

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 298**

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

PRESENTED BY:

***Antonio F. D. Cabral***

*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 school centered neighborhood development.**

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Antonio F. D. Cabral</i>	<i>13th Bristol</i>	<i>1/17/2025</i>
<i>Vanna Howard</i>	<i>17th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/30/2025</i>
<i>Rodney M. Elliott</i>	<i>16th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/4/2025</i>
<i>Christopher Hendricks</i>	<i>11th Bristol</i>	<i>2/4/2025</i>
<i>Mary S. Keefe</i>	<i>15th Worcester</i>	<i>3/5/2025</i>

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 298**

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By Representative Cabral of New Bedford, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 298) of Antonio F. D. Cabral and others relative to school centered neighborhood developments. Community Development and Small Businesses.

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court  
(2025-2026)**  
\_\_\_\_\_

An Act to promote school centered neighborhood development.

*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. The General Laws are hereby amended by inserting after chapter 40Y the  
2 following chapter:-

3

4           Chapter 40Z. School-centered neighborhood development

5           Section 1. Definitions

6           As used in this chapter, the following words shall, unless the context clearly requires  
7 otherwise, have the following meanings:—

8           "Community school", a public school that establishes a set of strategic partnerships  
9 between the school and other community resources that leverage shared accountability,

10 collaborative leadership, capacity building, and family and community engagement, to promote

11 student achievement, and the well-being of students, families, educators, and neighborhood  
12 residents through a variety of engaging practices including the provision of wraparound services.

13 “Community Schools strategy”, a strategy that transforms a school into a community  
14 school where educators, local community members, families, and students work together to  
15 establish shared vision and goals to strengthen conditions for student learning and healthy  
16 development, including but not limited to the organization of in- and out-of-school resources,  
17 supports, and student opportunities.

18 “Council”, the Massachusetts Interagency Council on School-Centered Neighborhood  
19 Development, established pursuant to section 2.

20 “Municipal children’s cabinets”, a standing body that includes municipal agencies,  
21 nonprofits, and private sector partners formed to map the cradle-to-career pipeline serving  
22 children and families in the community, identify gaps, and implement strategies to close these  
23 gaps. In addition to municipal-wide approaches, these strategies may include supporting the  
24 production and implementation of school-centered neighborhood development plans for discrete  
25 neighborhoods within the municipality.

26 "Office", the executive office of housing and livable communities.

27 “School-centered neighborhood development plan”, a long-term plan for the area  
28 surrounding a public school or public schools. The plan shall seek to identify opportunities to  
29 build strong mixed-income neighborhoods and schools for children and families and establish  
30 goals pursuant to these opportunities, in conformance with the general plan for the municipality.  
31 All school-centered neighborhood development plans shall incorporate strategies to ensure that

32 the public schools within the designated area adopt and operate according to the basic tenants of  
33 the community school model.

34 “Lead partner”, a nonprofit or governmental entity that is responsible for coordinating  
35 across partner organizations and driving the school-centered neighborhood development plan  
36 implementation.

37 “Research-practice partnerships”, collaborative, long-term relationships between  
38 researchers and practitioners that are designed to improve educational outcomes.

39 Section 2. The Massachusetts Interagency Council on School-Centered Neighborhood  
40 Development

41 There shall be established a council to be known as the Massachusetts Interagency  
42 Council on School-Centered Neighborhood Development ("the council"). The council shall  
43 consists of eighteen members: the Lieutenant Governor, who shall serve as the chair; three  
44 representatives to be appointed by the secretary of the executive office of housing and livable  
45 communities; three representatives from the education departments to be appointed by the  
46 secretary of the executive office of education; the chief executive officer of the Massachusetts  
47 Housing Finance Agency or their designee; the chief executive officer of the Massachusetts  
48 Development Finance Agency or their designee; the chief executive officer of the Massachusetts  
49 Housing Partnership or their designee; the chief executive officer of the Community Economic  
50 Development Assistance Corporation or their designee; the chief executive officer of the  
51 Massachusetts School Building Authority or their designee; a representative of the  
52 Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents; a representative of the Massachusetts  
53 Association of School Committees; two members to be appointed by the Speaker of the

54 Massachusetts House of Representatives; and two members to be appointed by the President of  
55 the Massachusetts Senate. All members, except for the chair, shall serve for two years, after  
56 which time they will be eligible for reappointment. All members shall not receive compensation  
57 for their service on the council. The council shall meet at the times and places to be determined  
58 by the chair.

