



# FY27 Voluntary Prekindergarten Verification Open Office Hour

February 12, 2026

# FY27 VPK Verification Process OOH Webinar: Agenda

During this Open Office Hours we will provide time for:

1. VPK Verification Survey (20 min)
  - Reminders and Resources
  - Projected FY25 Kindergarten Enrollment and VPK Calculation
  - Statement of Assurance
2. Parent Aware Automatic Rating information and opportunities (20 min)
3. Eligibility Info Review (10 min)
4. Other related Verification Process Questions (10 min)

- As of Wednesday morning, over 80% of eligible districts started the survey with six business days to go.
  - About 28% of responding districts are finished. Some of those may just need signatures – with that caveat 38% of responding districts are complete.
- About 64% of responding districts electing to carry forward allocation from last year.
- Great reduction in the number of double entries - thank you!
- Data cleaning is underway.

# Data Cleaning Nudges

- **Preserve all preschool funding opportunities for the next 24 months!**
  - Enter your district's information for the Parent Aware Automatic Rating section **and** upload the Excel file.
- If your district's response still needs signatures, put a calendar reminder right now for next Wednesday to get all signatures completed.
- 17% respondents requested more than their allocation from FY26. Note that in the child counts – only respond with MARSS-funded VPK students. We've added a note in the survey and will follow up.

Your district's efforts last year put your district in a position to apply for next year. We've unfortunately had to turn districts away this year. Know that the work you do now will continue to put you in position for future funding.

We're working with you to get you there – ask us questions as you have them.

# Webinar Details

- This presentation will be available within the VPK Verification Survey and on the VPK Website: [Voluntary Prekindergarten: Resources for Funded Programs | Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families](#)
- Additional guidance including a Frequently Asked Questions document is available within the VPK Verification Survey and VPK Website: [Voluntary Prekindergarten: Resources for Funded Programs | Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families](#)
- Email questions to [DCYF.VPK@state.mn.us](mailto:DCYF.VPK@state.mn.us).

# VPK Verification Reminders & Resources

# Verification Timeline

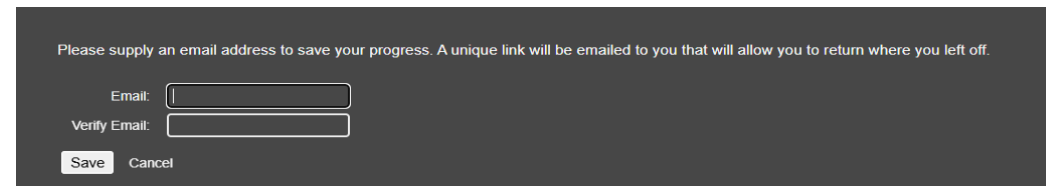
Action	
<b>Verification Overview Webinars</b>	<a href="#">Thursday, January 22 3-4 p.m.</a>
<b>Verification Process Opens</b>	<b>Friday, January 23, 2026</b>
<b>VPK Parent Aware Rating Email</b>	<b>Tuesday, January 27, 2026</b>
<b>Open Office Hours Webinars</b> <i>*Questions will be collected weekly and posted on the FAQ document and posted within the Verification Process Survey during the verification period.</i>	<a href="#">Thursday, February 12, 3 - 4 p.m.</a> <a href="#">Tuesday, February 17, 12:30-1:30</a>
<b>VPK Team reviews submitted surveys.</b> <b>Communication sent to incomplete surveys</b>	<a href="#">Friday, February 6-18, 2026</a>
<b>Verification Survey Due</b>	<b>Friday, February 20 at 4 p.m.</b>
<b>Funding Notification</b>	<b>Late Spring</b>

# Verification Tips and Reminders

- Start only one verification per district or charter.
- To SAVE the survey click on the Save and continue later in the bottom right corner:



You will be prompted to enter your email address and verify your email address (below). An email will be sent with a link allowing you to return and complete the survey. Be sure to complete and submit your survey by February 20, 2026 (due at 4pm).

A screenshot of an email verification form. The form has a dark grey background with white text. At the top, it says "Please supply an email address to save your progress. A unique link will be emailed to you that will allow you to return where you left off." Below this, there are two input fields: "Email:" and "Verify Email:". At the bottom of the form, there are two buttons: "Save" and "Cancel".

- ***Different from past years***, due to a technology glitch, when submitting completed survey, you will not receive an automated email confirming your submission.
- If you need to make additional changes to your survey after submission, please contact [DCYF.VPK@state.mn.us](mailto:DCYF.VPK@state.mn.us). A staff will respond with your unique survey edit link.

