SENATE . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . No. 2973

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

SENATE, June 30, 2022.

The committee on Senate Ways and Means, to whom was referred the Senate Bill to expand access to high-quality, affordable early education and care (Senate, No. 2883),- reports, recommending that the same ought to pass with an amendment substituting a new draft with the same title (Senate, No. 2973).

For the committee,

Michael J. Rodrigues
The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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An Act to expand access to high-quality, affordable early education and care.

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. The sixth paragraph of section 22N of chapter 7 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2020 Official Edition, is hereby amended by adding the following sentence:-

Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, child care and school age programs contracting with the department of early education and care or their agents shall be exempt from the price limitations set forth by the bureau.

SECTION 2. Chapter 10 of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding the following section:-

Section 79. (a) There shall be established and set up on the books of the commonwealth a separate fund to be known as the Early Education and Child Care Workforce Development Trust Fund. The fund shall be administered by the secretary of education, in consultation with the commissioner of early education and care and the commissioner of higher education, for the purpose of strengthening the pipeline of early childhood educators and promoting professional development opportunities for child care providers. The fund shall be credited with: (i)
appropriations, bond proceeds or other money authorized or transferred by the general court and
specifically designated to be credited to the fund; (ii) funds from public and private sources,
including, but not limited to, gifts, grants and donations; and (iii) any interest earned on such
money. Revenues deposited in the fund that are unexpended at the end of a fiscal year shall not
revert to the General Fund and shall be available for expenditure in the following fiscal year. No
expenditure made from the fund shall cause the fund to become deficient.

(b) Annually, not later than July 1, the secretary of education shall submit a report
detailing expenditures from the trust fund to the clerks of the senate and the house of
representatives, the senate and house committees on ways and means and the joint committee on
education.

SECTION 3. Chapter 15A of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after
section 19E the following 2 sections:-

Section 19F. (a) Subject to appropriation, the board, in consultation with the department
of early education and care, shall establish an early education and child care educator scholarship
program for early education and child care sector educators pursuant to clause (10) of section 5
of chapter 15D, including, but not limited to, standards and application criteria for the
administration of the program including mechanisms to ensure the scholarship provides
meaningful improvements in the delivery of high-quality early education and child care.

(b) The scholarship may be used to cover the cost of tuition, fees and related expenses,
including, but not limited to, supports unique to the diverse learning needs of the field, including
personal child care expenses in order to attend classes and class meetings, and other supports
deemed appropriate by the board for degree-granting programs for early educators who are
pursuing associate-level or bachelor-level degrees to meet the teacher and program quality
standards of the department of early education and care.

(c) The amount of each scholarship shall, at a minimum, be sufficient to cover the full
cost of tuition and associated fees for 1 semester of classes at a community college in the
commonwealth.

(d) Eligible recipients shall be current or prospective early education and child care
educators and providers employed in early education and child care programs in the
commonwealth who commit to teaching in early education and child care programs for a term of
service after graduation to be determined by the board and shall reflect the diversity of the
commonwealth’s early education and child care workforce.

(e) Preference shall be given to applicants identified as providers who have displayed a
proven commitment to early childhood education.

(f) The program shall be administered by the department in a manner that ensures
recipients receive adequate support in selecting programs and courses that lead to credentials and
further their career in early education and child care.

Section 19G. Subject to appropriation, the board shall establish an early education and
child care educator loan forgiveness program for early education and child care sector educators
in the commonwealth pursuant to clause (10) of section 5 of chapter 15D with preference given
to applicants identified as providers who have displayed a proven commitment to early
childhood education and who work in communities predominantly serving children and families
with high needs, as defined under section 1A of said chapter 15D, or areas with a shortage of early
education and child care slots.
SECTION 4. Section 1A of chapter 15D, as appearing in the 2020 Official Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after the definition of “Board” the following definition:-

“Caregiver”, a person living with, supervising and caring for at least 1 child whose parents are not living in the home with them.

SECTION 5. Said section 1A of said chapter 15D, as so appearing, is hereby further amended by inserting after the definition of “Child care center” the following 2 definitions:-

“Child care provider”, a licensed or exempt center-based child care program or a licensed family-based child care program located in the commonwealth.

