



General Assembly

February Session, 2012

Raised Bill No. 300

LCO No. 1665

* _____SB00300ED_APP031512_____*

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 10-16p of the 2012 supplement to the general
2 statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof
3 (*Effective July 1, 2012*):

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 president of the Board of Regents for Higher
54 Education, the Commissioner of Social Services and other appropriate
55 entities, shall develop a continuing education training program for the
56 staff of school readiness programs.

57 (2) For purposes of this section:

58 (A) Prior to July 1, 2015, "staff qualifications" means there is in each
59 classroom an individual who has at least the following: (i) A childhood
60 development associate credential or an equivalent credential issued by
61 an organization approved by the Commissioner of Education and
62 twelve credits or more in early childhood education or child
63 development, as determined by the president of the Board of Regents
64 for Higher Education, after consultation with the Commissioners of
65 Education and Social Services, from an institution of higher education
66 accredited by the Board of Regents for Higher Education or regionally
67 accredited; (ii) an associate's degree with twelve credits or more in
68 early childhood education or child development, as determined by the
69 president of the Board of Regents for Higher Education, after
70 consultation with the Commissioners of Education and Social Services,
71 from such an institution; (iii) a four-year degree with twelve credits or
72 more in early childhood education or child development, as
73 determined by the president of the Board of Regents for Higher
74 Education, after consultation with the Commissioners of Education
75 and Social Services, from such an institution; or (iv) certification
76 pursuant to section 10-145b with an endorsement in early childhood
77 education or special education;

78 (B) From July 1, 2015, to June 30, 2020, "staff qualifications" means
79 that for each early childhood education program accepting state funds,

80 including school readiness or childcare services funds and funds from
81 the Department of Social Services, (i) at least fifty per cent of those
82 individuals with the primary responsibility for a classroom of children
83 hold (I) certification pursuant to section 10-145b with an endorsement
84 in early childhood education or early childhood special education, or
85 (II) a bachelor's degree with a concentration in early childhood
86 education, including, but not limited to, a bachelor's degree in early
87 childhood education, child study, child development or human
88 growth and development, from an institution of higher education
89 accredited by the Board of Regents for Higher Education, provided
90 such bachelor's degree program is approved by the Board of Regents
91 for Higher Education and the Department of Education, and (ii) such
92 remaining individuals hold an associate degree with a concentration in
93 early childhood education, including, but not limited to, an associate's
94 degree in early childhood education, child study, child development or
95 human growth and development, from an institution of higher
96 education accredited by the Board of Regents for Higher Education,
97 provided such associate degree program is approved by the Board of
98 Regents for Higher Education and the Department of Education; and

99 (C) On and after July 1, 2020, "staff qualifications" means that for
100 each early childhood education program accepting state funds,
101 including school readiness or childcare services funds and funds from
102 the Department of Social Services, one hundred per cent of those
103 individuals with the primary responsibility for a classroom of children
104 hold (i) certification pursuant to section 10-145b with an endorsement
105 in early childhood education or early childhood special education, or
106 (ii) a bachelor's degree with a concentration in early childhood
107 education, including, but not limited to, a bachelor's degree in early
108 childhood education, child study, child development or human
109 growth and development, from an institution of higher education
110 accredited by the Board of Regents for Higher Education, provided
111 such bachelor's degree program is approved by the Board of Regents
112 for Higher Education and the Department of Education.

113 (3) Any individual with a bachelor's degree who, on or before June
114 30, 2015, is employed as a teacher by an early childhood education
115 program that accepts state funds, including school readiness or
116 childcare services funds and funds from the Department of Social
117 Services, and meets the staff qualifications required under
118 subparagraph (A) of subdivision (2) of this subsection shall be
119 considered to meet the staff qualifications required under
120 subparagraphs (B) and (C) of subdivision (2) of this subsection. No
121 such early childhood education program shall terminate any such
122 individual from employment for purposes of meeting the staff
123 qualification requirements set forth in subparagraph (B) or (C) of
124 subdivision (2) of this subsection.

