



General Assembly

January Session, 2003

**Raised Bill No. 893**

LCO No. 3030

Referred to Committee on Education

Introduced by:  
(ED)

***AN ACT CONCERNING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 10-16o of the general statutes is repealed and the  
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2003*):

3 The state shall encourage the development of a network of school  
4 readiness programs pursuant to sections 10-16p to 10-16r, inclusive, as  
5 amended by this act, 10-16u and 17b-749a in order to:

6 (1) Provide open access for children to quality programs that  
7 promote the health and safety of children and prepare them for formal  
8 schooling;

9 (2) Provide opportunities for parents to choose among affordable  
10 and accredited or approved programs;

11 (3) Encourage coordination and cooperation among programs and  
12 prevent the duplication of services;

13 (4) Recognize the specific service needs and unique resources  
14 available to particular municipalities and provide flexibility in the

15 implementation of programs;

16 (5) Prevent or minimize the potential for developmental delay in  
17 children prior to children reaching the age of five;

18 (6) Enhance federally funded school readiness programs, including,  
19 but not limited to, early reading first, Head Start, child care, early  
20 education for children with disabilities and any other preschool  
21 program funded under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary  
22 Education Act of 1965;

23 (7) Strengthen the family through: (A) Encouragement of parental  
24 involvement in a child's development and education; and (B)  
25 enhancement of a family's capacity to meet the special needs of the  
26 children, including children with disabilities;

27 (8) Reduce educational costs by decreasing the need for special  
28 education services for school age children and to avoid grade  
29 repetition;

30 (9) Assure that children with disabilities are integrated into  
31 programs available to children who are not disabled and that school  
32 readiness programs are appropriately reimbursed for children eligible  
33 for special education and related services; and

34 (10) Improve the availability and quality of school readiness  
35 programs and their coordination with the services of child care  
36 providers.

37 Sec. 2. Subsection (a) of section 10-16p of the general statutes is  
38 amended by adding subdivision (10) as follows (*Effective July 1, 2003*):

39 (NEW) (10) "Credential" means a Child Development Associate  
40 issued by the Council for Professional Recognition, or an American  
41 Montessori Instructor for children aged three to six years, issued by the  
42 American Montessori Association, or otherwise meeting such criteria  
43 as may be established by the Commissioner of Education, in

44 consultation with the Commissioner of Social Services.

45 Sec. 3. Subsection (b) of section 10-16p of the general statutes is  
46 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*  
47 *1, 2003*):

48 (b) (1) The Department of Education shall be the lead agency for  
49 school readiness. For purposes of this section and section 10-16u,  
50 school readiness program providers eligible for funding from the  
51 Department of Education shall include local and regional boards of  
52 education, regional educational service centers, family resource centers  
53 and providers of child day care centers, as defined in section 19a-77,  
54 Head Start programs, preschool programs and other programs that  
55 meet such standards established by the Commissioner of Education.  
56 The department shall establish standards for school readiness  
57 programs. The standards may include, but need not be limited to,  
58 guidelines for staff-child interactions, curriculum content, including  
59 preliteracy development based on scientifically based reading  
60 research, lesson plans, parent involvement, staff qualifications and  
61 training, transition to school and administration. The department shall  
62 develop age-appropriate developmental skills and goals for children  
63 attending such programs. The commissioner, in consultation with the  
64 Commissioners of Higher Education, [and] Social Services and Public  
65 Health and other appropriate entities, shall develop a continuing  
66 education training program for the staff of school readiness programs.  
67 For purposes of this section, on and after July 1, 2003, "staff  
68 qualifications" means there is in each classroom an individual who has  
69 at least the following: [(1)] (A) A credential issued by an organization  
70 approved by the Commissioner of Education and [nine] six credits or  
71 more, and on and after July 1, 2006, twelve credits or more, in early  
72 childhood education or child development from an institution of  
73 higher education accredited by the Board of Governors of Higher  
74 Education or regionally accredited; [(2)] (B) an associate's or four-year  
75 degree in early childhood education or child development from such  
76 an institution; [or (3) a] (C) an associate's or four-year degree with six

77 credits or more, and on and after July 1, 2006, twelve credits or more,  
78 in early childhood education or child development from such an  
79 institution; or (D) certification pursuant to section 10-145 with an  
80 endorsement in early childhood education or special education.

