

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

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Subject: Qualifying Charter Schools for School Readiness Aid

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Overview

A school district or group of school districts may establish a school readiness program to enable four-year-old children to enter kindergarten with the necessary skills and behavior to succeed. A child may participate in a school readiness program if the child is at least three years old and has had a developmental screening. Children under the age of three-and-one-half may be enrolled if the district determines that serving young children makes the program more effective.

Districts may establish a sliding fee for school readiness programs. Fees must be waived for participants who are unable to pay. For fiscal year 2017 and later, the state provides school readiness aid equal to \$33.683 million per year. One-half of the school readiness aid is awarded to districts based on their count of four-year-olds resident to that school district and one-half of the aid is based on each school district's share of free and reduced price lunch students.

This bill increases the state aid entitlement for school readiness by \$3 million per year beginning in fiscal year 2017 and qualifies charter schools for school readiness aid based on their kindergarten population for the previous school year.

Section

- 1 Establishment; purpose; school readiness.** Authorizes a charter school, individually or in cooperation with other charter schools, to establish a school readiness program.
- 2 Application and reporting requirements; school readiness.** Requires a charter school to apply to the commissioner of education for approval of its school readiness program in the

Section

same manner as a school district. Clarifies the timelines for both school districts and charter schools to submit their school readiness plans to the commissioner.

- 3** **Amount of aid.** Increases the statutory aid entitlement for the school readiness program by \$3 million per year beginning in fiscal year 2017. Bases the school readiness aid for charter schools on the number of kindergarten pupils enrolled in the previous year (there is no measure of resident four-year-old children for charter schools).
- 4** **School readiness appropriation.** Increases the school readiness appropriation by \$2.7 million for fiscal year 2017 (this is the “current year” 90 percent share of the school aid entitlement).
- 5** **School readiness; charter school approval for fiscal year 2017 only.** Allows a charter school to be eligible for school readiness aid in fiscal year 2017 as long as the charter school’s school readiness plan is approved by the commissioner by June 30, 2017.