Urban Education Network is registered as undecided and the Rural School Advocates of Iowa are registered in support of allowing young 5-year-olds to attend SVVP and be counted for enrollment purposes.  Some things to consider:

* COVID Preschool Enrollment Decline: PK doesn't have a budget guarantee for declining enrollment or on-time funding spending authority for increasing enrollment.  Statewide last Oct 1, PK enrollment dropped 4,076 students. That means that school preschool budgets will be down $14.4 million next fall, when the normal number of 4-year-olds are likely to show up.  If districts don't have big carry forwards, there won't be enough slots in many places for 4-year-olds, let alone young 5s.  (Spreadsheet attached that shows PK enrollment history for UEN district and the statewide total enrollment number at the bottom.)
* Kindergarten enrollment also dropped by 2,086 students statewide (that's more than 1/3 of the total enrollment decline of 5,935). That means that next fall’s kindergarten class is likely to have more 6-year-olds than normal, making sections larger or requiring more kindergarten teachers for those 2,086 students. With a larger kindergarten class than normal, it’s would help smooth out that pressure impact of some young 5-year-olds were in PK.
* Currently, kindergarteners count for the full 1.0 district cost per pupil, while PK is half of that, weighted at 0.5. If the enrollment growth next fall in PK isn’t funded, there is an additional disincentive to steer any 5-year-olds into PK.
* Rural schools may have a few more slots in a PK class without having to expand the number of sections, but urban school do not. If the legislature can find the way to fund PK enrollment increases timely, UEN would be supportive of this bill too.
* About cost: quality PK lowers costs later. Iowa has seen a drop in special education enrollment since 2010 when we began phasing in four-year-old PK. Although that’s not a causal study, it correlates to the research base, sited below. If we can fund and provide a quality PK experience for more students, we are likely to see a special education cost savings (Special Education at 0.7 weighting for one year for level 1 especially if provided for several years, far outweigh the .5 weighting for PK for one year). There will be other savings in the human services and justice appropriations areas down the road too.
* This bill should be effective for the fall of 2021 if it’s going to help solve our current PK pressure points.

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: Education Commission of the States, <http://www.ecs.org/docs/early-learning-primer.pdf> Oct. 2014: *Six rigorous long term evaluation studies have found that children who participated in high-quality preschool programs were:*

        *25% less likely to drop out of school.*

        *40% less likely to become a teen parent.*

        *50% less likely to be placed in special education.*

        *60% less likely to never attend college.*

        *70% less likely to be arrested for a violent crime.*

Sarah Daily, *Initiatives from Preschool to Third Grade: A Policymaker’s Guide*, shows reductions in costly outcomes that quality preschool prevents. (Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States, October 2014) [http://www.ecs.org/docs/early-learning-primer.pdf](http://www.ecs.org/docs/early-learning-primer.pdf.). The National Conference of State Legislatures quotes studies on long term return on investment. <http://www.ncsl.org/research/human-services/new-research-early-education-as-economic-investme.aspx>

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