CHAPTER 142D

EARLY CARE AND LEARNING

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142D.05 SCHOOL READINESS PROGRAMS.

Subdivision 1. **Establishment; purpose.** A district or a group of districts may establish a school readiness program for children age three to kindergarten entrance. The purpose of a school readiness program is to prepare children to enter kindergarten.

Subd. 2. **Program requirements.** A school readiness program provider must:

(1) assess each child's cognitive and language skills with a comprehensive child assessment instrument when the child enters and again before the child leaves the program to improve program planning and implementation, communicate with parents, and promote kindergarten readiness;

(2) provide comprehensive program content and intentional instructional practice aligned with the state early childhood learning guidelines and kindergarten standards and based on early childhood research and professional practice that is focused on children's cognitive, social, emotional, and physical skills and development and prepares children for the transition to kindergarten, including early literacy and language skills;

(3) coordinate appropriate kindergarten transition with parents and kindergarten teachers;

(4) involve parents in program planning and decision making;

(5) coordinate with relevant community-based services;

(6) cooperate with adult basic education programs and other adult literacy programs;

(7) ensure staff-child ratios of one-to-ten and maximum group size of 20 children with the first staff required to be a teacher; and

(8) have teachers knowledgeable in early childhood curriculum content, assessment, native and English language development programs, and instruction.

Subd. 3. **Application and reporting requirements.** (a) A school readiness program provider must include a biennial plan in the district's comprehensive achievement and civic readiness plan under section 120B.11, describing how the school readiness program meets the program requirements under subdivision 2.

(b) Programs receiving school readiness funds annually must submit a report to the department of education for transfer to the department of children, youth, and families.

Subd. 4. **Services with new or existing providers.** A district may contract with a charter school or community-based organization to provide eligible children developmentally appropriate services that meet the program requirements in subdivision 3. In the alternative, a district may pay tuition or fees to place an eligible child in an existing program. A district may establish a new program where no existing, reasonably accessible program meets the program requirements in subdivision 2. Services may be provided in a site-based program or in the home of the child or a combination of both. The district may not restrict participation to district residents.

Subd. 5. **Supervision.** A program provided by a board must be supervised by a licensed early childhood teacher, a certified early childhood educator, or a licensed parent educator.

Subd. 6. **Program fees.** A district must adopt a sliding fee schedule based on a family's income but must waive a fee for a participant unable to pay. School districts must use school readiness aid for eligible children. Children who do not meet the eligibility requirements in subdivision 8 may participate on a fee-for-service basis.

Subd. 7. **Assistance.** The department must assist districts, upon request, with programs under this section.

Subd. 8. **Eligibility.** A child is eligible to participate in a school readiness program if the child:

(1) is at least three years old on September 1;

(2) has completed health and developmental screening within 90 days of program enrollment under sections 142D.09 to 142D.093; and

(3) has one or more of the following risk factors:

(i) qualifies for free or reduced-price meals;

(ii) is an English learner;

(iii) is homeless;

(iv) has an individualized education program (IEP) or standardized written plan;

(v) is identified, through health and developmental screenings under sections 142D.09 to 142D.093, with a potential risk factor that may influence learning; or

(vi) is defined as at risk by the school district.

History: *1991 c 265 art 7 s 6; 1993 c 224 art 4 s 8; 1994 c 647 art 4 s 11; 1997 c 162 art 1 s 3,4; 1998 c 397 art 3 s 20-27,103; art 11 s 3; 1999 c 205 art 1 s 70; 1Sp2003 c 9 art 7 s 8; 1Sp2005 c 5 art 7 s 6-12; 2007 c 146 art 9 s 13; 2009 c 96 art 6 s 5; 2010 c 346 art 1 s 6-8; 2012 c 239 art 1 s 33; 2014 c 272 art 1 s 32; 1Sp2015 c 3 art 9 s 4; 2016 c 189 art 25 s 33; art 29 s 3; 2023 c 55 art 9 s 19; 2024 c 80 art 4 s 11,26; 2024 c 109 art 2 s 31; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 42; 2025 c 20 s 107*

142D.06 SCHOOL READINESS AID.

Subdivision 1. **Amount of aid.** (a) A district is eligible to receive school readiness aid for eligible prekindergarten pupils enrolled in a school readiness program under section 142D.05 if the biennial plan required by section 142D.05, subdivision 3, has been approved by the commissioner.

(b) A district must receive school readiness aid equal to:

(1) the number of four-year-old children in the district on October 1 for the previous school year times the ratio of 50 percent of the total school readiness aid for that year to the total number of four-year-old children reported to the commissioner for the previous school year; plus

(2) the number of pupils enrolled in the school district from families eligible for the free or reduced-price meals program for the previous school year times the ratio of 50 percent of the total school readiness aid for that year to the total number of pupils in the state from families eligible for the free or reduced-price meals program for the previous school year.

(c) The total school readiness aid entitlement equals $23,558,000 for fiscal year 2016 and $33,683,000 for fiscal year 2017 and later.

Subd. 2. **Use of aid.** School readiness aid shall be used only to provide a school readiness program and may be used to provide transportation. Not more than five percent of program revenue, as defined in subdivision 3, may be used for the cost of administering the program. Aid must be used to supplement and not supplant local, state, and federal funding. Aid may not be used for instruction and services required under sections 125A.03 to 125A.24 and 125A.65. Aid may not be used to purchase land or construct buildings, but may be used to lease or renovate existing buildings.

Subd. 3. **Reserve account.** School readiness revenue, which includes aids, fees, grants, and all other revenues received by the district school readiness programs, must be maintained in a reserve account within the community service fund.

Subd. 4. **Funding.** The commissioner and the commissioner of education shall enter into an agreement under which the commissioner of education shall distribute funds appropriated for programs under this section. Funding is subject to sections 127A.41 and 127A.45, subdivision 13.

History: *1991 c 265 art 7 s 13; 1992 c 363 art 2 s 5; 1992 c 499 art 7 s 2; 1993 c 224 art 4 s 22,23; 1994 c 483 s 1; 1Sp1995 c 3 art 16 s 13; 1997 c 162 art 4 s 59,60; 1998 c 397 art 3 s 74,75,103; art 11 s 3; 1999 c 205 art 1 s 70; 2000 c 489 art 1 s 8; 1Sp2001 c 3 art 1 s 10-13; 1Sp2003 c 9 art 7 s 9,10; 1Sp2005 c 5 art 7 s 13,14; 2012 c 239 art 3 s 6; 2014 c 312 art 20 s 9; 1Sp2015 c 3 art 9 s 5; 2023 c 55 art 9 s 19; 2024 c 80 art 4 s 15,26; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 42; 2025 c 20 s 108; 1Sp2025 c 10 art 10 s 3*

142D.07 MS 2024 [Repealed, 2024 c 109 art 9 s 7]

142D.08 VOLUNTARY PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM FOR ELIGIBLE FOUR-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN.

Subdivision 1. **Establishment; purpose.** A district, a charter school, a group of districts, a group of charter schools, or a group of districts and charter schools may establish a voluntary prekindergarten program for eligible four-year-old children. The purpose of a voluntary prekindergarten program is to support children and their families and prepare them for success in kindergarten and beyond.

Subd. 2. **Program requirements.** (a) A voluntary prekindergarten program provider must:

(1) provide instruction through play-based learning to foster children's social and emotional development, cognitive development, physical and motor development, and language and literacy skills, including the native language and literacy skills of English learners, to the extent practicable;

(2) assess each child's progress toward the state's early learning standards when the child enters and again before the child leaves the program using a commissioner-approved formative, developmentally appropriate assessment and report results and demographic data to the department in a form and manner prescribed by the commissioner;

(3) provide comprehensive program content aligned with the state early learning standards, including the implementation of curriculum, assessment, and intentional instructional strategies that support transition to kindergarten through grade 3 academic standards;

(4) provide instructional content and activities that are of sufficient length and intensity to address learning needs including offering a program with at least 350 hours of instruction per school year for a prekindergarten student;

(5) provide voluntary prekindergarten instructional staff salaries comparable to the salaries of local kindergarten through grade 12 instructional staff;

(6) coordinate appropriate kindergarten transition with families, prekindergarten programs offered by Head Start, licensed center and licensed family child care, community-based organizations, and school district kindergarten programs;

(7) involve parents in program decision-making and transition planning by implementing parent engagement strategies that include culturally and linguistically responsive activities in prekindergarten through third grade that are aligned with early childhood family education under section 142D.10;

(8) coordinate with relevant community-based services, including health and social service agencies, to ensure children have access to comprehensive services;

(9) coordinate with all relevant school district programs and services including early childhood special education, homeless students, and English learners;

(10) ensure staff-to-child ratios of one-to-ten and a maximum group size of 20 children;

(11) provide high-quality coordinated professional development, training, and coaching for staff in school districts and in prekindergarten programs offered by Head Start, licensed center and licensed family child care providers, and community-based organizations that is informed by a measure of adult-child interactions and enables teachers to be highly knowledgeable in early childhood curriculum content, assessment, native and English language development programs, and instruction; and

(12) implement strategies that support the alignment of professional development, instruction, assessments, and prekindergarten through grade 3 curricula.

(b) A voluntary prekindergarten program must have teachers knowledgeable in early childhood curriculum content, assessment, native and English language programs, and instruction, and licensed according to section 122A.261.

Subd. 3. **Mixed delivery program plan.** A district or charter school may contract with a charter school, Head Start program, licensed center and licensed family child care, or a community-based organization to provide eligible children with developmentally appropriate services that meet the program requirements in subdivision 2. Components of a mixed-delivery plan include strategies for recruitment, contracting, and monitoring of fiscal compliance and program quality.

Subd. 4. **Eligibility.** (a) An eligible child means a child who:

(1) is four years of age as of September 1 in the calendar year in which the school year commences; and

(2) meets at least one of the following criteria:

(i) qualifies for free or reduced-priced meals;

(ii) qualifies for the rate at application specified in section 142E.10, subdivision 1, paragraph (a), clause (2), in the current calendar year;

(iii) is an English language learner as defined by section 124D.59, subdivision 2;

(iv) is American Indian;

(v) has experienced homelessness in the last 24 months, as defined under the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, United States Code, title 42, section 1143a;

(vi) was identified as having a potential risk factor that may influence learning through health and developmental screening under sections 142D.09 to 142D.093;

(vii) is in foster care; is in kinship care, including children receiving Northstar kinship care assistance under sections 142A.60 to 142A.612; or is in need of child protection services;

(viii) has a parent who is a migrant or seasonal agricultural laborer under section 181.85;

(ix) has a parent who is incarcerated; or

(x) is defined as at-risk by the school district.

(b) School districts and charter schools must use state funding for eligible children to the extent it is available. A child may participate in a voluntary prekindergarten program on a fee-for-service basis if the child does not meet the eligibility criteria in paragraph (a) or state funding is not available. A school district or charter school must adopt a sliding-fee schedule based upon family income and must waive a fee for a participant unable to pay.

(c) Each eligible child must complete a health and developmental screening within 90 days of program enrollment under sections 142D.09 to 142D.093, and provide documentation of required immunizations under section 121A.15.

(d) A child with an individualized education program may not be excluded from participation in a program under this section if all other eligibility requirements are satisfied and the individualized education

program team determines that with reasonable accommodations the child can fully participate and make progress toward their goals and objectives.

Subd. 5. **Application process; priority for high poverty schools.** (a) To qualify for program approval for fiscal year 2026, a district or charter school must submit an application to the commissioner by January 30, 2025. Thereafter, the commissioner must accept applications and approve programs every four years. To qualify for program approval after fiscal year 2026, a school district or charter school must submit an application to the commissioner by January 30 of the fiscal year prior to the fiscal year in which the program will be implemented. The application must include:

(1) a description of the proposed program, including the number of hours per week the program will be offered at each school site or mixed-delivery location;

(2) an estimate of the number of eligible children to be served in the program at each school site or mixed-delivery location; and

(3) a statement of assurances signed by the superintendent or charter school director that the proposed program meets the requirements of subdivision 2.

