

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

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Overview

This bill is the Governor's prekindergarten through grade 12 budget recommendations.

Section

Article 1: General Education

Overview

This article creates a voluntary prekindergarten program and funds that program by including eligible prekindergarten pupils in the definition of pupil units. Counts prekindergarten pupils for the number of hours of instruction that they receive, but limits the overall pupil weight to not more than 0.6 pupil units. Adjusts other statutory provisions to match the voluntary prekindergarten program.

- 1 Length of school year.** Requires a voluntary prekindergarten program to provide at least 350 hours of instruction to each participating prekindergarten pupil during the school year.
- 2 Long-term facilities maintenance revenue.** Includes in each school district's long-term facilities revenue the approved amounts necessary to remodel existing instructional space to accommodate a voluntary prekindergarten program.

Section

- 3 Program reimbursement; school breakfast.** Includes in the state supplementary funding for school breakfasts an amount equal to \$1.30 per breakfast for each prekindergarten pupil who does not qualify for free or reduced price breakfasts. Note: breakfasts for prekindergarten pupils who qualify for free or reduced price meals are already fully funded by existing law.
- 4 No fees; breakfast.** Prohibits a school district from charging any prekindergarten pupil a fee for breakfast.
- 5 Voluntary prekindergarten program.**

Subd. 1. Establishment; purpose. Authorizes a school district or charter school to establish a voluntary prekindergarten program for qualifying children who are at least four years of age on September 1 of that school year.

Subd. 2. Program requirements. (a) Requires a voluntary prekindergarten program to:

- (1) measure each child's cognitive and social skills using a formative measure aligned to the state's early learning standards when entering and exiting a program;
 - (2) provide a comprehensive program including curriculum, assessment, and instructional strategies aligned with the state's prekindergarten through grade 3 early learning guidelines and academic standards;
 - (3) deliver instructional content and activities that are of sufficient length and intensity to address learning needs through at least 350 hours of instruction;
 - (4) establish voluntary prekindergarten instructional staff salary levels comparable to the salaries of kindergarten through grade 12 instructional staff;
 - (5) coordinate appropriate kindergarten transition activities with families, community-based prekindergarten programs, and school district kindergarten programs;
 - (6) involve parents in program planning and transition planning by implementing parent engagement strategies that include culturally and linguistically responsive activities in prekindergarten through grade three that are aligned with ECFE activities;
 - (7) coordinate activities with relevant community-based health and social service agencies to ensure children have access to comprehensive services;
 - (8) coordinate programs and services, including homeless, English learning, and special education services;
 - (9) ensure a staff to child ratio of no less than one staff person for each ten children and allow no more than 20 children in any one class;
 - (10) provide professional development for early learning providers; and
 - (11) implement strategies that support the alignment of professional development, instruction, assessments, and prekindergarten through grade three curriculum.
- (b) Requires that by the 2022-23 school year, all classroom teachers in a voluntary prekindergarten program have an early childhood license issued by the Board of Teaching or special permission to teach in the program.

Section

(c) Requires districts to implement and measure prekindergarten programs as part of their world's best workforce plan.

Subd. 3. Mixed delivery of services. Allows a school district or charter school to contract with a charter school, Head Start Program, child care center, licensed child care program, or a community-based organization to provide eligible children with developmentally appropriate services meeting the requirements of subdivision 2.

Subd. 4. Eligibility. Makes a child eligible to participate in the voluntary prekindergarten program if the child: (1) is at least four years old as of September 1 of that school year; (2) has completed early childhood developmental screening no later than 90 days after enrolling in the program; and (3) documents compliance with required immunizations.

Subd. 5. Application process; priority for high poverty schools. Requires a charter school or school district to have an application for a prekindergarten program approved by the commissioner of education. Lists items to be included in the application including the number of children to be served, a description of the program characteristics, and a statement that the conditions of subdivision 2 will be met.

Requires the commissioner to divide the applications into four regions; (1) Minneapolis and St. Paul school districts; (2) suburban school districts; (3) school districts in greater Minnesota; and (4) charter schools. Prioritizes the applications within each of the four groups based on the concentration of poverty and reduces the school districts' priority based on the presence of three- or four-star QRIS rated programs within or near the school district. Once a program becomes eligible, the program stays eligible for the prekindergarten program.

