A bill for an act

relating to education; establishing a pilot project to explore the programmatic alignment between age 3 and grade 3.

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

Section 1. **PROGRAMMATIC ALIGNMENT BETWEEN AGE 3 AND GRADE 3; PILOT PROJECT.**

Subdivision 1. **Establishment; participation.** (a) A four-year pilot project is established to explore the programmatic alignment between age 3 and grade 3 and determine the contribution that teacher quality, class size, parent involvement, and access to comprehensive services make in ensuring that prekindergarten standards, curriculum, and teaching methods are aligned with the standards, curriculum, and teaching methods in the public elementary schools that children attend after leaving a prekindergarten program.

(b) To participate in this pilot project, a public elementary school that enrolls children in kindergarten through grade 3 and whose principal has a demonstrated interest in children in kindergarten through grade 3 must form a partnership with at least one local agency that serves at-risk young children and their families and at least one early childhood education provider that serves young children age 3 and older and also trains early education providers.

(c) A partnership under paragraph (b) interested in participating in this pilot project must apply to the education commissioner in the form and manner the commissioner prescribes, consistent with subdivision 2.

Subd. 2. **Participant requirements.** The commissioner may select up to four applicants under subdivision 1, paragraph (b), to develop and implement a pilot project to:

(1) provide professional development to elementary school administrators in early childhood education and development;

(2) expand providers' knowledge base and capacity to deliver high quality early childhood education; and

(3) collaborate with early childhood education providers, local service providers, and families with young children to create in the community and school setting a continuum of high quality early learning opportunities for young children and opportunities for providers' shared professional development.

Subd. 3. **Pilot project evaluation.** The education commissioner, in consultation with qualified and recognized early childhood education experts, must determine the effectiveness of the pilot project participants for the purpose of:

(1) identifying best practices in professional development for elementary school administrators in early childhood education;

(2) reviewing the effective coordination of provider training;

(3) disseminating the latest research and findings regarding that training; and

(4) demonstrating the alignment or misalignment between prekindergarten early learning programs and standards and kindergarten through grade 3 academic standards.

The commissioner must submit a report of pilot project findings to the education committees of the legislature by February 1, 2016.

EFFECTIVE DATE. This section is effective the day following final enactment and applies to the 2011-2012 through 2014-2015 school years.