

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 679**

---

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

PRESENTED BY:

***Alice Hanlon Peisch***

*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 high quality early childhood education.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Alice Hanlon Peisch</i>	<i>14th Norfolk</i>	<i>2/18/2021</i>
<i>Kay Khan</i>	<i>11th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/25/2021</i>
<i>Frank A. Moran</i>	<i>17th Essex</i>	<i>2/25/2021</i>
<i>David Paul Linsky</i>	<i>5th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/25/2021</i>
<i>Kimberly N. Ferguson</i>	<i>1st Worcester</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>Paul F. Tucker</i>	<i>7th Essex</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>Kate Lipper-Garabedian</i>	<i>32nd Middlesex</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>Christopher Hendricks</i>	<i>11th Bristol</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>Sarah K. Peake</i>	<i>4th Barnstable</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>Paul McMurtry</i>	<i>11th Norfolk</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>Meghan Kilcoyne</i>	<i>12th Worcester</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>Brian W. Murray</i>	<i>10th Worcester</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>Carol A. Doherty</i>	<i>3rd Bristol</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>Andres X. Vargas</i>	<i>3rd Essex</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>Tricia Farley-Bouvier</i>	<i>3rd Berkshire</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>Joseph W. McGonagle, Jr.</i>	<i>28th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>James K. Hawkins</i>	<i>2nd Bristol</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>Steven Ultrino</i>	<i>33rd Middlesex</i>	<i>3/10/2021</i>

*Elizabeth A. Malia*  
*Tram T. Nguyen*

*11th Suffolk*  
*18th Essex*

*3/16/2021*  
*3/30/2021*

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 679**

---

By Ms. Peisch of Wellesley, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 679) of Alice Hanlon Peisch and others relative to high quality early childhood education. Education.

---

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Second General Court  
(2021-2022)**  
\_\_\_\_\_

An Act relative to high quality early childhood education.

*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 2 of chapter 15D of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2018  
2 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out clause (e) and inserting in place thereof the  
3 following clause:--

4           (e) establish and develop a schedule for revising: (1) a rate structure for voucher and  
5 contracted payments to providers of subsidized early education and care programs and services  
6 on behalf of low-income and other at-risk children that is adequate to help meet the cost of  
7 providing high quality early education and care programs to low-income and other at-risk  
8 children in conformity with federal and state law, regulations and quality and safety standards;  
9 and (2) a sliding fee scale for participants in those programs. A public hearing under chapter 30A  
10 and the approval of the board shall be required before the establishment or revision of the rate  
11 structure and sliding fee scale.

12 SECTION 2. Said section 2 of said chapter 15D, as so appearing, is hereby further  
13 amended by striking out clause (t) and inserting in place thereof the following clause:--

14 (t) establish the early childhood mental health consultation grant program to provide  
15 consultation services and workforce development to meet the behavioral health needs of children  
16 in early education and care programs, giving preference to those designed to prevent expulsions  
17 and suspensions. The grant program shall promote efforts to ensure healthy social and emotional  
18 development in child care settings and shall include, but not be limited to: (i) consultation  
19 services utilizing on-site, child focused observations using evidence-based observation tools; and  
20 (ii) providing on-site coaching for educators to address challenging behaviors and identify and  
21 facilitate referrals for children in need of more intensive services.

22 SECTION 3. Said chapter 15D, as so appearing, is hereby further amended by inserting,  
23 after section 12, the following section:--

24 Section 12A. Pursuant to clause (t) of section 2, the department shall develop  
25 performance standards for prohibiting or significantly limiting the use of suspension and  
26 expulsion in all licensed early education and care programs. The standards shall ensure that  
27 expulsion is only used in extraordinary circumstances where there is a serious safety threat that  
28 cannot be reduced or eliminated by the provision of reasonable program modifications. The  
29 standards shall include, but not be limited to: (1) benchmarks and goals for supporting children's  
30 social, emotional and behavioral development to include reducing the use of exclusion as a  
31 disciplinary tool and for eliminating disparities in the use of suspension and expulsion, and  
32 facilitating referrals for children with intensive needs; (2) engagement steps to be taken with the  
33 child and parent or guardian prior to suspension or expulsion; (3) requirements for

34 communicating disciplinary policies, including suspension and 37 expulsion policies, to staff,  
35 families and community partners; (4) pathways for programs to access technical assistance to  
36 support ongoing development of staff and teacher skills for supporting children's social,  
37 emotional and behavioral development, reducing disparities and limiting the use of suspension  
38 and expulsion; and (5) infant and toddler program reporting requirements.

39 SECTION 4. Said chapter 15D, as so appearing, is hereby further amended by adding the  
40 following section:--

41 Section 19. (a) The board shall, subject to appropriation, establish the early education and  
42 care educator scholarship program for all early childhood educators in the commonwealth  
43 pursuant to clause (10) of section 5. (b) The commissioner, in consultation with the  
44 commissioner of the department of higher education, shall make recommendations to the board  
45 establishing appropriate guidelines, standards and application criteria for the administration of  
46 the program, including mechanisms to ensure the scholarship provides meaningful improvements  
47 in the delivery of high quality early education and care across the state. (c) The scholarship shall  
48 cover the cost of tuition, fees and related expenses, including supports unique to the diverse  
49 learning needs of the field, and other supports deemed appropriate by the board for degree  
50 granting programs for early educators who are pursuing associate or bachelor level degrees to  
51 meet the teacher and program quality standards of the department. (d) The scholarship program  
52 shall be administered by the department through a memorandum of understanding with the  
53 department of higher education. (e) Eligible recipients shall be early educators and providers  
54 employed in early education and care programs in the commonwealth who commit to teaching in  
55 early education and care programs for a term of service after graduation to be determined by the  
56 board and shall reflect the diversity of the state's early education and care workforce. (f)

57 Preference shall be given to applicants identified as providers who have displayed a proven  
58 commitment to early childhood education as demonstrated by longevity in the field, who may  
59 not have otherwise met program quality standards of the department.

60 SECTION 5. The department of early education and care shall file a report, by December  
61 31, 2022 with the clerks of the house and the senate, who shall forward the report to the chairs of  
62 the house and senate committees on ways and means, and the joint committee on education, on  
63 recommendations to support continued programming in communities awarded the U.S.  
64 Department of Education's Preschool Expansion Grant, including strategies and resources  
65 necessary to address community-based program expansion plans currently in development under  
66 the Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Grant; provided, that the report shall identify means  
67 by which existing programming may be continued and existing planning grants implemented  
68 using existing resources available to providers in the mixed delivery system, in order to ensure  
69 that any additional state appropriations for planning or implementation are one-time, non  
70 recurring investments.

71 SECTION 6. The department of early education and care shall file a report, by January  
72 15, 2023 with the clerks of the house and the senate, who shall forward the report to the chairs of  
73 the house and senate committees on ways and means and the joint committee on education, on  
74 design and implementation plans for the early education and care educator scholarship program  
75 pursuant to section 4 of this act.

76 SECTION 7. Not later than December 31, 2022, the department of early education and  
77 care shall develop an early education and care career ladder. The department shall file a report to  
78 include: (i) a copy of the career ladder, and (ii) recommendations for linking professional 83

79 development and educational credentials to increased compensation and leadership opportunities  
80 in the field of early education and care. The report shall be filed to the Joint Committee on  
81 Education not later than December 31, 2022.