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NINETY-SECOND SESSION

S.F. No. 2174

(SENATE AUTHORS: NELSON)

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OFFICIAL STATUS
Introduction and first reading
Referred to Education Finance and Policy
See First Special Session 2021, HF33, Art. 14, Sec. 4

1.1 A bill for an act
 1.2 relating to early childhood programs; modifying the quality rating and improvement
 1.3 system; appropriating money; amending Minnesota Statutes 2020, section
 1.4 124D.142.

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

1.6 Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2020, section 124D.142, is amended to read:

1.7 **124D.142 QUALITY RATING AND IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM.**

1.8 Subdivision 1. System established. ~~(a)~~ There is established a quality rating and
 1.9 improvement system (QRIS) framework, known as Parent Aware, to ensure that Minnesota's
 1.10 children have access to high-quality early learning and care programs in a range of settings
 1.11 so that they are fully ready for kindergarten by 2020. ~~Creation of a standards-based voluntary~~
 1.12 ~~quality rating and improvement system includes:~~

1.13 Subd. 2. System components. The standards-based, voluntary quality rating and
 1.14 improvement system includes:

1.15 (1) quality opportunities in order to improve the educational outcomes of children so
 1.16 that they are ready for school. ~~The;~~

1.17 (2) a framework ~~shall be~~ based on the Minnesota quality rating system rating tool and
 1.18 a common set of child outcome and program standards and informed by evaluation results;

1.19 ~~(2)~~ (3) a tool to increase the number of publicly funded and regulated early learning and
 1.20 care services in both public and private market programs that are high quality;

1.21 (4) voluntary participation that ensures that if a program or provider chooses to participate,
 1.22 the program or provider will be rated and may receive public funding associated with the

rating. ~~The state shall develop a plan to link future early learning and care state funding to the framework in a manner that complies with federal requirements; and~~

~~(3) (5) tracking progress toward statewide access to high-quality early learning and care programs, progress toward the number of low-income children whose parents can access quality programs, and progress toward increasing the number of children who are fully prepared to enter kindergarten.~~

~~(b) In planning a statewide quality rating and improvement system framework in paragraph (a), the state shall use evaluation results of the Minnesota quality rating system rating tool in use in fiscal year 2008 to recommend:~~

~~(1) a framework of a common set of child outcome and program standards for a voluntary statewide quality rating and improvement system;~~

~~(2) a plan to link future funding to the framework described in paragraph (a), clause (2); and~~

~~(3) a plan for how the state will realign existing state and federal administrative resources to implement the voluntary quality rating and improvement system framework. The state shall provide the recommendation in this paragraph to the early childhood education finance committees of the legislature by March 15, 2011.~~

~~(c) Prior to the creation of a statewide quality rating and improvement system in paragraph (a), the state shall employ the Minnesota quality rating system rating tool in use in fiscal year 2008 in the original Minnesota Early Learning Foundation pilot areas and additional pilot areas supported by private or public funds with its modification as a result of the evaluation results of the pilot project.~~

Subd. 3. **Evaluation.** (a) By February 1, 2022, the commissioner of human services must arrange an independent evaluation of the quality rating and improvement system's effectiveness and impact on:

(1) children's progress toward school readiness;

(2) the quality of the early learning and care system supply and workforce; and

(3) parents' ability to access and use meaningful information about early learning and care program quality.

(b) The evaluation must be performed by a staff member from another agency or a consultant. An evaluator must have experience in program evaluation and must not be regularly involved in implementation of the quality rating and improvement system.

(c) The evaluation findings, along with the commissioner's recommendations for revisions, potential future evaluations, and plans for continuous improvement, must be reported to the chairs and ranking members of the legislative committees with jurisdiction over early childhood programs by December 31, 2024.

(d) At a minimum, the evaluation must:

(1) analyze the effectiveness of the quality rating and improvement system, including but not limited to reviewing:

(i) whether quality indicators and measures used in the quality rating and improvement system are consistent with evidence and research findings on early learning and care program quality; and

(ii) patterns or differences in observed quality of participating early learning and care programs in comparison to programs at other quality rating and improvement system star rating levels and accounting for other factors;

(2) perform evidence-based assessments of children's developmental gains in ways that are appropriate for children's linguistic and cultural backgrounds and are aligned with the state early childhood indicators of progress;

(3) analyze the extent to which differences in developmental gains among children correspond to the star ratings of the early learning and care programs, providing disaggregated findings by:

(i) children's demographic factors, including geographic area, family income level, and racial and ethnic groups;

(ii) type of provider, including family child care providers, child care centers, Head Start and Early Head Start, and school-based early childhood providers; and

(iii) any other categories identified by the commissioner, in consultation with the commissioners of health and education or entity performing the evaluation;

(4) analyze the accessibility for providers to participate in the quality rating and improvement system, including ease of application and supports for a provider to receive or improve a rating, and provide disaggregated findings by geographic area and type of provider, including family child care providers, child care centers, Head Start and Early Head Start, and school-based early childhood providers; and

(5) analyze the availability of providers participating in the quality rating and improvement system to families, and provide disaggregated findings by geographic area

and type of provider, including family child care providers, child care centers, Head Start and Early Head Start, and school-based early childhood providers.

Sec. 2. APPROPRIATION; QUALITY RATING AND IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM.

(a) The sums in this section are appropriated from the general fund to the commissioner of education in the fiscal years designated for a transfer to the commissioner of human services for the purposes of expanding the quality rating and improvement system under Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.142, in greater Minnesota and increasing supports for providers participating in the quality rating and improvement system:

<u>\$</u>	<u>3,400,000</u>	<u>.....</u>	<u>2022</u>
<u>\$</u>	<u>1,750,000</u>	<u>.....</u>	<u>2023</u>

(b) The amounts in paragraph (a) must be in addition to any federal funding under the child care and development block grant authorized under Public Law 101-508 in that year for the system under Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.142.

(c) Any balance in the first year does not cancel but is available in the second year.

(d) The onetime, supplemental funds appropriated in fiscal year 2022 are for the purposes of the quality rating and improvement system's evaluation, and remain available until June 30, 2025.

(e) The base for each of fiscal years 2024 and 2025 is \$1,750,000.