59 In addition, members of the council shall meet and consult on a regular basis with  
60 individuals or groups who have specific expertise in any area to be addressed by the council.

61 (b) The council shall have the authority to build long-term partnerships to further  
62 local school-centered neighborhood development plans, including but not limited to: reviewing  
63 existing programs and policies relating to community schools, municipal children's cabinets,  
64 school-centered neighborhood development plans, and school facility construction;  
65 recommending strategies to target state housing and community development investments to  
66 ensure that these resource allocations encourage and assist municipalities working  
67 collaboratively to implement school-centered neighborhood development plans; recommending  
68 changes to state tenant selection guidelines to ensure that these regulations further efforts to  
69 implement school-centered neighborhood development plans, in accordance with state and  
70 federal fair housing law; recommending legislation or changes to regulation of any agency of the  
71 Commonwealth to improve the operation of the policies of the Commonwealth relating to the  
72 development of mixed-income neighborhoods and schools; and monitoring the progress of any  
73 initiatives undertaken in response to the council's recommendations.

74 (c) The council shall report any findings or recommendations, including any  
75 recommendations for legislation or regulation, to the Governor at such periods as determined by  
76 the Chair.

77 Section 3. The Fund for Stronger Neighborhoods and Schools

78 There is hereby established and set up on the books of the commonwealth a separate fund  
79 to be known as the Fund for Stronger Neighborhoods and Schools. The fund shall be  
80 administered by the secretary of the executive office of housing and livable communities. The  
81 purpose of this fund shall be to support collaborative efforts to strengthen neighborhoods and  
82 schools. The fund shall consist of: (i) any revenues or other financing sources directed to the  
83 fund by appropriation; (ii) bond revenues or other monies authorized by the general court and  
84 specifically designated to be credited to the fund; (iii) any income derived from the investment of  
85 amounts credited to the fund or repayment of loans from the fund; (iv) funds from public and  
86 private sources including, but not limited to gifts, federal or private grants, donations, rebates and  
87 settlements received by the commonwealth that are specifically designated to be credited to the  
88 fund; and (v) all other amounts credited or transferred into the fund from any other source Any  
89 unexpended balances in the fund at the end of the fiscal year shall not revert back to the General  
90 Fund and shall be available for expenditures in the subsequent fiscal year.

91 (b) Such funds shall be used to support lead partner organizations, children's  
92 cabinets, community schools, and other local initiatives to strengthen neighborhoods and  
93 schools. Funds may also be used to provide third-party technical assistance and other  
94 professionals services to launch children's cabinets or community schools, to produce school-

95 centered neighborhood development plans or community schools strategies, or to research and  
96 evaluate any of the preceding practices.

97 (c) Annually, not later than December 1, the secretary of the executive office of  
98 housing and livable communities shall report on the activities of the fund to the clerks of the  
99 house of representatives and the senate and to the house and senate committees on ways and  
100 means. The report shall include an accounting of expenditures made from the fund with a  
101 description of the authorized purpose of each expenditure, an accounting of amounts credited to  
102 the fund and any unexpended balance remaining in the fund.

103 Section 4. Data and Evaluation

104 Children’s cabinets and lead partners may create research-practice partnerships to  
105 improve their understanding of the cradle-to-career pipeline at the municipal or neighborhood  
106 level. The council shall support these local efforts by coordinating with relevant state agencies to  
107 link local data to data systems maintained by state agencies, in compliance with all state and  
108 federal laws to protect individual privacy.