# Projected Kindergarten Enrollment (Fall 2025 ADMWE Reporting)

*If you received an email from us on January 27 with the following information:*

**Kindergarten Enrollment & Pupil Unit Caps:** Based on information your district submitted to MDE in November 2025 your district's kindergarten enrollment was 78. Per statute, the number of VPK seats cannot exceed (78x .6).

The kindergarten enrollment number noted here is the VPK allocated number of seats allocated to your district for FY26 NOT your kindergarten enrollment number for November 2025.

# Projected Kindergarten Enrollment (Fall 2025 ADMWE Reporting)

*The projected kindergarten enrollment number is entered annually by your district/charter via ADMWE. Since ADMWE reporting is dynamic, there is no need to change the reporting. As it relates to VPK funding, this projected kindergarten enrollment in FY26 is used to calculate the maximum number of seats/pupil units of VPK funding your district may request. The number is legislatively capped at 60% of your listed kindergarten enrollment. For example, if your projected kindergarten enrollment is 86 the total number of requested VPK funding cannot exceed 52 students ( $86 \times 0.6 = 51.6$ ). Additionally, the district or charter school may not request more seats than were submitted with the FY26 VPK Application (January 2025), even if your district/charter school has seen an increase in the number of students projected for FY27 enrollment.*

- Survey Demo review

# Statement of Assurance

- Since Application has moved to 4-year cycle, the Statement of Assurance submitted in January 2025 is valid for FY26-29.
- During Verification Process, superintendents and program leaders will need to sign the digital survey

# Parent Aware

# Session Questions: Parent Aware

**Q: What should I do if I recently renewed my Parent Aware rating and it doesn't expire until 12/11/2027? Should I select "No" for question #18, or is there another recommended option?**

If your program is on the Parent Aware Accelerated Pathway, you have the option to apply through the Parent Aware Automatic Pathway. This option is available because your program is currently VPK-funded, and VPK requirements exceed Parent Aware requirements. Choosing the Automatic Pathway aligns your Parent Aware rating process with your annual VPK survey and streamlines the process.

If you choose to apply through the Automatic Pathway, you will continue to hold your current Parent Aware rating through 12/11/2027 while also receiving an Automatic Pathway rating. After 12/11/2027, your program will continue under the Automatic Pathway rating until 4/30/2028, when your next rating will align with your annual VPK survey. Your re-rating process will be simpler and follow the VPK schedule as long as your program continues to receive VPK funding.

Participation in the Automatic Pathway is voluntary. If you choose not to participate, you should select "No" and will re-rate through the Accelerated Pathway, submitting all required supporting documentation.

**Reminder:**

- Programs must participate in Parent Aware to receive Pathway I scholarships.
- Programs must hold a Four-Star Parent Aware rating to receive a Pathway II scholarships allocation.

# Eligibility

# VPK Student Eligibility Requirements

## Voluntary Prekindergarten

### [Minnesota Statute 2024 section 142D.08.](#)

All children who are 4 years of age as of September 1 are eligible to participate in a VPK program free of charge.

They must also meet **one additional** eligibility criteria from the following list:

- Qualifies for free or reduced-priced meals.
- Qualifies using state general financial eligibility requirements listed in [Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 142E.10, subdivision 1\(2\)](#) in current calendar year.
- Is an American Indian.
- Is an English language learner as defined by section [Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 124D.59, subdivision 2.](#)
- Has experienced [homelessness](#) in the last 24 months.
- Is identified through health and developmental screening with a potential risk factor that may influence learning under sections [Minnesota Statutes 2024, sections 142D.09-142D.093.](#)
- Is in foster care, kinship care, including children receiving Northstar kinship care assistance under [Minnesota Statutes 2024, sections 142A.60-142A.612,](#) or is in need of child protection services.
- Has a parent who is a migrant or seasonal agricultural laborer under [Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 181.85.](#)
- Has a parent who is incarcerated.
- Is defined as at-risk by the school district.

# FY26 VPK Legislative Changes: VPK Student Eligibility Requirements (cont.)

- A child with an individualized education program may not be excluded from participation in a program under this section if all other eligibility requirements are satisfied and the individualized education program team determines that with reasonable accommodations the child can fully participate and make progress toward their goals and objectives.
- A school district or charter school must adopt a sliding-fee schedule based upon family income and must waive a fee for a participant unable to pay.
- NOTE: No parent paid fees may be collected for students enrolled as eligible for VPK during instructional hours included in the ADM calculation.

