emphasis on early learning in the state of Missouri. Recent efforts through the federal Preschool Development Grant (B-5) have illustrated the need for increased pre-K in our state. We are off to a great start of serving 4% of the average daily attendance of the total number of non-qualifying pupils ages five through 18 who are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch. Efforts that are being made to strengthen early learning programming in the state of Missouri will benefit from the passage of HB 973 in which the calculation is raised from 4% to 6% in 2022/23, 8% in 2023/24 and 10% in 2024/25. Having a quality pre-K experience makes a difference. We have heard from kindergarten teachers that children being able to follow directions, play cooperatively, participate in group activities, staying focused and being eager to learn are all skills that benefit children when they enter a kindergarten classroom. Our regional pilot of a tool to measure readiness for kindergarten have shown this to be true. Within the first six weeks of school, kindergarten teachers administered the Kindergarten Observation Form that assesses readiness in the areas of motor skills, self-regulation, social expression and kindergarten academics. Over the past two years, the results

indicated that children who attend licensed preschool the year prior to kindergarten, as well as children who demonstrated resilience, had higher readiness upon kindergarten entry. Young children benefit from high-quality pre-K experiences. The passage of HB 973 will allow for more children to have access to funded pre-K and will contribute to children entering school ready to succeed in kindergarten and beyond.



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WITNESS NAME			
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WITNESS NAME: ARNIE "HONEST-ABE" DIENOFF-STATE PUBLIC ADVOCATE		PHONE NUMBER:	
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The expansion of the program and Fiscal Note are in question. We keep expanding Programs and Eligibility