(b) The commissioner must review all applications by March 1 of the fiscal year in which the applications are received and determine whether each application meets the requirements of paragraph (a).

(c) The commissioner must divide all applications for new or expanded voluntary prekindergarten programs under this section meeting the requirements of paragraph (a) and school readiness plus programs into five groups as follows: the Minneapolis school district; the St. Paul school district; other school districts located in the metropolitan equity region as defined in section 126C.10, subdivision 28; school districts located in the rural equity region as defined in section 126C.10, subdivision 28; and charter schools. Within each group, the applications must be ordered by rank using a sliding scale based on the following criteria:

(1) concentration of kindergarten students eligible for free or reduced-price meals by school site on October 1 of the previous school year. A school site may contract to partner with a community-based provider or Head Start under subdivision 3 or establish an early childhood center and use the concentration of kindergarten students eligible for free or reduced-price meals from a specific school site as long as those eligible children are prioritized and guaranteed services at the mixed-delivery site or early education center. For school district programs to be operated at locations that do not have free and reduced-price meals concentration data for kindergarten programs for October 1 of the previous school year, including mixed-delivery programs, the school district average concentration of kindergarten students eligible for free or reduced-price meals must be used for the rank ordering;

(2) presence or absence of a three- or four-star Parent Aware rated program within the school district or close proximity of the district. School sites with the highest concentration of kindergarten students eligible for free or reduced-price meals that do not have a three- or four-star Parent Aware program within the district or close proximity of the district shall receive the highest priority, and school sites with the lowest concentration of kindergarten students eligible for free or reduced-price meals that have a three- or four-star Parent Aware rated program within the district or close proximity of the district shall receive the lowest priority; and

(3) whether the district has implemented a mixed delivery system.

Subd. 5a. **Participation limit allocation.** (a) Beginning July 1, 2024, the participation limit specified in subdivision 6 must be initially allocated as follows:

(1) a school site or mixed delivery site must receive the same number of seats the site received in fiscal year 2024; and

(2) the remaining seats must be allocated among the five groups identified under subdivision 5, paragraph (c), based on each group's percentage share of the statewide kindergarten enrollment on October 1 of the previous year.

(b) Within each group:

(1) the seats must be first allocated to any school sites and mixed delivery sites approved for aid in the previous year or allocation period; and

(2) any remaining seats must be allocated among school sites in priority order, as determined under subdivision 5, paragraph (c), until the group's share of seats are allocated.

(c) If a group's entire share of seats is not allocated under paragraphs (a) and (b), then the remaining seats must be allocated to the highest priority school sites and mixed delivery sites in the state, as designated under subdivision 5, paragraph (c), not funded in the allocation under paragraphs (a) and (b).

(d) Once a school site or a mixed delivery site is approved for aid under subdivision 5 and is allocated seats under this subdivision, it shall remain eligible for aid and seats if it continues to meet program requirements, regardless of changes in the concentration of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals.

(e) If the total number of participants approved based on applications submitted under subdivision 5, paragraph (a), is less than the participation limit under subdivision 6, the commissioner must notify all school districts and charter schools of the amount that remains available within 30 days of the initial application deadline under subdivision 5, paragraph (a), and complete a second round of allocations based on applications received within 60 days of the initial application deadline.

(f) Procedures for approving applications submitted under paragraph (e) shall be the same as specified in subdivision 5, and the allocations shall be made to the highest priority school sites in the state as designated under subdivision 5, paragraph (c), not funded in the initial allocation under paragraphs (a) and (b).

(g) For nonapplication years, the commissioner must annually review the distribution of seat allocations and may redistribute them between sites within a district at their request and between districts for the year in which a district will not utilize their full allocation.

Subd. 6. **Participation limits.** (a) Notwithstanding section 126C.05, subdivision 1, paragraph (c), the pupil units for a voluntary prekindergarten program for an eligible school district or charter school must not exceed 60 percent of the kindergarten pupil units for that school district or charter school under section 126C.05, subdivision 1, paragraph (d).

(b) In reviewing applications under subdivision 5 and allocating seats under subdivision 5a, the commissioner must limit the total number of participants in the voluntary prekindergarten and school readiness plus programs under section 142D.07, to not more than 7,160 participants for fiscal year 2024 and 12,360 participants for fiscal year 2025 and later.

Subd. 7. **Financial accounting.** An eligible school district or charter school must record expenditures attributable to voluntary prekindergarten pupils according to guidelines prepared by the commissioner of education under section 127A.17.

Subd. 8. **Funding.** The commissioner and the commissioner of education shall enter into an agreement under which the commissioner of education shall distribute funds appropriated for programs under this section. Funding is subject to sections 127A.41 and 127A.45, subdivision 13.

History: *2016 c 189 art 27 s 6; 1Sp2017 c 5 art 8 s 1,2; 1Sp2019 c 11 art 8 s 1-4; 1Sp2021 c 13 art 9 s 1; 2023 c 55 art 9 s 19; art 10 s 1; 2024 c 80 art 1 s 96; art 4 s 12-14,26; art 5 s 7; 2024 c 109 art 9 s 3; 2024 c 115 art 11 s 1; art 16 s 34,42; 1Sp2025 c 10 art 10 s 4*

142D.09 EARLY CHILDHOOD HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT SCREENING; PURPOSE.

The legislature finds that early detection of children's health and developmental problems can reduce their later need for costly care, minimize their physical and educational disabilities, and aid in their rehabilitation. The purpose of sections 142D.09 to 142D.093 is to assist parents and communities in improving the health of Minnesota children and in planning educational and health programs. Charter schools that elect to provide a screening program must comply with the requirements of sections 142D.09 to 142D.093.

History: *1977 c 437 s 1; 1994 c 465 art 2 s 1; 1998 c 397 art 3 s 103; art 11 s 3; 2005 c 56 s 1; 2010 c 346 art 1 s 1; 2024 c 80 art 4 s 26; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 42*

142D.091 SCHOOL BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES.

Subdivision 1. **Early childhood developmental screening.** Every school board must provide for a mandatory program of early childhood developmental screening for children at least once before school entrance, targeting children who are between three and four years old. This screening program must be established either by one board, by two or more boards acting in cooperation, by service cooperatives, by early childhood family education programs, or by other existing programs. This screening examination is a mandatory requirement for a student to continue attending kindergarten or first grade in a public school. A child need not submit to developmental screening provided by a board if the child's health records indicate to the board that the child has received comparable developmental screening from a public or private health care organization or individual health care provider. A student identification number, as defined by the commissioner of education, shall be assigned at the time of early childhood developmental screening or at the time of the provision of health records indicating a comparable screening. Each school district must provide the essential data in accordance with section 125B.07, subdivision 6, to the Department of Education. Districts are encouraged to reduce the costs of preschool developmental screening programs by utilizing volunteers and public or private health care organizations or individual health care providers in implementing the program.

Subd. 2. **Screening required before kindergarten enrollment.** A child must not be enrolled in kindergarten in a public school unless the parent or guardian of the child submits to the school principal or other person having general control and supervision of the school a record indicating the months and year the child received developmental screening and the results of the screening not later than 30 days after the first day of attendance. If a child is transferred from one kindergarten to another, the parent or guardian of the child must be allowed 30 days to submit the child's record, during which time the child may attend school.

Subd. 3. **Screening program.** (a) A screening program must include at least the following components: developmental assessments, including virtual developmental screening for families who make the request based on their immunocompromised health status or other health conditions, hearing and vision screening or referral, immunization review and referral, the child's height and weight, the date of the child's most recent comprehensive vision examination, if any, identification of risk factors that may influence learning, an interview with the parent about the child, and referral for assessment, diagnosis, and treatment when potential

needs are identified. The district and the person performing or supervising the screening must provide a parent or guardian with clear written notice that the parent or guardian may decline to answer questions or provide information about family circumstances that might affect development and identification of risk factors that may influence learning. The notice must state "Early childhood developmental screening helps a school district identify children who may benefit from district and community resources available to help in their development. Early childhood developmental screening includes a vision screening that helps detect potential eye problems but is not a substitute for a comprehensive eye exam." The notice must clearly state that declining to answer questions or provide information does not prevent the child from being enrolled in kindergarten or first grade if all other screening components are met. If a parent or guardian is not able to read and comprehend the written notice, the district and the person performing or supervising the screening must convey the information in another manner. The notice must also inform the parent or guardian that a child need not submit to the district screening program if the child's health records indicate to the school that the child has received comparable developmental screening performed within the preceding 365 days by a public or private health care organization or individual health care provider. The notice must be given to a parent or guardian at the time the district initially provides information to the parent or guardian about screening and must be given again at the screening location.

(b) All screening components shall be consistent with the standards of the state commissioner of health for early developmental screening programs. A developmental screening program must not provide laboratory tests or a physical examination to any child. The district must request from the public or private health care organization or the individual health care provider the results of any laboratory test or physical examination within the 12 months preceding a child's scheduled screening. For the purposes of this section, "comprehensive vision examination" means a vision examination performed by an optometrist or ophthalmologist.

(c) If a child is without health coverage, the school district must refer the child to an appropriate health care provider.

(d) A board may offer additional components such as nutritional, physical and dental assessments, review of family circumstances that might affect development, blood pressure, laboratory tests, and health history.

(e) If a statement signed by the child's parent or guardian is submitted to the administrator or other person having general control and supervision of the school that the child has not been screened because of conscientiously held beliefs of the parent or guardian, the screening is not required.

Subd. 4. **Follow-up screening.** If any child's screening indicates a condition which requires diagnosis or treatment, the child's parents shall be notified of the condition and the board shall ensure that an appropriate follow-up and referral process is available.

Subd. 5. **Developmental screening program information.** (a) The board must inform each resident family with a child eligible to participate in the developmental screening program, and a charter school that provides screening must inform families that apply for admission to the charter school, about the availability of the program and the state's requirement that a child receive a developmental screening or provide health records indicating that the child received a comparable developmental screening from a public or private health care organization or individual health care provider not later than 30 days after the first day of attending kindergarten in a public school. A school district must inform all resident families with eligible children under age seven, and a charter school that provides screening must inform families that apply for admission to the charter school, that their children may receive a developmental screening conducted either by the school district or by a public or private health care organization or individual health care provider and that the screening is not required if a statement signed by the child's parent or guardian is submitted to the

administrator or other person having general control and supervision of the school that the child has not been screened.

(b) A school district that enrolls students from an adjoining state under section 124D.041 may inform a nonresident child whose family resides at a Minnesota address as assigned by the United States Postal Service about the availability of the developmental screening program and may provide screening under this section to that child.

Subd. 6. **Developmental screening services.** A board may contract with or purchase service from an approved early developmental screening program in the area. Developmental screening must be conducted by either an individual who is licensed as, or has training that is similar to a special education teacher, school psychologist, kindergarten teacher, prekindergarten teacher, school nurse, public health nurse, registered nurse, or physician. The individual may be a volunteer.

Subd. 7. **Screening record.** The district must provide the parent or guardian of the child screened with a record indicating the month and year the child received developmental screening and the results of the screening. The district must keep a duplicate copy of the record of each child screened.

Subd. 8. **Volunteer screening programs.** Every board must integrate and utilize volunteer screening programs in implementing sections 142D.091 to 142D.093 wherever possible.

Subd. 9. **Priority to volunteers.** In selecting personnel to implement the screening program, the district must give priority first to qualified volunteers.

History: *1977 c 305 s 45; 1977 c 437 s 2; 1979 c 334 art 6 s 12,13; 1981 c 358 art 6 s 14; 1982 c 548 art 6 s 5; 1983 c 314 art 6 s 7; 1Sp1985 c 12 art 6 s 2; 1986 c 444; 1989 c 329 art 4 s 20; 1991 c 265 art 4 s 6,32; 1992 c 499 art 4 s 1-4; 1993 c 224 art 4 s 12-17; 1993 c 374 s 12; 1996 c 305 art 1 s 138; 1998 c 397 art 3 s 57-65,103; art 11 s 3; 1Sp2005 c 5 art 7 s 1,2; 2007 c 146 art 9 s 4; 2010 c 346 art 1 s 2; 2012 c 136 s 1; 1Sp2015 c 3 art 9 s 1; art 10 s 1; 2023 c 54 s 3; 2024 c 80 art 4 s 26; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 42*

142D.092 DATA USE.

