HOUSE DOCKET, NO. 1002 FILED ON: 1/14/2015

HOUSE . . . . . No. 478

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Tom Sannicandro

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 expanding inclusive transition programs for students with severe disabilities.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
Tom Sannicandro	*7th Middlesex*	*1/14/2015*
Barbara A. L'Italien	*Second Essex and Middlesex*	*8/27/2019*

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HOUSE . . . . . No. 478

By Mr. Sannicandro of Ashland, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 478) of Tom Sannicandro and Barbara L'Italien for legislation to establish a discretionary grant program for schools assisting children age eighteen to twenty-two with disabilities. Education.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Eighty-Ninth General Court
(2015-2016)

An Act expanding inclusive transition programs for students with severe disabilities.

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

Whereas individuals with disabilities aged 18-22 are entitled to receive a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment;

Whereas, the least restrictive environment for most of those students is outside of the confines of a public high school building;

Whereas, individuals with disabilities aged 18-22 have few if any genuine peers that still attend public high school;

Whereas college is the natural place for students aged 18-22 to learn the transition skills necessary to be prepared for integrated competitive employment;

Whereas, individuals with intellectual disabilities who participated in post-secondary education were 26% more likely to leave vocational rehabilitation services with a paid job and earn a 73% higher weekly income;

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

SECTION 1 Chapter 71B of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after Section 16 the following section: -

Section 17: Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment

(a) Subject to appropriation, the Executive Office of Education shall develop and administer a discretionary grant program to provide monies to school committees and state public institutions of higher education partnering together to offer inclusive concurrent enrollment program options for school-aged children with disabilities ages 18 to 22, inclusive; provided:

(1) that the grant program shall be limited to said students who are considered to have severe intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, or other developmental disabilities; and

(2) in the case of students aged 18-19, the grant program shall be further limited to students with severe disabilities who have been unable to achieve the competency determination necessary to pass the statewide assessment test pursuant to section 1Dof chapter 69 of the general laws. .

(b) The goal of the grant program shall be for school committees to partner with institutions of higher education to provide a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment that meets the transition needs of students with severe intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, or other developmental disabilities, and to support their

academic success, participation in student life of the college community, and competitive employment. This shall be achieved by fully including said students in higher education institutions by requiring the following:

(1) development of partnerships between institutions of higher education and school committees which also include any relevant agency serving students with severe intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, and other developmental disabilities, including but not limited to a vocational rehabilitation agency;

(2) enrollment in credit-bearing and non-credit courses that include students without disabilities including enrollment in credit-bearing courses in audit status for students who may not meet course prerequisites;

(3) participation in on-campus student life activities;

(4) adequate preparation for competitive employment;

(5) waiver of tuition for all courses by the institution of higher education;

(6) provision of supports and services necessary to facilitate a student's enrollment and support inclusion in academic courses, extracurricular activities, internships, work experiences, and other aspects of the institution of higher education's regular postsecondary program;

(7) training and technical assistance for teachers, faculty and personnel regarding strategy and teaching methodology to achieve successful inclusion of individuals with severe intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, and other developmental disabilities;

(8) that students with severe intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, and other developmental disabilities be socially and academically integrated with nondisabled students to

the maximum extent possible; and institutions of higher education may choose to engage students pursuing study in the areas of special education, general education, vocational rehabilitation, assistive technology, psychology, or related fields;

(9) utilization of person-centered planning in the development of the course of study for each participating student.

(c) The Executive Office of Education, in consultation with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Department of Higher Education and the Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Advisory Board, shall develop guidelines to ensure that the grant program meets this goal.

(d) Subject to appropriation, the Executive Office of Education shall designate an Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Coordinator to manage grant administration and coordinate reporting. The Executive Office of Education shall notify all participating school committees and institutions of higher education of the name and contact information for the Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Coordinator.