125 (4) Any individual with a bachelor's degree other than those
126 bachelor's degrees specified in subparagraphs (A) and (B) of
127 subdivision (2) of this subsection may submit documentation
128 concerning such degree for review and assessment by the Department
129 of Education as to whether such degree has a sufficient concentration
130 in early childhood education so as to satisfy the requirements set forth
131 in said subparagraphs (A) and (B).

132 (c) [The] (1) For the fiscal years ending June 30, 2011, to June 30,
133 2013, inclusive, the Commissioner of Education, in consultation with
134 the Commissioner of Social Services, shall establish a grant program to
135 provide spaces in accredited school readiness programs for eligible
136 children who reside in priority school districts pursuant to section 10-
137 266p or in former priority school districts as provided in this
138 subsection. Under the program, the grant shall be provided, in
139 accordance with this section, to the town in which such priority school
140 district or former priority school district is located. Eligibility shall be
141 determined for a five-year period based on an applicant's designation
142 as a priority school district for the initial year of application, except
143 that if a school district that receives a grant pursuant to this subsection
144 is no longer designated as a priority school district at the end of such
145 five-year period, such former priority school district shall continue to

146 be eligible to receive a grant pursuant to this subsection. Grant awards
147 shall be made annually contingent upon available funding and a
148 satisfactory annual evaluation. [The chief elected official of such town
149 and the superintendent of schools for such priority school district or
150 former priority school district shall submit a plan for the expenditure
151 of grant funds and responses to the local request for proposal process
152 to the Departments of Education and Social Services. The departments
153 shall jointly review such plans and shall each approve the portion of
154 such plan within its jurisdiction for funding. The plan shall: (1) Be
155 developed in consultation with the local or regional school readiness
156 council established pursuant to section 10-16r; (2) be based on a needs
157 and resource assessment; (3) provide for the issuance of requests for
158 proposals for providers of accredited school readiness programs,
159 provided, after the initial requests for proposals, facilities that have
160 been approved to operate a child care program financed through the
161 Connecticut Health and Education Facilities Authority and have
162 received a commitment for debt service from the Department of Social
163 Services pursuant to section 17b-749i, are exempt from the requirement
164 for issuance of annual requests for proposals; and (4) identify the need
165 for funding pursuant to section 17b-749a in order to extend the hours
166 and days of operation of school readiness programs in order to
167 provide child day care services for children attending such programs.]

168 (2) For the fiscal years ending June 30, 2014, to June 30, 2017,
169 inclusive, the commissioner shall award a grant, in accordance with
170 this section, to the towns in which a priority school district is located to
171 provide spaces in accredited school readiness programs for all eligible
172 children who reside in priority school districts. Eligibility shall be
173 determined for a three-year period based on a town's designation as a
174 priority school district. Grant awards shall be made annually upon a
175 satisfactory annual evaluation.

176 (3) For the fiscal years ending June 30, 2015, to June 30, 2017,
177 inclusive, the commissioner shall award a grant, in accordance with
178 this section and the plan developed pursuant to subsection (1) of this

179 section, to towns to provide spaces in accredited school readiness
180 programs for all eligible children who reside in the town. Grant
181 awards shall be made annually upon a satisfactory annual evaluation.

182 (4) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2018, and each fiscal year
183 thereafter, the commissioner shall award a grant, in accordance with
184 this section, to towns to provide spaces in accredited school readiness
185 programs for all eligible children who reside in the town. Grant
186 awards shall be made annually upon a satisfactory annual evaluation.

