



Minnesota Child Care Provider
Information Network
PO Box 1136
Prior Lake, MN 55372
651-636-1989
www.mccpin.org

The mission of the Minnesota Child Care Provider Information Network (MCCPIN) is to support, promote and strengthen the profession of licensed family child care, thereby enriching the lives of providers, children, families, and communities.

March 30, 2022

HF4570(Pinto) - Voluntary prekindergarten obsolete language removed.

Dear Committee Chair and Committee members:

My name is Cyndi Cunningham. I have been a Licensed Family Child Care Provider in St. Paul for 26 years and am the current Public Policy Chairperson for Minnesota Child Care Provider Information Network (MCCPIN), a 501c3 sitewide association for Licensed Child Care Providers. I also served as the MCCPIN representative on the Family Child Care Task Force years which is where the basis for this position was supported.

I'm testifying to share MCCPIN's concerns and opposition to the proposed Pre-K plan as presented by bill HF4570.

MCCPIN has met with MDE, listened carefully to what the plan is and have expressed our great concern for this plan.

We have also been connected on a national platform of advocates since early last fall regarding the federal actions of Build Back Better. These advocates strongly support mixed-delivery and all care settings. Most have stated the concern about the BBB degree requirement and other aspects to the proposal.

As presented the HF4570 issues are:

- Build Back Better has not passed, and per Sen Tina Smith's office, likely will not pass
 - To base a Minnesota plan on a federal idea which isn't in place is highly questionable
 - Minnesota needs to create and support what is currently best for Minnesota, not what 'might be'
 - Even if it passed, Minnesota would have the opportunity to make a decision on implementation
 - These discussions need to take place in a fully transparent setting with all options on the table



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- The percentages presented of 40% school, 30% Head Start and 30% child care is concerning:
 - This is almost a full shift away from the current percentages
 - This shifts children to schools and away from childcare
 - “childcare” is a mix of center and Licensed Family Child Care
 - There is not a requirement that these percentages be followed, they are guidelines
 - There is no incentive for the overseeing school district to ensure these are followed
 - School districts, like most entities, will proceed with what is the normal and known; for them it will be schools
 - School districts frequently do not currently recognize child care as a quality setting and will continue to marginalize our value
- **Ultimate impact will lead to long term limits of choice for families**
 - Families need a variety of choice, including pre-school settings in the broad definition, not just schools
 - Children will be removed from child care settings leading to an even larger child care crisis
 - Programs such as centers and licensed family child care will not be able to sustain their businesses and therefor less choice
- **Degree requirement, though with a 6-year implementation will eliminate and exclude many Early Childhood Educators in child care settings**
 - Minorities will be marginalized as this is an inequitable standard. We currently have a crisis in ECE with minority representation in care providers, this will exasperate the situation.
 - Current care providers working full-time do not have the flexibility to obtain a 4-degree. Paid time off from work, financial supports for education are limited, many are parents of young children complicating time away from work and family to obtain this degree
 - BA degrees are over-valued to prepare young children for school and life. There are many quality classifications for providers to ensure they have the tools to best prepare children: Parent Aware, ECE certificates/diplomas, AA degrees, ???, Montessori certificates, etc. have all proven to prepare children.
 - There are no studies which support a BA only degree, this is the known standard in schools, hence why it is comfortable to the MDE system



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- There are no complete studies which evaluate what setting children who are 'not prepared' for school are coming from! To make a leap and assumption that only BA degrees can prepare is not supported.

We ask legislators stop this plan. Ultimately, the presented structure will lead to families having limited choice and children will not have full support to grow and flourish.

Please support children and families by funding Pathways I scholarships and CCAP.

- These fundings have proven to meet children and families where they are. It does not build programs which then distribute the wealth to who can make it to the program.
- \$11,000/child would have a great impact on giving parents shopping dollars to go to the setting which meets their needs. Cost of a 4-year-old for a full year in my program would be approx. \$8,000 for over 2,000 hours of Early Childhood setting.
- Non-traditional hours, and non-school hours can be met by Pathways I and CCAP. To expect children and families to just participate in the few hours a school offers does not cover their overall needs.
- Child care, whether center or Licensed Child Care along with many other non-school programs can meet family and children's needs.

Lean on the experts in the field of Early Childhood Education. School have not been meeting these needs for as long as providers have been. The statement that children are not ready for school maybe true but there is not a proven where they are coming from.

We need to stop building programs with Pathways II and school fund expecting families & children come to them. The state needs to financially support families and children where they are.

Please support families, children, and ALL Early Childhood Educators!

Sincerely,

Cyndi Cunningham
MCCPIN Public Policy Chairperson