



FY27 Voluntary Prekindergarten Verification Open Office Hour

February 3, 2026

FY27 VPK Verification Process OOH Webinar: Agenda

During this Open Office Hours we will review:

1. Status of legislative of current Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 VPK funding
2. Eligibility (Number of Sites and Enrollment) & Calendar
3. Parent Aware Automatic Rating information and opportunities
4. Other related Verification Process Questions

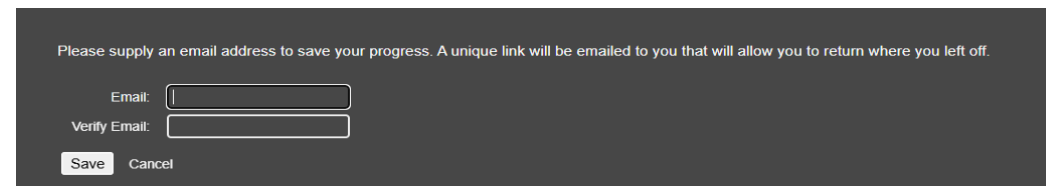
- This presentation will be available within the VPK Verification Survey and email to districts and charters.
- Additional guidance including a Frequently Asked Questions document is available within the VPK Verification Survey.
- Email questions to DCYF.VPK@state.mn.us.

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. 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 are two input fields: "Email:" and "Verify Email:". At the bottom of the form 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. A staff will respond with your unique survey edit link.

VPK Legislative Funding Change Review

Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK)

Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) is Minnesota's publicly funded 4-year-old prekindergarten program.

Purpose: Support children and their families for success in kindergarten and beyond.

Availability: All school districts and charter schools that applied in January 2025 for the 4-Year funding beginning in school year 2025-26 must participate in the annual Verification Process to continue being eligible for VPK funds: [List of districts and charter schools who applied in 2025 for funding for FY26-FY29](#)

FY27 VPK Legislative Changes: Verification Processes

During the 2024 legislative session, changes were made to voluntary prekindergarten [Minnesota Statute 2024 section 142D. 08](#). These changes went into effect with **the 2025-2026 school year, Fiscal Year (FY) 26**. The ongoing changes are:

1. FY26 and beyond, legislative action secured permanent ongoing funding for the 12,360 seats.
 - a. The VPK application moved to a four-year application cycle with a verification period for FY27 opening on January 23 and closing on February 20, 2026.
 - b. All students enrolled in VPK must meet specified eligibility requirements.
2. ALL District and charter schools that applied in January 2025 **must complete a verification survey for FY27** to receive ongoing funding as confirmed during the spring 2026 legislative session (FY2026-2027).

Who Should Participate in the Verification Process

All districts or charter schools that submitted a VPK application for FY26-29 must participate in the FY27 VPK Verification Process. This will assure:

- **Renewal of currently funded seats:** All districts and charter schools funded for VPK FY26
- **Consideration for reallocated or new funding:** Seats that were Permanently returned during FY26 will be reallocated for FY27 using the prescribed ranking process. Should new funding become available, the ranking process will be used to distribute the funding.

Verification Timeline

Action	Date
Verification Overview Webinars	Thursday, January 22 3-4 p.m.
Verification Process Opens	Friday, January 23, 2026
VPK Parent Aware Rating Email	Tuesday, January 27, 2026
Open Office Hours Webinars <i>*Questions will be collected weekly and posted on the FAQ document and posted within the Verification Process Survey during the verification period.</i>	Tuesday February 3, 11 a.m - 12 p.m. Thursday, February 12, 3 - 4 p.m. Tuesday, February 17, 12:30-1:30
VPK Team reviews submitted surveys. Communication sent to incomplete surveys	Friday, February 6-18, 2026
Verification Survey Due	Friday, February 20 at 4 p.m.
Funding Notification	Late Spring

Verification Process Overview

Note: You will need to reference the VPK FY2027 Verification Process email from DCYF on January 27, 2026 to complete the survey & Parent Aware Rating

Verification: Site and Allocation Information

Verify the name of both funded and unfunded VPK sites by entering the name of each site listed in the email from DCYF.

- A. Follow the survey instructions. Enter the total number of **REQUESTED** students for this site and then separate that number between the calendars that will be offered at that site.
- B. Repeat this process for each listed site until the total number of seats equals the original number of seats **requested** in FY26. (See NOTE)
- C. For unfunded seats, enter the information as listed in the letter. You may reduce the number of requested seats, but you cannot increase the number of seats.

NOTE: For currently funded districts: Ask for the same number of seats as previously allocated, if you reduce the number of participants/requested seats, the seats will no longer be available to your district. You will need to reapply for them in subsequent years.

Verification: Site and Allocation Information (cont.)

