



General Assembly

February Session, 2010

Raised Bill No. 380

LCO No. 1895

01895_____ED_

Referred to Committee on Education

Introduced by:
(ED)

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

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

1 Section 1. Section 10-16p of the 2010 supplement to the general
2 statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof
3 (*Effective July 1, 2010*):

4 (a) As used in sections 10-16o to 10-16s, inclusive, 10-16u, 17b-749a
5 and 17b-749c:

6 (1) "School readiness program" means a nonsectarian program that
7 (A) meets the standards set by the department pursuant to subsection
8 (b) of this section and the requirements of section 10-16q, and (B)
9 provides a developmentally appropriate learning experience of not less
10 than four hundred fifty hours and one hundred eighty days for eligible
11 children, except as provided in subsection (d) of section 10-16q;

12 (2) "Eligible children" means children three and four years of age
13 and children five years of age who are not eligible to enroll in school
14 pursuant to section 10-15c, or who are eligible to enroll in school and

15 will attend a school readiness program pursuant to section 10-16t;

16 (3) "Priority school" means a school in which forty per cent or more
17 of the lunches served are served to students who are eligible for free or
18 reduced price lunches pursuant to federal law and regulations,
19 excluding such a school located in a priority school district pursuant to
20 section 10-266p or in a former priority school district receiving a grant
21 pursuant to subsection (c) of this section and, on and after July 1, 2001,
22 excluding such a school in a transitional school district receiving a
23 grant pursuant to section 10-16u;

24 (4) "Severe need school" means a school in a priority school district
25 pursuant to section 10-266p or in a former priority school district in
26 which forty per cent or more of the lunches served are served to
27 students who are eligible for free or reduced price lunches;

28 (5) "Accredited" means accredited by the National Association for
29 the Education of Young Children, a Head Start on-site program review
30 instrument or a successor instrument pursuant to federal regulations,
31 or otherwise meeting such criteria as may be established by the
32 commissioner, in consultation with the Commissioner of Social
33 Services, unless the context otherwise requires;

34 (6) "Year-round" means fifty weeks per year, except as provided in
35 subsection (d) of section 10-16q;

36 (7) "Commissioner" means the Commissioner of Education; and

37 (8) "Department" means the Department of Education.

38 (b) (1) The Department of Education shall be the lead agency for
39 school readiness. For purposes of this section and section 10-16u,
40 school readiness program providers eligible for funding from the
41 Department of Education shall include local and regional boards of
42 education, regional educational service centers, family resource centers
43 and providers of child day care centers, as defined in section 19a-77,
44 Head Start programs, preschool programs and other programs that

45 meet such standards established by the Commissioner of Education.
46 The department shall establish standards for school readiness
47 programs. The standards may include, but need not be limited to,
48 guidelines for staff-child interactions, curriculum content, including
49 preliteracy development, lesson plans, parent involvement, staff
50 qualifications and training, transition to school and administration.
51 The department shall develop age-appropriate developmental skills
52 and goals for children attending such programs. The commissioner, in
53 consultation with the Commissioners of Higher Education and Social
54 Services and other appropriate entities, shall develop a continuing
55 education training program for the staff of school readiness programs.

56 (2) (A) For purposes of this section, prior to July 1, 2015, "staff
57 qualifications" means there is in each classroom an individual who has
58 at least the following: [(1)] (i) A credential issued by an organization
59 approved by the Commissioner of Education and nine credits or more,
60 and on and after July 1, 2005, twelve credits or more, in early
61 childhood education or child development from an institution of
62 higher education accredited by the Board of Governors of Higher
63 Education or regionally accredited; [(2)] (ii) an associate's degree with
64 nine credits or more, and on and after July 1, 2005, twelve credits or
65 more, in early childhood education or child development from such an
66 institution; [(3)] (iii) a four-year degree with nine credits or more, and
67 on and after July 1, 2005, twelve credits or more, in early childhood
68 education or child development from such an institution; or [(4)] (iv)
69 certification pursuant to section 10-145b with an endorsement in early
70 childhood education or special education. [, and on]

71 (B) On and after July 1, 2015, "staff qualifications" means there is in
72 each classroom an individual who has at least the following: [(A)] (i) A
73 bachelor's degree in early childhood education or childhood
74 development, or in a related field approved by the Commissioner of
75 Education from an institution of higher education accredited by the
76 Board of Governors of Higher Education or regionally accredited; or
77 [(B)] (ii) certification pursuant to section 10-145b with an endorsement

78 in early childhood education or special education.