187 (5) The chief elected official of such town and the superintendent of
188 schools for such priority school district or former priority school
189 district shall submit a plan for the expenditure of grant funds and
190 responses to the local request for proposal process to the Departments
191 of Education and Social Services. The departments shall jointly review
192 such plans and shall each approve the portion of such plan within its
193 jurisdiction for funding. The plan shall: (A) Be developed in
194 consultation with the local or regional school readiness council
195 established pursuant to section 10-16r; (B) be based on a needs and
196 resource assessment; (C) provide for the issuance of requests for
197 proposals for providers of accredited school readiness programs,
198 provided, after the initial requests for proposals, facilities that have
199 been approved to operate a child care program financed through the
200 Connecticut Health and Education Facilities Authority and have
201 received a commitment for debt service from the Department of Social
202 Services pursuant to section 17b-749i, are exempt from the requirement
203 for issuance of annual requests for proposals; and (D) identify the need
204 for funding pursuant to section 17b-749a in order to extend the hours
205 and days of operation of school readiness programs in order to
206 provide child day care services for children attending such programs.

207 (d) (1) [The] For the fiscal years ending June 30, 2011, to June 30,
208 2014, inclusive, the Commissioner of Education, in consultation with
209 the Commissioner of Social Services, shall establish a competitive grant
210 program to provide spaces in accredited school readiness programs for
211 eligible children who reside (A) in an area served by a priority school

212 or a former priority school as provided for in subdivision (2) of this
213 subsection, (B) in a town ranked one to fifty when all towns are ranked
214 in ascending order according to town wealth, as defined in subdivision
215 (26) of section 10-262f, whose school district is not a priority school
216 district pursuant to section 10-266p, or (C) in a town formerly a town
217 described in subparagraph (B) of this subdivision, as provided for in
218 subdivision (2) of this subsection. A town in which a priority school is
219 located, a regional school readiness council, pursuant to subsection (c)
220 of section 10-16r, for a region in which such a school is located or a
221 town described in subparagraph (B) of this subdivision may apply for
222 such a grant in an amount not to exceed one hundred seven thousand
223 dollars per priority school or town. Eligibility shall be determined for a
224 five-year period based on an applicant's designation as having a
225 priority school or being a town described in subparagraph (B) of this
226 subdivision for the initial year of application. Grant awards shall be
227 made annually contingent upon available funding and a satisfactory
228 annual evaluation. The chief elected official of such town and the
229 superintendent of schools of the school district or the regional school
230 readiness council shall submit a plan, as described in subsection (c) of
231 this section, for the expenditure of such grant funds to the Department
232 of Education. In awarding grants pursuant to this subsection, the
233 commissioner shall give preference to applications submitted by
234 regional school readiness councils and may, within available
235 appropriations, provide a grant in excess of one hundred seven
236 thousand dollars to towns with two or more priority schools in such
237 district. A town or regional school readiness council awarded a grant
238 pursuant to this subsection shall use the funds to purchase spaces for
239 such children from providers of accredited school readiness programs.

240 (2) (A) Except as provided in subparagraph (C) of this subdivision,
241 commencing with the fiscal year ending June 30, 2005, if a town
242 received a grant pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection and is
243 no longer eligible to receive such a grant, the town may receive a
244 phase-out grant for each of the three fiscal years following the fiscal
245 year such town received its final grant pursuant to subdivision (1) of

246 this subsection.

247 (B) The amount of such phase-out grants shall be determined as
248 follows: (i) For the first fiscal year following the fiscal year such town
249 received its final grant pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection, in
250 an amount that does not exceed seventy-five per cent of the grant
251 amount such town received for the town or school's final year of
252 eligibility pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection; (ii) for the
253 second fiscal year following the fiscal year such town received its final
254 grant pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection, in an amount that
255 does not exceed fifty per cent of the grant amount such town received
256 for the town's or school's final year of eligibility pursuant to
257 subdivision (1) of this subsection; and (iii) for the third fiscal year
258 following the fiscal year such town received its final grant pursuant to
259 subdivision (1) of this subsection, in an amount that does not exceed
260 twenty-five per cent of the grant amount such town received for the
261 town's or school's final year of eligibility pursuant to subdivision (1) of
262 this subsection.