Data on individuals collected in screening programs established pursuant to section 142D.091 is private, as defined by section 13.02, subdivision 12. Individual and summary data must be reported to the district by the health provider who performs the screening services, for the purposes of developing appropriate educational programs to meet the individual needs of children and designing appropriate health education programs for the district. No data on an individual shall be disclosed to the district without the consent of that individual's parent or guardian.

History: *1977 c 437 s 4; 1981 c 311 s 39; 1982 c 545 s 24; 1989 c 329 art 4 s 20; 1991 c 265 art 4 s 32; 1998 c 397 art 3 s 66,103; art 11 s 3; 2024 c 80 art 4 s 26; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 42*

142D.093 DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING AID.

(a) Each school year, the state must pay a district for each child or student screened by the district according to the requirements of section 142D.091. The amount of state aid for each child or student screened shall be: (1) $98 for a child screened at age three; (2) $65 for a child screened at age four; (3) $52 for a child screened at age five or six prior to kindergarten; and (4) $39 for a student screened within 30 days after first enrolling in a public school kindergarten if the student has not previously been screened according to the requirements of section 142D.091. If this amount of aid is insufficient, the district may permanently transfer from the general fund an amount that, when added to the aid, is sufficient. Developmental screening aid shall not be paid for any student who is screened more than 30 days after the first day of attendance at a

public school kindergarten, except if a student transfers to another public school kindergarten within 30 days after first enrolling in a Minnesota public school kindergarten program. In this case, if the student has not been screened, the district to which the student transfers may receive developmental screening aid for screening that student when the screening is performed within 30 days of the transfer date.

(b) The commissioner and the commissioner of education shall enter into an agreement under which the commissioner of education shall distribute funds appropriated for programs under this section. Funding is subject to sections 127A.41 and 127A.45, subdivision 13.

History: *1991 c 265 art 4 s 7; 1993 c 224 art 4 s 18; 1998 c 397 art 3 s 67,103; art 11 s 3; 1999 c 205 art 1 s 40; 1Sp2005 c 5 art 7 s 3; 2006 c 282 art 2 s 5; 2008 c 363 art 2 s 1; 2023 c 54 s 4; 2024 c 80 art 4 s 2,26; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 42; 1Sp2025 c 10 art 10 s 5*

142D.10 EARLY CHILDHOOD FAMILY EDUCATION (ECFE) PROGRAMS.

Subdivision 1. **Establishment; purpose.** A district that provides a community education program under sections 124D.18 and 124D.19 may establish an early childhood family education program. Two or more districts, each of which provides a community education program, may cooperate to jointly provide an early childhood family education program. The purpose of the early childhood family education program is to provide parenting education to support children's learning and development.

Subd. 2. **Program requirements.** (a) Early childhood family education programs are programs for children in the period of life from birth to kindergarten, for the parents and other relatives of these children, and for expectant parents. To the extent that funds are insufficient to provide programs for all children, early childhood family education programs should emphasize programming for a child from birth to age three and encourage parents and other relatives to involve four- and five-year-old children in school readiness programs, and other public and nonpublic early learning programs. A district may not limit participation to school district residents. Early childhood family education programs must provide:

(1) programs to educate parents and other relatives about the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development of children and to enhance the skills of parents and other relatives in providing for their children's learning and development;

(2) structured learning activities requiring interaction between children and their parents or relatives;

(3) structured learning activities for children that promote children's development and positive interaction with peers, which are held while parents or relatives attend parent education classes;

(4) information on related community resources;

(5) information, materials, and activities that support the safety of children, including prevention of child abuse and neglect;

(6) a community needs assessment that identifies new and underserved populations, identifies child and family risk factors, particularly those that impact children's learning and development, and assesses family and parenting education needs in the community;

(7) programming and services that are tailored to the needs of families and parents prioritized in the community needs assessment; and

(8) information about and, if needed, assist in making arrangements for an early childhood health and developmental screening under sections 142D.09 and 142D.091, when the child nears the third birthday.

(b) Early childhood family education programs should prioritize programming and services for families and parents identified in the community needs assessment, particularly those families and parents with children with the most risk factors birth to age three.

(c) Early childhood family education programs are encouraged to provide parents of English learners with translated oral and written information to monitor the program's impact on their children's English language development, to know whether their children are progressing in developing their English and native language proficiency, and to actively engage with and support their children in developing their English and native language proficiency.

(d) Early childhood family education programs must include learning experiences for children, parents, and other relatives that promote children's early literacy and, where practicable, their native language skills and activities for children that require substantial involvement of the children's parents or other relatives. Programs may provide parenting education programming or services to anyone identified in the community needs assessment. Providers must review the program periodically to assure the instruction and materials are not racially, culturally, or sexually biased. The programs must encourage parents to be aware of practices that may affect equitable development of children.

(e) For the purposes of this section, "relative" or "relatives" means noncustodial grandparents or other persons related to a child by blood, marriage, adoption, or foster placement, excluding parents.

Subd. 3. **Substantial parental involvement.** The requirement of substantial parental or other relative involvement in subdivision 2 means that:

(1) parents or other relatives must be physically present much of the time in classes with their children or be in concurrent classes;

(2) parenting education or family education must be an integral part of every early childhood family education program;

(3) early childhood family education appropriations must not be used for traditional day care or nursery school, or similar programs; and

(4) the form of parent involvement common to kindergarten, elementary school, or early childhood special education programs such as parent conferences, newsletters, and notes to parents do not qualify a program under subdivision 2.

Subd. 4. **Home visiting program.** (a) A district that levies for home visiting under section 142D.11, subdivision 6, shall use this revenue to include as part of the early childhood family education programs a parent education component that is designed to reach isolated or at-risk families.

(b) The home visiting program must:

(1) incorporate evidence-informed parenting education practices designed to support the healthy growth and development of children, with a priority focus on those children who have high needs;

(2) establish clear objectives and protocols for home visits;

(3) encourage families to make a transition from home visits to site-based parenting programs;

(4) provide program services that are community-based, accessible, and culturally relevant;

(5) foster collaboration among existing agencies and community-based organizations that serve young children and their families, such as public health evidence-based models of home visiting and Head Start home visiting; and

(6) provide information about and assist in making arrangements for an early childhood health and developmental screening when the child nears his or her third birthday.

(c) The home visiting program should be provided by licensed parenting educators, certified family life educators, or professionals with an equivalent license that reflect the demographic composition of the community to the extent possible.

Subd. 5. **Separate accounts.** The district must maintain a separate account within the community education fund for money for early childhood family education programs.

Subd. 6. **Participants' fees.** A district must establish a reasonable sliding fee scale but it shall waive the fee for a participant unable to pay.

Subd. 7. **Additional funding.** A district may receive funds from any governmental agency or private source.

Subd. 8. **Coordination.** (a) A district must describe strategies to coordinate and maximize public and private community resources and reduce duplication of services.

(b) A district is encouraged to coordinate adult basic education programs provided to parents and early childhood family education programs provided to children to accomplish the goals of section 124D.895.

Subd. 9. **District advisory councils.** The board must appoint an advisory council from the area in which the program is provided. A majority of the council must be parents participating in the program, who represent the demographics of the community. The district must ensure, to the extent possible, that the council includes representation of families who are racially, culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse. The council must assist the board in developing, planning, and monitoring the early childhood family education program. The council must report to the board and the community education advisory council.

Subd. 10. **Alternative council.** A board may direct the community education council, required according to section 124D.19, subdivision 2, to perform the functions of the Advisory Council for Early Childhood Family Education.

Subd. 11. **Teachers.** A school board must employ necessary licensed teachers for its early childhood family education programs.

Subd. 12. **Assistance.** The department must provide assistance to districts with programs described in this section. The department must establish guidelines that list barriers to learning and development affecting children served by early childhood family education programs.

Subd. 12a. **Support staff.** (a) The department must employ two full-time equivalent staff to serve as resources for programs described in this section. The staff persons must provide operational support and guidance to programs, including but not limited to providing professional development and education support, assisting with marketing and outreach, and facilitating collaborations with public and private organizations serving families.

(b) Each staff person described in this subdivision must hold a valid license as a teacher of parent and family education.

Subd. 13. **Program data submission requirements.** Districts receiving early childhood family education revenue under section 142D.11 must submit annual program data, including data that demonstrates the program response to the community needs assessment, to the department by July 15 in the form and manner prescribed by the commissioner.

Subd. 14. **Supervision.** A program provided by a board must be supervised by a licensed early childhood teacher or a licensed parent educator.

Subd. 15. **Parenting education transition program.** To the extent that funds are sufficient, early childhood family education may provide parenting education transition programming for parents of children birth to grade three in districts in which there is a prekindergarten-grade three initiative in order to facilitate continued parent engagement in children's learning and development. Early childhood family education programs are encouraged to develop partnerships to provide a parenting education liaison to providers of other public and nonpublic early learning programs, such as Head Start, school readiness, child care, early childhood special education, local public health programs, and health care providers.

History: *1984 c 463 art 4 s 1; 1Sp1985 c 12 art 4 s 2; 1989 c 329 art 4 s 3; 1990 c 562 art 4 s 1; 1991 c 130 s 37; 1991 c 265 art 4 s 3-5; 1992 c 571 art 10 s 1,2; 1993 c 224 art 4 s 11; 1Sp1995 c 3 art 16 s 13; 1997 c 162 art 1 s 5; 1998 c 397 art 3 s 43-50,103; art 11 s 3; 1999 c 205 art 1 s 41,70; 1Sp2003 c 9 art 7 s 3-5; 2006 c 263 art 6 s 6,7; 2007 c 146 art 9 s 5-8; 2008 c 266 s 1; 2009 c 96 art 6 s 2; 2014 c 272 art 1 s 31; 2014 c 312 art 20 s 1-6; 1Sp2017 c 5 art 3 s 25; 2023 c 54 s 7; 2024 c 80 art 4 s 3-5,26; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 42*

142D.11 EARLY CHILDHOOD FAMILY EDUCATION (ECFE) REVENUE.

Subdivision 1. **Revenue.** The revenue for early childhood family education programs for a school district equals the formula allowance under section 126C.10, subdivision 2, for the year times 0.023 times the greater of:

(1) 150; or

(2) the number of people under five years of age residing in the district on October 1 of the previous school year.

Subd. 2. **Population.** For the purposes of subdivision 1, data reported to the Department of Education may be used to determine the number of people under five years of age residing in the district. The commissioner, with the assistance of the state demographer, shall review the number reported by any district operating an early childhood family education program. If requested, the district shall submit to the commissioner an explanation of its methods and other information necessary to document accuracy. If the commissioner determines that the district has not provided sufficient documentation of accuracy, the commissioner may request the state demographer to prepare an estimate of the number of people under five years of age residing in the district and may use this estimate for the purposes of subdivision 1.

Subd. 3. **Early childhood family education levy.** By September 30 of each year, the commissioner of education shall establish a tax rate for early childhood family education revenue that raises $22,135,000 in each fiscal year. After consulting with the commissioner of children, youth, and families, if the commissioner of education determines that the amount of the early childhood family education levy would exceed the early childhood family education revenue, then the early childhood family education levy must equal the early childhood family education revenue. A district may not certify an early childhood family education levy unless it has met the annual program data reporting requirements under section 142D.10, subdivision 13.

Subd. 4. **Early childhood family education aid.** If a district complies with the provisions of section 142D.10, it must receive early childhood family education aid equal to the difference between the early childhood family education revenue and the early childhood family education levy. If the district does not levy the entire amount permitted, the early childhood family education aid must be reduced in proportion to the actual amount levied.

Subd. 5. **Use of revenue restricted.** (a) Early childhood family education revenue may be used only for early childhood family education programs.

(b) Not more than five percent of early childhood family education revenue, as defined in subdivision 9, may be used to administer early childhood family education programs.

