

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.