

A bill for an act

relating to early childhood education; creating an Office of Early Learning;
creating an advisory board on school readiness; proposing coding for new law in
Minnesota Statutes, chapters 4; 124D.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

Section 1. **[4.046] OFFICE OF EARLY LEARNING.**

(a) An Office of Early Learning is established to coordinate a high quality early
childhood system in Minnesota to make such programs more effective, and to improve
the educational outcomes of all children. The governor must appoint, and the senate
must confirm, a director who is a recognized expert in the field of early childhood care
and education who will facilitate communication and coordinate prekindergarten and
child care programs under the administration of the Departments of Education, Health,
and Human Services.

(b) The director of the Office of Early Learning must coordinate Departments of
Education, Health, and Human Services staff efforts to:

(1) consolidate and coordinate resources and public funding streams for early
education and child care, and ensure the accountability and coordinated development of
all early education and child care services to children from birth to age five;

(2) work with the Departments of Education, Health, and Human Services and the
Minnesota Early Learning Foundation (MELF) to create common standards for quality
early childhood programming and rules for teacher training and certification;

(3) create a seamless transition from early childhood programs to kindergarten;

(4) encourage family choice by ensuring a mixed system of high-quality public and
private programs, with local points of entry, staffed by well-qualified professionals;

(5) ensure parents a decisive role in the planning, operation, and evaluation of programs that aid families in the care of children;

(6) provide consumer education and accessibility to early education and child care resources;

(7) advance the quality of early education and child care programs in order to support the healthy development of children and preparation for their success in school;

(8) develop a seamless service delivery system of early education and child care programs administered by local, state, and federal agencies, with local points of entry;

(9) develop and manage an effective data collection system to support the necessary functions of a coordinated system of early education and child care in order to enable accurate evaluation of its impact;

(10) respect and be sensitive to family values and cultural heritage; and

(11) establish the administrative framework for and promote the development of early education and child care services in order to provide that these services, staffed by well-qualified professionals, are available in every community for all families that express a need for them.

(c) The director of the Office of Early Learning must report to the legislative committees with jurisdiction over the early childhood education and child care programs by February 1 of each year on the status of the work required under paragraph (b) and any statutory changes necessary to improve quality and increase access. The director also must present to these same legislative committees by February 1, 2009, a detailed plan, with an implementation timeline, to co-locate state early childhood education and child care assistance programs and services.

EFFECTIVE DATE. This section is effective the day following final enactment.

Sec. 2. [124D.141] STATE ADVISORY BOARD ON SCHOOL READINESS.

Subdivision 1. Establishment. A 12-member State Advisory Board on School Readiness is established. The director of the Office of Early Learning shall staff the advisory board and assist in developing a coordinated, efficient, and cost-effective system for delivering throughout Minnesota early childhood programs that focus on early care and education, health care, and family support.

Subd. 2. Board members; terms. (a) The advisory board includes the following 12 members:

(1) the commissioner of employment and economic development or the commissioner's designee;

(2) the commissioner of health or the commissioner's designee;

3.1 (3) the commissioner of education or the commissioner's designee;

3.2 (4) the commissioner of human services or the commissioner's designee;

3.3 (5) four public members appointed jointly by the majority and minority leaders in
3.4 the house and senate who are recognized experts in early care and education;

3.5 (6) two public members appointed jointly by the majority and minority leaders in the
3.6 house and senate who are community or business leaders; and

3.7 (7) two parents who have a child under age six.

3.8 The public members must be representative of communities of color.

3.9 (b) Members appointed by the majority and minority leaders in the house and senate
3.10 serve staggered three-year terms. Board members must nominate and elect a chair and
3.11 other officers from among the public members. Members initially appointed to the board
3.12 shall assign themselves by lot to terms of one, two, or three years. The chair must notify
3.13 the governor on the assignment of these terms. The board shall meet regularly at the times
3.14 and places the board determines. Meetings shall be called by the chair or at the written
3.15 request of any three members. Members' terms, compensation, removal, and vacancies
3.16 are governed by section 15.0575.

3.17 Subd. 3. **Duties.** (a) The board shall recommend to the governor and the legislature:

3.18 (1) the most effective method to improve the coordination and delivery of early care
3.19 and education services that integrates child care, preschools, and family support services
3.20 and programs;

3.21 (2) a multiyear plan for effectively and efficiently coordinating and integrating
3.22 state services for early care and education, improving service delivery and standards
3.23 of care, avoiding duplication and fragmentation of service, and enhancing public and
3.24 private investment;

3.25 (3) methods for measuring the quality, quantity, and effectiveness of early care and
3.26 education programs throughout the state;

3.27 (4) how to identify and measure school readiness indicators on a regular basis;

3.28 (5) how to track, enhance, integrate, and coordinate federal, state, and local funds
3.29 allocated for early care and education and related family support services;

3.30 (6) policy changes to improve children's ability to start school ready to learn; and

3.31 (7) how to provide technical assistance to community efforts that promote school
3.32 readiness and encourage community organizations to collaborate in promoting school
3.33 readiness.

3.34 (b) The board shall convene separate policy work groups to make recommendations
3.35 to the governor and the legislature on:

3.36 (1) financing early childhood programs;

4.1 (2) building a coordinated service delivery system based on an assessment of early
4.2 childhood systems and available state and federal funding;

4.3 (3) integrating a coordinated, collaborative health care component, including
4.4 medical homes, parent education, family support, behavioral health, and early education,
4.5 into early childhood programs and avoiding duplication of services;

4.6 (4) enhancing the quality and measuring the cost of child care and preschool
4.7 programs; and

4.8 (5) improving the wages, benefits, and supply of early childhood professionals.

4.9 Subd. 4. **Board expenses.** Notwithstanding section 15.059, board members must
4.10 not be paid a per diem or reimbursed for any expense associated with their membership on
4.11 the advisory board.

4.12 Subd. 5. **Board expiration.** The State Advisory Board on School Readiness
4.13 expires January 1, 2013.

4.14 **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective the day following final enactment.