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State of Minnesota
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

**EIGHTY-FIFTH
SESSION**

HOUSE FILE No. 3463

February 25, 2008

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The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on E-12 Education

1.1 A bill for an act
1.2 relating to early childhood education; creating an at-risk prekindergarten
1.3 program; appropriating money; proposing coding for new law in Minnesota
1.4 Statutes, chapter 124D.

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

1.6 Section 1. **[124D.168] AT-RISK PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM.**

1.7 Subdivision 1. **Establishment.** An at-risk prekindergarten program is established
1.8 to serve at-risk three- and four-year-old children in quality prekindergarten settings to
1.9 create opportunities for Minnesota's youngest children to develop and learn to their fullest
1.10 potential.

1.11 Subd. 2. **Child eligibility.** A child must be at least three years old on September 1
1.12 of that year, not yet enrolled in kindergarten, and be a resident of a school district in which
1.13 one of the programs is located.

1.14 Subd. 3. **Program eligibility.** At-risk prekindergarten program funds may be
1.15 granted to school districts that meet the program requirements under subdivision 4.
1.16 Districts may contract with qualifying preschool or child care programs to provide
1.17 services. At least ... percent of students must be served by nondistrict operated programs.
1.18 Districts must apply to the commissioner of education for program funds on the forms and
1.19 according to the timelines of the commissioner. The commissioner shall give preference
1.20 to districts that serve the most at-risk children, based on the percentage of students
1.21 participating in the free and reduced-price lunch program. Districts that have fewer than
1.22 50 percent of students participating in the free and reduced-price lunch program are not
1.23 eligible to receive at-risk prekindergarten program funds. To the extent possible, the

2.1 commissioner must provide for distribution of funds to metropolitan, suburban, and rural
2.2 areas of the state.

2.3 Subd. 4. **Program requirements.** School districts must administer a
2.4 prekindergarten program that meets the following requirements in order to be eligible for
2.5 at-risk prekindergarten program funding:

2.6 (1) programs must have a total class size of no more than 18 students and a child to
2.7 adult ratio of nine to one;

2.8 (2) programs must meet a minimum of two and one-half hours per day, four days
2.9 per week;

2.10 (3) curriculum and learning standards must be aligned between the prekindergarten,
2.11 participating child care, and kindergarten programs;

2.12 (4) programs must employ necessary qualified teachers or be rated a three or four by
2.13 the Quality Rating System;

2.14 (5) programs must have a strong accountability system with documented learning
2.15 standards, and must be highly rated by the Quality Rating System;

2.16 (6) each child must be assessed at program entrance and again at program exit;

2.17 (7) programs must offer comprehensive family services including developmental,
2.18 behavioral, and health screening;

2.19 (8) programs must offer compensatory services in language, literacy, and
2.20 mathematical thinking in a developmentally appropriate manner;

2.21 (9) programs must provide children's mental health consultation as needed; and

2.22 (10) programs must develop collaborative partnerships with school-based early
2.23 childhood programs, kindergarten teachers and other school officials, Head Start, and
2.24 community-based child care programs.

2.25 Subd. 5. **Program alignment.** Each school district receiving at-risk prekindergarten
2.26 funding must ensure that the at-risk prekindergarten program curriculum and learning
2.27 standards are aligned with kindergarten curriculum and learning standards.

2.28 Subd. 6. **Grants.** (a) The amount of the grant awarded to each participating district
2.29 must not be more than \$13,000 per child served for full-time programs and \$6,000 per
2.30 child served for part-time programs.

2.31 (b) A district may establish a new program where no existing, reasonably accessible
2.32 program meets the program requirements in subdivision 4. A district may contract with a
2.33 qualified preschool or child care program to provide eligible children developmentally
2.34 appropriate services that meet the requirements in subdivision 4. Districts must submit a
2.35 copy of each contract to the commissioner.

3.1 (c) A qualified program that offers services including home visits, parent supports,
3.2 social services, and health referrals to the most at-risk children may receive a bonus
3.3 above the maximum payment in paragraph (a) in the amount of ten percent of the per
3.4 child payment rate for each child served.

3.5 Sec. 2. **APPROPRIATIONS; DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.**

3.6 \$..... is appropriated from the general fund in fiscal year 2009 to the commissioner
3.7 of education for the at-risk prekindergarten program under Minnesota Statutes, section
3.8 124D.168.

3.9 **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective July 1, 2008.