

SENATE No.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Pavel Payano

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:

Pavel Payano

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

First Essex

SENATE No.

[Pin Slip]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**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 Chapter 40Z. School-centered neighborhood development

4 Section 1. Definitions

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

7 "Community school", a public school that establishes a set of strategic partnerships
8 between the school and other community resources that leverage shared accountability,
9 collaborative leadership, capacity building, and family and community engagement, to promote
10 student achievement, and the well-being of students, families, educators, and neighborhood
11 residents through a variety of engaging practices including the provision of wraparound services.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

55 which time they will be eligible for reappointment. All members shall not receive compensation
56 for their service on the council. The council shall meet at the times and places to be determined
57 by the chair.

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

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

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

76 Section 3. The Fund for Stronger Neighborhoods and Schools

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

90 (b) Such funds shall be used to support lead partner organizations, children's
91 cabinets, community schools, and other local initiatives to strengthen neighborhoods and
92 schools. Funds may also be used to provide third-party technical assistance and other
93 professional services to launch children's cabinets or community schools, to produce school-
94 centered neighborhood development plans or community schools strategies, or to research and
95 evaluate any of the preceding practices.

96 (c) Annually, not later than December 1, the secretary of the executive office of
97 housing and livable communities shall report on the activities of the fund to the clerks of the
98 house of representatives and the senate and to the house and senate committees on ways and
99 means. The report shall include an accounting of expenditures made from the fund with a

100 description of the authorized purpose of each expenditure, an accounting of amounts credited to
101 the fund and any unexpended balance remaining in the fund.

102 Section 4. Data and Evaluation

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