Subd. 6. Program and aid entitlement limits. Sets limits on the overall aid entitlement for the voluntary prekindergarten programs. Sets the aid entitlement cap at \$27,092,000 for fiscal year 2017, \$40,866,000 for fiscal year 2018, and \$61,549,000 for fiscal year 2019 and later.

- 6 **English learner.** Authorizes a school district to include a prekindergarten pupil in its count of English language learners for the purpose of receiving English learner aid.
- 7 **Pupil units.** Creates a funding stream for prekindergarten program pupils by counting the pupils in the regular pupil count. Limits the pupil units to not more than 0.6 for any pupil and reduces this amount proportionately for any prekindergarten pupil receiving instruction for less than 510 hours.
- 8 **Compensation revenue pupil units.** Clarifies that the current year count of free and reduced price meal eligible student may be used if a count for the previous year does not exist.
- 9 **Declining enrollment aid.** Exempts prekindergarten pupils from the pupil count used to determine declining enrollment aid for the next three school years.
- 10 **Operating capital levy.** Adjusts the operating capital levy equalizing factor to keep overall levies unchanged by the inclusion of the prekindergarten pupil units in Minnesota's school funding system.

Section

- 11 Appropriations.** Appropriates the following:
- ▶ \$23.5 million in FY 17 for additional general education aid
 - ▶ \$171,000 in FY 17 for additional charter school lease aid
 - ▶ \$116,000 in FY 17 for additional achievement and integration aid
 - ▶ \$113,000 in FY 17 for additional special education aid
 - ▶ \$289,000 in FY 17 for additional long-term facilities maintenance aid
 - ▶ \$218,000 in FY 17 for additional Qcomp aid
 - ▶ \$215,000 in FY 17 for additional breakfast aid
 - ▶ \$36,000 in FY 17 for additional school lunch aid
 - ▶ \$592,000 in FY 17 for administrative costs for MDE

Article 2: Education Excellence

- 1 Licensure via portfolio.** Appropriates the revenue from fees paid by applicants for licensure via portfolio to the education commissioner for expenditures related to administering the licensure via portfolio process. Makes the fees paid by unsuccessful applicants for licensure via portfolio nonrefundable. Allows the Board of Teaching to reduce or waive an applicant's fees based on financial need.
- 2 Basic alternative teacher compensation aid.** Establishes a state total basic alternative teacher compensation aid entitlement amount of \$75,840,000 in fiscal year 2016 and an amount of \$88,118,000 in fiscal year 2017 and later. Requires the education commissioner to limit the aid approved under this section so as not to exceed the established limits by: not approving new participants; or by prorating the aid among existing participants. Also allows the commissioner to reallocate a portion of the aid from the second year to the first year of the biennium to meet approved participants' needs.
- Makes this section effective immediately.
- 3 Full-service community school program.** (a) Increases from \$100,000 to \$150,000 the amount an eligible school site may receive annually.
- (c) Requires a school electing not to use planning funds to submit its school plan with its program application.
- (d) Directs the education commissioner to consider additional school factors such as, low-income, homeless, and highly mobile rates when dispensing funds.
- 4 Minnesota's future teachers grant program.**
- Subd. 1. Definitions.** (b) Defines "eligible institution" to mean MnSCU, the University of Minnesota, or a private postsecondary institution.

Section

(c) Defines “high need area” to mean an area in Minnesota identified by the education commissioner in the biennial teacher supply and demand report or other survey as experiencing a teacher shortage.

(d) Defines “high needs school” a school designated as low performing under federal accountability measures or enrolling a high percentage of low-income students.

(e) Defines “qualified candidate” to mean an individual enrolled in an eligible, Board of Teaching-approved teacher preparation program or institution.

Subd. 2. Account. Establishes an account under the control of the commissioner of the Office of Higher Education for financial assistance grants to support qualified candidates interested in becoming teachers. Declares unused funds do not cancel.

Subd. 3. Program requirements. (a) Directs the Office of Higher Education commissioner to award grants to eligible institutions for undergraduate and graduate students, beginning in the 2017-2018 academic year, to become licensed teachers. Directs the commissioner to determine maximum grant amounts available to eligible institutions and for administrative and support services.