“Child care subsidy”, financial assistance given to eligible parents for child care provided by a child care program pursuant to a contract or agreement with the department, a child care resource and referral agency or a contracted child care provider.

SECTION 6. Said section 1A of said chapter 15D, as so appearing, is hereby further amended by inserting after the definition of “Group care facility” the following definition:-

“High needs”, a designation for those individuals or families whose income is not more than 85 per cent of the state median income and individuals with needs that may result in the individual or family needing more services, which may include, but shall not be limited to, an individual or family experiencing any physical, mental, emotional, intellectual, cognitive, behavioral or health-related disability or condition, exposure to domestic violence, trauma history, limited English proficiency, limited literacy, homelessness or housing instability.

SECTION 7. Said section 1A of said chapter 15D, as so appearing, is hereby further amended by inserting after the definition of “Mixed system” the following definition:-
“Operational grant”, financial assistance from the commonwealth to a child care program or provider used for those costs directly attributable to the financial sustainability of the program, such as educator salary and benefits, instructional materials and program quality improvements.

SECTION 8. Said section 1A of said chapter 15D, as so appearing, is hereby further amended by inserting after the definition of “Services” the following definition:-

“Subsidized child care provider”, a child care provider, program or individual that holds a contract or voucher service agreement with the department for the provision of subsidized child care services.

SECTION 9. The second paragraph of section 2 of said chapter 15D, as so appearing, is hereby amended by striking out clause (e) and inserting in place thereof the following clause:-

(e) establish and develop a schedule for revising: (1) a rate structure for voucher and contracted payments to subsidized child care programs on behalf of low-income, at-risk and other eligible children designed with a goal of meeting the cost of providing high-quality early education and care services in conformity with federal and state law, regulations and quality and safety standards; and (2) a sliding fee scale for participants in those programs, which is updated at least every 5 years to reflect affordability standards for participating families; provided, however, that recipients of subsidized child care services whose income is not more than 100 per cent of the federal poverty level shall not be charged fees for care; and provided further that, a public hearing under chapter 30A and the approval of the board shall be required before the establishment or revision of the rate structure and sliding fee scale.

SECTION 10. Said second paragraph of said section 2 of said chapter 15D, as so appearing, is hereby further amended by adding the following clause:-
(v) annually, in consultation with the data advisory commission established in section 12A, collect and make publicly available data from child care providers that provides information on the cost and quality of early education and child care services; provided, however, that the collected data shall include, but not be limited to, the: (1) number of licensed or exempt child care providers; (2) per cent of children enrolled in a subsidized child care program whose family has an income of not more than 85 per cent of the state median income; (3) tuition charged for full-time and part-time early education and child care services by age group; and (4) number of children enrolled by age group, family income range, race, ethnicity, country of origin and preferred language.

SECTION 11. Said chapter 15D is hereby further amended by inserting after section 5 the following section:-

Section 5A. (a) There shall be an early education and child care workforce development advisory council that shall consist of: the commissioner of early education and care or a designee, who shall serve as co-chair; the secretary of labor and workforce development or a designee, who shall serve as co-chair; the secretary of education or a designee; the house and senate chairs of the joint committee on education or designees; the chairs of the joint committee on labor and workforce development; 1 member who shall be appointed by the minority leader of the senate; 1 member who shall be appointed by the minority leader of the house of representatives; 1 member who shall be a family child care provider appointed by the commissioner of early education and care; and 19 members who shall be appointed by the governor, 1 of whom shall be a representative of Nurtury, Inc., 1 of whom shall be a representative of the Massachusetts Association of Community Partnerships for Children, Inc., 1 of whom shall be a representative of the Massachusetts Child Care Resource and Referral
Network, Inc., 1 of whom shall be a representative of the MADCA, Inc., 1 of whom shall be a representative of Jumpstart for Young Children, Inc., 1 of whom shall be a representative of the Massachusetts Association of Community Colleges., 1 of whom shall be a representative of the Public Higher Education Network of Massachusetts Inc., 1 of whom shall be the president of a community college or a designee, 1 of whom shall be a representative of the Massachusetts Head Start Association, Inc., 1 of whom shall be a representative of the Massachusetts Association for the Education of Young Children, Inc., 1 of whom shall be a representative of the Massachusetts Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators, 1 of whom shall be a representative of Strategies for Children, Inc., 1 of whom shall be a representative of the Alliance of Massachusetts YMCAs, Inc., 1 of whom shall be a representative of the United Way of Massachusetts Bay, Inc., 1 of whom shall be a representative of the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce, 1 of whom shall be a representative of the Associated Industries of Massachusetts, Inc., 1 of whom shall be a representative of the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, 1 of whom shall be a representative of the Massachusetts Independent Child Care Organization, Inc. and 1 of whom shall be a representative of the Service Employees International Union Local 509.

