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DELAWARE STATE SENATE
150th GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SENATE BILL NO. 150

AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 14 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION.

1 WHEREAS, children that start school with the skills they need to succeed are more likely to be successful
2 throughout their education; and

3 WHEREAS, currently there are 28 school districts and charter schools that provide kindergarten services, each
4 with its own registration process, most of which use paper forms requiring in-person completion; and

5 WHEREAS, early kindergarten registration helps children be prepared to start school on the first day, by ensuring
6 they have all the necessary forms completed and by providing the schools and families time to work with the children to
7 help get them ready; and

8 WHEREAS, early kindergarten registration helps school districts and charter schools by giving them accurate
9 student counts, which drive teacher hiring, supplies, classroom set up, scheduling, and accurate and efficient bus routes and
10 transportation scheduling; and

11 WHEREAS, early kindergarten registration helps families take advantage of choice slots, which often close by the
12 first week in January; and

13 WHEREAS, families find the current process challenging and confusing; and

14 WHEREAS, approximately 1 in 3 Delaware public school students exercises school choice, electing to attend
15 other schools within his or her district of residence, or choice-out of their district to another public school; and

16 WHEREAS, 3 out of 4 Delaware parents or caregivers describe the kindergarten registration process as “hard” or
17 “extremely hard”, and almost all Spanish speaking parents (98%) said the registration process was “hard” or “extremely
18 hard”; and

19 WHEREAS, families may live in one school district and move before the start of the school year, or choice into
20 another school district or a charter school and must fill out duplicate paperwork; and

21 WHEREAS, school districts and charter schools will benefit from the efficiency of a single, State Internet-based
22 system, and some districts have already begun to develop common forms and processes for kindergarten registration; and

23 WHEREAS, school districts and charter schools should control the local implementation of welcoming families of
24 kindergarteners into their schools, continuing to hold their own open houses, kindergarten readiness events, and delivery
25 screening through locally-determined strategies; and

26 WHEREAS, the State currently operates a common data system and school choice portal; and

27 WHEREAS, the State currently requires school districts and charter schools to collect some common information.

28 NOW, THEREFORE:

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

30 Section 1. Amend Part I, Title 14 of the Delaware Code by making deletions as shown by strike through and
31 insertions as shown by underline as follows:

32 Chapter 4A. Uniform Kindergarten Registration Process.

33 § 401A. Definitions.

34 (1) “Charter school” means a public school established under Chapter 5 of this title.

35 (2) “Department” means the Department of Education.

36 (3) “Parent” means a natural parent, an adoptive parent, any person legally charged with the care or custody of
37 a student under 18 years of age, or any person who has assumed responsibility for the care of a student under 18 years
38 of age including any person acting as a caregiver pursuant to the provisions of § 202(f) of this title.

39 (4) “Receiving local education agency” means as defined under § 402 of this title.

40 (5) “School district” means a clearly defined geographic subdivision of the State organized for the purpose of
41 administering public education in that area and includes a district specifically created to administer a system of
42 vocational or technical education.

43 § 402A. Establishment of a uniform kindergarten registration process.

44 (a) The Department shall establish a uniform kindergarten registration process to be used by a parent to register a
45 child for kindergarten in a school district or charter school.

46 (b) The Department shall establish the uniform kindergarten registration process for the 2021 through 2022 school
47 year.

48 (c) The Department shall provide interested school districts and charter schools the option of testing the uniform
49 kindergarten registration process for the 2021 through 2022 school year.

50 (d) Beginning with the 2022 through 2023 school year, all school districts and charter schools shall use the
51 uniform kindergarten registration process.

52 (e) The Department shall seek feedback from school districts, charter schools, and parents to guide the
53 development and ongoing improvements to the uniform kindergarten registration process.

54 § 403A. Uniform kindergarten registration process and information collection requirements.

55 (a) The uniform kindergarten registration process established under § 402A of this title must meet both of the
56 following:

57 (1) Be available through the Internet and in paper form.

58 (2) Be available in English and Spanish.

59 (b) The uniform kindergarten registration process established under § 402A of this title must include all of the
60 documents required to be completed by a parent who is registering a child for kindergarten, including documents related to
61 the following:

62 (1) Acceptable use for digital technology.

63 (2) Transportation.

64 (3) Free and reduced lunch.

65 (4) The home language survey.

66 (5) The child care previously attended and the duration and time attended.

67 (6) Students' Individual Family Service Plan and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act status.

68 § 404A. Internet-based uniform kindergarten registration process requirements.

69 (a) The Internet-based uniform kindergarten registration process established under § 403A of this title must do all
70 of the following:

71 (1) Connect with the Department's school choice website and any other Internet-based system that is used by
72 the Department or a school district or charter school to collect student data.

73 (2) Collect the date a parent registers a child for kindergarten.

74 (3) Report the number of children registered during a given month.

75 (4) Permit information provided by a parent to be transferred to another school district or charter school when
76 a child's school district of residence changes or a parent applies to enroll the parent's child in a receiving local
77 education agency under Chapter 4 of this title.

78 (5) Permit any relevant personal document required by a school district or charter school to be uploaded using
79 the Internet-based uniform kindergarten registration process.

80 (b) A school district or charter school shall provide computer access so that a parent may use the Internet-based
81 uniform kindergarten registration process to register a child for kindergarten in a school district or charter school.

82 § 405A. Department duties.

83 The Department shall:

84 (1) Establish a date by which it is recommended that a parent register a child for kindergarten in a school
85 district or charter school. The date must be at least 6 weeks before the application deadline for the school district
86 enrollment choice program under § 403 of this title.

87 (2) Provide training on the uniform kindergarten registration process established under this chapter to school
88 district and charter school employees who are assigned to assist parents with the uniform kindergarten registration
89 process.

90 (3) Issue guidelines for privacy of information submitted as part of the uniform kindergarten registration
91 process.

92 § 406A. Regulatory authority.

93 The Secretary of the Department may promulgate regulations necessary to implement this chapter.

SYNOPSIS

This Act requires the Department of Education (“Department”) to establish a uniform kindergarten registration process. The Department must establish a uniform kindergarten registration process by the 2021 through 2022 school year and the school districts and charter schools must use the process beginning with the 2022 through 2023 school year.

This Act requires the uniform kindergarten registration process to be Internet-based and in paper form and in English and Spanish. This Act also requires that certain information must be provided in the process and that the Internet-based uniform kindergarten registration process must include certain features.

Finally, this Act requires the Department to establish a kindergarten registration date 6 weeks before the school choice program deadline, provide training to certain school district and charter school employees regarding the uniform kindergarten registration process, and issue guidelines for privacy of information submitted as part of the registration process.

Author: Senator Lockman