

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2019

H.B. 886
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HOUSE PRINCIPAL CLERK

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HOUSE BILL DRH10520-LU-115A

Short Title: Study Participation of Operators in NC Pre-K. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Horn, Dobson, Black, and Strickland (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO STUDY THE CHALLENGES CHILD CARE FACILITY OPERATORS FACE
3 IN PARTICIPATING IN THE NORTH CAROLINA PREKINDERGARTEN (NC PRE-K)
4 PROGRAM.

5 Whereas, the North Carolina Prekindergarten (NC Pre-K) program has been proven,
6 through over 15 years of rigorous research, to have lasting positive impacts, including increased
7 reading and math proficiency, reduced placements in special education, and less grade retention,
8 with these positive outcomes lasting through at least the eighth grade; and

9 Whereas, this rigorous research has confirmed that, as the number of NC Pre-K
10 eligible children participating in the program increases, children who do not participate in the
11 program experience some of the positive impacts as well; and

12 Whereas, this research confirms also that NC Pre-K is a critical foundation for
13 increasing third grade reading proficiency and continued success in North Carolina's K-12
14 system, which will strengthen the talent pipeline necessary to meet the skills needs of North
15 Carolina businesses; and

16 Whereas, North Carolina is nationally recognized for its early care and education
17 system; and

18 Whereas, research shows investment in NC Pre-K generates a strong return on
19 investment by reducing the number of children placed in special education classrooms in the
20 third grade by thirty-nine percent (39%); and

21 Whereas, research shows children enrolled in NC Pre-K learn to socialize, make
22 decisions, interact with others, and negotiate, which are all critical components of necessary
23 executive function skills that translate into critical soft skills North Carolina businesses need; and

24 Whereas, recent increases in State funding have raised statewide participation in the
25 NC Pre-K program to forty-seven percent (47%) of eligible children, and research shows
26 participation by at least seventy-five percent (75%) of eligible children in every North Carolina
27 county would increase the likelihood of success in school and in the workforce, but there are
28 unique challenges in counties across our State to expanding the program to serve at least
29 seventy-five percent (75%) of eligible children; Now, therefore,

30 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

31 **SECTION 1.** The Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Child
32 Development and Early Education (Division), shall complete a statewide study of operators of
33 four- and five-star centers who are not currently participating in the North Carolina
34 Prekindergarten (NC Pre-K) program to identify those operators' perception of the challenges
35 associated with becoming an NC Pre-K site. In addition, the Division shall complete a
36 county-by-county study of additional local challenges. Findings from these two studies shall be



1 used to make recommendations to address these challenges, including any recommended changes
2 in the State funding structure, to facilitate achieving the goal of enrolling in the NC Pre-K
3 program at least seventy-five percent (75%) of eligible children in each county. The Division
4 shall submit a report on its recommendations regarding the challenges, as well as any
5 recommendations for changes to support increased access for children eligible for the NC Pre-K
6 program, to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services and the
7 Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by February 1, 2020.

8 **SECTION 2.** This act is effective when it becomes law.