

During public hearings, the Commission heard testimony regarding the benefits of early childhood education.

Under current law, districts may choose to operate a four-year-old kindergarten (4K) program, but are not required to do so. Statutes specify that pupils must turn four by September 1 of the year they start attending 4K. In 2017-18, seven districts operating elementary grades do not offer 4K. State law provides two-year grants to school districts that implement a new 4K program of up to \$3,000 for each 4K pupil enrolled in the district in the first year of the grant and up to \$1,500 for each 4K pupil enrolled in the second year of the grant. If the appropriation amount is insufficient to fully fund the maximum payments, DPI is required to prorate the payment amounts. In awarding the grants, DPI is required to give preference to districts that use community approaches to early education. Under DPI rules, districts continuing in the grant program in their second year have priority for funding over districts new to the grant program in their first year. Additionally, a 4K pupil is included in equalization aid and revenue limit counts as 0.5 member if the pupil attends for at least 437 hours, unless the program provides at least 87.5 additional hours of outreach activities, in which case the pupil is counted as 0.6 member.

Additionally, state grants are provided as a supplement to the federal Head Start program that provides comprehensive educational, health, nutritional, social, and other services to economically disadvantaged preschool children and their families. Funds are distributed to federally designated Head Start agencies, to enable expansion of their programs to serve additional families. Grants may be used as a match for federal funds only if the state funds are used to secure additional federal support. Federal funding for Head Start and Early Head Start in Wisconsin was an estimated \$116.4 million in federal fiscal year 2017-18. The state supplement provides an additional \$6,264,100 GPR annually.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

1. Recommend allowing districts that offer full-day 4K to count participating pupils as 1.0 FTE, rather than 0.5 or 0.6 FTE as under current law.
2. Recommend providing \$1,000,000 annually for the state supplement for the Head Start program

<b>ALT 2</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>
GPR	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000

3. Recommend modifying current law relating to the age at which a pupil can be enrolled in 4K with one of the following options:

a. Specify that a pupil can begin 4K at any time during the school year on the day after his or her fourth birthday;

b. Specify that a pupil can begin 4K in September if he or she turns four by December 31, and in January if he or she turns four between January 1 and the last day of the school year;  
or

c. Delete current law specifying a start age for 4K, and instead allow each district to set its own policy regarding the age at which a pupil can start 4K.