(b) The advisory council shall regularly make recommendations to the secretary of labor and workforce development, the secretary of education, the commissioner of early education and care and the commissioner of higher education on the improvement of the design, oversight and implementation of workforce development programs for early childhood educators.

The advisory council may receive and consider reports and input from expert individuals, educators, early education and child care providers, parents, community-based organizations,
voluntary education organizations and other relevant public and private organizations recognized
as having expertise in early education and child care.

(c) There shall be an early education and care workforce development program to
strengthen the pipeline of early educators and promote professional development opportunities
for early education and child care providers. The secretary of education, in consultation with the
secretary of labor and workforce development, the commissioner of early education and care and
the commissioner of higher education, may expend funds from the Early Education and Child
Care Workforce Development Trust Fund established in section 79 of chapter 10 to fund the
program.

SECTION 12. Said chapter 15D is hereby further amended by inserting after section 12
the following section:-

Section 12A. (a) There shall be a data advisory commission to promote the improved use
of state-level, provider-level and program-level data to inform the cost and quality of early
education and child care services.

The data advisory commission shall assist the department in identifying, analyzing and
making recommendations on high-impact, cost-effective data strategies for assessing the needs
of families and children, including, but not limited to:

(i) establishing a data collection and reporting system to track: (A) the total number of
children receiving child care subsidies, delineated by region, age, type of care and other
demographic characteristics; (B) the utilization of available contracted slots and vouchers by
region and type of care provided; and (C) the monthly average number of children on the
department’s waitlist for subsidized care, delineated by region, type of care and other
demographic characteristics;

(ii) strengthening the department’s capacity to analyze and report on staffing, scheduling
and financial data in ways that support strategic resource allocation decisions, including a review
of national best practice models that ensure greater financial transparency;

(iii) strengthening the department’s capacity to use data to inform strategic resource
allocation and implementation decisions; and

(iv) streamlining data reporting, eliminating duplicative reporting requirements and
improving data quality.

(b) The data advisory commission shall consist of: the commissioner of early education
and care or a designee, who shall serve as chair; the secretary of education or a designee; 10
members who shall have demonstrated knowledge and experience in data collection and analysis
for the purpose of improving access to high-quality and affordable early education and child care
services, 1 of whom shall be a representative of the Massachusetts Association for Early
Education & Care, Inc, 1 of whom shall be a representative of the Massachusetts Budget and
Policy Center, Inc., 1 of whom shall be a representative of the Common Start Coalition, 1 of
whom shall be a representative of the Massachusetts Early Childhood Funder Collaborative, 1 of
whom shall be a representative of the Massachusetts Business Roundtable, 1 of whom shall be a
representative of the Massachusetts Business Coalition for Early Childhood Education, Inc., 1 of
whom shall be a representative of the Boston Foundation, Inc., 1 of whom shall be a
representative of Jumpstart for Young Children, Inc., 1 of whom shall be a representative of
Strategies for Children, Inc. and 1 of whom shall be a representative of Massachusetts Taxpayers
Foundation, Inc.; and 4 members who shall be appointed by the commissioner, 1 of whom shall
be an early education and child care provider, 1 of whom shall be a parent of a child currently
enrolled in an early education and child care program and 2 of whom shall have professional
experience and knowledge in the area of data collection, quality and usage in establishing
education policy and improving child and family outcomes.

