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State of Minnesota

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETY-SECOND SESSION

H. F. No. 348

01/28/2021 Authored by Scott and Moller
The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Judiciary Finance and Civil Law

1.1 A bill for an act
1.2 relating to family law; requiring the court to provide certain notices; modifying
1.3 requirements for parent education program; amending Minnesota Statutes 2020,
1.4 section 518.157, subdivisions 1, 3.

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

1.6 Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2020, section 518.157, subdivision 1, is amended to read:

1.7 Subdivision 1. **Implementation; administration.** (a) By January 1, 1998, the chief
1.8 judge of each judicial district or a designee shall implement one or more parent education
1.9 programs within the judicial district for the purpose of educating parents about the impact
1.10 that divorce, the restructuring of families, and judicial proceedings have upon children and
1.11 families; methods for preventing parenting time conflicts; and dispute resolution options.
1.12 The chief judge of each judicial district or a designee may require that children attend a
1.13 separate education program designed to deal with the impact of divorce upon children as
1.14 part of the parent education program. Each parent education program must enable persons
1.15 to have timely and reasonable access to education sessions.

1.16 (b) The chief judge of each judicial district shall ensure that the judicial district's website
1.17 includes information on the parent education program or programs required under this
1.18 section.

1.19 Sec. 2. Minnesota Statutes 2020, section 518.157, subdivision 3, is amended to read:

1.20 Subd. 3. **Attendance.** (a) In a proceeding under this chapter where the parties have not
1.21 agreed to custody or a parenting time is-contested schedule, the parents of a minor child

2.1 shall attend a minimum of eight hours in an orientation and education program that meets
2.2 the minimum standards promulgated by the Minnesota Supreme Court.

2.3 (b) In all ~~other~~ proceedings involving custody, support, or parenting time the court may
2.4 order the parents of a minor child to attend a parent education program.

2.5 (c) The program shall provide the court with names of persons who fail to attend the
2.6 parent education program as ordered by the court. Persons who are separated or contemplating
2.7 involvement in a dissolution, paternity, custody, or parenting time proceeding may attend
2.8 a parent education program without a court order.

2.9 (d) Unless otherwise ordered by the court, participation in a parent education program
2.10 must begin before an initial case management conference and within 30 days after the first
2.11 filing with the court or as soon as practicable after that time based on the reasonable
2.12 availability of classes for the program for the parent. Parent education programs must offer
2.13 an opportunity to participate at all phases of a pending or postdecree proceeding.

2.14 (e) Upon request of a party and a showing of good cause, the court may excuse the party
2.15 from attending the program. If past or present domestic abuse, as defined in chapter 518B,
2.16 is alleged, the court shall not require the parties to attend the same parent education sessions
2.17 and shall enter an order setting forth the manner in which the parties may safely participate
2.18 in the program.

2.19 (f) Before an initial case management conference for a proceeding under this chapter
2.20 where the parties have not agreed to custody or parenting time, the court shall notify the
2.21 parties of their option to resolve disagreements, including the development of a parenting
2.22 plan, through the use of private mediation.