

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 1853**

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

PRESENTED BY:

***Martha M. Walz***

*To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:*

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act relative to third grade reading proficiency.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
<i>Martha M. Walz</i>	<i>8th Suffolk</i>
<i>William N. Brownsberger</i>	
<i>David Paul Linsky</i>	<i>5th Middlesex</i>
<i>Frank I. Smizik</i>	<i>15th Norfolk</i>
<i>Linda Dorcena Forry</i>	<i>12th Suffolk</i>
<i>Denise Andrews</i>	<i>2nd Franklin</i>
<i>Brian M. Ashe</i>	<i>2nd Hampden</i>
<i>Cory Atkins</i>	<i>14th Middlesex</i>
<i>Carlo Basile</i>	<i>1st Suffolk</i>
<i>Stephen R. Canessa</i>	<i>12th Bristol</i>
<i>Cheryl A. Coakley-Rivera</i>	<i>10th Hampden</i>
<i>Thomas P. Conroy</i>	<i>13th Middlesex</i>
<i>Sean Curran</i>	<i>9th Hampden</i>
<i>Carolyn C. Dykema</i>	<i>8th Middlesex</i>
<i>James B. Eldridge</i>	
<i>Susan C. Fargo</i>	
<i>John V. Fernandes</i>	<i>10th Worcester</i>
<i>John P. Fresolo</i>	<i>16th Worcester</i>

<i>Sean Garballey</i>	<i>23rd Middlesex</i>
<i>Patricia A. Haddad</i>	<i>5th Bristol</i>
<i>Jonathan Hecht</i>	<i>29th Middlesex</i>
<i>Louis L. Kafka</i>	<i>8th Norfolk</i>
<i>Michael F. Kane</i>	<i>5th Hampden</i>
<i>Kay Khan</i>	<i>11th Middlesex</i>
<i>Jason M. Lewis</i>	<i>31st Middlesex</i>
<i>James M. Murphy</i>	<i>4th Norfolk</i>
<i>Kevin J. Murphy</i>	<i>18th Middlesex</i>
<i>James J. O'Day</i>	<i>14th Worcester</i>
<i>Alice Hanlon Peisch</i>	<i>14th Norfolk</i>
<i>Angelo J. Puppolo, Jr.</i>	<i>12th Hampden</i>
<i>John W. Scibak</i>	<i>2nd Hampshire</i>
<i>Benjamin Swan</i>	<i>11th Hampden</i>
<i>Walter F. Timilty</i>	<i>7th Norfolk</i>
<i>Timothy J. Toomey, Jr.</i>	<i>26th Middlesex</i>
<i>Martin J. Walsh</i>	<i>13th Suffolk</i>
<i>Thomas M. Petrolati</i>	<i>7th Hampden</i>
<i>Alice K. Wolf</i>	<i>25th Middlesex</i>

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 1853**

By Ms. Walz of Boston, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 1853) of Martha M. Walz and others for legislation to establish an early reading council for the development of literacy of students in the third grades of the public schools in the Commonwealth. Education.

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

**In the Year Two Thousand Eleven**

An Act relative to third grade reading proficiency.

*Whereas*, The deferred operation of this act would tend to defeat its purpose, which is to improve third grade reading proficiency, therefore, it is hereby declared to be an emergency law, necessary for the immediate preservation of the public convenience.

*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. (a) There is hereby established the Massachusetts early reading council to  
2 enhance children’s language and literacy development with the goal of achieving reading  
3 proficiency and higher levels of learning for all students by the end of third grade, including, but  
4 not limited to, those eligible for free or reduced cost lunches, early intervention or individualized  
5 education plans, English-language learners, and advanced learners, to consist of 17 members: the  
6 secretary of education who shall serve as co-chair; a recognized expert in children’s language  
7 and literacy development, to be appointed by the Massachusetts governor, who shall serve as co-  
8 chair; the senate and house chairs of the joint committee on education or their designees; 2  
9 persons to be appointed by the commissioner of the department of early education and care, 1 of  
10 whom shall be a member of the department of early education and care’s parent advisory  
11 committee and 1 of whom shall be a representative from a licensed early education and care

12 program; an early childhood educator to be appointed by the Massachusetts Head Start  
13 Association; an expert in children’s language and literacy development to be appointed by the  
14 commissioner of elementary and secondary education; a superintendent of a local education  
15 agency to be appointed by the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents; a principal  
16 of a public school to be appointed by the Massachusetts Elementary School Principals  
17 Association; a sitting school committee member to be appointed by the Massachusetts School  
18 Committee Association; a pre-kindergarten to third grade teacher with reading expertise to be  
19 appointed by the American Federation of Teachers-Massachusetts; a pre-kindergarten to third  
20 grade teacher with reading expertise to be appointed by the Massachusetts Teachers Association;  
21 a mayor to be appointed by the Massachusetts Mayors’ Association; a pediatrician to be  
22 appointed by the Massachusetts chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics; a representative  
23 of the Massachusetts Reading Association; and a representative of Strategies for Children.

