

Subject Modifying seat allocation for the voluntary prekindergarten and school readiness plus programs

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Date March 20, 2024

Overview

Minnesota's school districts and charter schools may operate a voluntary prekindergarten (VPK) or school readiness plus (SRP) program for four-year-old children. The programs are administered by the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE). Statute limits the number of seats for the programs. For fiscal year 2024, the combined seat limit is 7,160.

Under current law, the seats for the programs are allocated to districts and charter schools according to a method set out in statute that divides the seats among four groups based on each group's proportionate share of kindergarten pupils and then prioritizes school sites in each group primarily based on the percent of kindergarten students who are eligible for free and reduced-price meals at that site. The four groups are: (1) the Minneapolis and St. Paul school districts; (2) other schools districts with their administrative offices located in Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, or Washington counties; (3) all other school districts; and (4) charter schools.

H.F. 3785 increases the number of groups for allocating VPK and SRP seats from four to five by splitting the Minneapolis and St. Paul school districts into two separate groups. The bill also ensures that any school sites that received seats in fiscal year 2024 would receive the same number of seats in future years.

Summary

Section	Description
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1	Application process; priority for high poverty schools.
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	Directs MDE to allocate VPK and SRP seats among five rather than four groups, with the new group created by splitting the Minneapolis and St. Paul school districts into two groups rather than being combined in one group. Strikes language providing
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Section	Description
	direction about allocating the seats and moves much of the language to a new subdivision established under section 2 of the bill. Strikes obsolete language.
2	Participation limit allocation. Establishes a new subdivision that directs MDE on allocating VPK and SRP seats, with much of the language moved from Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.151, subdivision 5. Provides that beginning July 1, 2024, the seats must be initially allocated to school sites that received seats in fiscal year 2024 and any remaining seats must be allocated among five groups, based on each group's share of the statewide kindergarten enrollment in the previous year.
3	Participation limits. Makes a conforming change to account for the new subdivision created under section 2 of the bill.



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