A bill for an act

relating to education; providing for school readiness assessments and kindergarten transition strategies; appropriating money.

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

Section 1. **SCHOOL READINESS ASSESSMENTS AND KINDERGARTEN TRANSITION STRATEGIES.**

Subdivision 1. **Establishment.** In order to increase the capacity of school districts to improve the performance of children at risk for not being fully prepared for kindergarten, school readiness assessment and kindergarten transition strategy grants are established.

Subd. 2. **Technical assistance.** (a) The commissioner of education must provide resources and technical assistance to enable a participating school district to offer comprehensive and developmentally appropriate assessments to entering kindergartners, or where applicable, children in prekindergarten programs and to develop and implement kindergarten transition strategies.

(b) The assessment tool must be research-based and must assist with identifying risk and informing instructional improvement. A participating school district must coordinate with community and school-based early childhood programs.

(c) An effective kindergarten transition strategy may include:

(1) transition plans for children entering kindergarten;

(2) a transition planning team composed of representatives from early care and education providers, elementary school staff, including kindergarten teachers, parents, and community members;

(3) information and education for parents, program providers, and educators on:

(i) comprehensive child development;

(ii) the skills and knowledge incoming kindergartners should demonstrate; and

(iii) related community resources;

(4) building community awareness about the importance of children's school readiness; and

(5) fostering collaboration among child care, Head Start, early childhood family education, school readiness, family, friend and neighbor, and other early childhood programs and elementary school providers.

Subd. 3. **Application.** A school district must submit its application to the commissioner in the form and manner required by the commissioner. The commissioner must select school districts to receive grants giving priority to districts with high poverty rates. To the extent practical, the selected districts must be located throughout the state.

Subd. 4. **Annual report.** A school district that receives a grant must submit an annual report to the commissioner in the form and manner required by the commissioner. The report must include a description of the assessment tool, process, and results.

Sec. 2. **APPROPRIATION.**

Subdivision 1. **Minnesota Department of Education.** The sums indicated in this section are appropriated from the general fund to the Department of Education for the fiscal years designated.

Subd. 2. **School readiness and kindergarten transition strategies.** For school readiness and kindergarten transition strategies:

$ 2009

Of this amount, $..... is for program administration. This appropriation must be added to the base budget.