

**Subject** School Readiness Plus Funding Made Permanent

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## Overview

School Readiness Plus is a mixed delivery early learning program for four-year-olds created by the 2017 Legislature. Under the program, school districts could choose to use a voluntary prekindergarten (VPK) model of service or a school readiness plus model of service. The program added 4,000 prekindergarten seats for the 2018-2019 school year (on top of the 3,160 seats funded on a permanent basis through the VPK). Absent legislation, the program expires at the end of the 2018-2019 school year.

H.F. 2463 makes the School Readiness Plus program permanent. The bill also splits the Minneapolis and St. Paul school districts into two VPK regions, clarifies that a participating mixed delivery program may charge a fee to a child as long as that child's seat was not funded through a mixed delivery program, creates an early learning scholarship special revenue fund to avoid cancelations due to timing issues, and adds language authorizing Tribal organizations and Head Start programs to contract with the Department of Human Services in order to conduct background checks on employees.

## Summary

Section	Description
1	<b>Eligibility; voluntary prekindergarten.</b> 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 a fee as long as the mixed delivery partner was not awarded a mixed-delivery funded seat for that child.
2	<b>Applications process; priority for high poverty schools; voluntary prekindergarten.</b> Splits the Minneapolis and St. Paul school districts into separate voluntary prekindergarten (VPK) regions. Removes obsolete language. Clarifies the way the existing allocations of seats for eligible participants are calculated.

Section	Description
3	<p><b>Participation limits; voluntary prekindergarten.</b></p> <p>Makes the current number of VPK seats (7,160) permanent for fiscal years 2020 and later. Under current law, the number of statewide total number of seats is scheduled to drop back to 3,160 seats.</p>
4	<p><b>Early learning scholarship account.</b></p> <p>Creates an account in the special revenue fund called the early learning scholarship account. Places all appropriations for early learning scholarships in this account and annually appropriates this money to the commissioner for early learning scholarships. This funding mechanism is being proposed because the early learning scholarship program has had a relatively large cancellation in each of the last few years due to uncertainty about total enrollment in the program. Makes permanent an appropriation out of the account of \$950,000 per year for MDE's administrative needs.</p>
5	<p><b>Background study; tribal organizations.</b></p> <p>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.</p>
6	<p><b>Background study; Head Start programs.</b></p> <p>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.</p>



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