81 (2) Full-time programs shall have credentialed staff in classrooms  
82 from nine o'clock a.m. to five o'clock p.m. Not later than January 1,  
83 2004, trained staff shall be present in the absence of credentialed staff  
84 during full-time program hours earlier than nine o'clock a.m. and later  
85 than five o'clock p.m. For purposes of this subsection, "trained staff"  
86 means an individual who has completed a minimum of fifteen hours  
87 training per year which meets criteria established by the local school  
88 readiness council and approved by the Commissioner of Education.

89 Sec. 4. Section 10-16q of the general statutes is repealed and the  
90 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2003*):

91 (a) Each school readiness program shall include: (1) A plan for  
92 collaboration with other community programs and services, including  
93 public libraries, and for coordination of resources in order to facilitate  
94 full-day and year-round child care and education programs for  
95 children of working parents and parents in education or training  
96 programs; (2) parent involvement, parenting education and outreach;  
97 (3) (A) record-keeping policies that require documentation of the name  
98 and address of each child's doctor, primary care provider and health  
99 insurance company and information on whether the child is  
100 immunized and has had health screens pursuant to the federal Early  
101 and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment Services Program  
102 under 42 USC 1396d, and (B) referrals for health services, including  
103 referrals for appropriate immunizations and screenings; (4) a plan for  
104 the incorporation of appropriate preliteracy practices and teacher  
105 training in such practices based on the report completed by the Early  
106 Reading Success Panel established pursuant to section 10-221j; (5)  
107 nutrition services; (6) referrals to family literacy programs that  
108 incorporate adult basic education and provide for the promotion of

109 literacy through access to public library services; (7) admission policies  
110 that promote enrollment of children from different racial, ethnic and  
111 economic backgrounds and from other communities; (8) a plan of  
112 transition for participating children from the school readiness program  
113 to kindergarten and provide for the transfer of records from the  
114 program to the kindergarten program; (9) a plan for professional  
115 development for staff, including, but not limited to, training (A) in  
116 preliteracy skills development, and (B) designed to assure respect for  
117 racial and ethnic diversity; (10) a sliding fee scale for families  
118 participating in the program pursuant to section 17b-749d; and (11) an  
119 annual evaluation of the effectiveness of the program. On and after  
120 July 1, 2000, school readiness programs shall use the assessment  
121 measures developed pursuant to section 10-16s in conducting their  
122 annual evaluations.

123 (b) The per child cost of the Department of Education school  
124 readiness component of the program offered by a school readiness  
125 provider shall not exceed the foundation, as defined in subdivision (9)  
126 of section 10-262f. A school readiness provider may provide child day  
127 care services and the cost of such child day care services shall not be  
128 subject to such per child cost limitation.

129 (c) A local or regional board of education may implement a sliding  
130 fee scale for the cost of services provided to children enrolled in a  
131 school readiness program.

132 (d) A school readiness program or a group of school readiness  
133 programs may apply for a federal early reading first competitive grant  
134 in accordance with provisions set forth in the No Child Left Behind  
135 Act, P.L. 107-110.

136 (e) The Department of Education may apply for federal dollars to  
137 create, in collaboration with appropriate New England nonprofit and  
138 public agencies, a New England center for teacher training in literacy.  
139 The center will train new and continuing teachers, preschool through  
140 elementary school, in instruction methods consistent with research

141 based reading instruction.

