

I MINA' TRENTAI UNU NA LIHESLATURAN GUÅHAN
2011 (FIRST) Regular Session

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Bill No. 179-31(LS)

Introduced by:

V. Anthony Ada
F. F. BLAS, JR.

**AN ACT TO ADD A NEW ARTICLE 6 TO CHAPTER 6 OF
17G.C.A. RELATIVE TO AUTHORIZING THE DEPARTMENT
OF EDUCATION TO CREATE AND IMPLEMENT A
VOLUNTARY PRESCHOOL PILOT PROGRAM.**

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF GUAM:

Section 1. A new Article 6 is hereby *added* to Chapter 6 of 17G.C.A. to read:

Article 6

Voluntary Preschool Pilot Project

§6600. Legislative Findings and intent: *I Liheslaturan Guåhan* finds and declares all of the following:

(a) A compelling body of respected research demonstrates that quality preschool programs benefit children and their families, the public school system, public safety, the economy, and society as a whole.

(b) Guam has an enormous opportunity to reach children at a time when they are eager and ready to learn. Ninety percent of brain development takes place before age five, making early childhood the best time to invest in preschool programs that boost learning, creativity, and social skills. Preschool programs lay a strong foundation that help children succeed in school and in life.

(c) Quality preschool experiences boost academic achievement in school, decrease grade retention, decrease special education placements, and increase

1 graduation rates. Quality preschool further reduces the likelihood of later arrest and
2 incarceration, and increases college attendance and earnings in adulthood.

3 (d) Thousands of children on Guam do not have access to quality preschool.
4 Preschool age children enroll at a rate of just 47 percent below the national average and
5 far below international comparisons.

6 (e) Pathways to excellence must be created for all children while communicating
7 respect and support for differences in cultural origins and economic status.

8 (f) Quality preschool experiences decrease special education placements, in part
9 because they have the potential to provide early identification and intervention for
10 young children with exceptional needs, which can reduce the need for ongoing special
11 education services. Providing access to quality preschool for children with exceptional
12 needs can help support their development and prepare them for a successful transition
13 to kindergarten and beyond.

14 (g) Research confirms the many benefits that children, parents, and preschool
15 programs gain when parents are involved in their child' s preschool learning both inside
16 the classroom and at home.

17 (h) Universal programs -- those available to all families -- are supported by
18 research. Research shows that children from all backgrounds benefit from quality
19 preschool. The school and life success of low-income and at-risk children may be
20 significantly increased through quality preschool. But problems with school readiness
21 are not confined to low-income children and neither are the benefits of preschool. A
22 2004 University of California study of California kindergartners found that children
23 from all income backgrounds who attended preschool showed significant pre-reading
24 and pre-math gains over children who did not attend preschool.

25 Therefore, it is the intent of *I Liheslatura* to establish a pilot program leading to
26 the establishment of a voluntary preschool-for-all system that conforms to the following
27 principles:

1 (a) A goal will be set for preschool teachers to be educated and compensated at
2 levels comparable to teachers in the public school system and early education
3 professionals will have access to ongoing professional development.

4 (b) Recognizing that parents are their children's first teachers, and that preschool
5 programs benefit from engaged parents, programs will create opportunities for parent
6 involvement in preschool settings, as well as for interaction between parents and
7 preschool teachers and administrators. Quality preschools can become learning
8 resources not only for children but for their parents as well.

9 (c) Families will have access to programs with settings, locations, hours, and
10 participatory opportunities that meet their needs and preferences, and that support their
11 aspirations for their children.

12 (d) Children of all cultural, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds, income levels,
13 and neighborhoods will be welcomed in inclusive programs designed to meet their
14 needs.

15 (d) Elements that promote the inclusion of children with exceptional needs will
16 be integrated into the planning and design of programs, facilities, staff training
17 programs, and the provision of resources for parents.

18 (f) A system of public accountability will be established to ensure maximum
19 benefits for children, equal access to services, proper use of tax dollars, and
20 transparency to the public.

21 (g) All children deserve the opportunity to get ready to do their best in school,
22 and to succeed later in life. Quality preschool helps build a learning foundation that
23 should be available to all families who want it for their children. *I Liheslatura*
24 recognizes the benefits of quality preschool, and that the public education system, the
25 economy, and quality of life will be strengthened by providing quality preschool for all
26 children.

1 **§6601. Voluntary Preschool Pilot Project Plan:** (a) The Superintendent shall
2 convene a committee to develop a plan to:

3 (1) coordinate the capacity and efficiency of a post-secondary education program
4 for the purpose of preparing and training high quality staff in preschool programs. The
5 plan shall address the enhancement of the postsecondary education system
6 infrastructure for the purpose of educating, preparing, and supporting a well-trained,
7 culturally and linguistically diverse teaching and administrative staff to work with all
8 children in preschool programs and early learning programs.

9 (2) Select one elementary school that is suitable for a preschool program per each
10 of the following four geographic areas:

- 11 (a) Dededo and Yigo
- 12 (b) Barrigada, Chalan Pago-Ordot, Mangilao, and Mongmong-Toto-Maite
- 13 (c) Agaña Heights, Asan-Maina, Hagatña, Piti, Sinajaña and Tamuning
- 14 (d) Inarajan, Merizo, Santa Rita, Talofoyo, Umatac. and Yoña

15 (3) Develop a preschool curriculum,

16 (4) Develop a budget that includes funding from legislative appropriations and
17 sources that may include federal grants-in-aid and tuition payments.

18 (5) Develop an enrollment plan that is representative of the community's
19 demographics in terms of economic status and ethnicity based on the most recent
20 census. Students to be enrolled in the Voluntary Preschool Pilot Program shall be a
21 representative sample of the community's preschool-age population and the selection
22 process shall be done by lottery.

23 (b) The committee shall consist of experts in early childcare and education,
24 parents, and representatives from all levels of postsecondary education. The number of
25 members on the committee and selection of members shall be the prerogative of the
26 Superintendent.

1 (c) The Voluntary Preschool pilot program plan shall be approved by the Guam
2 Education Board prior to implementation.

3 (d) The pilot program and any permanent program implemented shall not be
4 compulsory in terms of attendance.

5 **§6602. Pilot Project costs.** The Department of Education shall prepare a budget
6 (funding request) to *I Liheslatura* for this pilot program. To the extent allowed by the
7 grantor, grants-in-aid may also be used to fund the pilot program.

8 **§6603. Timeframe.** The timeframe to complete the pilot program shall be from
9 two (2) to five (5) years at the discretion of the Guam Education Board.

10 **§6604. Implementation and monitoring.** The Guam Education Board shall set
11 all the parameters and policies for the implementation and monitoring of the pilot
12 program.

13 **§6605. Periodic and Final Reports.** The Superintendent shall prepare periodic
14 report each semester on the pilot program. At the end of the pilot program, the
15 Superintendent shall prepare a final report with recommendations. All reports shall be
16 submitted to the Guam Education Board.

17 **§6606. Transportation.** As a condition of enrollment, the parents or guardian of
18 the child attending the preschool program shall provide transportation to and from the
19 school. Neither the Department of Education or the Department of Public works shall
20 provide transportation for preschool (pilot program) students nor are such agencies
21 responsible for the safety of these children while traveling to and from school.