

S.214

Introduced by Senator Ram Hinsdale

Referred to Committee on

Date:

Subject: Education; prekindergarten education; geographically isolated; tuition

Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to allow a
prekindergarten student that resides in a geographically isolated school district
to use State funds authorized under 16 V.S.A. § 829 to attend a
prekindergarten program in New Hampshire if certain conditions are met.

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

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

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

§ 829. PREKINDERGARTEN EDUCATION

* * *

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

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

1 (A) shall not be smaller than the geographic boundaries of the school
2 district;

3 (B) shall be based in part upon the estimated number of
4 prekindergarten children residing in the district and in surrounding districts, the
5 availability of prequalified private and public providers of prekindergarten
6 education, commuting patterns, and other region-specific criteria; and

7 (C) shall be designed to support existing partnerships between the
8 school district and private providers of prekindergarten education.

9 (3) If a school board chooses to pay tuition to providers solely within its
10 prekindergarten region, and if a resident prekindergarten child is unable to
11 access publicly funded prekindergarten education within that region, then the
12 child's parent or guardian may request and in its discretion the district may pay
13 tuition at the statewide rate for a prekindergarten education program operated
14 by a prequalified provider located outside the prekindergarten region.

15 (4) Except for the narrow exception permitting a school board to limit
16 geographic boundaries under subdivision (1) of this subsection, all other
17 provisions of this section and related rules shall continue to apply.

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.