24 (b) Council members shall each be appointed for a term of 3 years. No member shall  
25 serve for more than 2 consecutive terms. The council shall meet no less than 4 times annually.  
26 The secretary of education shall appoint personnel necessary to coordinate the activities of the  
27 council and provide administrative support to the council, as requested.

28 (c) The council shall: (1) advise the secretary of education, the commissioner of the  
29 department of early education and care, the commissioner of the department of elementary and  
30 secondary education, and other appropriate public agencies on the development, implementation  
31 and oversight of programs and services intended to support young children’s language and  
32 literacy development from birth through third grade, including, but not limited to, family  
33 engagement and home-visiting programs, high-quality infant and toddler programs, high-quality  
34 pre-kindergarten, high-quality full-day kindergarten, and pre-kindergarten to grade 3 alignment

35 of curriculum and instruction; (2) help facilitate interagency collaboration and communication to  
36 improve alignment across diverse educational settings and levels; (3) review the annual plans  
37 and the proposed annual budgets of the department of early education and care and the  
38 department of elementary and secondary education, and make recommendations to the  
39 commissioners in regard thereto; (4) make recommendations regarding any legislation and  
40 regulations that would affect children’s language and literacy development in light of the goal of  
41 the council; and (5) cultivate public-private partnerships and encourage sharing of best practices  
42 between schools and community-based organizations, particularly early education and care and  
43 afterschool programs.

44 SECTION 2. The council shall develop recommendations and benchmarks for measuring  
45 progress by the department of elementary and secondary education and the department of early  
46 education and care, including, but not limited to, each of the following areas: (a) Professional  
47 development and instructional leadership in reading and English language arts, consistent with  
48 the principles that effective professional development: (1) is data driven, collaborative and  
49 sustained over time; (2) occurs in collaborative professional cultures that support ongoing  
50 improvement; (3) includes quality standards for identifying appropriate professional  
51 development offerings; (4) is provided within a rigorous accountability system to evaluate the  
52 qualifications of professional development providers and the effectiveness of trainings; and (5) is  
53 provided in diverse settings, including online communities, and through diverse methods to  
54 address the needs of all educators.

55 (b) Curriculum guidelines for districts, schools, and licensed early education and care  
56 programs, to support best practices and encourage improved alignment across educational  
57 settings and levels, acknowledging that recommended curricula should: (1) draw on evidence

58 demonstrating effectiveness in improving children’s learning and emphasize integrated learning  
59 experiences that address phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and reading  
60 comprehension; (2) promote developmentally appropriate educational practices including play to  
61 accommodate young children’s learning styles; (3) provide additional guidance on best practices  
62 to meet the learning needs of children eligible for early intervention and individualized education  
63 plans, English language learners, and children otherwise deemed at risk of falling below age  
64 appropriate benchmarks for language and literacy development; (4) include strategies for  
65 incorporating reading and writing standards from the Massachusetts curriculum framework for  
66 English language arts and literacy into other subjects; and (5) provide guidance to early  
67 education and care providers on the use of curricula, materials, and instructional techniques for  
68 programs serving children prior to school entry.

69 (c) An assessment system to monitor and report on children’s progress toward achieving  
70 benchmarks in language and literacy development prior to grade three across educational levels  
71 and program settings to include, in collaboration with the department of early education and care  
72 and the department of elementary and secondary education, exploring the establishment of state  
73 approved assessment tools for measuring school readiness and children’s reading proficiency  
74 from pre-kindergarten to grade three.

75 (d) Birth to age five school readiness plans to be developed by districts and schools, in  
76 partnership with community members and organizations, and including literacy plans for  
77 entering students and their families.

78 (e) Family engagement strategies for improving communication and interactions between  
79 families and educational settings frequented by children, including guidance on the following:

80 (1) community outreach and family education on children’s language and literacy development;  
81 (2) home visiting programs to support daytime learning and prioritize daily family conversation  
82 and family reading time; (3) professional development to help educators and instructional leaders  
83 communicate with native and non-native English speaking parents; (4) book reading and  
84 storytelling as healthy alternatives to television watching; and (5) events at libraries and other  
85 appropriate venues to promote literacy prior to school entry and throughout elementary school.

86           The council shall prepare and submit an annual progress report concerning its activities,  
87 with appropriate recommendations regarding children’s language and literacy development, to  
88 the governor and the clerks of the senate and the house who shall forward the same to the chairs  
89 of the joint committee on education and the chairs of the house and senate committees on ways  
90 and means on or before December 31.