142 Sec. 5. Subsection (a) of section 10-16r of the general statutes is  
143 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*  
144 *1, 2003*):

145 (a) A town seeking to apply for a grant pursuant to subsection (c) of  
146 section 10-16p, as amended by this act, or section 10-16u shall convene  
147 a local school readiness council or shall establish a regional school  
148 readiness council pursuant to subsection (c) of this section. Any other  
149 town may convene such a council. The chief elected official of the town  
150 or, in the case of a regional school district, the chief elected officials of  
151 the towns in the school district and the superintendent of schools for  
152 the school district shall jointly appoint and convene such council. Each  
153 school readiness council shall be composed of: (1) The chief elected  
154 official, or the official's designee; (2) the superintendent of schools, or a  
155 management level staff person as the superintendent's designee; (3)  
156 parents; (4) representatives from local programs such as Head Start,  
157 family resource centers, nonprofit and for-profit child day care centers,  
158 group day care homes, prekindergarten and nursery schools, and  
159 family day care home providers; and (5) other representatives from the  
160 community who provide services to children or the community  
161 including, but not limited to, librarians, child health experts and  
162 business leaders. The chief elected official shall designate the  
163 chairperson of the school readiness council.

164 Sec. 6. (*Effective from passage*) On or before October 1, 2003, the  
165 presidents of institutions of higher education that provide teacher  
166 education programs, or their designees, shall summarize and report to  
167 the Commissioners of Education and Higher Education on the changes  
168 made in the curricula of each such program to implement the  
169 recommendations set forth in the report of the Early Reading Success  
170 Panel pursuant to section 10-221j of the general statutes. On or before  
171 February 1, 2004, said commissioners shall report, in accordance with  
172 the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint

173 standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of  
174 matters relating to education on such curricula changes.

175 Sec. 7. Subsection (g) of section 10-16p of the general statutes is  
176 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from*  
177 *passage*):

178 (g) Subject to the provisions of this subsection, no funds received by  
179 a town pursuant to subsection (c) or (d) of this section or section 10-  
180 16u shall be used to supplant federal, state or local funding received by  
181 such town for early childhood education, provided (1) a town may use  
182 the greater of (A) twenty-five thousand dollars, or (B) up to five per  
183 cent but no more than fifty thousand dollars of the amount [received]  
184 allocated pursuant to subsection (c) or (d) of this section or section 10-  
185 16u for coordination, program evaluation and administration, and (2)  
186 if a town provides twenty-five thousand dollars in local funding for  
187 early childhood education coordination, program evaluation and  
188 administration, such town may use up to ten per cent but no more  
189 than seventy-five thousand dollars of such amount for coordination,  
190 program evaluation and administration. Each town that receives a  
191 grant pursuant to said subsection (c) or (d) or section 10-16u shall  
192 designate a person to be responsible for such coordination, program  
193 evaluation and administration and to act as a liaison between the town  
194 and the Departments of Education and Social Services. Each school  
195 readiness program that receives funds pursuant to this section or  
196 section 10-16u shall provide information to the department or the  
197 school readiness council, as requested, that is necessary for purposes of  
198 any school readiness program evaluation.

199 Sec. 8. Subsection (e) of section 10-16p of the general statutes is  
200 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*  
201 *1, 2003*):

202 (e) (1) Ninety-three per cent of the amount appropriated for  
203 purposes of this section shall be used for the grant program pursuant  
204 to subsection (c) of this section. Priority school districts and former

205 priority school districts shall receive grants based on their proportional  
206 share of the sum of the products obtained by multiplying the average  
207 number of enrolled kindergarten students in each priority school  
208 district and in each former priority school district for the three years  
209 prior to the year the grant is to be paid, by the ratio of the average  
210 percentage of free and reduced price meals for all severe need schools  
211 in such district to the minimum percentage requirement for severe  
212 need school eligibility, provided no such school district shall receive a  
213 grant that is less than the grant it received for the prior fiscal year or a  
214 grant that is less than one hundred fifty thousand dollars.