(c) Annually, not later than December 1, the data advisory commission shall report on its
progress to the clerks of the senate and house of representatives, the house and senate
committees on ways and means and the joint committee on education. The report shall be made
publicly available on the department's website.

SECTION 13. Said chapter 15D is hereby further amended by inserting after section 13
the following section:-

Section 13A. (a) The department shall use funding that is appropriated or otherwise
provided to it for the purpose of subsidizing education and care to fulfill the requirements of this
section, including, but not limited to, increasing per child rates set by the department.

(b) Subject to appropriation, the child care subsidy program shall provide sufficient
subsidies to enable eligible families to afford and access high-quality early education and child
care for infants, toddlers, preschool-age children and school-age children; provided, however,
that a school-age child’s subsidy shall continue until at least the end of the school year in which
the child reaches the maximum age. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary,
reimbursement for voucher and contracted payments to child care providers of subsidized early
education and child care programs and services on behalf of income eligible and other at-risk
children shall be based on quarterly enrollment rather than the daily attendance of participants.
(c) The department shall subsidize early education and care through means including, but not limited to: (i) providing vouchers for payment to child care providers, enabling families to access child care providers of their choice; or (ii) offering families the alternative of an open space with a child care provider that is subsidized under the provider’s contract with the department.

(d) Subsidies may be used for early education and child care provided by public, private, non-profit and for-profit entities licensed or approved by the department, including, but not limited to, preschools, child care centers, nursery schools, before-school programs and after-school programs, out-of-school time programs, Head Start and Early Head Start programs and independent and system-affiliated family child care homes.

(e) The department shall provide subsidies to families receiving services from the department of children and families as provided in section 2 of chapter 18B.

(f) The department shall provide subsidies to families currently involved with, or transitioning from, transitional aid to families with dependent children; provided, however, that early education and care benefits shall be available to: (i) recipients of transitional aid to families with dependent children benefits; (ii) former participants who are working for up to 1 year after termination of their benefits; (iii) participants who are working for up to 1 year after the transitional period; and (iv) parents who are under 18 years of age who are currently enrolled in a job training program and who would qualify for benefits under chapter 118 of the General Laws if not for the consideration of the grandparents’ income; provided further, that early education and care benefits shall be made available to recipients of the supplemental nutrition assistance
program who are participating in education and training services approved by the department of transitional assistance.

(g)(1) The department shall provide subsidies pursuant to this section to families eligible under income limits under this subsection.

(2) Subject to appropriation, the department shall subsidize the cost of early education and child care services to all families in need of these services with an income of not more than 85 per cent of the state median income; provided, however, that if appropriations are insufficient to subsidize the cost of early education and child care services to all families in need of these services with an income of not more than 85 per cent of the state median income, first priority shall be provided to those children whose family’s household income is not more than 50 per cent of the state median income or children with a documented disability whose family’s household income is not more than 85 per cent of the state median income and to all children in families who are experiencing homelessness or who are headed by a parent under the age of 20; and provided further, that second priority shall be given to children whose family’s household income is greater than 50 per cent but not more than 85 per cent of the state median income; provided, however, that the department may consider length of time families wait to receive a subsidy.

(3) If additional state or federal funds are available or the federal government otherwise obligates itself to release additional funding for the purpose of expanding access to child care services, the department shall, in a manner consistent with any requirements or conditions placed on the receipt or expenditure of the relevant federal funds, allocate funding to increase the numbers of families receiving subsidies based on income eligibility in the following order of
priority: (i) to those eligible for subsidies as stipulated in paragraph (2); (ii) to subsidize the cost of early education and child care services to all families in need of such services, whose income is above 85 per cent, but not exceeding 100 per cent, of the state median income; (iii) to subsidize the cost of early education and child care services to all families in need of these services, whose income is above 100 per cent, but not exceeding 110 per cent, of the state median income; and (iv) to subsidize the cost of early education and child care services to all families in need of these services, whose income is above 110 per cent, but not exceeding 125 per cent, of the state median income.

(h) For the purposes of eligibility for child care subsidies, “family income” shall include income of parents living with the child receiving subsidized care but shall not include: (i) any form of income of foster parents, caregivers or other adult family members; (ii) income of or for siblings who are not receiving subsidized care; or (iii) earned income of any minor child.

