

HOUSE BILL NO. 177

INTRODUCED BY F. ANDERSON, J. BACHMEIER, G. CUSTER, D. FERN, B. GRUBBS, J. KASSMIER,  
K. KELKER, W. MCKAMEY, R. TEMPEL

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT REMOVING THE PROHIBITION ON A SCHOOL DISTRICT  
SUPPORTING ITS PRESCHOOL PROGRAM WITH STATE EQUALIZATION AID; AMENDING SECTION  
20-7-117, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE AND AN APPLICABILITY DATE."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

**Section 1.** Section 20-7-117, MCA, is amended to read:

**"20-7-117. Kindergarten and preschool programs.** (1) The trustees of an elementary district shall establish or make available a kindergarten program capable of accommodating, at a minimum, all the children in the district who will be 5 years old on or before September 10 of the school year for which the program is to be conducted or who have been enrolled by special permission of the board of trustees. The kindergarten program, which the trustees may designate as either a half-time or full-time program, must be an integral part of the elementary school and must be financed and governed accordingly, provided that to be eligible for inclusion in the calculation of ANB pursuant to 20-9-311, a child must have reached 5 years of age on or before September 10 of the school year covered by the calculation or have been enrolled by special permission of the board of trustees. A kindergarten program must meet the minimum aggregate hour requirements established in 20-1-301. A kindergarten program that is designated as a full-time program must allow a parent, guardian, or other person who is responsible for the enrollment of a child in school, as provided in 20-5-102, to enroll the child half-time.

(2) The trustees of an elementary school district may establish and operate a free preschool program for children between the ages of 3 and 5 years. When preschool programs are established, they must be an integral part of the elementary school and must be governed accordingly. ~~Financing of preschool programs may not be supported by money available from state equalization aid.~~

NEW SECTION. **Section 2. Effective date.** [This act] is effective July 1, 2019.

NEW SECTION. **Section 3. Applicability.** [This act] applies to school fiscal years beginning on or after

1 July 1, 2019.

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