(b) Directs the commissioner to award grants to eligible institutions that: use most of the grant to reduce students’ tuition, fees, and other such costs; encourage underserved students, students of color, and students interested in teaching in a high needs school to participate in the program; provide support services to allow students to complete the program and receive a license; offer experiential opportunities to explore teaching; and have students demonstrate their intent to teach in a high needs school after completing the program.

(c) Requires participating institutions to mentor students.

5 Rulemaking authority. (a) Directs the Board of Teaching to adopt rules for certificates of advanced professional study available to fully licensed teachers to allow the teacher to continue teaching without a waiver or variance when: a licensure program in a particular subject area is not available in Minnesota; or no teacher licensed in that subject area is available. Requires the certificate to: have fewer requirements than a full professional teaching license in that subject area; specify requirements for attaining the certificate; and maintain professional teaching standards in that subject area.

(b) Requires the rules to limit the certificates to subject areas where a shortage of teachers exists in one or more regions of the state or full professional teaching licenses or programs are not available in Minnesota.

6 Stepping up for kids; financial assistance.

Subd. 1. Definitions. (b) Defines “high needs area” to mean an area in Minnesota identified by the education commissioner in the biennial teacher supply and demand report or other survey as experiencing a teacher shortage.

(c) Defines “high needs school” to mean school designated as low performing under federal accountability measures and enrolling a high percentage of low-income students.

Section

(d) Defines “qualified candidate” to mean a paraprofessional currently or recently employed by a district and enrolled in an eligible, Board of Teaching-approved teacher preparation program or institution.

Subd. 2. Account. Establishes an account under the control of the commissioner of the Office of Higher Education for financial assistance grants to support qualified paraprofessional candidates interested in becoming teachers. Declares unused funds do not cancel.

Subd. 3. Eligibility. (a) Allows a qualified candidate to apply to the commissioner of the Office of Higher Education beginning in the 2017-2018 school year. Directs the commissioner to award financial assistance to qualified paraprofessionals employed in a high needs area or school, and to consider diversifying the workforce. Requires the paraprofessional to submit a letter from a district administrator.

(b) Requires a qualified candidate to agree to work for four years as a teacher in a Minnesota school district or possibly repay the financial assistance.

(c) Requires a qualified candidate to submit a letter indicating an interest in teaching in a high needs area or school.

Subd. 4. Usage. Allows qualified candidates to use the financial assistance under this section for tuition and expenses related to completing a teacher preparation program and attaining a teaching license.

Subd. 5. Policymaking. Directs the education commissioner, with the assistance of the commissioner of the Office of Higher Education, to adopt the policies and procedures needed to implement this section.

7 Teacher development and evaluation aid. (a) For fiscal year 2017 only, declares that teacher development and evaluation aid for a district, group of districts, or charter school without an alternative professional pay system agreement equals \$341.74 times the number of full-time equivalent teachers employed in each school site on October 1 in the 2015-2016 school year. With the exception of charter schools, requires districts to use the aid for teacher development and evaluation activities under the teacher tenure and continuing contract statutes. Defines “teacher” in the context of the teacher tenure and continuing contract statutes.

(b) Limits the state total development and evaluation aid entitlement to \$10,000,000 in fiscal year 2017. Prohibits the commissioner from exceeding this limit.

(c) Requires all teacher development and evaluation aid to be paid in fiscal year 2017.

8 Appropriations. Appropriates the following:

- ▶ \$250,000 in FY 16 and \$2,250,000 in FY 17 for full service community schools
- ▶ \$10,000,000 in FY 17 and later for Minnesota’s future teachers grant program
- ▶ \$2,000,000 in FY 17 for the “stepping up for kids” program
- ▶ \$183,000 in FY 16 and \$21,000 in FY 17 for additional Qcomp aid
- ▶ \$10,000,000 in FY 17 only for teacher development and evaluation aid

Section

Article 3: Charter Schools

- 1 **Effective date.** Allows prekindergarten deaf and hard-of-hearing pupils to enroll in a charter school in the 2016-2017 school year and deletes a previously enacted condition allowing such enrollment only if the commissioner determined no added cost would be attributable to the pupil.

Makes this section effective immediately.

