

Subject Early Childhood Division Report – Education

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Overview

This bill, as proposed to be amended by the H2610DE3 author's delete-all amendment, would form a division report from the Early Childhood Finance and Policy Division to the Education Finance Division. It contains various provisions, which include setting licensure requirements for early education instruction, making permanent a two-year increase in the number of participant seats for the voluntary prekindergarten program, changing the age eligibility for early learning scholarships to primarily be children birth to three, and increasing funding for early learning scholarships.

Summary

Section	Description
1	<p>Grounds for dismissal.</p> <p>Modifies the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act by prohibiting a school district or charter school from dismissing a child participating or enrolled in a prekindergarten program. Under the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act, a "dismissal" means the denial of the current educational program to any pupil, including exclusion, expulsion, and suspension. It does not include removal from class. It would take effect beginning in the 2019-2020 school year.</p>
2	<p>[Adds § 122A.261] Prekindergarten, school readiness, preschool, and early education programs; licensure requirements.</p> <p>Requires a person providing instruction in a school district or charter school preschool, school readiness, school readiness plus, prekindergarten, or other early education program to meet the teacher licensure requirements that apply to K-12 teachers.</p>
3	<p>Program requirements.</p> <p>Clarifies that the cognitive and social skills formative measure administered to prekindergarten pupils under a voluntary prekindergarten program must be age-appropriate.</p>
4	<p>Eligibility (voluntary prekindergarten).</p> <p>Clarifies that an eligible four-year-old child served in a mixed-delivery system by a child care center, family child care program, or community-based organization may be charged</p>

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	a fee as long as the mixed delivery partner was not awarded a mixed-delivery funded seat for that child.
5	Applications process; priority for high poverty schools (voluntary prekindergarten). Splits the Minneapolis and St. Paul school districts into separate voluntary prekindergarten (VPK) regions. (This split does not affect any funding for the other three regions.) Removes obsolete language. Clarifies the way the existing allocations of seats for eligible participants are calculated.
6	Participation limits (voluntary prekindergarten). Sets the combined count of participants for VPK and School Readiness Plus at 7,160 annually on an ongoing basis. Under current law, the total number of participants is set to drop (from 7,160 in fiscal year 2019) to 3,160 participants starting in fiscal year 2020.
7	Family eligibility (early learning scholarships). Paragraph (a) modifies early learning scholarship income verification requirements so that parents or guardians do not have to verify income for homeless children, children in need of protective services, or children in foster care. Paragraphs (b) and (c) lower the scholarship age eligibility to require that a recipient is from birth to age three, except for: (1) a sibling of a scholarship recipient, who can be up to age four; and (2) a recipient who had previously received a scholarship (until the child is eligible for kindergarten). Under current law, the recipient must be three or four (with exceptions).
8	Administration (early learning scholarships). Paragraph (c) eliminates a cap on the number of scholarships distributed through Pathway II to program sites, for award by those programs (which is currently set at the funding level in fiscal year 2017). Paragraph (e) clarifies that children receiving early learning scholarships must receive an early learning developmental screening within 90 days after turning three years old, and screening is not before that age.
9	Early childhood program eligibility (early learning scholarships). Removes an obsolete provision that allowed early learning scholarship pilot sites to participate in the statewide program prior to becoming rated through Parent Aware, the state's quality rating and improvement system.
10	Early learning scholarship account. Creates an early learning scholarship account in the special revenue fund. Transfers all appropriations for early learning scholarships into this account, and annually appropriates the money to the commissioner of education for early learning scholarships. Allows for

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	carryforward of unspent dollars, so that appropriations do not cancel to the general fund. Makes \$950,000 annually available to the department for administrative costs of the early learning scholarships program.
11	Pupil unit. Removes the sunset on the formula for calculating pupils under the school readiness plus program.
12	Background study; tribal organizations. Authorizes tribal organizations to contract with the commissioner of human services to conduct background studies of individuals affiliated with a child care program sponsored, managed, or licensed by a tribal organization.
13	Background study; Head Start programs. Authorizes Head Start programs to contract with the commissioner of human services for background studies. Exempts a Head Start program that does not contract with the commissioner, is not licensed, and is not registered for funding under chapter 119B from chapter 245C.
14	Effective date. Makes a conforming change.
15	Legislative report on early care and education coordination. Directs the Departments of Education and Human Services to jointly provide a report on enhancing coordination between the child care assistance program and the early learning scholarships program. Requires consultation and specifies report contents. Makes the report due by February 15, 2020.
16	Appropriations. Makes appropriations from the general fund to the Department of Education for fiscal years 2020-21, for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="451 1524 1382 1593">▪ early learning scholarships (which reflects a proposed total funding for the program including an increase over base);<li data-bbox="451 1602 824 1629">▪ Metro Deaf Charter School;<li data-bbox="451 1638 932 1665">▪ Reach Out and Read Minnesota; and<li data-bbox="451 1673 997 1709">▪ a St. Paul college saving account program.



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