79 (c) The Commissioner of Education, in consultation with the
80 Commissioner of Social Services, shall establish a grant program to
81 provide spaces in accredited school readiness programs for eligible
82 children who reside in priority school districts pursuant to section 10-
83 266p or in former priority school districts as provided in this
84 subsection. Under the program, the grant shall be provided, in
85 accordance with this section, to the town in which such priority school
86 district or former priority school district is located. Eligibility shall be
87 determined for a five-year period based on an applicant's designation
88 as a priority school district for the initial year of application, except
89 that if a school district that receives a grant pursuant to this subsection
90 is no longer designated as a priority school district at the end of such
91 five-year period, such former priority school district shall continue to
92 be eligible to receive a grant pursuant to this subsection. Grant awards
93 shall be made annually contingent upon available funding and a
94 satisfactory annual evaluation. The chief elected official of such town
95 and the superintendent of schools for such priority school district or
96 former priority school district shall submit a plan for the expenditure
97 of grant funds and responses to the local request for proposal process
98 to the Departments of Education and Social Services. The departments
99 shall jointly review such plans and shall each approve the portion of
100 such plan within its jurisdiction for funding. The plan shall: (1) Be
101 developed in consultation with the local or regional school readiness
102 council established pursuant to section 10-16r; (2) be based on a needs
103 and resource assessment; (3) provide for the issuance of requests for
104 proposals for providers of accredited school readiness programs,
105 provided, after the initial requests for proposals, facilities that have
106 been approved to operate a child care program financed through the
107 Connecticut Health and Education Facilities Authority and have
108 received a commitment for debt service from the Department of Social
109 Services pursuant to section 17b-749i, are exempt from the requirement
110 for issuance of annual requests for proposals; and (4) identify the need
111 for funding pursuant to section 17b-749a in order to extend the hours

112 and days of operation of school readiness programs in order to
113 provide child day care services for children attending such programs.

114 (d) (1) The Commissioner of Education, in consultation with the
115 Commissioner of Social Services, shall establish a competitive grant
116 program to provide spaces in accredited school readiness programs for
117 eligible children who reside (A) in an area served by a priority school
118 or a former priority school as provided for in subdivision (2) of this
119 subsection, (B) in a town ranked one to fifty when all towns are ranked
120 in ascending order according to town wealth, as defined in subdivision
121 (26) of section 10-262f, whose school district is not a priority school
122 district pursuant to section 10-266p, or (C) in a town formerly a town
123 described in subparagraph (B) of this subdivision, as provided for in
124 said subdivision (2). A town in which a priority school is located, a
125 regional school readiness council, pursuant to subsection (c) of section
126 10-16r, for a region in which such a school is located or a town
127 described in subparagraph (B) of this subdivision may apply for such a
128 grant in an amount not to exceed one hundred seven thousand dollars
129 per priority school or town. Eligibility shall be determined for a five-
130 year period based on an applicant's designation as having a priority
131 school or being a town described in subparagraph (B) of this
132 subdivision for the initial year of application. Grant awards shall be
133 made annually contingent upon available funding and a satisfactory
134 annual evaluation. The chief elected official of such town and the
135 superintendent of schools of the school district or the regional school
136 readiness council shall submit a plan, as described in subsection (c) of
137 this section, for the expenditure of such grant funds to the Department
138 of Education. In awarding grants pursuant to this subsection, the
139 commissioner shall give preference to applications submitted by
140 regional school readiness councils and may, within available
141 appropriations, provide a grant in excess of one hundred seven
142 thousand dollars to towns with two or more priority schools in such
143 district. A town or regional school readiness council awarded a grant
144 pursuant to this subsection shall use the funds to purchase spaces for
145 such children from providers of accredited school readiness programs.

146 (2) (A) Commencing with the fiscal year ending June 30, 2005, if a
147 town received a grant pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection
148 and is no longer eligible to receive such a grant, the town may receive
149 a phase-out grant for each of the three fiscal years following the fiscal
150 year such town received its final grant pursuant to subdivision (1) of
151 this subsection.

152 (B) The amount of such phase-out grants shall be determined as
153 follows: (i) For the first fiscal year following the fiscal year such town
154 received its final grant pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection, in
155 an amount that does not exceed seventy-five per cent of the grant
156 amount such town received for the town or school's final year of
157 eligibility pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection; (ii) for the
158 second fiscal year following the fiscal year such town received its final
159 grant pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection, in an amount that
160 does not exceed fifty per cent of the grant amount such town received
161 for the town's or school's final year of eligibility pursuant to
162 subdivision (1) of this subsection; (iii) for the third fiscal year following
163 the fiscal year such town received its final grant pursuant to
164 subdivision (1) of this subsection, in an amount that does not exceed
165 twenty-five per cent of the grant amount such town received for the
166 town's or school's final year of eligibility pursuant to subdivision (1) of
167 this subsection.

168 (e) (1) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2009, and each fiscal year
169 thereafter, priority school districts and former priority school districts
170 shall receive grants based on the sum of the products obtained by (A)
171 multiplying the district's number of contracted slots on March thirtieth
172 of the fiscal year prior to the fiscal year in which the grant is to be paid,
173 by the per child cost pursuant to subdivision (2) of subsection (b) of
174 section 10-16q, except that such per child cost shall be reduced for slots
175 that are less than year-round, and (B) multiplying the number of
176 additional or decreased slots the districts have requested for the fiscal
177 year in which the grant is to be paid by the per child cost pursuant to
178 subdivision (2) of subsection (b) of said section 10-16q, except such per

179 child cost shall be reduced for slots that are less than year-round. If
180 said sum exceeds the available appropriation, such number of
181 requested additional slots shall be reduced, as determined by the
182 Commissioner of Education, to stay within the available appropriation.

