

HOUSE No. 225

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Jennifer E. Benson

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 to promote cost-effective, high quality in-district programs for students with disabilities.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
<i>Jennifer E. Benson</i>	<i>37th Middlesex</i>
<i>José F. Tosado</i>	<i>9th Hampden</i>
<i>Denise Provost</i>	<i>27th Middlesex</i>
<i>Barbara A. L'Italien</i>	<i>Second Essex and Middlesex</i>
<i>Jennifer L. Flanagan</i>	<i>Worcester and Middlesex</i>
<i>Kate Hogan</i>	<i>3rd Middlesex</i>
<i>Mary S. Keefe</i>	<i>15th Worcester</i>
<i>Bruce E. Tarr</i>	<i>First Essex and Middlesex</i>

HOUSE No. 225

By Ms. Benson of Lunenburg, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 225) of Jennifer E. Benson and others for legislation to promote cost-effective, high quality in-district programs for students with disabilities. Education.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninetieth General Court
(2017-2018)**

An Act to promote cost-effective, high quality in-district programs for students with disabilities.

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

1 Subject to appropriation the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education shall
2 develop and administer a discretionary grant pilot program to provide monies to school districts
3 to develop cost-effective and high quality models of in-district educational services and supports
4 for students with disabilities currently enrolled in out-of-district programs and for students with
5 disabilities identified by the district at risk for placement in more restrictive out-of-district
6 programs. The goal of the grant program shall be for school districts to develop high quality,
7 cost-effective programs that educate children in the communities in which they live and promote
8 access to general education settings and maximize opportunities to be educated with their non-
9 disabled peers. The pilot program will reflect the diversity of the Commonwealth’s schools, and
10 will be limited to no more than six school districts, including two rural, two suburban and two
11 urban school districts. The pilot demonstration program will run for at least three and no more
12 than four years. The department shall issue a RFP no later than three months after the start of the
13 first fiscal year to be disseminated statewide to all local school districts.

14 Each school district shall receive a grant to be used to design, implement and evaluate the
15 in-district inclusive program. School districts may contract with private schools, collaboratives
16 and consultants, including but not limited to higher education faculty, to provide consultation
17 and programmatic expertise, support, and services necessary to develop capacity to serve
18 students within the district and also provide these students with access to general education
19 settings and maximum opportunities to be educated with their nondisabled peers. Funds can
20 additionally be used for professional development and related costs such as cost of substitutes,
21 staff training, staff planning time and materials and technology. Funds may not be used to pay
22 for salaries for personnel employed or contracted by the school district in programs currently
23 operating in the district.

24 The first year of the grant pilot shall be devoted exclusively to planning, including, but
25 not limited to involving parents from the community. The second, third, and fourth years shall be
26 devoted to implementation and evaluation. The department shall identify an evaluator at the
27 outset of the program to design the evaluation plan, establish the methodology, and collect data
28 from all the pilot programs to document and evaluate planning costs and requirements, efficacy,
29 operational successes and challenges, student outcomes, and cost effectiveness.

30 There shall be an advisory committee which shall assist the department in developing and
31 implementing this grant program. Members of the advisory committee shall include the
32 commissioner of the department of developmental services or designee, the commissioner of the
33 department of mental health or designee, and the commissioner of the mass rehabilitation
34 commission or designee, and one person selected by each of the following organizations: the
35 Massachusetts Administrators for Special Education, the Massachusetts Association of School
36 Superintendents, the Massachusetts Organization of Educational Collaboratives, the

37 Massachusetts Association of 766 Approved Private Schools, the Massachusetts Advocates for
38 Children, the Federation for Children with Special Needs, and the Disability Law Center and a
39 representative of an Institution of Higher Education involved in inclusive educator preparation.

40 The department and the advisory committee shall report to the house and senate
41 committees on ways and means and the joint committee on education on the status of the project
42 annually on August 31, with a final report at the conclusion of the demonstration which reports
43 findings on the efficacy of the pilot programs and makes recommendations to support high
44 quality cost-effective in-district programs statewide, including but not limited to any
45 recommendations on mechanisms for reimbursing special education costs.