[Eligibility Requirements for Preschool Funding Streams \(PDF\)](#)

# What can the school district determine is “at risk” to support VPK eligibility?

- This language was intended to give **LOCAL** school districts flexibility in determining how to qualify children for VPK and school readiness funding. Information gathered from families and the district community can be used to determine what **additional factors** are impacting families and children who are otherwise eligible to attend their program. Examples of circumstances for this category might include:
  - Family hardship or extenuating circumstances that make paying for care or accessing other prekindergarten options difficult.
  - Community determined risk factors
  - Limited access to other care options due to transportation, availability, or distance.
  - If the family qualifies for funding under PWII at the 85% State Median Income (SMI) eligibility level- particularly if there are other risk factors present.

***\*Each district's At-Risk factor may differ from neighboring districts'***

# What is meant by the eligibility criteria for VPK and SR, “Is defined as at risk through the school district”?

- **Enrollment Eligibility:** VPK enrolled students need to meet [age and eligibility requirements](#) as listed on the signed Statement of Assurance document submitted with your application. **Eligibility must be determined individually for each student. Eligibility cannot be determined at a whole school/site level (including established attendance boundaries for that site).** District [open enrollment](#) policies apply.
- **Income Eligibility:** As you prepare program enrollment forms for 2026-27 school year, please note that income levels were updated in October. This [chart](#) gives updated information. Some districts include this information in their parent applications. Districts may consider and elect to use the higher income range (85% State Median Income and/or up to 130% FPG for reduced price lunch) as a district determined risk factor.

# Should programs prioritize enrollment of children who are eligible for VPK and Early Learning Scholarships?

- **Should programs prioritize enrollment of children who are eligible for VPK and Early Learning Scholarships?**
- Eligibility for school readiness, early learning scholarships and voluntary prekindergarten are determined by state statute. In recognition of the fact that districts have limited seat allocations for VPK, it is the recommendation of the Department of Children Youth and Families (DCYF), that programs prioritize high needs populations.
- Early Learning Scholarships include a prioritization requirement that can be found in [Minnesota Statute 2024, section 142D.25, subdivision 3](#). School districts could follow the prioritization categories as stated for early learning scholarships, including prioritizing children under the age of 4 who would not meet the age requirement for VPK .
- **As a rule of thumb, suggest allocating funds in the following order: VPK, Pathway, School Readiness and then other local funds including parent paid fees (where applicable).**

# How do charter schools with VPK programs meet charter school application and lottery requirements?

Charter schools may only seek basic information about applicants seeking admission, such as the student's name, name of parent or guardian, contact information, and the grade or program for which the student is applying, and information related to possible enrollment preferences for which the prospective student may qualify. **Additional information such as race, age, ethnicity, and disability status can be collected on enrollment forms once a student has been admitted to the school.** This includes information to determine whether an admitted student meets the eligibility criteria under [Minnesota Statute 2024, section 142D.08, subdivision 4\(a\)\(2\)](#) in order for the school's voluntary prekindergarten program to be eligible to receive state funding for the child. An admitted student who does not meet the eligibility criteria under section [142D.08, subdivision 4\(a\)\(2\)](#) and who is otherwise eligible to enroll under section [Minnesota Statute 2024, section 124E.11](#) must be enrolled in the charter school; however, the charter school will not receive state funds under section 142D.08. Questions about charter school application and lottery requirements should be directed to [mde.charterschools@state.mn.us](mailto:mde.charterschools@state.mn.us)

# How do charter schools with VPK programs meet charter school application and lottery requirements? (cont.)

A charter school may notify families that in order for the school to be eligible to receive state funding, their child must meet the eligibility criteria under section [Minnesota Statute 2024, section 142D.08, subdivision 4\(a\)\(2\)](#) . A charter school may also notify families that, per section [142D.08](#), subdivision 4(b), “A child may participate in a voluntary prekindergarten program on a fee-for-service basis if the child does not meet the eligibility criteria in paragraph (a) or state funding is not available. A school district or charter school must adopt a sliding-fee schedule based upon family income and must waive a fee for a participant unable to pay.” A charter school may not establish the eligibility criteria under section 142D.08, subdivision 4(a)(2) as criteria or requirements for admission to the school’s voluntary prekindergarten program, per [Minnesota Statute 2024, section 124E.11, paragraph \(e\)](#).

# Thank You!

[DCYF.VPK@state.mn.us](mailto:DCYF.VPK@state.mn.us)