

Subject Voluntary prekindergarten program

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## Overview

H.F. 4570, as amended by H4570DE3, is the governor's proposal for a new voluntary prekindergarten (VPK) program.

## Summary

Section	Description
1	<p><b>Age limitations; pupils.</b></p> <p>Provides that a child cannot be admitted to a VPK program unless the child is at least four years old as of September 1 of the year in which the child seeks admission.</p>
2	<p><b>Length of school year; hours of instruction.</b></p> <p>Provides that the school calendar must include 850 hours of instruction in a school year for a VPK student who does not have a disability.</p>
3	<p><b>Voluntary prekindergarten program for eligible four-year-old children.</b></p> <p>Establishes a new VPK program for eligible four-year-old children.</p> <p><b>Subd. 1. Establishment; purpose.</b> Allows a school district, charter school, licensed child care center, licensed family child care provider, or Head Start agency that meets specified requirements to establish a VPK program for eligible four-year-old children.</p> <p><b>Subd. 2. Program requirements.</b> Specifies the requirements a VPK program provider must meet, including: assessing each child's progress toward state standards at program entrance and exit; providing program content aligned with the state's early learning standards; providing at least 850 hours of instruction per year; paying salaries equivalent to the salaries of public elementary school staff with similar credentials and experience for school district and charter school programs, and to the extent practicable for Head Start and licensed child care programs; employing a lead teacher who has at least a bachelor's degree in each classroom no later than July 1, 2028; including parents in program decision making; ensuring that staff-to-child ratios and group size requirements meet</p>

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specified criteria; and providing professional development, training, and coaching for teachers.

**Subd. 3. Mixed delivery program plan.** Requires school districts and charter schools that receive funding under this section to annually submit to the Department of Education a mixed delivery program plan that ensures alignment of all VPK program providers within the school district boundary in meeting the program requirements.

**Subd. 3a. Funding.** Provides that school district and charter school VPK programs are funded based on the number of eligible pupils enrolled. Provides that Head Start and licensed child care VPK programs receive \$11,000 per child served per year. Directs the commissioner to establish a process for allocating seats for Head Start and licensed child care VPK programs that match community strengths, capacity, and needs. Up to 2.5 percent of amounts appropriated for Head Start and licensed child care VPK programs may be used for distribution of funds.

**Subd. 4. Eligibility.** Defines an “eligible child” for purposes of a VPK program as a child who: (1) is four years old as of September 1 in the calendar year in which the student will enroll; and (2) meets one or more of the specified criteria. Provides that an eligible child can participate in a VPK program free of charge. Allows VPK programs to charge a sliding fee for instructional hours that exceed the 850 hours required during the school year, any hours provided before or after school, or any hours for child care provided in the summer. Provides that a child who is not eligible may participate in the same classroom as eligible children and may be charged a sliding fee as long as state funding is not awarded for the child.

**Subd. 5. Application process; priority for high poverty schools.** This subdivision is repealed in section 10.

**Subd. 6. Participation limits.** This subdivision is repealed in section 10.

**Subd. 7. Financial accounting.** Directs school district and charter schools to record expenditures attributable to VPK pupils according to the guidelines prepared by the commissioner of education for a uniform system of records. Directs Head Start and licensed child care programs to record expenditures for VPK pupils according to guidelines developed by the commissioner of education.

**4 Pupil unit.**

Counts a student who does not have a disability and is enrolled in a VPK program as 1.0 pupil unit. Deletes language made obsolete by establishing the VPK program.

Section	Description
5	<p><b>Compensation revenue pupil units.</b></p> <p>Deletes language made obsolete by establishing the VPK program.</p>
6	<p><b>Declining enrollment revenue.</b></p> <p>Excludes VPK pupil units from the calculation of declining enrollment revenue in fiscal year 2023 only.</p>
7	<p><b>Early learning scholarships; appropriation.</b></p> <p>Allows MDE, in fiscal year 2023 only, to allocate scholarship money to Head Start programs, licensed child care centers, and licensed family child care providers to implement the transition year for the VPK program.</p>
8	<p><b>Transition year in 2023.</b></p> <p>Provides that fiscal year 2023 may serve as a transition year for current voluntary prekindergarten, school readiness plus, and early learning scholarships Pathway II programs to transition to the new VPK program for eligible four-year-old children.</p> <p>Allows school districts, for fiscal year 2023 only, to apply to MDE to continue to operate their VPK and school readiness plus programs as they existed prior to enactment of this bill.</p>
9	<p><b>Appropriations.</b></p> <p><b>Subd. 1. Department of Education.</b> Appropriates funding from the general fund to the Department of Education for the purposes and years specified.</p> <p><b>Subd. 2. Voluntary prekindergarten through mixed delivery.</b> Appropriates \$96,920,000 in fiscal year 2023 for VPK programs provided by Head Start and licensed child care providers.</p>
10	<p><b>Repealer.</b></p> <p>Repeals two subdivisions made obsolete by the new VPK program.</p>



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