

1 S.214

2 Introduced by Senator Ram Hinsdale

3 Referred to Committee on

4 Date:

5 Subject: Education; prekindergarten education; geographically isolated; tuition

6 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to allow a

7 prekindergarten student that resides in a geographically isolated school district

8 to use State funds authorized under 16 V.S.A. § 829 to attend a

9 prekindergarten program in New Hampshire if certain conditions are met.

10 An act relating to the provision of prekindergarten education in  
11 geographically isolated school districts

12 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

13 Sec. 1. 16 V.S.A. § 829 is amended to read:

14 § 829. PREKINDERGARTEN EDUCATION

15 \* \* \*

16 (e) Rules. The Secretary of Education and the Commissioner for Children  
17 and Families shall jointly develop and agree to rules and present them to the  
18 State Board for adoption under 3 V.S.A. chapter 25 as follows:

19 \* \* \*

1                   (12) To establish a definition for “geographically isolated school  
2                   district” as the term relates to the provision of prekindergarten education under  
3                   subsection (i) of this section. The Agency and Department shall establish a  
4                   process for a prekindergarten student residing in a geographically isolated  
5                   school district to enroll in a prekindergarten program located in New  
6                   Hampshire, pursuant to subsection (i) of this section.

7                   \* \* \*

8                   (h) Geographic limitations Prekindergarten regions.

9                   (1) Notwithstanding the requirement that a district pay tuition to any  
10                  prequalified public or private provider in the State, a school board may choose  
11                  to limit the geographic boundaries within which the district shall pay tuition by  
12                  paying tuition solely to those prequalified providers in which parents and  
13                  guardians choose to enroll resident prekindergarten children that are located  
14                  within the district’s “prekindergarten region” as determined in subdivision (2)  
15                  of this subsection.

16                   (2) For purposes of this subsection, upon application from the school  
17                  board, a district’s prekindergarten region shall be determined jointly by the  
18                  Agencies of Education and of Human Services in consultation with the school  
19                  board, private providers of prekindergarten education, parents and guardians of  
20                  prekindergarten children, and other interested parties pursuant to a process  
21                  adopted by rule under subsection (e) of this section. A prekindergarten region:

18 (i) Geographically isolated school districts.

19                   (1) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, on behalf of a  
20                   resident prekindergarten child, a school district shall pay tuition for  
21                   prekindergarten education for 10 hours per week for 35 weeks to a

1       prekindergarten program located outside Vermont if the following conditions  
2       are met:

3           (A) the prekindergarten student is a resident of a geographically  
4       isolated school district as defined by the State Board of Education; and

5           (B) the prekindergarten program located outside Vermont is:

6            (i) approved to provide publicly funded prekindergarten education  
7       under the laws of New Hampshire; and

8            (ii) is located within 25 miles of the Vermont border.

9           (2) Payments made pursuant to this subsection shall be paid under the  
10       same statewide rate that is paid to prequalified prekindergarten providers  
11       located within Vermont, which may be adjusted regionally, that is established  
12       annually through a process jointly developed and implemented by the  
13       Agencies of Education and of Human Services.

14       Sec. 2. STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION; PREKINDERGARTEN  
15                   EDUCATION; RULES

16       On or before January 1, 2027, the State Board of Education and the  
17       Department for Children and Families shall initiate rulemaking, pursuant to 3  
18       V.S.A. chapter 25, to amend the prekindergarten education rules, Agency of  
19       Education, Prekindergarten Education (22-000-035) to ensure compliance with  
20       16 V.S.A. § 829(e)(12) and (i).

1 Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

2 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.