(i) As a condition for receiving subsidies from the department under this section, child care providers shall enter into and comply with a contract with the department or its agents. The department shall develop the contract and the contract shall include a requirement that the child care provider comply with all applicable requirements of this chapter and any other federal or state requirements necessary to receive funding for subsidies provided to families under this section.

(j) The department or its agents shall not reduce, terminate or deny continued subsidies to a family unless and until the family is determined to be ineligible and is given the opportunity for an administrative review. If the department or its agents reduce, terminate or deny a family’s application for a child care subsidy, the department shall provide the family with an opportunity
for an administrative appeal hearing and shall process the appeal within 60 days from the date a request is made.

(k) The department or its agents shall not reduce, terminate or deny continued child care subsidies to a family based solely on a family’s household income unless and until the family’s household income exceed not less than 85 per cent of the state median income or the income threshold for currently eligible families as prioritized in subsection (f), whichever is higher.

(l) The department shall review the child care subsidy program not less than annually to identify access barriers to families and opportunities to improve families’ experience with the child care subsidy process, including, but not limited to, department paperwork and verification requirements. The department shall take action to remove any access barriers, including, but not limited to: (i) making technological improvements; (ii) streamlining the application and renewal processes; (iii) improving outreach to potentially eligible families regarding the availability of subsidies and the process for applying; and (iv) improving access for families whose primary language is not English.

(m) The department shall, in accordance with chapter 30A, promulgate any regulations necessary to implement this section.

SECTION 14. Said chapter 15D is hereby further amended by adding the following 2 sections:-

Section 19. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary and subject to appropriation, the department shall establish, distribute and maintain an operational grant program for child care providers. Annually, the department shall review and update the
operational grant formula to ensure continued equity and effectiveness in promoting the financial sustainability and viability of child care providers.

The department shall require early education and care providers, as a condition for receiving funding under this section, to: (i) enter into and comply with contractual agreements with the department, which shall be developed by the department; (ii) continue or begin to enroll children with subsidies through the department, provided the family chooses the provider and the provider has an available opening; (iii) comply with any recommended salaries or compensation put forth by the department; and (iv) provide data that the department requires, as needed to carry out the department’s assessment and reporting requirements under this chapter.

Absent any changes in circumstances, assuming compliance with this section and as otherwise determined as necessary by the department, operational grants shall, subject to appropriation and the methodology, be renewed to each provider annually.

The department shall annually review and update the operational grant formula to ensure continued equity and effectiveness in promoting the financial sustainability and viability of child care providers.

A public hearing under chapter 30A and the approval of the board shall be required before the establishment or revision of the operational grant formula.

Section 20. The department shall develop the early education and care career ladder considered under clause (11) of the second paragraph of section 5. The department shall review the career ladder’s compensation structure and benefits guidelines annually and update them, as needed, based on increased cost of living and other factors deemed relevant by the department to determine appropriate compensation for the field.
SECTION 15. (a) The department of early education and care shall submit a report for
the implementation of the permanent operational grant program for child care providers under
section 19 of chapter 15D of the General Laws that shall include recommendations and proposed
methodology.

(b) The department shall make recommendations on: (i) a formula for the distribution of
the grants to child care providers; (ii) criteria for determining eligible grant recipients; (iii)
ablessable uses for the grants; and (iv) the incorporation of the cost of quality care methodology
to be proposed by the department.

(c) In developing recommendations for the distribution formula for operational grants, the
department shall consider the following factors: (i) provider licensed capacity and enrollment;
(ii) employee staffing costs and benefits; (iii) the number of children enrolled in the child care
program receiving a child care subsidy; (iv) the number of children enrolled in the child care
program identified as high needs; (v) the cost of goods and services necessary for the operation
of a child care program, including rent, utilities, maintenance and facility improvements; (vi) the
cost of quality care methodology developed by the department and until such time as the
methodology is established, any available information regarding the cost of quality early
education and care including available credentialling frameworks and applicable salary
guidelines; and (vii) any other factors impacting costs to the provider of providing quality care in
areas of need such as serving infants and toddlers, providing non-standard hours of care, or
providing care in areas that have overall shortages of early education and care slots. The
department shall also incorporate geographic equity into the development of the distribution
formula.
(d) In developing its recommendations regarding the grants recipient eligibility, the
department shall require that, as a condition for receiving funding under this section, child care
providers: (i) enter into and comply with contracts with the department that shall be developed
by the department; (ii) continue or begin to enroll children with subsidies through the department
if the family chooses the provider and the provider has an available opening; (iii) comply with
any recommended salaries or compensation put forth by the department; and (iv) provide the
department with data that the department needs to carry out the department’s assessment and
reporting requirements under said chapter 15D.

