



State of Vermont

Act 166: Vermont Universal PreK Update

Governor's Office, Agency of Education, Department for Children and Families, and Building Bright Futures

Our Opportunity

Act 166 provides publicly funded access to **prequalified** PreK programs operated by a public school, Head Start or a private provider for 10 hours a week, 35 weeks a year, for all Vermont three and four-year-olds. The bill applies to enrollments beginning on July 1, 2015.

The passage of Act 166 provides Vermont with the incredible opportunity to offer prekindergarten education to every three and four year old child in the state. With its focus on improving quality and expanding access, Act 166 also includes a level of flexibility in the variety of early learning and development programs that can offer prekindergarten education, resulting in a more accessible system for all parents who choose a preschool experience for their children. Additionally, this law sets a statewide tuition rate for all prekindergarten reimbursements established annually by the Agencies of Education and Human Services to promote sustainability and consistency within the system.

The Rulemaking Process

This law charges the Secretary of the Education and the Commissioner of Children and Families to propose rules on a series of specific points to lay a strong foundation for implementation. The rulemaking process is technical and needs to happen in a very short timeframe, so the Agency leads have jumped right in to ensure they can get work done in the time allotted. It is a priority for the administration to strike the balance of meeting the rules deadline, while incorporating many opportunities for input and feedback. Therefore, in addition to a public comment period built into the rule-making process, the lead Agencies have pushed up their internal deadline for draft rule completion to allow time for a more informal pre-review of the rules with stakeholders before the proposed rules are filed. Finally, an informal workgroup including state agency leads, Building Bright Futures, educational leaders, and private provider representatives has been convened to check in on progress, help identify and pass along issues to the Agency leads and disseminate updates on the process to other stakeholders.

Schedule for Input and Drafting of Rules for Act 166

August 19: State Board of Education Meeting for Preliminary Rule-Making Discussion

September 2: Full DRAFT of rules for informal pre-review with stakeholders

September 10: Meeting for stakeholder feedback and discussion of DRAFT rules

September 16: State Board of Education Meeting to vote to initiate rulemaking process

September 22: Building Bright Futures State Advisory Council Meeting to discuss draft rules

October: Rules go to Interagency on Administrative Rules (ICAR) (estimated timeframe)

Oct – Dec: Public Comment Period (estimated timeframe)

Feb – March: Final Proposed Rules go to Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules (LCAR) (estimated timeframe)