

1 Sec. X. PREKINDERGARTEN EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE;

2 REPORT

3 (a) Creation. There is created the Prekindergarten Education Study
4 Committee to make recommendations on how to improve and expand
5 accessible, affordable, and high-quality prekindergarten education.

6 (b) Membership. The Committee shall be composed of the following
7 members:

8 (1) the Secretary of Education or designee, who shall serve as chair;

9 (2) the Secretary of Human Services or designee;

10 (3) the Executive Director of the Vermont Principals' Association or
11 designee;

12 (4) the Executive Director of the Vermont Superintendents Association
13 or designee;

14 (5) the Executive Director of the Vermont School Board Association or
15 designee;

16 (6) the Executive Director of the Vermont National Education
17 Association or designee;

18 (7) the Chair of the Vermont Council of Special Education
19 Administrators or designee;

20 (8) the Executive Director of the Vermont Curriculum Leaders
21 Association or designee;

1 (9) the Executive Director of Building Bright Futures or designee;

2 (10) a representative of a prequalified private provider as defined in 16

3 V.S.A. § 829, operating a licensed center-based child care and preschool

4 program, appointed by the Speaker of the House;

5 (11) a representative of a prequalified private provider as defined in 16

6 V.S.A. § 829, operating a regulated family child care home, appointed by the

7 Committee on Committees;

8 (12) the Head Start Collaboration Office Director or designee;

9 (13) the Executive Officer of Let’s Grow Kids or designee; and

10 (14) a family representative with a prekindergarten-age child, appointed
11 by the Building Bright Futures Council.

12 (c) Powers and duties. The Committee shall examine the delivery of
13 prekindergarten education in Vermont and make recommendations for
14 expanding equitable access for all children three and four years of age in a
15 manner that achieves the best outcomes for children, whether through the
16 current mixed-delivery system, the public school system, the private
17 prekindergarten system, or a system that allows school districts to contract
18 with private providers. The Committee shall also examine and make
19 recommendations on the changes necessary to provide prekindergarten
20 education to all children three and four years of age through the public school
21 system, including a timeline and transition plan for such changes. In

1 conducting its analysis, the Committee shall address the following topics and
2 questions, which may yield distinct recommendations for children three and
3 four years of age:

4 (1) Outcomes and quality.

5 (A) What are the benchmarks for “high quality” in prekindergarten
6 education?

7 (B) How should best practices be implemented and measured across
8 various prekindergarten education settings?

9 (2) Capacity and demand.

10 (A) How many children, by age, does the current mixed-delivery
11 system have the capacity to serve? In studying this issue, the Committee shall
12 consider the number of children on waitlists and the number of vacancies in
13 programs.

14 (B) What are the workforce requirements to expand prekindergarten
15 education? In studying this question, the Committee may consider:

16 (i) whether there is a gap between the total number of licensed
17 teachers currently working and the number needed for expansion;

18 (ii) whether there is a gap between the total prekindergarten
19 education workforce, including paraeducators, and the number needed for
20 expansion; and

1 (iii) what are the educational and training costs associated with
2 training and retaining the workforce necessary for expansion?

3 (C) If prekindergarten education in the public school system is
4 provided solely to children four years of age, what is the impact on the
5 capacity and workforce of private prekindergarten providers?

6 (3) Special education.

7 (A) How many children three and four years of age are currently on
8 individual education programs receiving services in public and private
9 settings?

10 (B) Are children three and four years of age on individual education
11 plans receiving the full range of services that they are entitled to?

12 (C) Does the availability or cost of special education services vary
13 between private and public prequalified providers?

14 (4) Public school expansion.

15 (A) What infrastructure changes are necessary to expand
16 prekindergarten education?

17 (B) How would the current prekindergarten education mixed-delivery
18 system transition to a program within the public school system?

19 (C) What capacity needs to be built for developmentally appropriate
20 after-school and out-of-school-time care?

1 (D) Are changes needed to existing health and safety standards for
2 public schools to accommodate children three and four years of age?

3 (5) Funding and costs.

4 (A) What are fiscally strategic options to sustain and expand
5 universal prekindergarten education?

6 (B) What is the financial and business impact on regulated private
7 childcare providers if the prekindergarten system transitions to public schools?

8 (C) What, if any, changes need to be made to pupil weights for
9 prekindergarten students?

10 (D) What, if any, changes need to be made to tuition rates for private
11 prekindergarten programs?

12 (6) Oversight.

13 (A) What additional Agency of Education personnel or resources
14 would be needed to oversee an expansion of the current prekindergarten
15 education system under either a mixed-delivery model, a public school system
16 model, or a system that allows school districts to contract with private
17 providers?

18 (B) What additional Agency of Human Services personnel or
19 resources would be needed to oversee an expansion of the current mixed-
20 delivery model or a private prekindergarten system?

1 (d) Assistance. The Committee shall have the administrative, technical,
2 fiscal, and legal assistance of the Agencies of Education and of Human
3 Services. If the Agencies are unable to provide the Committee with adequate
4 support to assist with its technical, fiscal, or legal needs, then the Agency of
5 Education shall retain a contractor with the necessary expertise to assist the
6 Committee.

7 (e) Report. On or before December 1, 2023, the Committee shall submit a
8 written report to the House Committees on Education and on Human Services
9 and the Senate Committees on Education and on Health and Welfare with its
10 findings and recommendations based on the analysis conducted pursuant to
11 subsection (c) of this section. The report shall include draft legislative
12 language to support the Committee’s recommendations.

13 (f) Meetings.

14 (1) The Secretary of Education or designee shall call the first meeting of
15 the Committee to occur on or before July 15, 2023.

16 (2) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

17 (3) The Committee shall cease to exist on February 1, 2024.

18 (g) Compensation and reimbursement. Members of the Committee who
19 are not employees of the State of Vermont and who are not otherwise
20 compensated or reimbursed for their attendance shall be entitled to per diem
21 compensation and reimbursement of expenses pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 1010

1 for not more than 10 meetings per year. These payments shall be made from
2 monies appropriated to the Agency of Education.

3 (h) Appropriations.

4 (1) The sum of \$5,000.00 is appropriated to the Agency of Education
5 from the General Fund in fiscal year 2024 for per diem compensation and
6 reimbursement of expenses for members of the Committee.

7 (2) The sum of \$100,000.000 is appropriated to the Agency of
8 Education from the General Fund in fiscal year 2024 for cost of retaining a
9 contractor as provided under subsection (d) of this section.

10 (3) Any unused portion of these appropriations shall, as of July 1, 2024,
11 revert to the General Fund.