263 (C) For the fiscal [year] years ending June 30, 2011, [and each fiscal
264 year thereafter] to June 30, 2014, inclusive, any town that received a
265 grant pursuant to subparagraph (B) of subdivision (1) of this
266 subsection for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2010, shall continue to
267 receive a grant under this subsection even if the town no longer meets
268 the criteria for such grant pursuant to subparagraph (B) of subdivision
269 (1) of this subsection.

270 (e) (1) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2009, and each fiscal year
271 thereafter, [priority school districts and former priority school districts]
272 towns receiving a grant under this section shall receive grants based on
273 the sum of the products obtained by (A) multiplying the district's
274 number of contracted slots on March thirtieth of the fiscal year prior to
275 the fiscal year in which the grant is to be paid, by the per child cost
276 pursuant to subdivision (2) of subsection (b) of section 10-16q, except
277 that such per child cost shall be reduced for slots that are less than
278 year-round, and (B) multiplying the number of additional or decreased

279 slots the districts have requested for the fiscal year in which the grant
280 is to be paid by the per child cost pursuant to subdivision (2) of
281 subsection (b) of section 10-16q, except such per child cost shall be
282 reduced for slots that are less than year-round. [If] For the fiscal years
283 ending June 30, 2011, to June 30, 2013, inclusive, if said sum exceeds
284 the available appropriation, such number of requested additional slots
285 shall be reduced, as determined by the Commissioner of Education, to
286 stay within the available appropriation.

287 (2) (A) If funds appropriated for the purposes of subsection (c) of
288 this section are not expended, the Commissioner of Education may
289 deposit such unexpended funds in the account established under
290 section 10-16aa and use such unexpended funds in accordance with
291 the provisions of section 10-16aa.

292 (B) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2012, and each fiscal year
293 thereafter, if funds appropriated for the purposes of subsection (c) of
294 this section are not expended, an amount up to five hundred thousand
295 dollars of such unexpended funds may be available for use in
296 accordance with the provisions of this subparagraph for the
297 subsequent fiscal year. The Commissioner of Education may use such
298 unexpended funds on and after July 1, 2012, in consultation with the
299 president of the Board of Regents for Higher Education, to support
300 early childhood education programs accepting state funds in satisfying
301 the staff qualifications requirements of subparagraphs (B) and (C) of
302 subdivision (2) of subsection (b) of this section. The local school
303 readiness programs shall use any such funds to provide assistance to
304 staff members at a maximum of five thousand dollars per staff member
305 per year for the cost of higher education courses leading to a bachelor's
306 degree or, not later than December 31, 2013, an associate's degree, as
307 such degrees are described in said subparagraphs (B) and (C) at an in-
308 state public institution of higher education or a Connecticut-based for-
309 profit or nonprofit institution of higher education, provided such staff
310 members have applied for all available federal and state scholarships
311 and grants, and such assistance does not exceed such staff members'

312 financial need. Local school readiness programs shall apply for such
313 unexpended funds in such program's application for a school
314 readiness grant pursuant to this section. The Commissioner of
315 Education shall determine, in consultation with the president of the
316 Board of Regents for Higher Education, how such unexpended funds
317 shall be distributed.

318 (C) If funds appropriated for the purposes of subsection (c) of this
319 section are not expended pursuant to subsection (c) of this section,
320 deposited pursuant to subparagraph (A) of this subdivision, or used
321 pursuant to subparagraph (B) of this subdivision, the Commissioner of
322 Education may use such unexpended funds to support local school
323 readiness programs. The commissioner may use such funds for
324 purposes including, but not limited to, (i) assisting local school
325 readiness programs in meeting and maintaining accreditation
326 requirements, (ii) providing training in implementing the preschool
327 assessment and curriculum frameworks, including training to enhance
328 literacy teaching skills, (iii) developing a state-wide preschool
329 curriculum, (iv) developing student assessments for students in grades
330 kindergarten to two, inclusive, (v) developing and implementing best
331 practices for parents in supporting preschool and kindergarten student
332 learning, (vi) developing and implementing strategies for children to
333 transition from preschool to kindergarten, (vii) providing for
334 professional development, including assisting in career ladder
335 advancement, for school readiness staff, and (viii) providing
336 supplemental grants to other towns that are eligible for grants
337 pursuant to subsection (c) of this section.

