

HOUSE No. 530

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand Nine

An Act relative to early education and care..

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 4 of Chapter 15D of the General Laws, as most recently amended
2 by Section 34 of Chapter 215 of the Acts of 2008, is hereby amended by striking out the eighth
3 and ninth paragraphs and inserting in place thereof the following three paragraphs:--

4 The commissioner shall analyze the present and future goals, needs and requirements of
5 early childhood education and care in the commonwealth and recommend to the board
6 comprehensive means to achieve a well-coordinated system that promotes positive social and
7 emotional development, high education achievement and quality care in the commonwealth.

8 The commissioner shall prepare and, following consultation with the board and advisory
9 council and after a public hearing, shall submit to the secretary, for the secretary's review and
10 approval, a 5-year master plan for achieving such a coordinated system. The master plan along
11 with an annual progress report shall reflect the goals and standards established by the board and
12 the secretary. The master plan shall include, but not be limited to: enrollment projections,
13 identification of measures for age-appropriate child development and school readiness, expulsion
14 rate projections, utilization of existing facilities, promotion of research, programmatic

excellence, recommendations for construction or acquisition of new facilities, program distribution, the addition of new programs, the elimination of existing programs, the need for program revisions and the role of the public schools in the delivery of early education and care programs, services and quality enhancements. The plan shall be reported to the Joint Committee on Education no later than December 31, 2009. Updates shall also be reported to the Joint Committee on Education.

The commissioner shall receive reports, undertake research, and facilitate coordination among and between all entities delivering programs or services under this chapter. The commissioner shall promote the partnership of providers of early education and care programs and services with elementary and secondary schools, institutions of higher education and business and civic organizations.

SECTION 2. Section 4A of Chapter 15D, as most recently amended, is hereby amended by striking subsection (b) and inserting in place thereof the following subsection:--

(b) In order to ensure local coordination and to maximize local participation in the programs and services of the department, the department shall support and work with local early education and care councils in the development of community plans that address how the councils and communities will:

(1) build on the local array of services and improve access to services for additional families or increased services for families already receiving services; (2) increase quality of early education and care programming; (3) support comprehensive services for children and families; (4) collaborate across agencies; (5) provide services for hard to reach populations; (6) promote the school readiness, healthy development and emotional well being of children participating in

early education and care programs or services; and (7) assist local programs in meeting the quality standards of the universal pre-kindergarten program established in Chapter 15D, Section 13. Said local plans shall be developed by the local early education and care council into comprehensive city- or town-wide proposals for funding, each of which shall be reviewed and evaluated using board approved criteria to assess the quality of collaborative and coordinated planning, the effectiveness of the plan in addressing the early education and care needs of children and families and the quality and cost-effectiveness of proposed services. Local lead agencies may include, but not be limited to, a school district, a Head Start agency, or a child care agency licensed by the department. Each city or town may submit only one said city- or town-wide proposal to the department for each grant program funded through the department. Proposals for funding that encompass multiple cities and towns must demonstrate support of local councils for said proposals.

SECTION 3. Section 4A of Chapter 15D, as most recently amended, is hereby further amended in subsection (d) by adding at the end thereof, the following words:-- ; provided, however, that nothing herein shall require the regionalization of particular programs or services and the department's goal shall be to preserve local decision-making by city or town.