



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE April 26, 2022

Welcome to the Child Care Aware Legislative update. The updates from the full session, along with our Bill Trackers, can be found on the [Child Care Aware of Minnesota Website](#).

Each week we will provide a brief overview of bills that have been introduced, action that has been taken at the committee level or on the floor, and any other pertinent news related to early care and education and school-age care issues. If you have additions to recommend to the bill tracker, please contact [Ann McCully](#).

OVERVIEW

As lawmakers return to the Capitol this week from their spring break, the focus will be on the passage of all of the omnibus bills (packages of policy and funding proposals by topic area), first through the House Ways and Means/Senate Finance Committees and then on to the House and Senate Floors. After this, the process of negotiating differences in these proposals will take place through joint House/Senate conference committees.

The current House and Senate bills are taking different approaches to their early childhood proposals. The Minnesota House's budget proposal includes a \$1.6 billion omnibus tax bill, which expands tax credits for child care and education expenses.

The House also proposes an additional \$1.2 billion next year for early care and education, including more funding for child care assistance, ongoing funds for stabilization and hardship grants, expanding of Early Learning Scholarships to ages 0-3, and a new, combined Voluntary Pre-K program delivered through public schools, child care centers, head start programs, and licensed family child care programs. See the [April 12 Session Update](#) for a complete list of these elements.

In contrast, the Senate's proposed tax bill contains no tax credits for child care or education expenses. The Senate also does not include any new funding for early care and education in its budget proposal.

In order to meet the constitutionally required adjournment date of May 23, negotiations are needed between the House and Senate leadership and the Governor. However, because the current state budget is set through June 2023, there is a chance that the Legislature could adjourn without spending any of the \$9.3 billion surplus. If that is the case, surplus funds will be back on the table during the budget-setting session in 2023.

Below you will find updates on action taken to approve Omnibus Bills last week in the House Ways and Means and Senate Finance Committees and a summary of any Early Childhood elements included in these bills.

COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

- On April 21, the **House Ways and Means Committee** heard the Omnibus Education Bill which combined HF 4300-Davnie and HF 4735-Pinto (articles 5 & 6). The bill was recommended to pass as amended and sent to the General Register. The bill includes the following elements:
 - Modifies the existing after-school community learning program grant language, removes eligibility for child care centers, requires grant programs to offer a broad array of academic enrichment activities - \$25 million in 2022-23
 - Increases the appropriation for full-service community schools - \$50 million in 2022-23
 - Allows adults who provide child care, or caregivers, to participate in early childhood family education (ECFE) programs
 - Establishes a new Voluntary prekindergarten program for all eligible four-year-old children; blends VPK, school readiness, school readiness plus, and early learning pathway two scholarships - \$67 million in 2022-23 and \$193 million in 2024-25
 - Allows a school district, charter school, licensed child care center, licensed family child care provider, or Head Start agency that meets specified requirements to establish a VPK program for eligible four-year-old children
 - School district and charter school VPK programs are funded based on the number of eligible pupils enrolled, Head Start and licensed child care VPK programs receive \$11,000 per child served per year
 - An eligible child can participate in a VPK program free of charge
 - Allows VPK programs to charge a sliding fee for instructional hours that exceed the 850 hours required during the school year, any hours provided before or after school, or any hours for child care provided in the summer
 - Programs must provide comprehensive program content aligned with the state early learning standards, including the implementation of curriculum, assessment, and intentional instructional strategies
 - Provide voluntary prekindergarten staff salaries and set salary schedules equivalent to the salaries of public school district elementary school staff with similar credentials and experience for school district and charter prekindergarten program sites and, to the extent practicable, for Head Start, child care center, and family child care sites
 - Employ a lead teacher for each voluntary prekindergarten classroom who has at least a bachelor's degree in early education or a related field no later than July 1, 2028; Teachers employed by an eligible provider for at least three of the last five years immediately preceding July 1, 2022, who meet the necessary content knowledge and teaching skills for early childhood educators, as demonstrated through measures determined by the state, may be employed as a lead teacher
 - School districts and charter schools that receive funding for voluntary pre-kindergarten programs must develop and submit a mixed-delivery program plan to the Department of Education annually by July 1, 2023, and every year thereafter
 - Provides that the state appropriation for Head Start programs may be used for costs associated with program operations, infrastructure, or reconfiguration to serve children from birth to age five in center-based services
 - Increases the amount of state aid paid to school districts for each child who is screened prior to or within 30 days of enrolling in public school kindergarten
 - Establishes the Grow Your Own Early Childhood Educator program to enhance and diversify the early childhood workforce
 - Allows school districts to receive school breakfast aid for ECSE students who participate in VPK programs
 - Allows adults who provide child care, or caregivers, to participate in ECFE programs
 - Makes families that have a child who is referred as in need of child protective services or placed in foster care eligible for Early Learning scholarships regardless of a family's income level

- Changes a child’s eligibility for scholarships to include all children from birth through age four on September 1 of the current school year
- Directs the commissioner to give highest priority for scholarships to children who are younger than four years old and adds children who have incarcerated parents to the priority list
- Allows school districts to receive English learner aid for ECSE students, Services provided to ECSE students do not count against the seven-year limit of total funded service
- Allows the commissioner of human services to make grants to school districts and charter schools to provide services related to children’s mental health
- Authorizes DEED to conduct an early childhood workforce study

EDUCATION (ECE) APPROPRIATIONS

- Early Learning Scholarships increased funding: \$150 million in 2022-23 and \$90 million in 2024-25
 - Early Childhood Family Education Office at MDE: \$325,000 in 2022-23 and \$650,000 in 2024-25
 - Grow your own Early Educators: \$3.8 million in 2022-23 and \$7.6 million in 2024-25
 - Early Head Start increased funding: \$10 million in 2022-23 and \$20 million in 2024-25
 - Infant & Early Ch. Mental Health Consult (Transfer to DHS): \$3.8 million in 2022-23 and \$7.5 million in 2024-25
 - Early Childhood Family Education Office at MDE: \$325,000 in 2022-23 and \$650,000 in 2024-25
 - Early Childhood Mental Health Consulting: \$2.5 million in 2022-23 and \$5 million in 2024-25
 - Reach out and Read increase: \$250,000 in 2022-23 and \$500,000 in 2024-25
 - Early Childhood Workforce study (transfer to DEED): \$255,000 in 2022-23
- On April 19 the **House Ways and Means Committee** heard the Omnibus Agriculture Bill (HF 4366-Sundin). The bill was recommended to pass and received its second reading on the House Floor. The bill contains the following:
 - Farm-to-school grant funding increased, child care providers who purchase from local farmers reimbursement authorized (\$1.6 million in 2022-23)
 - On April 19, the **Senate Finance Committee** heard the Omnibus Health and Human Services bill (SF 4410-Abeler). The bill was recommended to pass as amended and received its second reading on the Senate Floor. The bill contains the following element:
 - Quality Parenting Initiative funding provided (\$200,000 in 2024-25)

BILL INTRODUCTIONS

This list includes topics, numbers, authors, and general committee referrals for bills filed during the week of April 18-22. For more information about each bill, or to see all of the bills introduced, please download [our weekly Bill Tracker](#).

- No new bills related to early care and education or school-age care were introduced this week.

TIMELINES

- **Monday, May 23** - Last day of session