

HOUSE No. 01853

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Martha M. Walz

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 passage of the accompanying bill:

An Act relative to third grade reading proficiency.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
<i>Martha M. Walz</i>	<i>8th Suffolk</i>
<i>William N. Brownsberger</i>	<i>24th Middlesex</i>
<i>David Paul Linsky</i>	<i>5th Middlesex</i>
<i>Frank I. Smizik</i>	<i>15th Norfolk</i>
<i>Linda Dorcena Forry</i>	<i>12th Suffolk</i>
<i>Denise Andrews</i>	<i>2nd Franklin</i>
<i>Brian Ashe</i>	<i>2nd Hampden</i>
<i>Cory Atkins</i>	<i>14th Middlesex</i>
<i>Carlo Basile</i>	<i>1st Suffolk</i>
<i>Stephen R. Canessa</i>	<i>12th Bristol</i>
<i>Cheryl A. Coakley-Rivera</i>	<i>10th Hampden</i>
<i>Thomas P. Conroy</i>	<i>13th Middlesex</i>
<i>Sean Curran</i>	<i>9th Hampden</i>
<i>Carolyn C. Dykema</i>	<i>8th Middlesex</i>
<i>James B. Eldridge</i>	<i>Middlesex and Worcester</i>
<i>Susan C. Fargo</i>	<i>Third Middlesex</i>
<i>John V. Fernandes</i>	<i>10th Worcester</i>

<i>John P. Fresolo</i>	<i>16th Worcester</i>
<i>Sean Garballey</i>	<i>23rd Middlesex</i>
<i>Patricia A. Haddad</i>	<i>5th Bristol</i>
<i>Jonathan Hecht</i>	<i>29th Middlesex</i>
<i>Louis L. Kafka</i>	<i>8th Norfolk</i>
<i>Michael F. Kane</i>	<i>5th Hampden</i>
<i>Kay Khan</i>	<i>11th Middlesex</i>
<i>Jason M. Lewis</i>	<i>31st Middlesex</i>
<i>James M. Murphy</i>	<i>4th Norfolk</i>
<i>Kevin J. Murphy</i>	<i>18th Middlesex</i>
<i>James J. O'Day</i>	<i>14th Worcester</i>
<i>Alice Hanlon Peisch</i>	<i>14th Norfolk</i>
<i>Angelo J. Puppolo, Jr.</i>	<i>12th Hampden</i>
<i>John W. Scibak</i>	<i>2nd Hampshire</i>
<i>Benjamin Swan</i>	<i>11th Hampden</i>
<i>Walter F. Timilty</i>	<i>7th Norfolk</i>
<i>Timothy J. Toomey, Jr.</i>	<i>26th Middlesex</i>
<i>Martin J. Walsh</i>	<i>13th Suffolk</i>
<i>Thomas M. Petrolati</i>	<i>7th Hampden</i>
<i>Alice K. Wolf</i>	<i>25th Middlesex</i>

HOUSE No. 01853

By Representative Ms. Walz of Boston, petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 01853) of Wolf and others for legislation to establish an early reading council for the development of literacy of students in the third grades of the public schools in the Commonwealth. Joint Committee on Education.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand Eleven

An Act relative to third grade reading proficiency.

Whereas, the deferred operation of this act would tend to defeat its purpose, which is forthwith to improve third grade reading proficiency, therefore, it is hereby declared to be an emergency law, necessary for the immediate preservation of the public convenience.

□

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. (a) There is hereby established the Massachusetts early reading council to enhance
2 children’s language and literacy development with the goal of achieving reading proficiency and
3 higher levels of learning for all students by the end of third grade, including, but not limited to,
4 those eligible for free or reduced cost lunches, early intervention or individualized education
5 plans, English-language learners, and advanced learners, to consist of 17 members: the secretary
6 of education who shall serve as co-chair; a recognized expert in children’s language and literacy
7 development, to be appointed by the Massachusetts governor, who shall serve as co-chair; the

8 senate and house chairs of the joint committee on education or their designees; 2 persons to be
9 appointed by the commissioner of the department of early education and care, 1 of whom shall
10 be a member of the department of early education and care's parent advisory committee and 1 of
11 whom shall be a representative from a licensed early education and care program; an early
12 childhood educator to be appointed by the Massachusetts Head Start Association; an expert in
13 children's language and literacy development to be appointed by the commissioner of elementary
14 and secondary education; a superintendent of a local education agency to be appointed by the
15 Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents; a principal of a public school to be
16 appointed by the Massachusetts Elementary School Principals Association; a sitting school
17 committee member to be appointed by the Massachusetts School Committee Association; a pre-
18 kindergarten to third grade teacher with reading expertise to be appointed by the American
19 Federation of Teachers-Massachusetts; a pre-kindergarten to third grade teacher with reading
20 expertise to be appointed by the Massachusetts Teachers Association; a mayor to be appointed
21 by the Massachusetts Mayors' Association; a pediatrician to be appointed by the Massachusetts
22 chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics; a representative of the Massachusetts Reading
23 Association; and a representative of Strategies for Children.