- D. If you plan to serve some or all of the seats at a early learning site (that has not previously had seat assigned to it) in your district, we will handle that through the amendment process once FY27 allocations notifications have been sent.
- E. DCYF is offering the opportunity to adjust the total number of allocated seats between currently allocated sites. Be sure to include a note that verifies the changes that you want to make so that we understand your adjusted site seat totals. We will follow-up to clarify the request.

Verification: Instructional Calendar Information

The survey will ask to:

1. Confirm/edit the calendar information for FY27.
2. You may change the calendar (hours or days) from previous years to reach the maximum 0.6 ADM allowed per pupil unit.
3. Confirm the number of students at each site who will be enrolled in each calendar.

Question: Number of Sites and Calendars

Session Questions: Allocations

- **Q: Is the number of students with each calendar only the VPK seats? Or all students at that site?**

The number of students that you will work with for the site will match the number of seats that you requested last year for that site. The information will be listed in the email that you receive from DCYF.

- **Q: Enrollment numbers for next year are an estimation or do we use actual 2026 numbers?**

You will work with the numbers that were submitted with your application last year and listed in the letter you received from DCYF (both funded and unfunded seats). If you need to adjust the location so that you can best use the funded seats, you can adjust numbers between funded sites and add a note so that we understand that you want to make that change. You may want to request these changes if you've had a shift in enrollment attending a given site or the number of classrooms that are available at a site has changed.

Session Questions: Calendar

- **Q: Since FY27 Calendar(s) have not been set, can we adjust later?**

Yes, we will be able to adjust calendar numbers once they have been confirmed by your district later this spring. Please add a note in that section of the survey that will let us know to watch for the change.

- **Q: Is the number of students listed in each calendar only the VPK seats? Or all students in the site?**

The number of students that you will work with for the site will match the number of seats that you requested last year for that site. The information will be listed in the email that you receive from DCYF on January 27.

Session Questions: Calendar

- **Q: Our new calendar will be a bell-to-bell program at our elementary sites for 6.25 hours. I am trying to understand the maximum value of .6 ADM for VPK. Can my total instructional hours per day be 375?**

A full-day program with 170 instructional days @ 375 minutes/day=1,062.5 instructional hours/year. This will equate to .6 ADM/student or pay for 510 of the total instructional hours. This means that you can braid/blend other funding sources with VPK to pay for the 552.5 hours beyond the 510 hours that VPK will fund the total 1,062.5 hour program that you are offering. This means that your entry in the screenshot below is correct. We want to know the full scope of the program that you will be offering. It helps us better understand and document what is being offered to 4-year olds

Session Questions: Calendar

- **Q: Our calendar 1 is a 2.5-hour-per-day half-day program. So this is 170 instructional days 150 minutes of instruction per day and 425 instructional minutes per year.**

A half-day program with 170 instructional days @ 150 minutes/day=425 instructional hours/year. This will equate to .5 ADM/student.

Session Questions: Parent Aware

- **Q: We have a site(s) that will be closing for the 2026-27 school year and an elementary site that we will no longer have a classroom at for the 2026-27 school year. Column I (Parent Aware Rating Sheet) asks for site details as of 4/30/26. On that date, the sites will still be offering preschool/VPK. After this school year, we will no longer have preschool in these locations. How should I complete the spreadsheet for these locations? Also, we have a site that will have additional classrooms for the 2026-27 school year, should I put the current number of classrooms or the number of classrooms for the 2026-27 school year in column O?**

Please use your current information/programs to reflect as of 4/30/2026 in the Parent Aware Rating sheet. You may make adjustments later. If you are adding new classrooms for the 2026–27 school year, ensure that lead teachers meet VPK requirements, or for non-VPK classrooms, that lead teachers meet Parent Aware requirements.

Session Questions: Parent Aware

- **Q: One more question, if we have classes that are under 350 hours per year, but we still employ licensed teachers, use Creative Curriculum, has GOLD, etc., do we need to place those classes in column Q on the Parent Aware spreadsheet. What standard specifically are we answering for in column P?**

Column P is for classrooms that meet VPK requirements. Column Q is for classrooms that do not meet VPK requirements but do meet School Readiness requirements. VPK requires a minimum of 350 instructional hours, so in this case it should be included in Column Q.

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 \(PDF\)](#)

Eligibility Criteria Comparison Chart

Eligibility	SR	VPK	PWII
Child is Age 3 on Sept 1	x		x
Child is age 4 on Sept 1	x	x	x
Has completed health and developmental screening within 90 days of program enrollment	x	x	x
Child qualifies for educational benefits	x	x	x
Child fall under income guidelines designated in MN Statute 142E.10 (47% of State Median income)		x	x
Is in foster care, kinship care or child protective services		x	x
Has experienced homelessness in the past 24 months	x	x	x
Has a parent who is incarcerated		x	x
Has a parent who is seasonal or migrant worker.		x	
Is an English Language Learner	x	x	
Is American Indian		x	
Is identified through health and developmental screening with a potential risk factor that may influence learning	x	x	
Is defined as at risk through the school district	x	x	
Has an individualized education program (IEP) or standardized written plan	x	X	X

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'***

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

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 \(e\)](#).

