



FY27 Voluntary Prekindergarten Verification Overview and Demonstration

January 29, 2026

FY27 VPK Verification Process Webinar: Agenda

During this presentation we will review:

1. Status of legislative of current Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 VPK funding.
2. Overview of new FY27 VPK Verification Process for funded and unfunded programs.
3. Parent Aware Automatic Rating information and opportunities.
4. Demonstration of VPK Verification Process Survey
5. VPK General Program Information: Ranking, allocation, and funding/finance
6. VPK General Program Information: Requirements, instructional design and mixed delivery partnerships.

Webinar Details

- A recording of this webinar and slides from 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.

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: Eligibility and 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).

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 \(PDF\)](#)

Verification Process Information

(FY) 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	
Verification Overview Webinars	Thursday, January 22 3-4 p.m.
Verification Process Opens	Friday, January 23, 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
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

Overview of Verification Process Survey Sections

Districts and charter schools must submit **one** online Verification Survey.

1. Verification of mixed delivery partners and partnerships.
2. Site and allocation verification information.
3. Instructional Calendar information.
4. Anticipated Facility Remodeling and Maintenance Expenses
5. Parent Aware Automatic Rating

Verification Survey Part I: Mixed Delivery

- Complete this section if entering into a new or changed mixed delivery partnership(s).
- List all programs you will contract with to deliver VPK programming.
- All partners must have a signed FY27 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on file prior to the start of programming in the fall.

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.

Verification: Anticipated Facility Remodeling and Maintenance

ESTIMATED FACILITY REMODELING COSTS-Districts Only

Anticipated Remodeling Costs	Amount the district expects remodeling for VPK students will cost.
Square Footage to be Remodeled for Prekindergarten	Square footage of the VPK remodeling project.
Pay As You Go or Bond Financed?	How will the VPK remodeling project be financed, with a one-year levy, or through bonding?
Long-Term Facilities Maintenance Additional Annual Costs for Prekindergarten	Amount that the district will add to its Levy Limitation and Certification report for the following year. MDE will contact district to confirm details before adding to levies.

For facility and maintenance related questions contact MDE.funding@state.mn.us

Verification: Parent Aware Automatic Rating Application

- Parent Aware Automatic Rating process will be demonstrated separately
- You will have the opportunity to select Yes or No
 - If you have or expect to have Pathway II funding, you must participate in the Parent Aware Rating Process.

VPK Parent Aware Automatic Rating

Automatic Parent Aware Four-Star Rating

- VPK-funded programs and their partners are eligible for an Automatic Four-Star Parent Aware Rating because VPK statute meets or exceeds the Parent Aware Indicators.
 - This opportunity is not available for School Readiness programs.
- Programs funded (originally) with VPK during the application process for FY26 are eligible to opt in to the Automatic Rating within the FY27 Annual VPK Verification Survey process.
 - Even if your program was previously rated under the Accelerated Pathway, you will re-rate under the Automatic Process within the VPK Verification Survey.
 - 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**.
 - If your program is VPK-funded in FY27, you may apply for Automatic Parent Aware in 2028.

How to Opt in to the Automatic Rating

- Provide the following information in the online Survey:
 - Parent Aware primary contact information.
 - Assessment tool.
 - Approved Parent Aware curriculum. View the list of Parent Aware [aligned curricula](#).
- Sign the *Parent Aware Participation Agreement* on your FY27 Annual VPK verification survey.
 - This must be signed by the superintendent/the individual legally authorized to sign on behalf of the program.
- Complete the spreadsheet attached in the email sent on January 27th by filling out details for each currently rated site and adding any new sites.
 - 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.