(c) An early childhood family education program may use up to ten percent of its early childhood family education revenue as defined in subdivision 1, including revenue from participant fees, for equipment that is used in the early childhood family education program. This revenue may only be used for the following purposes:

(1) to purchase or lease computers and related materials; and

(2) to purchase or lease equipment for instruction for participating children and their families.

If a district anticipates an unusual circumstance requiring its early childhood family education program capital expenditures to exceed the ten percent limitation, prior approval to exceed the limit must be obtained in writing from the commissioner.

Subd. 6. **Home visiting revenue.** (a) A district that is eligible to levy for early childhood family education under subdivision 3 and that enters into a collaborative agreement to provide education services and social services to families with young children is eligible for home visiting revenue.

(b) Total home visiting revenue for a district equals $3 times the number of people under five years of age residing in the district on September 1 of the last school year. Revenue under this subdivision must not be included as revenue under subdivision 1. The revenue must be used for home visiting programs under section 142D.10, subdivision 4.

Subd. 7. **Home visiting levy.** To obtain home visiting revenue, a district may levy an amount not more than the product of its home visiting revenue for the fiscal year times the lesser of one or the ratio of its adjusted net tax capacity per adjusted pupil unit to the home visiting equalizing factor. The home visiting equalizing factor equals $17,250 for fiscal year 2018 and later.

Subd. 8. **Home visiting aid.** A district's home visiting aid equals its home visiting revenue minus its home visiting levy times the ratio of the actual amount levied to the permitted levy.

Subd. 9. **Reserve account.** Early childhood family education revenue, which includes aids, levies, fees, grants, and all other revenues received by the district for early childhood family education programs, must be maintained in a reserve account within the community service fund.

Subd. 10. **Funding.** The commissioner and the commissioner of education shall enter into an agreement under which the commissioner of education shall distribute funds appropriated for programs under this section. Funding is subject to sections 127A.41 and 127A.45, subdivision 13.

History: *1984 c 463 art 4 s 3; 1Sp1985 c 12 art 4 s 6; 1987 c 398 art 4 s 13; 1988 c 486 s 39; 1989 c 329 art 4 s 10,11; 1991 c 265 art 4 s 13; 1993 c 224 art 4 s 24-26; art 14 s 10; 1994 c 647 art 4 s 22,23; 1Sp1995 c 3 art 4 s 18; art 16 s 13; 1996 c 412 art 4 s 7; 1997 c 162 art 1 s 6,7; 1998 c 397 art 3 s 76,103;*

art 11 s 3; 1998 c 398 art 1 s 16; 1999 c 205 art 1 s 42,43; 1999 c 249 s 7; 1Sp2001 c 3 art 1 s 8,9; 1Sp2003 c 9 art 7 s 6,7; 1Sp2005 c 5 art 7 s 4,5; 2006 c 282 art 2 s 7; 2007 c 146 art 9 s 9-12; 2009 c 96 art 6 s 3; 2012 c 239 art 3 s 6; 2014 c 312 art 20 s 7,8; 2016 c 189 art 31 s 1-3; 2024 c 80 art 4 s 6-8,26; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 42; 2025 c 20 s 109-111; 1Sp2025 c 10 art 10 s 6-8

142D.12 HEAD START PROGRAM.

Subdivision 1. **Department of Children, Youth, and Families.** The Department of Children, Youth, and Families is the state agency responsible for administering the Head Start program. The commissioner of children, youth, and families shall allocate funds according to the formula in section 142D.121 to public or private nonprofit agencies for the purpose of providing supplemental funds for the federal Head Start program.

Subd. 2. **Data classification.** Data collected on individuals from which the identity of any individual receiving services may be determined are private data on individuals as defined in section 13.02.

Subd. 3. [Renumbered section 120B.121]

History: *1989 c 282 art 2 s 171; 1994 c 483 s 1; 1Sp1995 c 3 art 16 s 13; 1997 c 162 art 1 s 8; 2000 c 468 s 23; 2003 c 130 s 12; 2006 c 263 art 6 s 1; 2007 c 146 art 2 s 1; 1Sp2011 c 11 art 7 s 1; 2014 c 272 art 1 s 1; 2015 c 21 art 1 s 13; 2024 c 80 art 4 s 26; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 42; 2025 c 20 s 112; 1Sp2025 c 3 art 13 s 19*

142D.121 DISTRIBUTION OF APPROPRIATION.

(a) The commissioner of children, youth, and families must distribute money appropriated for that purpose to federally designated Head Start programs to expand services and to serve additional low-income children, which may include costs associated with program operations, infrastructure, or reconfiguration to serve children from birth to age five in center-based services. The distribution must occur in the following order: (1) 10.72 percent of the total Head Start appropriation must be initially allocated to federally designated Tribal Head Start programs; (2) the Tribal Head Start portion of the appropriation must be initially allocated to Tribal Head Start programs based on the programs' share of federal funds; and (3) migrant programs must be initially allocated funding based on the programs' share of federal funds. The remaining money must be initially allocated to the remaining local agencies based equally on the agencies' share of federal funds and on the proportion of eligible children in the agencies' service area who are not currently being served. A Head Start program must be funded at a per child rate equal to its contracted, federally funded base level at the start of the fiscal year. For all agencies without a federal Early Head Start rate, the state average federal cost per child for Early Head Start applies. In allocating funds under this paragraph, the commissioner of children, youth, and families must assure that each Head Start program in existence in 1993 is allocated no less funding in any fiscal year than was allocated to that program in fiscal year 1993. Before paying money to the programs, the commissioner must notify each program of its initial allocation and how the money must be used. Each program must present a plan under section 142D.123. For any program that cannot utilize its full allocation at the beginning of the fiscal year, the commissioner must reduce the allocation proportionately. Money available after the initial allocations are reduced must be redistributed to eligible programs.

(b) The commissioner must develop procedures to make payments to programs based upon the number of children reported to be enrolled during the required time period of program operations. Enrollment is defined by federal Head Start regulations. The procedures must include a reporting schedule, corrective action plan requirements, and financial consequences to be imposed on programs that do not meet full enrollment after the period of corrective action. Programs reporting chronic underenrollment, as defined by

the commissioner, will have their subsequent program year allocation reduced proportionately. Funds made available by prorating payments and allocations to programs with reported underenrollment will be made available to the extent funds exist to fully enrolled Head Start programs through a form and manner prescribed by the department.

(c) Programs with approved innovative initiatives that target services to high-risk populations, including homeless families and families living in homeless shelters and transitional housing, are exempt from the procedures in paragraph (b). This exemption does not apply to entire programs. The exemption applies only to approved innovative initiatives that target services to high-risk populations, including homeless families and families living in homeless shelters, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing.

History: *1989 c 282 art 2 s 173; 1991 c 292 art 3 s 34; 1993 c 369 s 89; 1994 c 483 s 1; 1Sp1995 c 3 art 16 s 13; 1997 c 162 art 1 s 11; 1Sp2003 c 9 art 7 s 1; 2006 c 263 art 6 s 2; 2007 c 146 art 9 s 1; 2009 c 96 art 6 s 1; 2023 c 54 s 1; 2024 c 80 art 4 s 26; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 42*

142D.122 FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS.

Programs and the commissioner shall comply with federal regulations governing the federal Head Start program, except for funding for innovative initiatives under section 142D.123 as approved by the commissioner, which may be used to operate differently than federal Head Start regulations. If a state statute or rule conflicts with a federal statute or regulation, the state statute or rule prevails.

History: *1989 c 282 art 2 s 174; 1Sp1995 c 3 art 16 s 13; 1Sp2003 c 9 art 7 s 2; 2006 c 263 art 6 s 3; 2024 c 80 art 4 s 26; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 42*

142D.123 APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS.

Eligible Head Start organizations must submit a plan to the department for approval on a form and in the manner prescribed by the commissioner. The plan must include:

(1) the number of low-income children and families the program will be able to serve;

(2) a description of the program design and service delivery area which meets the needs of and encourages access by low-income working families;

(3) a program design that ensures fair and equitable access to Head Start services for all populations and parts of the service area;

(4) a plan for providing Head Start services in conjunction with full-day child care programs to minimize child transitions, increase program intensity and duration, and improve child and family outcomes as required in section 142D.124;

(5) identification of regular Head Start, early Head Start, full-day services identified in section 142D.124, and innovative services based upon demonstrated needs to be provided; and

(6) evidence parents of English learners are provided with oral or written information to monitor the program's impact on their children's English language development, know whether their children are progressing in developing their English proficiency, and, where practicable, their native language proficiency, and actively engage with their children in developing their English and native language proficiency.

History: *2006 c 263 art 6 s 4; 2007 c 146 art 9 s 2; 2014 c 272 art 1 s 2; 2024 c 80 art 4 s 26; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 42*

142D.124 FULL-DAY REQUIREMENTS.

(a) A minimum of 50 percent of the total state-funded enrollment in Head Start programs, including in licensed child care programs, throughout the state must be provided in full-day services.

(b) Head Start programs may provide full-day services as part of their own program model or through agreements with full-day licensed child care programs. If licensed child care programs do not exist in a geographic area, choose not to participate, cannot meet the federal Head Start performance standards after sufficient opportunity, or a Head Start program is unable to establish the full-day services as a part of their own program model, the Head Start program may request exemption from the commissioner.

History: *2007 c 146 art 9 s 3; 2024 c 80 art 4 s 1,26; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 42*

142D.125 AUTHORITY TO WAIVE REQUIREMENTS DURING DISASTER PERIODS.

The commissioner of children, youth, and families may waive requirements under sections 142D.12 to 142D.123, for up to nine months after the disaster, for Head Start programs in areas where a federal disaster has been declared under United States Code, title 42, section 5121, et seq., or the governor has exercised authority under chapter 12. The commissioner shall notify the chairs of the appropriate senate and house of representatives committees ten days before the effective date of any waiver granted under this section.

History: *1Sp1995 c 3 art 16 s 13; 1997 c 203 art 1 s 15; 1Sp1997 c 5 s 46; 1998 c 383 s 37; 1999 c 86 art 1 s 62; 2003 c 130 s 12; 2004 c 206 s 52; 2006 c 263 art 6 s 5; 2024 c 80 art 4 s 26; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 42*

142D.13 QUALITY RATING AND IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM.

Subdivision 1. **System established.** A quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) framework, known as Parent Aware, is established to ensure that Minnesota's children have access to high-quality early learning and care programs in a range of settings so that they are fully ready for kindergarten.

Subd. 2. **System components.** (a) The standards-based voluntary quality rating and improvement system includes:

(1) effective July 1, 2026, at least a one-star rating for all programs licensed under Minnesota Rules, chapter 9502 or 9503, or Tribally licensed that do not opt out of the system under paragraph (b) and that are not:

(i) the subject of a finding of fraud for which the program or individual is currently serving a penalty or exclusion;

(ii) prohibited from receiving public funds under section 142A.12, regardless of whether the action is under appeal;

(iii) under revocation, suspension, temporary immediate suspension, or decertification, or is operating under a conditional license, regardless of whether the action is under appeal; or

(iv) the subject of suspended, denied, or terminated payments to a provider under section 142E.17, subdivision 9, paragraph (d), clause (1) or (2); 142E.51, subdivision 7, paragraph (c), clause (4); or 256.98, subdivision 1, regardless of whether the action is under appeal;

(2) quality opportunities in order to improve the educational outcomes of children so that they are ready for school;

(3) a framework based on the Minnesota quality rating system rating tool and a common set of child outcome and program standards informed by evaluation results;

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

(5) voluntary participation ensuring that if a program or provider chooses to participate, the program or provider will be rated and may receive public funding associated with the rating; and

(6) 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) By July 1, 2026, the commissioner of children, youth, and families shall establish a process by which a program may opt out of the rating under paragraph (a), clause (1). The commissioner shall consult with Tribes to develop a process for rating Tribally licensed programs that is consistent with the goal outlined in paragraph (a), clause (1).

