



## Text File

**Introduced:** 4/28/2017

**Bill No:** 2017-1463, **Version:** 2

**Committee:** Committee on Finance and Law

**Status:** Passed Finally

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Resolution authorizing and directing the Mayor of the City of Pittsburgh and his designee to contact the School District of Pittsburgh for the purpose of establishing and administering the Pittsburgh Pre-K Scholarship Fund.

**Whereas**, the biggest hurdles facing our region - from high school dropout rates to violent crime to the rising cost of health care - can be addressed by expanding voluntary, high-quality pre-K education. Investing in children before kindergarten is much more cost-effective than spending tax dollars to address problems later in their lives; and,

**Whereas**, at-risk children who don't receive a high-quality early-childhood education are 25 percent more likely to drop out of school, 50 percent more likely to be placed in special education programs, 60 percent more likely to never attend college and 70 percent more likely to be arrested for a violent crime; and,

**Whereas**, according to independent studies, the children participating in early-childhood education programs are achieving the intended results. A Rutgers University study showed that kids enrolled in New Jersey's programs showed 30 percent higher gains in vocabulary and 80 percent higher gains in math skills than those who did not participate; and,

**Whereas**, School District of Pittsburgh is the primary provider of Pre-K services in the City of Pittsburgh; and,

**Whereas**, the School District of Pittsburgh also partners with community-based providers to provide Pre-K services; and,

**Whereas**, Pittsburgh Public Schools provides free, full-day pre-K to students ages 3-5. The district operates classrooms in 34 locations and collaborates with 16 local child care agencies to provide comprehensive services for children and families. Programs are operated out of elementary schools in addition to two district-run early childhood centers; and,

**Whereas**, enrollment is free for families making up to 300 percent of the federal poverty level or less. Children from families exceeding the bar may enroll through a tuition-based option; and,

**Whereas**, the Pittsburgh Public Schools Early Childhood Education Program waitlist for the 2015-16 academic year was roughly 340 students; in prior years the waitlist reached approximately 500; and,

**Whereas**, the cost of enrolling students into the Pittsburgh Public Schools Early Childhood Education Program is approximately \$9,220 per student; and,

**Whereas**, the City of Pittsburgh's non-profits no longer contribute to the Pittsburgh Public Service Fund.

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**Be it resolved by the Council of the City of Pittsburgh as follows:**

**Section 1.** The Mayor of the City of Pittsburgh and/or his designee is hereby authorized and directed to contact the School District of Pittsburgh for the purpose of establishing the Pittsburgh Pre-K Scholarship Fund. The Purpose of the Pittsburgh Pre-K Scholarship Fund is to provide scholarships for those students who are on the Pittsburgh Public Schools Early Childhood Education Programs waiting list.

**Section 2.** The Mayor and/or his designee is also authorized to contact Pittsburgh-based non-profit organizations, including educational and medical institutions to solicit funding for the Pre-K Scholarship Fund.

**Section 3.** The goal of the Pittsburgh Pre-K Scholarship Fund is to provide funding for all students whose families earn up to 300 percent of the federal poverty level or less and are on the Pittsburgh Public Schools Pre-Kindergarten waiting list.

**Section 4.** In order to ensure a comprehensive approach to serving all low and moderate income children and providers across the City of Pittsburgh, sections 1-3 of this bill shall be sent to the Early Childhood Education Task Force created by City Council, for inclusion in the final Early Childhood Education Implementation Plan.