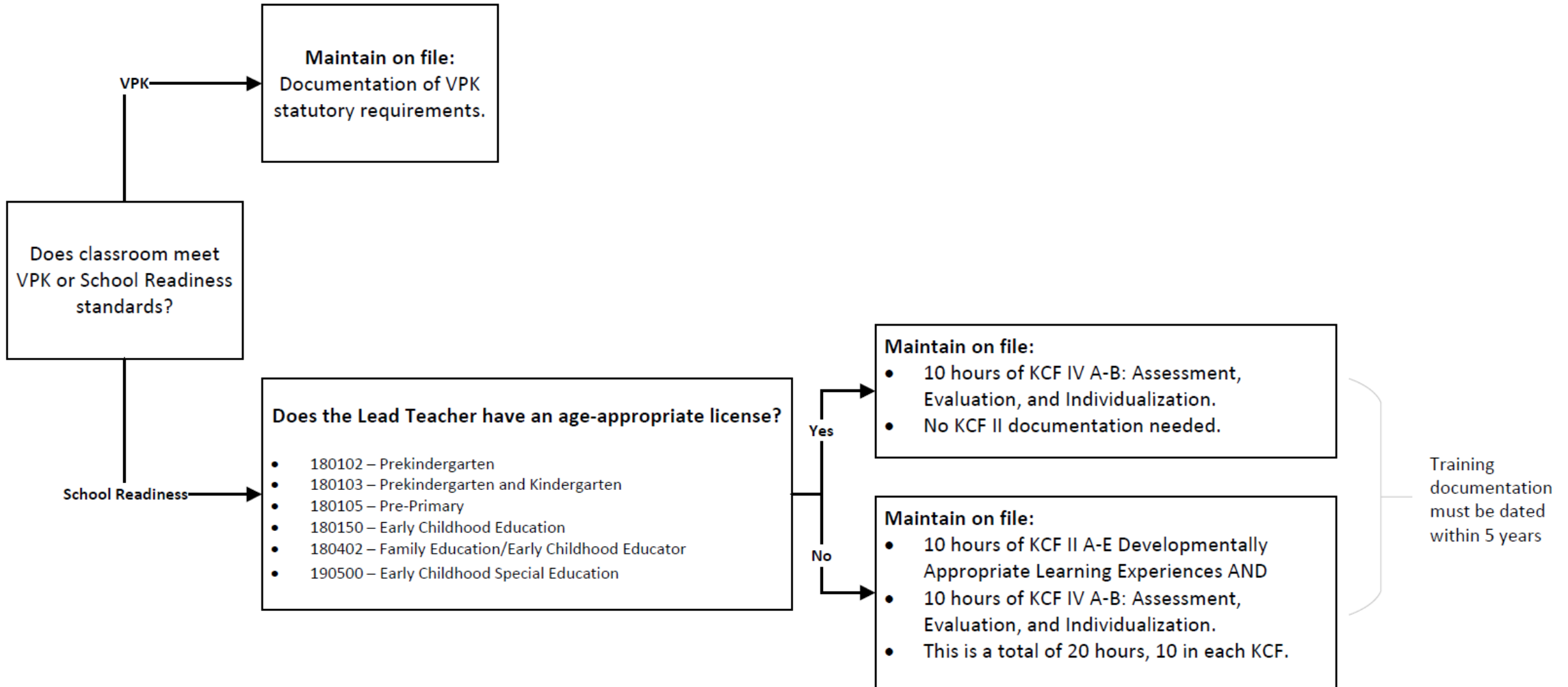
Automatic Rating – Site Details

- The automatic rating will apply to all sites (buildings) within your district meeting VPK or School Readiness requirements, as outlined in the Accelerated Pathway to Rating process.
 - Please see the next slides for detailed requirements for non-VPK classrooms.
- Please confirm the list of sites to be included in your rating.
 - Reminder: If sites are not included in your Rating, they are not eligible for Early Learning Scholarships (Pathway I and Pathway II).
- If sites/partnerships change during the two-year rating (closing or opening a site, changing the address or name of a site), please contact ParentAware.DCYF@state.mn.us to request an addendum.