Subd. 3. **Evaluation.** (a) By February 1, 2022, the commissioner of children, youth, and families 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;

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

(4) providers' ability to serve children and families, including those from racially, ethnically, or culturally diverse backgrounds.

(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 implementing 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 minority 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 aligned with the state early childhood indicators of progress, including in ways that are appropriate for children's linguistic and cultural backgrounds;

(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 the 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 children's demographic factors and type of provider, as each is defined in clause (3);

(5) analyze the availability of providers participating in the quality rating and improvement system to families, and provide disaggregated findings by children's demographic factors and type of provider, as each is defined in clause (3);

(6) analyze the degree to which the quality rating and improvement system accounts for racial, cultural, linguistic, and ethnic diversity when measuring quality; and

(7) analyze the impact of financial or administrative requirements of the quality rating and improvement system on family child care providers and child care providers, including those providers serving racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse communities.

(e) The evaluation must include a comparison of the quality rating and improvement system with at least three other quality metric systems used in other states. The other chosen metric systems must incorporate methods of assessing and monitoring developmental and achievement benchmarks in early care and education settings to assess kindergarten readiness, including for racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse populations.

Subd. 4. **Equity report.** The Department of Children, Youth, and Families shall conduct outreach to a racially, ethnically, culturally, and geographically diverse group of early learning and care providers to identify any barriers that prevent the providers from pursuing a Parent Aware rating. The department shall summarize and submit the results of the outreach, along with a plan for reducing those barriers, to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees with jurisdiction over early learning and care programs by March 1, 2022.

History: *2009 c 96 art 6 s 4; 1Sp2021 c 7 art 14 s 4; 2023 c 54 s 9; 2024 c 80 art 1 s 96; art 4 s 9,10,26; art 5 s 7; art 8 s 70; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 42; art 18 s 7*

142D.14 AFTER-SCHOOL COMMUNITY LEARNING PROGRAMS.

Subdivision 1. **Establishment.** A competitive statewide after-school community learning grant program is established to provide grants to support eligible organizations to provide culturally affirming and enriching after-school and summer learning programs for school-age youth after school or during nonschool hours. Grants must be used to offer a broad array of academic enrichment activities that promote positive after-school

and summer learning activities, including art, music, community engagement, literacy, science, technology, engineering, math, health, and recreation programs. The commissioner shall develop criteria for after-school community learning programs that promote partnerships and active collaboration with the schools that participating students attend. The commissioner may award grants under this section to community or nonprofit organizations, culturally specific organizations, American Indian organizations, Tribal Nations, political subdivisions, public libraries, or school-based programs that serve youth after school, during the summer, or during nonschool hours.

Subd. 2. **Objectives.** The objectives of the after-school community learning programs are to:

(1) increase access to comprehensive and culturally affirming after-school and summer learning and enrichment opportunities that meet the academic, social, and emotional needs of historically underserved students;

(2) promote engagement in learning and connections to school and community; and

(3) encourage school attendance and improve academic performance.

Subd. 3. **Grants.** (a) An applicant must submit an after-school community learning program proposal to the commissioner. The submitted proposal must include:

(1) an assessment of the needs and available resources for the after-school community learning program and a description of how the proposed program will address the needs identified, including how students and families were engaged in the process;

(2) a description of the partnership between a school and another eligible entity;

(3) an explanation of how the proposal will support the objectives identified in subdivision 2, including the use of best practices;

(4) a plan to implement effective after-school and summer learning practices and provide staff access to professional development opportunities; and

(5) a description of the data they will use to evaluate the impact of the program.

(b) The commissioner must review proposals and award grants to programs that:

(1) primarily serve historically underserved students; and

(2) provide opportunities for academic enrichment and a broad array of additional services and activities to meet program objectives.

(c) To the extent practicable, the commissioner must award grants equitably among the geographic areas of Minnesota, including rural, suburban, and urban communities.

Subd. 4. **Technical assistance and continuous improvement.** (a) The commissioner must monitor and evaluate the performance of grant recipients to assess the effectiveness of after-school community learning programs in meeting the objectives identified in subdivision 2.

(b) The commissioner must provide technical assistance, capacity building, and professional development to grant recipients, including guidance on effective practices for after-school and summer learning programs.

History: *2007 c 146 art 9 s 14; 2023 c 55 art 11 s 3; 2024 c 80 art 4 s 26; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 42*

142D.15 FAMILY SERVICES AND COMMUNITY-BASED COLLABORATIVES.

Subdivision 1. **Establishment.** (a) In order to qualify as a family services collaborative, a minimum of one school district, one county, one public health entity, one community action agency as defined in section 142F.301, and one Head Start grantee if the community action agency is not the designated federal grantee for the Head Start program must agree in writing to provide coordinated family services and commit resources to an integrated fund. Collaboratives are expected to have broad community representation, which may include other local providers, including additional school districts, counties, and public health entities, other municipalities, public libraries, existing culturally specific community organizations, tribal entities, local health organizations, private and nonprofit service providers, child care providers, local foundations, community-based service groups, businesses, local transit authorities or other transportation providers, community action agencies under section 142F.301, senior citizen volunteer organizations, parent organizations, parents, and sectarian organizations that provide nonsectarian services.

(b) Members of the governing bodies of political subdivisions involved in the establishment of a family services collaborative shall select representatives of the nongovernmental entities listed in paragraph (a) to serve on the governing board of a collaborative. The governing body members of the political subdivisions shall select one or more representatives of the nongovernmental entities within the family service collaborative.

(c) Two or more family services collaboratives or children's mental health collaboratives may consolidate decision-making, pool resources, and collectively act on behalf of the individual collaboratives, based on a written agreement among the participating collaboratives.

Subd. 2. **Duties.** (a) Each collaborative must:

(1) establish, with assistance from families and service providers, clear goals for addressing the health, developmental, educational, and family-related needs of children and youth and use outcome-based indicators to measure progress toward achieving those goals;

(2) establish a comprehensive planning process that involves all sectors of the community, identifies local needs, and surveys existing local programs;

(3) integrate service funding sources so that children and their families obtain services from providers best able to anticipate and meet their needs;

(4) coordinate families' services to avoid duplicative and overlapping assessment and intake procedures;

(5) focus primarily on family-centered services;

(6) encourage parents and volunteers to actively participate by using flexible scheduling and actively recruiting volunteers;

(7) provide services in locations that are readily accessible to children and families;

(8) use new or reallocated funds to improve or enhance services provided to children and their families;

(9) identify federal, state, and local institutional barriers to coordinating services and suggest ways to remove these barriers; and

(10) design and implement an integrated local service delivery system for children and their families that coordinates services across agencies and is client centered. The delivery system shall provide a continuum of services for children birth to age 18, or birth through age 21 for individuals with disabilities. The

collaborative shall describe the community plan for serving pregnant women and children from birth to age six.

(b) The outcome-based indicators developed in paragraph (a), clause (1), may include the number of low birth weight babies, the infant mortality rate, the number of children who are adequately immunized and healthy, require out-of-home placement or long-term special education services, and the number of minor parents.

Subd. 3. **Duties of certain coordinating bodies.** By mutual agreement of the collaborative and a coordinating body listed in this subdivision, a family services collaborative may assume the duties of a community transition interagency committee established under section 125A.22; an interagency early intervention committee established under section 125A.30; or a local advisory council established under section 245.4875, subdivision 5.

Subd. 4. **Integrated local service delivery system.** A collaborative must design an integrated local service delivery system that coordinates funding streams and the delivery of services between existing agencies. The integrated local service delivery system may:

(1) improve outreach and early identification of children and families in need of services and intervene across service systems on behalf of families;

(2) offer an inclusive service system that supports all families within a community;

(3) coordinate services that eliminate the need to match funding streams, provider eligibilities, or clients with multiple providers;

(4) improve access to services by coordinating transportation services;

(5) provide initial outreach to all new mothers and periodic family visits to children who are potentially at risk;

(6) coordinate assessment across systems to determine which children and families need coordinated multiagency services and supplemental services;

(7) include multiagency service plans and coordinate unitary case management; and

(8) integrate funding of services.

Subd. 5. **Information sharing.** (a) The school district, county, and public health entity members of a family services collaborative may inform each other as to whether an individual or family is being served by the member, without the consent of the subject of the data. If further information sharing is necessary in order for the collaborative to carry out duties under subdivision 2 or 3, the collaborative may share data if the individual, as defined in section 13.02, subdivision 8, gives written informed consent. Data on individuals shared under this subdivision retain the original classification as defined under section 13.02, as to each member of the collaborative with whom the data is shared.

(b) If a federal law or regulation impedes information sharing that is necessary in order for a collaborative to carry out duties under subdivision 2 or 3, the appropriate state agencies shall seek a waiver or exemption from the applicable law or regulation.

Subd. 6. **Integrated fund.** (a) A collaborative must establish an integrated fund to help provide an integrated service system and fund additional supplemental services. The integrated fund may consist of federal, state, local, or private resources. The collaborative agreement must specify a minimum financial

commitment by the contributors to an integrated fund. Contributors may not reduce their financial commitment except as specified in the agreement or by federal declaration.

(b) A collaborative must seek to maximize federal and private funds by designating local expenditures for services that can be matched with federal or private grant funds and by designing services to meet the requirements for state or federal reimbursement.

(c) Collaboratives may seek to maximize federal reimbursement of funds under section 256F.10.

Subd. 7. **Local plans.** The collaborative plan must describe how the collaborative will carry out the duties and implement the integrated local services delivery system required under this section. The plan must include a list of the collaborative participants, a copy of the agreement required under subdivision 1, the amount and source of resources each participant will contribute to the integrated fund, and methods for increasing local participation in the collaborative, involving parents and other community members in implementing and operating the collaborative, and providing effective outreach services to all families with young children in the community. The plan must also include specific goals that the collaborative intends to achieve and methods for objectively measuring progress toward meeting the goals.

Subd. 8. **Plan approval by Children's Cabinet.** (a) The Children's Cabinet must approve local plans for collaboratives. In approving local plans, the Children's Cabinet must give highest priority to a plan that provides:

(1) early intervention and family outreach services;

(2) parenting time services;

(3) a continuum of services for children from birth to age 18;

(4) family preservation services;

(5) culturally sensitive approaches for delivering services and utilizing culturally specific organizations;

(6) clearly defined outcomes and valid methods of assessment;

(7) effective service coordination;

(8) participation by the maximum number of jurisdictions and local, county, and state funding sources;

(9) integrated community service providers and local resources;

(10) integrated transportation services;

(11) integrated housing services; and

(12) coordinated services that include a children's mental health collaborative authorized by law.

(b) The Children's Cabinet must ensure that the collaboratives established under this section do not conflict with any state or federal policy or program and do not negatively impact the state budget.

Subd. 9. **Liability insurance.** The commissioner of children, youth, and families may designate one collaborative to act as a lead collaborative for purposes of obtaining liability coverage for participating collaboratives.

History: *1993 c 224 art 4 s 10; 1994 c 618 art 1 s 18; 1994 c 647 art 4 s 12; 1Sp1995 c 3 art 3 s 4; art 16 s 13; 1996 c 412 art 4 s 4,5; 1997 c 162 art 4 s 58; 1998 c 397 art 3 s 32-35,103; art 11 s 3; 1999 c 205*

art 1 s 46; 2000 c 444 art 2 s 4; 2003 c 130 s 12; 1Sp2003 c 14 art 4 s 1; 2005 c 98 art 1 s 24; 2014 c 262 art 5 s 6; 2024 c 80 art 4 s 26; art 6 s 4; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 42,43

142D.16 STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE.

Subdivision 1. **Membership; duties.** Two members of the house of representatives, one appointed by the speaker and one appointed by the minority leader; and two members of the senate appointed by the Subcommittee on Committees of the Committee on Rules and Administration, including one member of the minority; the commissioner of health or the commissioner's designee; and two parents with a child under age six, shall be added to the membership of the State Advisory Council on Early Education and Care. The council must fulfill the duties required under the federal Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 as provided in Public Law 110-134.

