

House File 2353 - Introduced

HOUSE FILE 2353

BY STONE

A BILL FOR

1 An Act relating to preschool for four-year-old children,
2 including funding, minimum hours, and approved programs, and
3 including effective date provisions.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

1 Section 1. Section 256C.1, Code 2024, is amended by adding
2 the following new subsection:

3 NEW SUBSECTION. 1A. *“Approved nonpublic program”* means
4 an accredited nonpublic school’s program for four-year-old
5 children approved by the department of education to provide
6 high-quality preschool instruction.

7 Sec. 2. Section 256C.3, subsection 3, paragraph f, Code
8 2024, is amended to read as follows:

9 *f.* A minimum of twenty hours per week of instruction for
10 eligible children whose household income is less than one
11 hundred eighty-five percent of the federal poverty level
12 applicable to the family’s size, and ten hours per week of
13 instruction for all other eligible children, delivered on the
14 skills and knowledge included in the student learning standards
15 developed for the preschool program.

16 Sec. 3. Section 256C.5, subsection 1, paragraph c, Code
17 2024, is amended by striking the paragraph and inserting in
18 lieu thereof the following:

19 *c.* *“Preschool budget enrollment”* means the figure that
20 is equal to the sum of the following numbers of eligible
21 students approved to participate and enrolled in the preschool
22 programming provided by a school district on October 1 of the
23 base year, or the first Monday in October if October 1 falls on
24 a Saturday or Sunday:

25 (1) Fifty percent of the actual enrollment of eligible
26 students not described in subparagraph (2).

27 (2) The actual enrollment of eligible students who receive
28 a minimum of twenty hours of instruction per week and whose
29 household income is less than one hundred eighty-five percent
30 of the federal poverty level applicable to the family’s size.

31 Sec. 4. NEW SECTION. **256C.6 Nonpublic programs.**

32 1. The state board shall adopt rules pursuant to chapter 17A
33 to define the requirements for an accredited nonpublic school
34 preschool program to be approved for the purposes of qualifying
35 for payments from an education savings account established

1 pursuant to section 257.11B. Such rules shall not require an
2 approved nonpublic program to do any of the following:

3 a. Retain the services of a teacher licensed by the board of
4 educational examiners for the approved nonpublic program.

5 b. Partner or collaborate with a school district.

6 c. Partner or collaborate with community stakeholders.

7 2. A child that is eligible to participate in preschool
8 programming provided by an approved local program shall also be
9 eligible to participate in an approved nonpublic program.

10 Sec. 5. Section 257.11B, subsection 1, paragraph b, Code
11 2024, is amended by adding the following new subparagraph:

12 NEW SUBPARAGRAPH. (01) *"Approved nonpublic program"* means
13 the same as defined in section 256C.1.

14 Sec. 6. Section 257.11B, subsection 1, paragraph b,
15 subparagraph (1), Code 2024, is amended to read as follows:

16 (1) *"Qualified educational expenses"* includes ~~tuition~~ any
17 of the following:

18 (a) Tuition and fees at a nonpublic school, ~~textbooks, fees.~~

19 (b) Textbooks.

20 (c) Fees or payments for educational therapies, including
21 tutoring or cognitive skills training, ~~curriculum fees.~~

22 (d) Curriculum fees, software, and materials for a course of
23 study for a specific subject matter or grade level, ~~tuition.~~

24 (e) Tuition or fees for nonpublic online education
25 programs, ~~tuition.~~

26 (f) Tuition for vocational and life skills education
27 approved by the department of education, ~~education.~~

28 (g) Education materials and services for pupils with
29 disabilities from an accredited provider, including the cost of
30 paraprofessionals and assistants who are trained in accordance
31 with state law, ~~standardized.~~

32 (h) Standardized test fees, ~~and advanced.~~

33 (i) Advanced placement examinations or examinations related
34 to postsecondary education admission or credentialing.

35 (j) Tuition for an approved nonpublic program.

1 the explanation's substance by the members of the general assembly.

2 This bill relates to preschool for four-year-old children.

3 The bill requires that each statewide voluntary preschool
4 program (SVPP) offered by a school district to include 20 hours
5 of instruction per week for children whose household income is
6 below 185 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL) applicable
7 to the family's size. Currently, each SVPP is only required to
8 offer 10 hours of instruction per week for an enrolled child.

9 A school district with an approved SVPP is funded in part by
10 preschool foundation aid payments. The preschool foundation
11 aid is calculated by multiplying the regular program state cost
12 per pupil by the school district's preschool budget enrollment.
13 Currently, the preschool budget enrollment for a given year
14 is calculated by multiplying the number of eligible students
15 enrolled in the preschool program by 50 percent.

16 The bill changes the calculation for preschool budget
17 enrollment to the sum of the actual number of eligible
18 students who receive 20 hours per week of instruction and whose
19 household income is less than 185 percent of the FPL plus 50
20 percent of all other eligible students.

21 The education savings account (ESA) program is a program
22 established to assist pupils who attend nonpublic schools in
23 paying for qualified educational expenses including but not
24 limited to tuition, tutoring or cognitive skill training fees,
25 educational therapy costs, software expenses, and expenses
26 related to course materials. Under current law, students
27 enrolled in a preschool program are not eligible for the ESA
28 program.

29 The bill defines "approved nonpublic program" as an
30 accredited nonpublic school's program for four-year-old
31 children approved by the department of education to provide
32 high-quality preschool instruction.

33 The bill requires the state board of education to adopt rules
34 to define the requirements for an accredited nonpublic school
35 preschool program to be approved for the purposes of qualifying

1 for payments from an ESA. The bill prohibits such rules from
2 requiring an approved nonpublic program to retain the services
3 of a licensed teacher for the approved nonpublic program,
4 partner or collaborate with a school district, or partner or
5 collaborate with community stakeholders.

6 The bill provides that all children eligible to participate
7 in preschool programming provided by a school district through
8 the statewide voluntary preschool program are eligible to
9 participate in an approved nonpublic program.

10 The bill makes tuition for an approved nonpublic program a
11 qualified expense for the purposes of the ESA program.

12 The bill makes resident pupils who are eligible to enroll in
13 an approved nonpublic program eligible for the ESA program for
14 school budget years beginning on or after July 1, 2024.

15 The bill sets ESA payments for pupils enrolled in an approved
16 nonpublic school in an amount equal to the regular program
17 state cost per pupil for the school budget year multiplied
18 by 50 percent, which is the same amount per pupil a school
19 district receives for preschool students under current law for
20 programs that offer 10 hours of instruction per week.

21 The bill allows the state board of education to adopt
22 emergency rules to implement the provisions of the bill.

23 The bill takes effect upon enactment.