



General Assembly

**Substitute Bill No. 1141**

*January Session, 2003*

**AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL READINESS AND PRIORITY  
SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND CONCERNING A SCHOLARSHIP  
PROGRAM FOR CERTAIN PARAPROFESSIONALS.**

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

1 Section 1. Subsection (c) of section 10-16p of the general statutes is  
2 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*  
3 *1, 2003*):

4 (c) The Commissioner of Education, in consultation with the  
5 Commissioner of Social Services, shall establish a grant program to  
6 provide spaces in accredited or approved school readiness programs  
7 for eligible children who reside in priority school districts pursuant to  
8 section 10-266p or in former priority school districts as provided in this  
9 subsection. Not later than July 1, 2008, the grant program shall provide  
10 for spaces in accredited or approved school readiness programs for all  
11 eligible children who reside in priority school districts pursuant to  
12 section 10-266p or in former priority school districts as provided in this  
13 subsection. Under the program, the grant shall be provided, in  
14 accordance with this section, to the town in which such priority school  
15 district or former priority school district is located. Eligibility shall be  
16 determined for a five-year period based on an applicant's designation  
17 as a priority school district for the initial year of application, except  
18 that if a school district that receives a grant pursuant to this subsection  
19 is no longer designated as a priority school district at the end of such

20 five-year period, such former priority school district shall continue to  
21 be eligible to receive a grant pursuant to this subsection. Grant awards  
22 shall be made annually contingent upon available funding and a  
23 satisfactory annual evaluation. The chief elected official of such town  
24 and the superintendent of schools for such priority school district or  
25 former priority school district shall submit a plan for the expenditure  
26 of grant funds and responses to the local request for proposal process  
27 to the Departments of Education and Social Services. The departments  
28 shall jointly review such plans and shall each approve the portion of  
29 such plan within its jurisdiction for funding. The plan shall: (1) Be  
30 developed in consultation with the local or regional school readiness  
31 council established pursuant to section 10-16r; (2) be based on a needs  
32 and resource assessment; (3) provide for the issuance of requests for  
33 proposals for providers of accredited or approved school readiness  
34 programs, provided, after the initial requests for proposals, facilities  
35 that have been approved to operate a child care program financed  
36 through the Connecticut Health and Education Facilities Authority  
37 and have received a commitment for debt service from the Department  
38 of Social Services pursuant to section 17b-749i, are exempt from the  
39 requirement for issuance of annual requests for proposals; [and] (4)  
40 identify the need for funding pursuant to section 17b-749a in order to  
41 extend the hours and days of operation of school readiness programs  
42 in order to provide child day care services for children attending such  
43 programs; and (5) for plans submitted for the fiscal year ending June  
44 30, 2009, and annually thereafter, include provisions allowing for  
45 participation of all eligible children who reside in priority school  
46 districts pursuant to section 10-266p or in former priority school  
47 districts as provided in this subsection.

48 Sec. 2. Subsection (d) of section 10-16p of the general statutes is  
49 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from*  
50 *passage*):

51 (d) The Commissioner of Education, in consultation with the  
52 Commissioner of Social Services, shall establish a competitive grant  
53 program to provide spaces in accredited or approved school readiness

54 programs for eligible children who reside in an area served by a  
55 priority school or a former priority school as provided in this  
56 subsection. A town in which such a school is located or a regional  
57 school readiness council, pursuant to subsection (c) of section 10-16r,  
58 for a region in which such a school is located may apply for such a  
59 grant in an amount not to exceed one hundred thousand dollars per  
60 priority school or former priority school. Eligibility shall be  
61 determined for a five-year period based on an applicant's designation  
62 as having a priority school for the initial year of application, except  
63 that if an applicant receives a grant pursuant to this subsection for a  
64 school that is no longer designated a priority school at the end of such  
65 five-year period due to school redistricting to reduce racial, ethnic and  
66 economic isolation, such applicant with a former priority school shall  
67 continue to be eligible to receive a grant pursuant to this subsection.  
68 Grant awards shall be made annually contingent upon available  
69 funding and a satisfactory annual evaluation. The chief elected official  
70 of such town and the superintendent of schools of the school district or  
71 the regional school readiness council shall submit a plan, as described  
72 in subsection (c) of this section, as amended by this act, for the  
73 expenditure of such grant funds to the Department of Education. In  
74 awarding grants pursuant to this subsection, the commissioner shall  
75 give preference to applications submitted by regional school readiness  
76 councils and may, within available appropriations, provide a grant in  
77 excess of one hundred thousand dollars to towns with two or more  
78 priority schools in such district. A town or regional school readiness  
79 council awarded a grant pursuant to this subsection shall use the funds  
80 to purchase spaces for such children from providers of accredited or  
81 approved school readiness programs.

82 Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2003*) (a) The Department of Higher  
83 Education, in collaboration with the Board for State Academic Awards,  
84 shall establish, within available appropriations, a program to provide  
85 scholarships to allow paraprofessionals to obtain an associate's degree.  
86 Scholarships may be awarded to paraprofessionals employed by local  
87 and regional school boards of education who are subject to the

88 provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act, P.L. 107-110 that require  
89 paraprofessionals to complete two years at an institution of higher  
90 education, obtain an associate's degree or higher, or to pass an  
91 assessment demonstrating instructional skills on or before January 8,  
92 2006. The scholarships may be based on need and other circumstances,  
93 based on criteria established by the Commissioner of Higher  
94 Education, and disbursed in annual payments. The total amount of  
95 scholarship money provided to any paraprofessional pursuant to this  
96 section shall not exceed (1) two thousand dollars, or (2) the combined  
97 cost of the tuition and fees at the institution of higher education the  
98 paraprofessional is attending or will attend, whichever is less. The  
99 department shall establish criteria for paraprofessionals for  
100 participation in the program and procedures for the repayment of the  
101 amount of the scholarships if the paraprofessional does not work as a  
102 paraprofessional in a local or regional school district upon completion  
103 of the program.

104 (b) For purposes of this section, "paraprofessional" means an  
105 employee of a local or regional board of education who does not  
106 possess a certificate issued by the State Board of Education and who  
107 serves as an instructional assistant for such local or regional board of  
108 education.

This act shall take effect as follows:	
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2003</i>
Sec. 2	<i>from passage</i>
Sec. 3	<i>July 1, 2003</i>

**ED**

*Joint Favorable Subst. C/R*

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