Article 4: Special Education

- 1 **Nonresident tuition rate; other costs.** Allows an intermediate school district or special education cooperative to recover its unreimbursed costs of service to special education pupils, including costs for building leases, debt service levies, and indirect costs in membership fees and nonmember access fees to each student's resident district. Clarifies the definition of general education revenue used to compute the nonresident tuition rate.
- 2 **Use of reimbursements.** Requires school districts to reserve third-party revenue and spend the revenue only for the purposes enumerated in this section.
- 3 **Special education aid.** Requires the Department of Education to include procedures in the Uniform Financial and Reporting Standards (UFARS) system to track third-party billing proceeds at the school building level. Requires third-party billing revenue to be included in the cross-subsidy report and excluded from the calculation of special education excess cost aid.
- 4 **Definitions; special education excess cost.** Clarifies the definition of general education revenue used to calculate unreimbursed nonfederal special education expenditures.
- 5 **Alternative attendance programs.** Clarifies the definition of general education revenue in order to calculate the unreimbursed cost of providing special education and services.
- 6 **Appropriation.** Appropriates the following:
 - ▶ \$69,000 per year starting in FY 17 for additional special education aid associated with article 3, section 1, allowing the Metro Deaf charter school to directly enroll prekindergarten pupils.
 - ▶ \$1,000,000 per year beginning in FY 17 to implement the recommendations from the restrictive procedures work group.

Section

Article 5: Early Childhood Education

1 Help Me Grow System.

Subd. 1. Purpose. States that the purpose of the Help Me Grow program is to develop and implement a comprehensive, statewide, coordinated system of early identification, referral, and follow-up for children, prenatal through age eight, and their families.

Subd. 2. Establishment and administration. Requires the commissioner of education to provide funding and work collaboratively with the commissioners of human services and health to implement and maintain a Help Me Grow program compatible with Help Me Grow National Center's program.

Subd. 3. Duties. (a) States that the Help Me Grow system must extend across child health, early learning, and family support areas. Requires the Help Me Grow system to: (1) coordinate child health care provider outreach; (2) strengthen identification and detection of young children at risk for behavioral and developmental problems; and (3) link children and families to community-based services.

(b) Requires the Help Me Grow system to provide community outreach and compile and maintain a directory of: (1) primary and specialty medical care providers; (2) early child education and child care programs; (3) developmental disabilities assessment and intervention programs; (4) mental health services; (5) family and social support services; (6) child advocacy and legal services; (7) public health services; and (8) other appropriate early childhood information.

(c) Requires the Help Me Grow system to develop a centralized point of access to services.

(d) Requires the Help Me Grow system to collect data to identify service gaps, barriers to appropriate services, and areas where resources are not sufficient.

Subd. 4. Review. Requires the Department of Education to annually review: (1) outcomes achieved by the Help Me Grow system; (2) the system's alignment with overall early childhood goals and objectives; and (3) the system's impact on young children.

Article 6: Self-sufficiency and lifelong learning

1 GED test fees. Authorizes the commissioner to pay 100 percent of the fee charged to an eligible individual for costs of one full battery of the GED tests for fiscal year 2017 only.

2 GED tests; appropriation. Increases the appropriation for the costs of GED tests by \$120,000 for fiscal year 2017 only.

Section

Article 7: State Agencies

- 1 Department of Education; appropriations.** Increases the agency appropriation for fiscal year 2016 by \$30,000 and by \$4.764 million for fiscal year 2017. Increases the riders as follows:
 - ▶ Board of Teaching rider increased by \$30,000 in FY 16 and \$77,000 in FY 17
 - ▶ Adds a new rider for the Board of Teaching of an added \$302,000 in FY 17 for costs associated with the Certificates of Advanced Professional Study (CAPS) in article 2, section 5
 - ▶ Adds a new rider of \$4,385,000 in FY 17 only for transfer to MN.IT for IT enhancements and security.

- 2 Appropriations.** Appropriates the following amounts:
 - ▶ \$1,000,000 in fiscal year 2017 only for Help Me Grow activities;
 - ▶ \$2,750,000 in fiscal year 2017 only for Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS);
 - ▶ \$2,000,000 in fiscal year 2017 and a base of \$540,000 for each subsequent year for a statewide online special education reporting system in cooperation with the state's Information Technology (IT) services, known as MN.IT.