338 (3) Notwithstanding subdivision (2) of this subsection, for the fiscal
339 years ending June 30, 2008, to June 30, 2013, inclusive, the Department
340 of Education may retain up to one hundred ninety-eight thousand two
341 hundred dollars of the amount appropriated for purposes of this
342 section for coordination, program evaluation and administration.

343 (f) Any school readiness program that receives funds pursuant to
344 this section or section 10-16u shall not discriminate on the basis of race,

345 color, national origin, gender, religion or disability. For purposes of
346 this section, a nonsectarian program means any public or private
347 school readiness program that is not violative of the Establishment
348 Clause of the Constitution of the State of Connecticut or the
349 Establishment Clause of the Constitution of the United States of
350 America.

351 (g) Subject to the provisions of this subsection, no funds received by
352 a town pursuant to subsection (c) or (d) of this section or section 10-
353 16u shall be used to supplant federal, state or local funding received by
354 such town for early childhood education, provided a town may use an
355 amount determined in accordance with this subsection for
356 coordination, program evaluation and administration. Such amount
357 shall be at least twenty-five thousand dollars but not more than
358 seventy-five thousand dollars and shall be determined by the
359 Department of Education, in consultation with the Department of
360 Social Services, based on the school readiness grant award allocated to
361 the town pursuant to subsection (c) or (d) of this section or section 10-
362 16u and the number of operating sites for coordination, program
363 evaluation and administration. Such amount shall be increased by an
364 amount equal to local funding provided for early childhood education
365 coordination, program evaluation and administration, not to exceed
366 twenty-five thousand dollars. Each town that receives a grant pursuant
367 to subsection (c) or (d) of this section or section 10-16u shall designate
368 a person to be responsible for such coordination, program evaluation
369 and administration and to act as a liaison between the town and the
370 Departments of Education and Social Services. Each school readiness
371 program that receives funds pursuant to this section or section 10-16u
372 shall provide information to the department or the school readiness
373 council, as requested, that is necessary for purposes of any school
374 readiness program evaluation.

375 (h) For the first three years a town receives grants pursuant to this
376 section, such grants may be used, with the approval of the
377 commissioner, to prepare a facility or staff for operating a school

378 readiness program and shall be adjusted based on the number of days
379 of operation of a school readiness program if a shorter term of
380 operation is approved by the commissioner.

381 (i) A town may use grant funds to purchase spaces for eligible
382 children who reside in such town at an accredited school readiness
383 program located in another town. A regional school readiness council
384 may use grant funds to purchase spaces for eligible children who
385 reside in the region covered by the council at an accredited school
386 readiness program located outside such region.

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

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

396 (l) On or before July 1, 2013, the Commissioner of Education shall
397 develop a plan for the phase-in of grant awards under this subsection.
398 Such phase-in shall commence in the fiscal year ending June 30, 2015,
399 and be completed for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2017. The plan
400 shall outline the distribution of grant awards under this subsection
401 with priority given to (1) school districts in which a priority school is
402 located, (2) former priority school districts, and (3) school districts not
403 served by accredited school readiness programs. Such plan shall
404 include provisions relating to the financing and construction of
405 facilities through the Connecticut Health and Education Facilities
406 Authority, pursuant to section 10a-194c, to meet the needs for
407 additional spaces in accredited school readiness programs under this
408 subsection.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:

Section 1	<i>July 1, 2012</i>	10-16p
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ED

Joint Favorable C/R

APP