Parent Aware Training Documentation Needed

- Lead teachers in **VPK classrooms** must keep documentation that they are meeting VPK statutory requirements.
- Lead teachers in **School Readiness classrooms** must meet the minimum Parent Aware training requirements and have the following on file:
 - Their age-appropriate license or 10 hours of training in Knowledge and Competency Framework (KCF) II A-E: Developmentally Appropriate Learning Experiences, and
 - All lead teachers (licensed and unlicensed) must have 10 hours of training in KCF IV A: Observing, Recording and Assessing Development **OR** IVB: Assessing and Using Information to Plan.
 - Note: Training documentation must be within **five years** of the re-rating date.

Documentation Requirements – Decision Tree



Non-VPK Classrooms

- Lead teachers in classrooms not funded by VPK – but meeting school readiness standards – must meet the minimum Parent Aware training requirements and **keep the required training documentation on file.**
 - This documentation does not need to be submitted within your application or to Parent Aware, but may be requested when your program is reviewed for continuation of your Parent Aware rating.
- This requirement also refers to any extended day or wrap-around child care that you wish to include with your Parent Aware Rating.
 - Extended day and wrap-around programming must meet VPK or School Readiness standards.
 - Lead teachers in extended day and wrap-around programming must meet the Parent Aware training requirements and keep documentation on file.
 - If extended day or wrap-around programming does not meet VPK or School Readiness standards, these programs cannot be included in your rating.
- Reminder: Certified child care must have a pre-K certification separate from school age care to be included in the Parent Aware rating.

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.

Thank you!

ParentAware.DCYF@state.mn.us

Verification Survey Demo

Demonstration of the verification survey, Parent Aware Automatic Rating File, and other components.

Review of VPK General Program Information

Ranking and Allocation

Program Implementation Resources

All verifications meeting program requirements will be rank-ordered based on three criteria:

1. Free and reduced-price meal concentration of students in kindergarten at the site* as of October 1 of the previous fiscal year;
2. Proximity of site to Three- or Four-Star Parent Aware rated programs; and
3. Whether the district has implemented a mixed-delivery program partnership for all or part of the requested seats.

*If a school site contracts with a community-based provider or Head Start, or establish an early childhood center, they will use the free and reduced-price meals concentration of students in kindergarten at the school site the program is near as long as those eligible children are prioritized and guaranteed services at the mixed-delivery site or early education center.

Ranking Process (Continued)

- **Step 1:** Calculate Poverty Concentration (not the same as Compensatory) =
 - $(\# \text{ FY26 Free K} + \# \text{ FY26 Reduced K}) / \text{Total FY26 K Enrollment} \times 100$
- **Step 2:** Calculate Bonus Points:
 - 5 points for school sites with no Three- or Four-Star Parent Aware rated child care or Head Start within 10 miles of the school site.
 - 5 points for school sites with no Three- or Four-Star Parent Aware rated child care or Head Start within 20 miles of the school site.
 - 5 points if working in partnership with a mixed-delivery site (Head Start, child care center, family child care or community organization).
- **Step 3:** Add Poverty Concentration + Bonus Points = Individual Site Ranking
- **NOTE:** Each site will receive two ranking numbers, State and Region.

Understanding Allocation Processes

The percentage of participant seats allocated for each region is determined by a legislative formula and is calculated using state kindergarten enrollment:

Funding Allocation	Minneapolis	St. Paul	Metro Suburbs	Non-Metro	Charter	Total
FY26 Allocation of 12,360 seats	514	534	4,914	5,256	1,142	12,360
FY26 Unfunded Seat Requests	256	520	374	4,063	180	5,393
Total Seat Requests	770	1,054	5,288	9,319	1,322	17,753

Note: These numbers will be updated prior to FY27 allocation notices.