215 (2) Six and five-tenths per cent of the amount appropriated for  
216 purposes of this section shall be used for the competitive grant  
217 program pursuant to subsection (d) of this section.

218 (3) The Department of Education may retain up to five-tenths of one  
219 per cent of the amount appropriated for purposes of this section for  
220 coordination, program evaluation and administration.

221 (4) If a town that is eligible for a grant pursuant to subsection (c) of  
222 this section does not submit, by January first, a plan which is  
223 subsequently approved for the expenditure of the entire amount of  
224 funds for which such town is eligible, the department may use [up to  
225 fifty per cent of] any amounts such town has not earmarked for  
226 expenditure to (1) provide supplemental grants to other towns that are  
227 eligible for grants pursuant to subsection (c) of this section, or (2)  
228 enhance the system of professional development for pre-school  
229 educators in programs receiving funds pursuant to this section.

230 Sec. 9. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2003*) The Department of Education  
231 shall oversee the 21<sup>st</sup> century community learning centers, as provided  
232 for in the No Child Left Behind Act, P.L. 107-110.

233 Sec. 10. Subsection (a) of section 10-265f of the general statutes is  
234 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*  
235 *1, 2003*):

236 (a) The Commissioner of Education shall establish, within available  
237 appropriations, an early reading success grant program to assist local  
238 and regional boards of education for priority school districts and  
239 school districts in which priority elementary schools are located in: (1)  
240 Establishing full-day kindergarten programs; (2) reducing class size in  
241 grades kindergarten to three, inclusive, to not more than eighteen  
242 students; and (3) establishing intensive early intervention reading  
243 programs, including after-school and summer programs, for students  
244 identified as being at risk of failing to learn to read by the end of first  
245 grade and students in grades one to three, inclusive, who are reading  
246 below grade level. Eligibility for grants pursuant to this section shall be  
247 determined for a five-year period based on a school district's  
248 designation as a priority school district or as a school district in which  
249 a priority elementary school is located for the initial year of  
250 application. In order to receive a grant, an eligible board of education  
251 shall submit a plan for the expenditure of grant funds, in accordance  
252 with this section, to the Department of Education, at such time and in  
253 such manner as the commissioner prescribes. An eligible school district  
254 may receive a grant for one or more purposes pursuant to subdivisions  
255 (1) to (3), inclusive, of this subsection, provided at least fifty per cent of  
256 any grant funds received by such school district are used for programs  
257 pursuant to subdivision (3) of this subsection. School districts shall use  
258 sufficient grant funds to provide professional training for teachers and  
259 principals in reading instruction required pursuant to subsection (d) of  
260 this section at reading institutes approved by the Commissioner of  
261 Education. If the commissioner determines the school district is  
262 addressing the issue of early reading intervention sufficiently, the  
263 commissioner may allow the school district to set aside a smaller  
264 percentage of the funds received pursuant to this section for such  
265 programs.

This act shall take effect as follows:	
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2003</i>
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2003</i>

Sec. 3	<i>July 1, 2003</i>
Sec. 4	<i>July 1, 2003</i>
Sec. 5	<i>July 1, 2003</i>
Sec. 6	<i>from passage</i>
Sec. 7	<i>from passage</i>
Sec. 8	<i>July 1, 2003</i>
Sec. 9	<i>July 1, 2003</i>
Sec. 10	<i>July 1, 2003</i>

***Statement of Purpose:***

To ensure that all young children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a quality education; to close the achievement gap between high and low performing children, especially the achievement gap between minority and nonminority students, to align preschool with high-quality K-3 education expectations to bolster performance, continuity and educational accountability, to offer parents substantial and meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children to coordinate services in early care and education with each other and to enhance the school readiness of preschool children through high quality oral language and literature-rich environments and to transfer the authorization of the quality enhancement grant to the Department of Education.

*[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]*