(e) The Executive Office of Education shall establish an Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Advisory Board to evaluate and to advise the Executive Office of Education on efforts to implement inclusive concurrent enrollment and to participate in educational outreach efforts on inclusive concurrent enrollment. The Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Advisory Board shall include representatives of school districts and colleges and universities where the inclusive concurrent enrollment program has been successfully implemented, two former or current students who have participated in an inclusive concurrent enrollment program, the co-chairs of the joint committee on Education or designees, the co-chairs of the joint committee on Higher

Education or designees, the Commissioner of Higher Education or designee, the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education or designee, the Secretary of Education or designee, the Commissioner of the Department of Development Disability Services or designee, the Commissioner of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission or designee, a representative of Massachusetts Advocates for Children, a representative of the Federation for Students with Special Needs, a representative of the Institute for Community Inclusion, and the Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Coordinator. The Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Advisory Board shall meet quarterly.

(f) The Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Coordinator, in consultation with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Department of Higher Education and the Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Advisory Board, shall develop strategies and procedures designed to assist institutions of higher education in sustaining, expanding and replicating inclusive concurrent enrollment partnerships established through the Executive Office of Education's discretionary grant program. Strategies and procedures shall include but not be limited to:

(1) provision of continued grant funding for partnerships between institutions of higher education and school committees that have developed inclusive concurrent enrollment programs in order to sustain the existing programs and to retain employment specialists to assist students in meeting competitive employment and other transition-related goals;

(2) adoption of procedures and funding mechanisms to ensure that new partnerships providing inclusive concurrent enrollment programs fully utilize the models and expertise developed in existing partnerships to ensure that all programs are successful and sustainable;

(3) development of a mechanism to encourage existing and new partnerships to expand capacity to respond to school committees and individual parents who are not currently benefitting from those partnerships and who request an opportunity for their children to participate in inclusive concurrent enrollment;

(4) outreach to institutions of higher education and school committees that are not currently participating in inclusive concurrent enrollment, with intent to encourage such institutions of higher education and school committees to offer inclusive concurrent enrollment programming;

(5) addressing of challenges frequently faced by institutions of higher education and newly created inclusive concurrent enrollment programs and a compilation of best practices to address these difficulties;

(6) for those institutions that offer residential life for students, the integration of students with severe intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, and other developmental disabilities into the housing offered to nondisabled students with the accommodations, supports, and services necessary to enable inclusive dormitory living.

(g) The executive office of education shall distribute strategies and procedures developed pursuant to subsection (f) to all public colleges and universities in the Commonwealth annually.

(h) The executive office of education shall select grant recipients no later than July 15 of each year.

(i) The executive office of education, in consultation with the department of elementary and secondary education and the department of higher education, shall make a report available

online on the status of the grant program annually, no later than March 15. The report shall include but not be limited to the following components:

(1) enrollment data that details the number of students enrolled in inclusive concurrent enrollment each semester and the unduplicated count of total students served at each institution;

(2) a list of all full-time and part-time employment positions supported by the grant program that are dedicated to supporting students with severe disabilities through the inclusive concurrent enrollment program and the average salary for those positions including but not limited to:

(i) educational coaches;

(ii) educational specialists;

(iii) job coaches and vocational specialists;

(iv) program specialists;

(v) program directors;

(vi) peer mentors, note-takers, and tutors;

(vii) contracted employees;

(viii) parent and school committee liaisons.

(3) a list of all courses taken by all students participating in the inclusive concurrent enrollment program during the academic year with indication as to whether the student attempted the course for credit or for audit and whether the student passed or completed the course;

(4) a summary of innovative strategies and practices implemented at each institution of higher education that helped foster their relationship with school committees or helped students succeed;

(5) employment data for students and graduates, obtained to the best of the ability of the school committee and the institution of higher education;

(6) a report detailing the amount of grant funds allocated to each institution of higher education in the planning and implementation phases, the amount allocated to the department of elementary and secondary education and the department of higher education, and the amount allocated to the executive office of education.

SECTION 2. The executive office of education shall promulgate guidelines pursuant to section 17 of chapter 71B of the General Laws on or before January 1, 2015.