24 (b) Council members shall each be appointed for a term of 3 years. No member shall serve for
25 more than 2 consecutive terms. The council shall meet no less than 4 times annually. The
26 secretary of education shall appoint personnel necessary to coordinate the activities of the
27 council and provide administrative support to the council, as requested.

28 (c) The council shall: (1) advise the secretary of education, the commissioner of the department
29 of early education and care, the commissioner of the department of elementary and secondary
30 education, and other appropriate public agencies on the development, implementation and

31 oversight of programs and services intended to support young children’s language and literacy
32 development from birth through third grade, including, but not limited to, family engagement
33 and home-visiting programs, high-quality infant and toddler programs, high-quality pre-
34 kindergarten, high-quality full-day kindergarten, and pre-kindergarten to grade 3 alignment of
35 curriculum and instruction; (2) help facilitate interagency collaboration and communication to
36 improve alignment across diverse educational settings and levels; (3) review the annual plans
37 and the proposed annual budgets of the department of early education and care and the
38 department of elementary and secondary education, and make recommendations to the
39 commissioners in regard thereto; (4) make recommendations regarding any legislation and
40 regulations that would affect children’s language and literacy development in light of the goal of
41 the council; and (5) cultivate public-private partnerships and encourage sharing of best practices
42 between schools and community-based organizations, particularly early education and care and
43 afterschool programs.

44 SECTION 2. The council shall develop recommendations and benchmarks for measuring
45 progress by the department of elementary and secondary education and the department of early
46 education and care, including, but not limited to, each of the following areas: (a) Professional
47 development and instructional leadership in reading and English language arts, consistent with
48 the principles that effective professional development: (1) is data driven, collaborative and
49 sustained over time; (2) occurs in collaborative professional cultures that support ongoing
50 improvement; (3) includes quality standards for identifying appropriate professional
51 development offerings; (4) is provided within a rigorous accountability system to evaluate the
52 qualifications of professional development providers and the effectiveness of trainings; and (5) is

53 provided in diverse settings, including online communities, and through diverse methods to
54 address the needs of all educators.

55 (b) Curriculum guidelines for districts, schools, and licensed early education and care programs,
56 to support best practices and encourage improved alignment across educational settings and
57 levels, acknowledging that recommended curricula should: (1) draw on evidence demonstrating
58 effectiveness in improving children’s learning and emphasize integrated learning experiences
59 that address phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension;
60 (2) promote developmentally appropriate educational practices including play to accommodate
61 young children’s learning styles; (3) provide additional guidance on best practices to meet the
62 learning needs of children eligible for early intervention and individualized education plans,
63 English language learners, and children otherwise deemed at risk of falling below age
64 appropriate benchmarks for language and literacy development; (4) include strategies for
65 incorporating reading and writing standards from the Massachusetts curriculum framework for
66 English language arts and literacy into other subjects; and (5) provide guidance to early
67 education and care providers on the use of curricula, materials, and instructional techniques for
68 programs serving children prior to school entry.

69 (c) An assessment system to monitor and report on children’s progress toward achieving
70 benchmarks in language and literacy development prior to grade three across educational levels
71 and program settings to include, in collaboration with the department of early education and care
72 and the department of elementary and secondary education, exploring the establishment of state
73 approved assessment tools for measuring school readiness and children’s reading proficiency
74 from pre-kindergarten to grade three.

75 (d) Birth to age five school readiness plans to be developed by districts and schools, in
76 partnership with community members and organizations, and including literacy plans for
77 entering students and their families.

78 (e) Family engagement strategies for improving communication and interactions between
79 families and educational settings frequented by children, including guidance on the following:
80 (1) community outreach and family education on children's language and literacy development;
81 (2) home visiting programs to support daytime learning and prioritize daily family conversation
82 and family reading time; (3) professional development to help educators and instructional leaders
83 communicate with native and non-native English speaking parents; (4) book reading and
84 storytelling as healthy alternatives to television watching; and (5) events at libraries and other
85 appropriate venues to promote literacy prior to school entry and throughout elementary school.

86 The council shall prepare and submit an annual progress report concerning its activities, with
87 appropriate recommendations regarding children's language and literacy development, to the
88 governor and the clerks of the senate and the house who shall forward the same to the chairs of
89 the joint committee on education and the chairs of the house and senate committees on ways and
90 means on or before December 31.