Subd. 2. **Additional duties.** The following duties are added to those assigned to the council under federal law:

(1) make recommendations on the most efficient and effective way to leverage state and federal funding streams for early childhood and child care programs;

(2) review program evaluations regarding high-quality early childhood programs;

(3) make recommendations to the governor and legislature, including proposed legislation on how to most effectively create a high-quality early childhood system in Minnesota in order to improve the educational outcomes of children so that all children have the opportunities and experiences to support a successful transition to kindergarten; and

(4) review and provide input on the recommendations and implementation timelines developed by the Great Start For All Minnesota Children Task Force under Laws 2021, First Special Session chapter 7, article 14, section 18, subdivision 2.

Subd. 3. **Administration.** The council may pursue additional funds from state, federal, and private sources.

History: *2008 c 363 art 2 s 13; 2010 c 346 art 1 s 4,5; 2014 c 272 art 8 s 2; 2023 c 54 s 8; 2024 c 80 art 4 s 26; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 42*

142D.20 CHILD CARE IMPROVEMENT GRANTS.

Subdivision 1. **Purpose.** The purpose of this section is to enhance and expand child care sites, to encourage private investment in child care and early childhood education sites, to promote availability of quality, affordable child care throughout Minnesota, and to provide for cooperation between private nonprofit child care organizations, family child care and center providers and the department.

Subd. 2. **Grants.** (a) The commissioner shall distribute money provided by this section through grants to one or more nonprofit corporations to plan, develop, and finance early childhood education and child care sites. A nonprofit corporation must have demonstrated the ability to analyze financing projects, have knowledge of other sources of public and private financing for child care and early childhood education sites, and have a relationship with regional resource and referral programs. The board of directors of a nonprofit corporation must include members who are knowledgeable about early childhood education, child care, development and improvement, and financing.

(b) The commissioners of the Departments of Human Services, Employment and Economic Development, and the Housing Finance Agency shall advise the boards of any nonprofit corporations that use the grant

money provided under this section for loan programs as described in subdivision 3, paragraph (a), clauses (1) to (4). All loans made by a nonprofit corporation under this section must comply with section 363A.16.

Subd. 3. **Financing program.** (a) A nonprofit corporation that receives a grant under this section shall use the money for one or more of the following activities:

(1) to establish a revolving loan fund to make loans to existing, expanding, and new licensed and legal unlicensed child care and early childhood education sites;

(2) to establish a fund to guarantee private loans to improve or construct a child care or early childhood education site;

(3) to establish a fund to provide forgivable loans or grants to match all or part of a loan made under this section;

(4) to establish a fund as a reserve against bad debt;

(5) to provide business planning assistance for child care providers;

(6) to provide training and consultation for child care providers to build and strengthen their businesses and acquire key business skills; and

(7) to provide grants to child care providers for facility improvements, minor renovations, and related equipment and services, including assistance to meet licensing requirements, needed to establish, maintain, or expand licensed and legal unlicensed child care and early childhood education sites.

(b) A nonprofit corporation establishing loans under this section shall establish the terms and conditions for loans and loan guarantees including, but not limited to, interest rates, repayment agreements, private match requirements, and conditions for loan forgiveness. A nonprofit corporation shall establish a minimum interest rate for loans to ensure that necessary loan administration costs are covered. A nonprofit corporation may use interest earnings for administrative expenses.

Subd. 4. **Reporting.** A nonprofit corporation that receives a grant under this section shall:

(1) annually report by September 30 to the commissioner the purposes for which the grant money was used in the past fiscal year, including a description of projects supported by the financing, an account of loans and grants made, the financing program's assets and liabilities, and an explanation of administrative expenses; and

(2) annually submit to the commissioner a copy of the report of an independent audit performed in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices and auditing standards.

History: *1997 c 162 art 4 s 57; 1999 c 205 art 1 s 39; art 5 s 21; 2003 c 130 s 12; 1Sp2003 c 4 s 1; 2004 c 288 art 4 s 24; 2005 c 10 art 1 s 24; 1Sp2021 c 7 art 8 s 9; 2024 c 80 art 4 s 26; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 42*

142D.21 GREAT START COMPENSATION SUPPORT PAYMENTS.

Subdivision 1. **Establishment.** The commissioner of children, youth, and families shall establish and administer the great start compensation support payment program to provide eligible child care and early learning programs with payments to improve access to early care and learning in Minnesota and to strengthen the ability of programs to recruit and retain early educators.

Subd. 2. **Eligible programs.** (a) The following programs are eligible to receive payments under this section:

(1) family and group family child care homes licensed under Minnesota Rules, chapter 9502;

(2) child care centers licensed under Minnesota Rules, chapter 9503;

(3) certified license-exempt child care centers under chapter 142C;

(4) Tribally licensed child care programs; and

(5) other programs as determined by the commissioner.

(b) To be eligible, programs must not be:

(1) the subject of a finding of fraud for which the program or individual is currently serving a penalty or exclusion;

(2) the subject of suspended, denied, or terminated payments to a provider under section 142E.17, subdivision 9, paragraph (d), clauses (1) and (2); 142E.51, subdivision 7, paragraph (c), clause (4); or 256.98, subdivision 1, regardless of whether the action is under appeal;

(3) prohibited from receiving public funds under section 142A.12, regardless of whether the action is under appeal; or

(4) under license revocation, suspension, temporary immediate suspension, or decertification, regardless of whether the action is under appeal.

Subd. 3. **Requirements.** (a) As a condition of payment under this section, a program must:

(1) complete an application developed by the commissioner for each payment period for which the program applies for funding;

(2) submit data on child enrollment and attendance to the commissioner in the form and manner specified by the commissioner; and

(3) attest and agree in writing that the program was open and operating and served a minimum number of children, as determined by the commissioner, during the funding period, with the exceptions of:

(i) service disruptions that are necessary to protect the safety and health of children and child care programs based on public health guidance issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the commissioner of health, the commissioner of children, youth, and families, or a local public health agency; and

(ii) planned temporary closures for provider vacation and holidays during each payment period. The commissioner must establish the maximum allowed duration for vacations and holidays.

(b) A program must expend money received under this section no later than six months after the date the payment was received.

(c) A program that receives a payment under this section must comply with all requirements listed in the application. The commissioner must establish methods to determine that the application requirements have been met.

Subd. 4. **Record retention.** (a) A program that receives a payment under this section must keep accurate and legible records of the following:

(1) use of money;

(2) staff employment, compensation, and benefits, which must include time sheets or other records of daily hours worked; documentation of compensation and benefits; documentation of written changes to employees' rate or rates of pay and basis thereof as a result of payments received under this section, as required under section 181.032, paragraphs (d) to (f); and any other records required to be maintained under section 177.30; and

(3) attendance. Daily attendance records must be completed every day and must include the date, the first and last name of each child in attendance, and the time each child is dropped off at and picked up from the program. To the extent possible, the person dropping off or picking up the child must enter the times.

(b) The requirement to document compensation and benefits under paragraph (a), clause (2), applies to family and group family child care homes only if a payment received under this section is used for employee compensation or benefits.

(c) Records identified in paragraph (a) must be retained at the site where services are delivered for six years after the date of receipt of payment and must be made immediately available to the commissioner upon request. Any records not provided to the commissioner at the date and time of request are deemed inadmissible if offered as evidence by a program in any proceeding to contest an overpayment or disqualification of the program.

Subd. 5. **Enforcement.** A program that receives a payment under this section that fails to meet the requirements of this section is subject to discontinuation of future installment payments, recovery of overpayments, and actions under sections 142E.51 to 142E.58. Except when based on a finding of fraud, actions to establish an overpayment must be made within six years of receipt of the payments. Once an overpayment is established, collection may continue until money has been repaid in full. The appeal process under section 142E.18 applies to actions taken for failure to meet the requirements of this section.

Subd. 6. **Payments.** (a) The commissioner shall provide payments under this section to all eligible programs on a noncompetitive basis. The payment amounts shall be based on the number of full-time equivalent staff who regularly care for children in the program, including any employees, sole proprietors, or independent contractors.

(b) For purposes of this section, "one full-time equivalent" is defined as an individual caring for children 32 hours per week. An individual can count as more or less than one full-time equivalent staff, but as no more than two full-time equivalent staff.

(c) The commissioner must establish an amount to award per full-time equivalent individual who regularly cares for children in the program.

(d) Payments must be increased by ten percent for programs receiving child care assistance payments under section 142E.08 or 142E.17 or early learning scholarships under section 142D.25, or for programs located in a child care access equity area. The commissioner must develop a method for establishing child care access equity areas. For purposes of this section, "child care access equity area" means an area with low access to child care, high poverty rates, high unemployment rates, low homeownership rates, and low median household incomes.

(e) The commissioner shall establish the form, frequency, and manner for making payments under this section.

Subd. 7. **Eligible uses of money.** (a) Child care centers licensed under Minnesota Rules, chapter 9503, certified license-exempt child care centers under chapter 142C, and Tribally licensed child care centers must use money received under this section to pay for increases in compensation, benefits, premium pay, or additional federal taxes assessed on the compensation of employees as a result of paying increased compensation or premium pay to all paid employees or independent contractors regularly caring for children.

(b) Family and group family child care homes licensed under Minnesota Rules, chapter 9502, and Tribally licensed family child care homes must use money received under this section for one or more of the following purposes:

(1) paying personnel costs, such as payroll, salaries, or similar compensation; employee benefits; premium pay; or financial incentives for recruitment and retention for an employee, a sole proprietor, or an independent contractor;

(2) paying rent, including rent under a lease agreement, or making payments on any mortgage obligation, utilities, facility maintenance or improvements, property taxes, or insurance;

(3) purchasing or updating equipment, supplies, goods, or services;

(4) providing mental health supports for children; or

(5) purchasing training or other professional development.

Subd. 8. **Legal nonlicensed child care provider payments.** (a) Legal nonlicensed child care providers, as defined in section 142E.01, subdivision 19, are eligible to apply for a payment of up to $500 for costs incurred before the first month when payments from the child care assistance program are issued.

(b) A payment received under this subdivision must be used for one or more of the following activities:

(1) purchasing or updating equipment, supplies, goods, or services; or

(2) purchasing training or other professional development.

(c) The commissioner shall determine the form and manner of the application for a payment under this subdivision.

Subd. 9. **Report.** By January 1 each year, the commissioner must report to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees with jurisdiction over child care and early learning the number of payments provided to programs and related outcomes since the last report. This subdivision expires January 31, 2033.

Subd. 10. **Carryforward authority.** Money appropriated under this section is available until expended.

Subd. 11. **Data.** Data under this section are public except:

(1) data collected on a child's enrollment and attendance under subdivision 3, paragraph (a), clause (2), that may allow for identification of a child or family, as determined by the commissioner, are private data on individuals as defined in section 13.02, subdivision 12;

(2) data related to operating expenses or an individual's employment are private or nonpublic data; and

(3) data for legal nonlicensed child care providers under subdivision 8 are private or nonpublic data.

History: *2023 c 70 art 13 s 20; 2024 c 80 art 1 s 96; art 3 s 3; art 4 s 26; art 5 s 7; art 8 s 70; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 42; 2025 c 21 s 94; 1Sp2025 c 3 art 12 s 2*

142D.22 SHARED SERVICES GRANTS.

Subdivision 1. **Establishment.** The commissioner of children, youth, and families shall establish a grant program to award money to public entities and private for-profit and nonprofit organizations for planning, establishment, expansion, improvement, or operation of shared services alliances.

Subd. 2. **Shared services alliances.** For purposes of this section, "shared services alliances" are networks of eligible entities that share services to reduce costs and achieve efficiencies. "Eligible entities" are:

(1) family and group family child care homes licensed under Minnesota Rules, chapter 9502;

(2) Tribally licensed family child care programs; and

(3) individuals in the process of starting a family or group family child care home.