(e) Prior to filing the report, the department shall solicit public comment.

(f) The department shall file the report with the clerks of the senate and the house of
representatives, the senate and house committees on ways and means and the joint committee on
education not later than June 30, 2023.

(g) The operational grant program for child care providers under said section 19 of said
chapter 15D shall be established based on the recommendations and proposed methodology in
the report required under this section.

SECTION 16. (a) There shall be a special commission to study and make
recommendations on employer-supported child care benefits.

The commission shall consist of: the chairs of the joint committee on education or their
designees who shall serve as co-chairs; 1 member who shall be appointed by the minority leader
of the senate; 1 member who shall be appointed by the minority leader of the house of
representatives; the chairs of the joint committee on labor and workforce development or their
designees; the secretary of education or a designee; the secretary of housing and economic
development or a designee; 10 members appointed by the governor, 1 of whom shall be a representative of the Massachusetts Association for Early Education & Care, Inc, 1 of whom shall be a representative of Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center, Inc., 1 of whom shall be a representative of the Common Start Coalition, 1 of whom shall be a representative of the Massachusetts Early Childhood Funder Collaborative, 1 of whom shall be a representative of the Massachusetts Business Roundtable, 1 of whom shall be a representative of the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce, 1 of whom shall be a representative of Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation, Inc., 1 of whom shall be a representative of the Associated Industries of Massachusetts, Inc, 1 of whom shall be a representative of the Boston Foundation, Inc., Strategies for Children, Inc., and 1 of whom shall be a representative of Massachusetts Business Coalition for Early Childhood Education.

(b) In making its recommendations, the commission shall consider the feasibility and economic impact of employer-supported early education and care benefits in the commonwealth, including, but not limited to: (i) on-site child care; (ii) financial assistance stipends for child care services; (iii) pre-tax spending child care spending accounts; (iv) partnerships with child care programs to provide child care services for employees; and (iv) flexible work schedules.

The commission shall make recommendations on: (i) encouraging employers to provide employer-supported early education and care benefits to employees; (ii) requirements for specific subgroups of employers to provide employer-supported early education and care benefits to employees; and (iii) other matters related to the expansion of employer-supported early education and care benefits in the commonwealth.
(c) The commission shall hold not less than 3 public meetings and may hold additional meetings, hearings and other forums that is considers necessary. The commission shall file its report and recommendations with the clerks of the senate and the house of representatives, the senate and house committees on ways and means and the joint committee on education not later than June 30, 2023.

SECTION 17. The department of early education and care shall file a report: (i) detailing a plan to expand local partnerships, including strategies and resources necessary to address community-based program expansion plans currently in development under the Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative grant; (ii) identifying means by which existing programming may be continued using existing resources available to child care providers in the mixed delivery system; (iii) identifying strategies for expanding the number of slots available in communities currently receiving Commonwealth preschool partnership initiative grants; and (iv) identifying best practices to expand local partnerships to more communities, including through mixed delivery programs administered by the local school system, municipal scholarship programs provided directly to families based on successful models already being implemented in certain municipalities and other approaches to expand access to public high-quality care. The report shall be filed with the clerks of the senate and house of representatives, the senate and house committees on ways and means and the joint committee on education not later than December 31, 2022.

SECTION 18. Not later than December 31, 2022, the department of early education and care, in consultation with the Children’s Investment Fund and the Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation, shall file a report with the clerks of the senate and house of representatives, the senate and house committees on ways and means and the joint committee on education.
on education detailing proposed improvements to the Early Education and Out of School Time Capital fund. The report shall include, but not be limited to: (i) eligibility criteria; (ii) size of grants; (iii) ways to streamline the application process; (iv) any other parameters to increase the impact of the fund; and (iv) any data available on unmet needs for early education and care facilities improvements.