VPK Information That Supports Program Implementation

- **Bookmark: [DCYF School-based preschool and VPK Resources for Funded Programs](#)**
- **Program Requirements**
 - [Eligibility Requirements for Preschool Funding Streams \(PDF\)](#)
 - [Publicly Funded Preschool Program Comparison Chart](#) – The chart compares statutory requirements for school readiness, School Readiness, VPK and Head Start programs.
 - [VPK Program Implementation Checklist](#)

Funding and Finance Information

- **View the FY26 VPK Implementation Webinar (July 9, 2025): [View the recording here](#).** Use Passcode: u25P@&^A.
- [FY26 Statewide Site Poverty Concentration and VPK Rankings for all Elementary School Sites](#)
- [Financial UFARS and Achievement and Integration Memos](#)

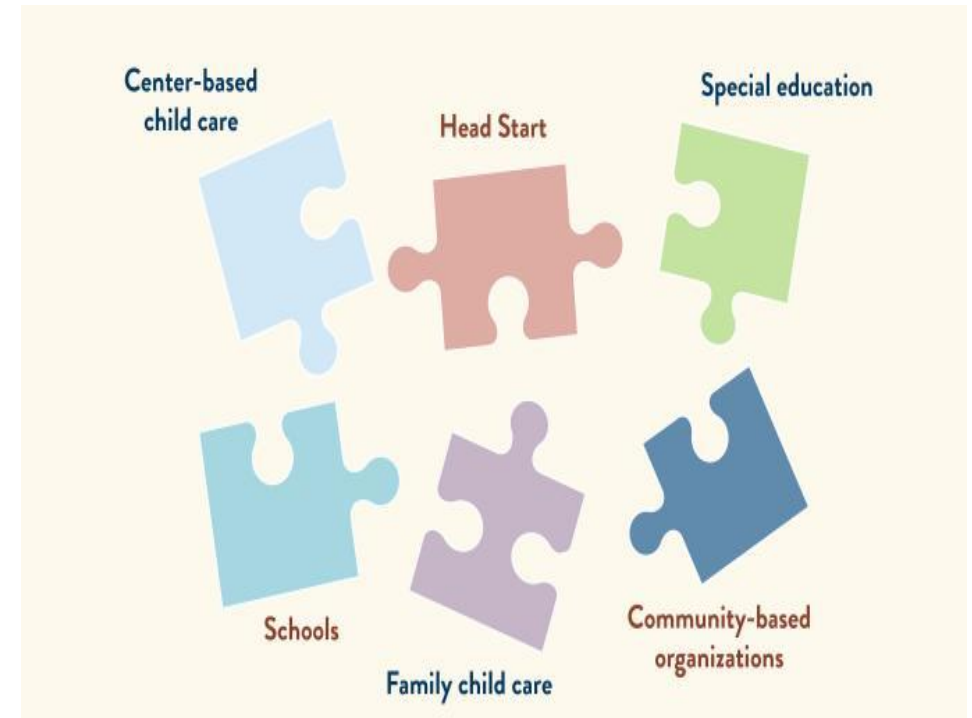
Requirements for Mixed Delivery Partnership

[Minnesota Statute 2024 section 142D.08, subdivision 3](#) states: A district or charter school may contract with a charter school, Head Start or child care centers, family child care programs licensed under section 245A.03, or a community-based organization to provide eligible children with developmentally appropriate services that meet the program requirements in subdivision 2.

- The district/charter school must have one signed *Statement of Assurances* from each mixed-delivery partner site that is noted in the application.
- The district must have a signed contract with their partner site before the first date of program implementation. This formalized agreement clarifies the roles and responsibilities of each partner.
- The district or charter school is responsible to make sure that all program requirements are met by the mixed-delivery partner.
- DCYF is happy to provide materials or consultation to help facilitate partnerships.

Mixed Delivery Resources that Support Partnership

- [Early Learning Mixed Delivery Webpage](#)
 - Introduction to ECCE Mixed Delivery Systems and Partnerships
- [VPK Mixed Delivery Webinar](#)
- Head Start and Local Education Agency Collaboration Grids for [Part B](#) and [Part C](#).
- Available upon request: Tools for Building Local ECCE Mixed Delivery Relationships; Partnership Planning Template and sample MOU



Verification Recap, Reminders, and Resources

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, 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. A staff will respond with your unique survey edit link.

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