Automatic Parent Aware Rating Sheet

Automatic Parent Aware Four-Star Rating

Reminder/Clarification:

Districts/Charters who received ***original allocation*** for VPK FY26 Funding can opt in to Parent Aware Automatic Rating

- Complete the attached **2026 VPK Rating Site List** (Parent Aware) Sheet- emailed sent Jan. 27. Complete the sheet and submit with your survey as an attachment. If you already submitted your survey, please email dcyf.vpk@state.mn.us for your editable link
- Programs applying for the Automatic Parent Aware Rating during the FY27 VPK Verification Survey will receive a **Four-Star Parent Aware Rating** for a two-year period, from **April 30, 2026, through April 30, 2028.**

Site Confirmation Process

Site Confirmation Process

- A. On January 27, 2026, the VPK contact for your program, Business Manager, and the Superintendent received an email from dcyf.vpk@state.mn.us with instructions and a spreadsheet titled “2026 VPK Rating Site List.”
 - a. The spreadsheet includes your Parent Aware rated sites as of December 4, 2025.
 - b. If your program was not funded during the FY26 application process and you received the Parent Aware spreadsheet, please disregard it, as your program will not have the Parent Aware option in the FY27 VPK Verification Survey.
- B. Complete the spreadsheet by filling out details for each currently rated site and adding any new sites.
 - a. Upload the completed spreadsheet to the FY 2027 Voluntary Prekindergarten Verification Survey by February 20 at 4:00 pm. If you already submitted your Verification Survey and need an editable link to upload the spreadsheet, please contact dcyf.vpk@state.mn.us.
- C. DCYF will review and contact you if there are any questions.
- D. Once finalized, DCYF will submit your program and site details to the Parent Aware rating team to complete the re-rating process.

Auto-Rating Site Spreadsheet Notes

- Gray columns (A-H and K-L) have been prepopulated with currently rated sites. For currently rated programs. **Programs that are not currently rated will need to populate these columns.**
- Blue columns (I-J and M-R) are to be filled out by your program. Select from the dropdown menu for each site.
 - Do not type over the cells, only use the dropdowns.
- Note: In Column R, DCYF asks if lead teachers in School Readiness classrooms have the required training documentation. DCYF will use this information to support your program in meeting the requirements, even if you do not currently have the documentation. The site will still be rated, and we will work with you to meet the requirements.

Reminders for Licensed and Certified Sites

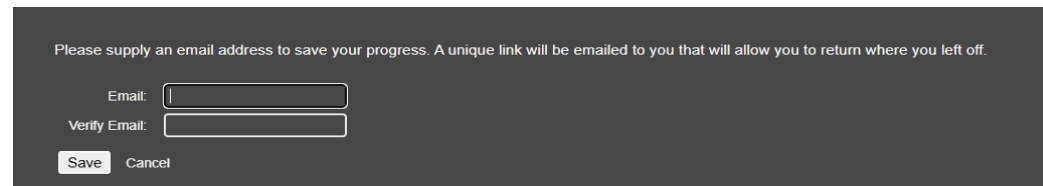
- Some districts and charter schools have a Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) licensed or certified site(s). This allows them to accept the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) at the site.
- If you have licensed/certified sites in your rating:
 - If a site is DCYF licensed or certified, the license or certification number must be listed in Column K.
 - If a site accepts the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP), the site must be licensed or certified. A DCYF license/certification number must be listed in Column K.
 - Certified sites must have a preschool certification separate from a school age certification.
 - All licensed or certified sites must meet VPK or School Readiness requirements.
- Note: Many district/charter sites are not licensed or certified. If you are not, you will leave Columns K and L as is.

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Resources to Understand VPK Program Requirements

The following information has been embedded in the Verification Survey:

- FY27 Verification Process Instructions
- SFY27 FAQ Document-Updated with new questions weekly
- Copy of webinar slides and a link to review a recorded version of this FY27 Verification webinar.
- [Statement of Assurances.](#)
- **View** emails and GovDelivery notices
- **Email questions to:** DCYF.VPK@state.mn.us. Best email to use since VPK team members have access to this email and check daily. Not necessary to email individual VPK members.



Question & Answer Time

Please refer to the Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) documents that are available within the VPK Program Verification Survey. Documents are updated weekly.

Thank You!

DCYF.VPK@state.mn.us