SECTION 19. Not later than January 15, 2023, the department of higher education shall file a report with the clerks of the senate and house of representatives, the senate and house committees on ways and means and the joint committee on education, on design and implementation plans for the early education and care educator scholarship program and the early education and care educator loan forgiveness program established in sections 19F and 19G of chapter 15A of the General Laws.

SECTION 20. Not later than June 30, 2023, the department of early education and care shall file a report with the clerks of the senate and house of representatives, the senate and house committees on ways and means and the joint committee on education that assesses the extent of current supply and the unmet needs of families, taking into account relevant differences among geographic locations within the commonwealth including: (i) subsidized transportation of children to and from child care providers; (ii) early education and care services for time periods outside standard hours; (iii) substitute care on days on which the family’s regular child care provider is unavailable; and (iv) any other factors that prevent families from accessing state early education and care subsidies and to assess the cost of addressing these unmet needs.

SECTION 21. Not later than June 30, 2023, the department of early education and care shall submit a report to the clerks of the house of representatives and the senate, the house and
senate committees on ways and means and the joint committee on education on a proposed
methodology to calculate and assess the cost to provide high-quality early education and care.
The methodology shall take into consideration the full cost of service delivery, including, but not
limited to, costs that vary based on: (i) geographic region; (ii) child care provider type and size;
(iii) age ranges of children served; (iv) group size and ratios; and (v) the demographics of the
populations served by child care providers; and (vi) costs of additional services to children and
families with high needs, as defined under section 1A f said chapter 15D of the General Laws,
including staff and staff training needed for accommodating children with disabilities or other
high needs, interpreter services, mental health supports for children and staff, and staff time
required to provide comprehensive family engagement and services to ensure effective early
education and promote multi-generational success.

In developing the proposed methodology, the department shall consider the categories
that affect the cost of service delivery, including, but not limited to: (i) administration; (ii) staff
pay and benefits; (iii) professional development and instructional coaching; (iv) operations and
maintenance, including, but not limited to, rent, furniture and utility costs; (v) equipment, office
supplies and technology; (vi) educational supplies and curricula; (vii) food services; and (viii)
transportation services.

In the report, the department shall include recommendations to annually assess and
update the methodology to ensure continued alignment with the cost of providing high-quality
early education and care in the commonwealth and compliance with federal regulations. The
department shall also include recommendations regarding the use of the proposed methodology
to inform the development of subsidy reimbursement rates.
SECTION 22. Not later than March 31, 2023, the department of early education and care shall develop the early education and care career ladder required by section 20 of chapter 15D of the General Laws. The department shall file a report with the clerks of the senate and house of representatives, the senate and house committees on ways and means and the joint committee on education that includes: (i) a copy of the career ladder; (ii) recommendations for linking professional development and educational credentials to increased compensation and leadership opportunities in the field of early education and care; (iii) minimum recommended salaries and compensation for each level of the career ladder that are commensurate with the salaries of public school teachers with equivalent credentials and training when required for a position; and (iv) minimum recommended benefits for child care provider staff, including, but not limited to, health insurance, retirement benefits, paid vacation and other leave time.

SECTION 23. Not later than October 1, 2023, the department of early education and care shall file a report detailing a plan to pilot, scale and regularly evaluate shared services and quality licensed hubs for early education and care programs, including family child care providers with the clerks of the senate and house of representatives, the senate and house committees on ways and means and the joint committee on education.

SECTION 24. Not later than 180 days after the effective date of this act, the department of early education and care shall file a report with the clerks of the house and the senate, the senate and house committees on ways and means and the joint committee on education on the steps required to implement this act and a preliminary assessment of the funding and administrative resources that would aid the department in implementing this act, such as technological resources, technical expertise and staffing of the department. The report shall be made publicly available on the department’s website.
SECTION 25. Section 13 shall take effect 1 year after the effective date of this act.

SECTION 26. Section 14 shall take effect on January 15, 2024.