183 (2) (A) If funds appropriated for the purposes of subsection (c) of
184 this section are not expended, the Commissioner of Education shall use
185 such unexpended funds for providing professional development to
186 school readiness staff to satisfy the staff qualifications requirements of
187 subparagraph (B) of subdivision (2) of subsection (b) of this section.

188 [(2)] (B) If any additional funds appropriated for the purposes of
189 subsection (c) of this section and are not expended pursuant to
190 subparagraph (A) of this subdivision, the Commissioner of Education
191 may use such unexpended funds to support local school readiness
192 programs. The commissioner may use such funds for purposes
193 including, but not limited to, [(A)] (i) assisting local school readiness
194 programs in meeting and maintaining accreditation requirements, [(B)]
195 (ii) providing training in implementing the preschool assessment and
196 curriculum frameworks, including training to enhance literacy
197 teaching skills, [(C)] (iii) developing a state-wide preschool curriculum,
198 [(D)] (iv) developing student assessments for students in grades
199 kindergarten to two, inclusive, [(E)] (v) developing and implementing
200 best practices for parents in supporting preschool and kindergarten
201 student learning, [(F)] (vi) developing and implementing strategies for
202 children to transition from preschool to kindergarten, [(G)] providing
203 for professional development, including assisting in career ladder
204 advancement, for school readiness staff,] and [(H)] (vii) providing
205 supplemental grants to other towns that are eligible for grants
206 pursuant to subsection (c) of this section.

207 (3) Notwithstanding subdivision (2) of this subsection, for the fiscal
208 years ending June 30, 2008, to June 30, 2011, inclusive, the Department
209 of Education may retain up to one hundred ninety-eight thousand two
210 hundred dollars of the amount appropriated for purposes of this

211 section for coordination, program evaluation and administration.

212 (f) Any school readiness program that receives funds pursuant to
213 this section or section 10-16u shall not discriminate on the basis of race,
214 color, national origin, gender, religion or disability. For purposes of
215 this section, a nonsectarian program means any public or private
216 school readiness program that is not violative of the Establishment
217 Clause of the Constitution of the State of Connecticut or the
218 Establishment Clause of the Constitution of the United States of
219 America.

220 (g) Subject to the provisions of this subsection, no funds received by
221 a town pursuant to subsection (c) or (d) of this section or section 10-
222 16u shall be used to supplant federal, state or local funding received by
223 such town for early childhood education, provided a town may use an
224 amount determined in accordance with this subsection for
225 coordination, program evaluation and administration. Such amount
226 shall be at least twenty-five thousand dollars but not more than
227 seventy-five thousand dollars and shall be determined by the
228 Department of Education, in consultation with the Department of
229 Social Services, based on the school readiness grant award allocated to
230 the town pursuant to subsection (c) or (d) of this section or section 10-
231 16u and the number of operating sites for coordination, program
232 evaluation and administration. Such amount shall be increased by an
233 amount equal to local funding provided for early childhood education
234 coordination, program evaluation and administration, not to exceed
235 twenty-five thousand dollars. Each town that receives a grant pursuant
236 to said subsection (c) or (d) or section 10-16u shall designate a person
237 to be responsible for such coordination, program evaluation and
238 administration and to act as a liaison between the town and the
239 Departments of Education and Social Services. Each school readiness
240 program that receives funds pursuant to this section or section 10-16u
241 shall provide information to the department or the school readiness
242 council, as requested, that is necessary for purposes of any school
243 readiness program evaluation.

244 (h) For the first three years a town receives grants pursuant to this
 245 section, such grants may be used, with the approval of the
 246 commissioner, to prepare a facility or staff for operating a school
 247 readiness program and shall be adjusted based on the number of days
 248 of operation of a school readiness program if a shorter term of
 249 operation is approved by the commissioner.

250 (i) A town may use grant funds to purchase spaces for eligible
 251 children who reside in such town at an accredited school readiness
 252 program located in another town. A regional school readiness council
 253 may use grant funds to purchase spaces for eligible children who
 254 reside in the region covered by the council at an accredited school
 255 readiness program located outside such region.

256 (j) Children enrolled in school readiness programs funded pursuant
 257 to this section shall not be counted (1) as resident students for
 258 purposes of subdivision (22) of section 10-262f, or (2) in the
 259 determination of average daily membership pursuant to subdivision
 260 (2) of subsection (a) of section 10-261.

261 (k) Up to two per cent of the amount of the appropriation for this
 262 section may be allocated to the competitive grant program pursuant to
 263 subsection (d) of this section. The determination of the amount of such
 264 allocation shall be made on or before August first.

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|---|---------------------|--------|
| This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections: | | |
| Section 1 | <i>July 1, 2010</i> | 10-16p |

Statement of Purpose:

To direct the Commissioner of Education to use unexpended funds for providing professional development to school readiness staff.

[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.]