Subd. 3. **Eligible uses of money.** Grantees must use money received under this section to deliver one or more of the following services:

(1) pooling management of payroll and benefits, banking, janitorial services, food services, and other operations;

(2) shared administrative staff for tasks such as record keeping and complying with reporting requirements for programs, including but not limited to the child care assistance program, Head Start, the child and adult care food program, and early learning scholarships;

(3) coordination of bulk purchasing;

(4) management of a substitute pool;

(5) support for implementing shared curriculum and assessments;

(6) mentoring of child care providers to improve business practices;

(7) provision of and training in child care management software to simplify processes such as enrollment, billing, and tracking expenditures;

(8) support for a group of providers sharing one or more physical spaces within a larger building; or

(9) other services as determined by the commissioner.

Subd. 4. **Administration; reporting.** (a) The commissioner must develop a process to award grants under this section that includes application forms, timelines, and standards for renewals.

(b) The commissioner must develop a process by which grantees will report to the department on how grant money was spent.

History: *2023 c 70 art 13 s 21; 2024 c 80 art 4 s 26; art 8 s 70; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 42*

142D.23 CHILD CARE PROVIDER ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY GRANTS.

Subdivision 1. **Establishment.** The commissioner of children, youth, and families shall award money under this section to one or more eligible organizations to offer grants or other supports to eligible child care providers for technology intended to improve the providers' business practices.

Subd. 2. **Eligibility.** (a) To be eligible for a grant from the department under this section, an organization must be a public entity or private for-profit or nonprofit organization with:

(1) the ability to develop technology products for child care business management; or

(2) the ability to offer training, technical assistance, coaching, or other supports to help child care providers learn to use technology products for child care business management.

(b) Grantees may award grants or offer supports under this section to the following types of child care providers:

(1) family or group family child care homes licensed under Minnesota Rules, chapter 9502;

(2) child care centers licensed under Minnesota Rules, chapter 9503; and

(3) Tribally licensed child care programs.

Subd. 3. **Eligible uses of money.** Grantees must use money received under this section, either directly or through grants to eligible child care providers, for one or more of the following purposes:

(1) the purchase of computers or mobile devices for use in business management;

(2) access to the Internet through the provision of necessary hardware such as routers or modems or by covering the costs of monthly fees for Internet access;

(3) covering the costs of subscription to child care management software;

(4) covering the costs of training in the use of technology for business management purposes;

(5) providing grants for up to $4,000 to licensed child care centers to help cover the costs of video security cameras and related training; or

(6) other services as determined by the commissioner.

Subd. 4. **Administration.** The commissioner must develop a process to award grants under this section that includes application forms, timelines, reporting requirements, and standards for renewal.

History: *2023 c 70 art 13 s 22; 2024 c 80 art 4 s 26; art 8 s 70; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 42; 1Sp2025 c 3 art 13 s 4*

142D.24 FAMILY, FRIEND, AND NEIGHBOR GRANT PROGRAM.

Subdivision 1. **Establishment.** The commissioner of children, youth, and families shall establish a family, friend, and neighbor (FFN) grant program to promote children's social-emotional learning and healthy development, early literacy, and other skills to succeed as learners and to foster community partnerships that will help children thrive when they enter school.

Subd. 2. **Grant awards.** The commissioner may award grants under this section to the following entities working with FFN caregivers: community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, local or regional

libraries, local public health agencies, and Indian Tribes and Tribal organizations. Grantees may use grant money received under this section to:

(1) provide culturally and linguistically appropriate training, support, and resources to FFN caregivers and children's families to improve and promote children's health, safety, nutrition, and learning;

(2) connect FFN caregivers and children's families with community resources that support the families' physical and mental health and economic and developmental needs;

(3) connect FFN caregivers and children's families to early childhood screening programs and facilitate referrals to state and local agencies, schools, community organizations, and medical providers, as appropriate;

(4) provide FFN caregivers and children's families with information about high-quality, community-based early care and learning programs and financial assistance available to the families, including but not limited to child care assistance under this chapter and early learning scholarships under section 142D.25;

(5) provide FFN caregivers with information about registering as a legal nonlicensed child care provider as defined in section 142E.01, subdivision 19, and establishing a licensed family or group family child care program;

(6) provide transportation for FFN caregivers and children's families to educational and other early childhood training activities;

(7) translate materials for FFN caregivers and children's families and provide translation services to FFN caregivers and children's families;

(8) develop and disseminate social-emotional learning, health and safety, and early learning kits to FFN caregivers; and

(9) establish play and learning groups for FFN caregivers.

Subd. 3. **Administration.** Applicants must apply for the grants using the forms and according to timelines established by the commissioner.

Subd. 4. **Reporting requirements.** (a) Grantees shall provide data and program outcomes to the commissioner in a form and manner specified by the commissioner for the purpose of evaluating the grant program.

(b) Beginning February 1, 2024, and every two years thereafter, the commissioner shall report to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees with jurisdiction over child care on program outcomes.

History: *2023 c 70 art 12 s 12; 2024 c 80 art 4 s 26; art 5 s 7; art 8 s 70; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 42*

142D.25 EARLY LEARNING SCHOLARSHIPS.

Subdivision 1. **Establishment; purpose.** An early learning scholarships program is established to close the opportunity gap by increasing access to high-quality early childhood programs.

Subd. 2. **Family eligibility.** (a) For a family to receive an early learning scholarship, parents or guardians must have an eligible child and meet at least one of the following requirements:

(1) have income equal to or less than:

(i) the at-application rate specified in section 142E.10, subdivision 1, paragraph (a), clause (2), in the current calendar year; or

(ii) beginning July 1, 2025, the rate specified in United States Code, title 42, section 9858n(4)(B), as adjusted for family size;

(2) be able to document their child's current participation in the free and reduced-price meals program or Child and Adult Care Food Program, National School Lunch Act, United States Code, title 42, sections 1751 and 1766; the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations, Food and Nutrition Act, United States Code, title 7, sections 2011-2036; Head Start under the federal Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007; Minnesota family investment program under chapter 142G; child care assistance programs under chapter 142E; the supplemental nutrition assistance program; or

(3) have or be a child referred as in need of child protection services or placed in foster care under section 260C.212.

(b) An "eligible child" means a child who has not yet enrolled in kindergarten and is not yet five years of age on September 1 of the current school year.

(c) A child who has received a scholarship under this section must continue to receive a scholarship each year until that child is eligible for kindergarten under section 120A.20 and as long as funds are available.

(d) Early learning scholarships may not be counted as earned income for the purposes of medical assistance under chapter 256B, MinnesotaCare under chapter 256L, Minnesota family investment program under chapter 142G, child care assistance programs under chapter 142E, or Head Start under the federal Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007.

(e) A child from an adjoining state whose family resides at a Minnesota address as assigned by the United States Postal Service, who has received developmental screening under sections 142D.09 to 142D.093, who intends to enroll in a Minnesota school district, and whose family meets the criteria of paragraph (a) is eligible for an early learning scholarship under this section.

Subd. 3. **Applications; priorities.** (a) The commissioner shall establish application timelines and determine the schedule for awarding scholarships that meet the operational needs of eligible families and programs.

(b) The commissioner must give highest priority to applications from children who:

(1) are not yet four years of age;

(2) have a parent under age 21 who is pursuing a high school diploma or a course of study for a high school equivalency test;

(3) are in foster care;

(4) have been referred as in need of child protection services;

(5) have an incarcerated parent;

(6) are in or have a parent in a substance use treatment program;

(7) are in or have a parent in a mental health treatment program;

(8) have experienced domestic violence;

(9) have an individualized education program or individualized family service plan; or

(10) have experienced homelessness in the last 24 months, as defined under the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, United States Code, title 42, section 1143a.

(c) Notwithstanding paragraph (b), beginning July 1, 2025, the commissioner must give highest priority to applications from children in families with income equal to or less than the rate specified under subdivision 2, paragraph (a), clause (1), item (i), and within this group must prioritize children who meet one or more of the criteria listed in paragraph (b).

(d) The commissioner may prioritize applications on additional factors, including but not limited to availability of funding, family income, geographic location, and whether the child's family is on a waiting list for a publicly funded program providing early education or child care services.

Subd. 4. **Administration.** (a) The commissioner shall establish a schedule of tiered per-child scholarship amounts based on the results of the rate survey conducted under section 142E.02, subdivision 7, the cost of providing high-quality early care and learning to children in varying circumstances, a family's income, and geographic location.

(b) Notwithstanding paragraph (a), a program that has a four-star rating under section 142D.13 must receive, for each scholarship recipient who meets the criteria in subdivision 3, paragraph (b) or (c), an amount not less than the cost to provide full-time care at the 75th percentile of the most recent market rate survey under section 142E.02, subdivision 7.

(c) A four-star rated program that has children eligible for a scholarship enrolled in or on a waiting list for a program beginning in July, August, or September may notify the commissioner, in the form and manner prescribed by the commissioner, each year of the program's desire to enhance program services or to serve more children than current funding provides. The commissioner may designate a predetermined number of scholarship slots for that program and notify the program of that number. For fiscal year 2018 and later, the statewide amount of funding directly designated by the commissioner must not exceed the funding directly designated for fiscal year 2017. Beginning July 1, 2016, a school district or Head Start program qualifying under this paragraph may use its established registration process to enroll scholarship recipients and may verify a scholarship recipient's family income in the same manner as for other program participants.

(d) A scholarship is awarded for a 12-month period. If the scholarship recipient has not been accepted and subsequently enrolled in a rated program within three months of the awarding of the scholarship, the scholarship cancels and the recipient must reapply in order to be eligible for another scholarship. An extension may be requested if a program is unavailable for the child within the three-month timeline. A child may not be awarded more than one scholarship in a 12-month period.

(e) A child who receives a scholarship who has not completed development screening under sections 142D.09 to 142D.093 must complete that screening within 90 days of first attending an eligible program or within 90 days after the child's third birthday if awarded a scholarship under the age of three.

(f) A school district or Head Start program enrolling scholarship recipients under paragraph (c) may apply to the commissioner, in the form and manner prescribed by the commissioner, for direct payment of state aid. Upon receipt of the application, the commissioner must pay each program directly for each approved scholarship recipient enrolled under paragraph (c) according to the metered payment system or another schedule established by the commissioner. This paragraph expires upon implementation of the processes required under paragraph (g).

(g) Beginning January 1, 2026, to the extent funding is available under subdivision 7, paragraph (f), the commissioner must:

(1) make scholarship payments to eligible programs in advance of or at the beginning of the delivery of services based on an approved scholarship recipient's enrollment; and

(2) implement a process for transferring scholarship awards between eligible programs, when initiated by a scholarship recipient. Under the process, the commissioner:

(i) may adjust scholarship payment schedules for eligible programs to account for changes in a scholarship recipient's enrollment; and

(ii) must specify a period of time for which scholarship payments must continue to an eligible program for a scholarship recipient who transfers to a different eligible program.

(h) By January 1, 2026, to the extent funding is available under subdivision 6, paragraph (f), the commissioner must have information technology systems in place that prioritize efficiency and usability for families and early childhood programs and that support the following:

(1) the ability for a family to apply for a scholarship through an online system that allows the family to upload documents that demonstrate scholarship eligibility;

(2) the administration of scholarships, including but not limited to verification of family and child eligibility, identification of programs eligible to accept scholarships, management of scholarship awards and payments, and communication with families and eligible programs; and

(3) making scholarship payments to eligible programs in advance of or at the beginning of the delivery of services for an approved scholarship recipient.

(i) In creating the information technology systems and functions under paragraph (h), the commissioner must consider the requirements for and the potential transition to the great start scholarships program under section 142A.44.

Subd. 5. **Early childhood program eligibility.** (a) In order to be eligible to accept an early learning scholarship, a program must participate in the quality rating and improvement system under section 142D.13.

(b) Any program accepting scholarships must use the revenue to supplement and not supplant federal funding.

Subd. 6. **Report required.** The commissioner shall contract with an independent contractor to evaluate the early learning scholarship program. The evaluation must include recommendations regarding the appropriate scholarship amount, efficiency, and effectiveness of the administration, and impact on kindergarten readiness. By January 15, 2016, the commissioner shall submit a written copy of the evaluation to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees and divisions with primary jurisdiction over kindergarten through grade 12 education.

