



State Pre-K Funding in Missouri



State Pre-K Formula Funding

House Bill 1689 was passed during the 2014 legislative session. This legislation marks the first time that state funding is available for pre-K statewide in Missouri. According to statute, as of FY19, local education agencies (LEAs) or school districts can be reimbursed through the state school funding formula for pre-K students up to 4% of their total free and reduced-price lunch student population. Statutory language below:¹

163.018. Early childhood education programs, pupils included in average daily attendance calculation, when — standards for early education program, department considerations. —

1. (1) Notwithstanding the definition of average daily attendance in subdivision (2) of section 163.011 to the contrary, pupils between the ages of three and five who are eligible for free and reduced price lunch and attend an early childhood education program:
 - (a) That is operated by and in a district or by a charter school that has declared itself as a local educational agency providing full-day kindergarten and that meets standards established by the state board of education; or
 - (b) That is under contract with a district or charter school that has declared itself as a local educational agency and that meets standards established by the state board of education;shall be included in the district's or charter school's calculation of average daily attendance. The total number of such pupils included in the district's or charter school's calculation of average daily attendance shall not exceed four percent of the total number of pupils who are eligible for free and reduced price lunch between the ages of five and eighteen who are included in the district's or charter school's calculation of average daily attendance.
- (2) If a pupil described under subdivision (1) of this subsection leaves an early childhood education program during the school year, a district or charter school shall be allowed to fill the vacant enrollment spot with another pupil between the ages of three and five who is eligible for free and reduced price lunch without affecting the district's or charter school's calculation of average daily attendance.
2. In establishing standards for any early childhood education program that is under contract with a district or charter school that has declared itself as a local educational agency, the state board of education shall consider:
 - (1) Whether a program offers full-day and full-year programming;
 - (2) Whether a program has teacher-to-child ratios consistent with reasonable standards set by early childhood education program accrediting agencies;
 - (3) Whether a program offers professional development supports for educators and the type of supports offered;
 - (4) Whether a program uses appropriately credentialed educators;
 - (5) Whether a program uses an early childhood education curriculum that has been approved by the department of elementary and secondary education and whether the curriculum is developmentally appropriate; and
 - (6) Any other factor that the state board of education determines to be significant in ensuring that children achieve high levels of kindergarten readiness.

The state board of education shall require that staff members of any early childhood education program that is under contract with a district or charter school that has declared itself as a local educational agency undergo background checks as described in section 168.133.

3. This section shall not require school attendance beyond that mandated under section 167.031 and shall not change or amend the provisions of sections 160.051, 160.053, 160.054, and 160.055 relating to kindergarten attendance.

¹ Missouri Revisor or Records. *Title XI Education and Libraries 163.018*. Retrieved from <https://revisor.mo.gov/main/OneSection.aspx?section=163.018>

Pre-K Contracting: Flexibility for Districts and Families

While larger public school districts have been leaders in tapping state pre-K funding, smaller LEAs have found it challenging to leverage the dollars working in isolation, given limitations on space, expertise, and the scale of their eligible student population. Contracting legislation has made it possible for LEAs to solve those challenges through collaboration with community-based pre-K providers. Legislation was passed in July 2019 and regulation has been written by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education validating the opportunity for LEAs to contract with community-based pre-K providers to utilize state pre-K funding. Oftentimes, community based providers are able to offer more flexibility to accommodate the schedules of families that they serve. Notably, contracted providers must achieve Missouri Accreditation, the highest mark of program quality in Missouri, and employ Missouri certified teachers.