Subd. 7. **Early learning scholarship account.** (a) An account is established in the special revenue fund known as the "early learning scholarship account."

(b) Funds appropriated for early learning scholarships under this section must be transferred to the early learning scholarship account in the special revenue fund.

(c) Money in the account is annually appropriated to the commissioner for early learning scholarships under this section. Any returned funds are available to be regranted.

(d) Up to $2,133,000 annually is appropriated to the commissioner for costs associated with administering and monitoring early learning scholarships.

(e) The commissioner may use funds under paragraph (c) for the purpose of family outreach and distribution of scholarships.

(f) The commissioner may use up to $12,000,000 in funds under paragraph (c) to create information technology systems under subdivision 4, paragraph (h). Beginning July 1, 2025, the commissioner may use up to $2,400,000 annually in funds under paragraph (c) to maintain the information technology systems that support the early learning scholarships program.

(g) By December 31 of each year, the commissioner must provide a written report to the legislative committees with jurisdiction over early care and learning programs on the use of funds under paragraph (c) for purposes other than providing scholarships to eligible children.

History: *2013 c 116 art 8 s 2; 2014 c 272 art 6 s 2,3; 2014 c 312 art 20 s 10-12; 1Sp2015 c 3 art 9 s 6; 1Sp2017 c 5 art 8 s 3-6; 1Sp2019 c 11 art 8 s 5; 1Sp2020 c 8 art 5 s 3,4; 2023 c 54 s 11-15; 2023 c 55 art 9 s 19; 2024 c 80 art 4 s 16,26; art 5 s 7; art 7 s 12; 2024 c 109 art 9 s 4,5; 2024 c 115 art 11 s 2,3; art 16 s 42;; 2025 c 20 s 113*

142D.30 RETAINING EARLY EDUCATORS THROUGH ATTAINING INCENTIVES NOW (REETAIN) GRANT PROGRAM.

Subdivision 1. **Establishment; purpose.** The retaining early educators through attaining incentives now (REETAIN) grant program is established to provide competitive grants to incentivize well-trained child care professionals to remain in the workforce. The overall goal of the REETAIN grant program is to create more consistent care for children over time.

Subd. 2. **Administration.** The commissioner shall administer the REETAIN grant program through a grant to a nonprofit with the demonstrated ability to manage benefit programs for child care professionals. Up to ten percent of grant money may be used for administration of the grant program.

Subd. 3. **Application.** Applicants must apply for the REETAIN grant program using the forms and according to timelines established by the commissioner.

Subd. 4. **Eligibility.** (a) To be eligible for a grant, an applicant must:

(1) be licensed to provide child care or work for a licensed child care program;

(2) work directly with children at least 30 hours per week;

(3) have worked in the applicant's current position for at least 12 months;

(4) agree to work in the early childhood care and education field for at least 12 months upon receiving a grant under this section;

(5) have a career lattice step of five or higher;

(6) have a current membership with the Minnesota quality improvement and registry tool;

(7) not be a current teacher education and compensation helps scholarship recipient; and

(8) meet any other requirements determined by the commissioner.

(b) Grant recipients must sign a contract agreeing to remain in the early childhood care and education field for 12 months.

Subd. 5. **Grant awards.** Grant awards must be made annually and may be made up to an amount per recipient determined by the commissioner. Grant recipients may use grant money for program supplies, training, or personal expenses.

Subd. 6. **Report.** By January 1 each year, the commissioner must report to the legislative committees with jurisdiction over child care about the number of grants awarded to recipients and outcomes of the grant program since the last report.

History: *1Sp2021 c 7 art 14 s 3; 2024 c 80 art 4 s 26; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 42*

142D.31 TEACHER EDUCATION AND COMPENSATION HELPS; EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHER EDUCATION INCENTIVES.

Subdivision 1. **TEACH.** The teacher education and compensation helps program (TEACH) is established to provide tuition scholarships and education incentives to early care and education providers. The commissioner shall make a grant with appropriations for this purpose to a nonprofit organization licensed to administer the TEACH early childhood program.

Subd. 2. **Program components.** (a) The nonprofit organization must use the grant for:

(1) tuition scholarships in amounts per year consistent with the national TEACH early childhood program requirements for courses leading to the nationally recognized child development associate credential or college-level courses leading to an associate's degree or bachelor's degree in early childhood development and school-age care; and

(2) education incentives of a minimum of $250 to participants in the tuition scholarship program if they complete a year of working in the early care and education field.

(b) Applicants for the scholarship must be employed by a licensed or certified early childhood or child care program and working directly with children, a licensed family child care provider, employed by a public prekindergarten program, employed by a Head Start program, or an employee in a school-age program exempt from licensing under section 142B.05, subdivision 2, paragraph (a), clause (8). Lower wage earners must be given priority in awarding the tuition scholarships. Scholarship recipients must contribute at least ten percent of the total scholarship and must be sponsored by their employers, who must also contribute at least five percent of the total scholarship. Scholarship recipients who work in licensed family child care under Minnesota Rules, chapter 9502, must contribute at least ten percent of the total scholarship and are not required to receive employer sponsorship or employer match.

Subd. 3. **Advisory committee.** The TEACH early childhood and Minnesota early childhood teacher education incentive programs may have an advisory board as prescribed by the national TEACH organization.

Subd. 4. **Administration.** A nonprofit organization that receives a grant under this section may use ten percent of the grant amount to administer the program.

History: *2007 c 144 art 2 s 23; 2008 c 298 s 7; 2013 c 99 art 2 s 29; 2016 c 158 art 1 s 51; 1Sp2021 c 7 art 14 s 5,6,24; 2024 c 80 art 2 s 74; art 4 s 26; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 42; 1Sp2025 c 3 art 13 s 5*

142D.32 EARLY CHILDHOOD REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP GRANT PROGRAM.

Subdivision 1. **Establishment.** The commissioner of children, youth, and families shall, in coordination with the commissioner of labor and industry, establish an apprenticeship grant program to provide employment-based training and mentoring opportunities for early childhood workers.

Subd. 2. **Definitions.** (a) For purposes of this section, the following terms have the meanings given.

(b) "Apprentice" means an employee participating in an early childhood registered apprenticeship program.

(c) "Early childhood registered apprenticeship program" means an organization holding the TEACH license with the Department of Children, Youth, and Families that is registered with the Department of Labor and Industry under chapter 178.

(d) "Early childhood signatory employer" means an employer that participates in an early childhood registered apprenticeship program and employs an apprentice and that is:

(1) a licensed child care center under Minnesota Rules, chapter 9503;

(2) a licensed family and group family child care provider under Minnesota Rules, chapter 9502;

(3) an early childhood family education program under section 142D.10; a school readiness program under section 142D.05; a voluntary prekindergarten program under section 142D.08; a special education program under chapter 125A; or a school readiness plus program under section 142D.07;

(4) a Head Start program under United States Code, title 42, section 9801, et seq.;

(5) a certified license-exempt child care center under chapter 142C; or

(6) a Tribally licensed child care program.

(e) "Mentor" means an early childhood registered apprenticeship program journeyworker under section 178.011, subdivision 9, who has a career lattice step of nine or higher.

Subd. 3. **Program components.** The organization holding the TEACH license with the Department of Children, Youth, and Families shall distribute the grant and must use the grant for:

(1) tuition scholarships for apprentices for courses leading to a higher education degree in early childhood;

(2) stipends for mentors; or

(3) stipends for early childhood signatory employers.

Subd. 4. **Grants to apprentices.** An apprentice may receive a higher education scholarship of up to $10,000 for up to 24 months under this section, provided the apprentice:

(1) enrolls in an early childhood registered apprenticeship program;

(2) is a current participant in good standing in the TEACH scholarship program under section 142D.31;

(3) participates in meetings and on-the-job learning with a mentor consistent with the requirements in the apprenticeship program standards;

(4) works toward meeting early childhood competencies identified in Minnesota's Knowledge and Competency Framework for early childhood professionals, as observed by a mentor; and

(5) works toward the attainment of a higher education degree in early childhood.

Subd. 5. **Stipends for mentors.** A mentor shall receive up to $4,000 for each apprentice mentored under this section, provided the mentor complies with the requirements in the apprenticeship program standard and completes eight weeks of mentor training and additional training on observation. Mentors may use money received through stipends for personal expenses. The training must be free of charge to mentors.

Subd. 6. **Stipends for early childhood signatory employers.** (a) An early childhood signatory employer shall receive up to $5,000 for each apprentice employed under this section, provided the early childhood signatory employer complies with the requirements in the apprenticeship program standard and the following requirements:

(1) sponsor each apprentice's TEACH scholarship under section 142D.31; and

(2) provide each apprentice at least three hours a week of paid release time for coursework.

(b) An early childhood signatory employer may not employ more than three apprentices at one site in a 12-month period.

History: *2023 c 70 art 13 s 19; 2024 c 80 art 3 s 3; art 4 s 26; art 8 s 70; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 42*

142D.33 GRANTS FOR GROW YOUR OWN EARLY CHILDHOOD AND FAMILY EDUCATOR PROGRAMS.

Subdivision 1. **Establishment.** The commissioner of children, youth, and families must award grants for Grow Your Own Early Childhood Educator programs established under this section in order to develop an early childhood education workforce that more closely reflects the state's increasingly diverse student population and ensures all students have equitable access to high-quality early educators.

Subd. 2. **Grow Your Own Early Childhood and Family Educator programs.** (a) Minnesota-licensed family child care or licensed center-based child care programs, school district or charter school early learning programs, Head Start programs, institutions of higher education, and other community partnership nongovernmental organizations may apply for a grant to host, build, or expand an early childhood educator preparation program that leads to an individual earning the credential or degree needed to enter or advance in the early childhood education workforce. Examples include programs that help interested individuals earn the child development associate (CDA) credential, an associate's degree in child development, or a bachelor's degree in early childhood and family education studies or early childhood licensures. The grant recipient must use at least 80 percent of grant money for student stipends, tuition scholarships, or unique student teaching or field placement experiences.

(b) Programs providing financial support to interested individuals may require a commitment from the individuals awarded, as determined by the commissioner, to teach in the program or school for a reasonable amount of time that does not exceed one year.

Subd. 3. **Grant procedure.** (a) Eligible programs must apply for a grant under this section in the form and manner specified by the commissioner. To the extent that there are sufficient applications, the commissioner must, to the extent practicable, award an equal number of grants between applicants in greater Minnesota and those in the metropolitan area.

(b) For the 2023-2024 school year and later, grant applications for new and existing programs must be received by the commissioner no later than January 15 of the year prior to the school year in which the grant will be used. The commissioner must review all applications and notify grant recipients by March 15 or as

soon as practicable of the anticipated amount awarded. If the commissioner determines that sufficient funding is unavailable for the grants, the commissioner must notify grant applicants by June 30 or as soon as practicable that there is insufficient money.

Subd. 4. **Grow Your Own Early Childhood Education program account.** (a) The Grow Your Own Early Childhood Education program account is established in the special revenue fund.

(b) Money appropriated for the Grow Your Own Early Childhood Education program under this section must be transferred to the Grow Your Own Early Childhood Education program account in the special revenue fund.

(c) Money in the account is annually appropriated to the commissioner for the Grow Your Own Early Childhood Education program under this section. Any returned money is available to be regranted. Grant recipients may apply to use grant money over a period of up to 60 months.

(d) Up to $175,000 annually is appropriated to the commissioner for costs associated with administering and monitoring the program under this section.

Subd. 5. **Report.** Grant recipients must annually report to the commissioner in the form and manner determined by the commissioner on their activities under this section, including the number of educators supported through grant money and the number of educators obtaining credentials by type. Data must indicate the beginning level of education and ending level of education of individual participants and an assessment of program effectiveness, including participant feedback, areas for improvement, and employment changes and current employment status, where applicable, after completing preparation programs. The commissioner must publish a report for the public that summarizes the activities and outcomes of grant recipients and what was done to promote sharing of effective practices among grant recipients and potential grant applicants.

History: *2023 c 54 s 6; 2024 c 80 art 4 s 26; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 42*