

SENATE No. 240

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Sal N. DiDomenico

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 ensuring high quality pre-kindergarten education.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	
<i>Sal N. DiDomenico</i>	<i>Middlesex and Suffolk</i>	
<i>Barbara A. L'Italien</i>	<i>Second Essex and Middlesex</i>	<i>1/27/2017</i>
<i>James M. Cantwell</i>	<i>4th Plymouth</i>	<i>1/27/2017</i>
<i>Jason M. Lewis</i>	<i>Fifth Middlesex</i>	<i>1/30/2017</i>
<i>Joseph W. McGonagle, Jr.</i>	<i>28th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/30/2017</i>
<i>Kay Khan</i>	<i>11th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/31/2017</i>
<i>James B. Eldridge</i>	<i>Middlesex and Worcester</i>	<i>1/31/2017</i>
<i>John F. Keenan</i>	<i>Norfolk and Plymouth</i>	<i>1/31/2017</i>
<i>Marjorie C. Decker</i>	<i>25th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/1/2017</i>
<i>Walter F. Timilty</i>	<i>Norfolk, Bristol and Plymouth</i>	<i>2/2/2017</i>
<i>Mike Connolly</i>	<i>26th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/2/2017</i>
<i>Kevin G. Honan</i>	<i>17th Suffolk</i>	<i>2/3/2017</i>
<i>Eileen M. Donoghue</i>	<i>First Middlesex</i>	<i>2/3/2017</i>

SENATE No. 240

By Mr. DiDomenico, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 240) of Sal N. DiDomenico, Barbara A. L'Italien, James M. Cantwell, Jason M. Lewis and other members of the General Court for legislation to ensure high quality pre-kindergarten education. Education.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninetieth General Court
(2017-2018)**

An Act ensuring high quality pre-kindergarten 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. Chapter 15D of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2014 Official
2 Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after section 13 the following section:-

3 Section 13A. (a) The department of early education and care, in consultation with the
4 department of elementary and secondary education, shall develop and administer the High
5 Quality Pre-Kindergarten Education grant program to support the implementation of high quality
6 pre-kindergarten programs for children between the ages of 2 years and 9 months and the age a
7 child becomes eligible for kindergarten in the district where he or she resides. The grants shall be
8 used to invest in a high quality, mixed delivery early education system in order to reduce the
9 achievement gap and improve third grade reading scores. Eligible grantees shall include
10 individual school districts and collaborations of multiple school districts in a region. Proposals
11 must include partnerships with licensed community-based early learning programs.

12 (b) The departments shall establish requirements for grant applicants which shall include,
13 but not be limited to the following: (1) a tracking system for preschool students in the program
14 using the state student identifier system; (2) a child to instructor ratio of no more than 10 to 1; (3)
15 tactics to engage families in the enrollment process and implementation of the plan required
16 under subsection (c), and methods to ensure a high level of participation by families with 3 and 4
17 year olds; (4) teacher qualifications and on-going professional development requirements; (5)
18 full school day program in the district; (6) a class size of no more than 20 preschool students; (7)
19 inclusion of children with disabilities; (8) instructional staff salaries and benefits comparable to
20 the responding districts salaries and benefits for kindergarten to high school staff; (9)
21 developmentally and linguistically appropriate instruction; (10) evidenced based curricula; (11)
22 accommodations and support for access and participation in all learning opportunities by each
23 child; (12) a learning environment aligned with the state early learning and development
24 standards; (13) on-site or access to comprehensive services for children; (14) partnership with,
25 and promotion of, community service providers for families to support children's learning and
26 development; (15) evidenced based health and safety standards; (16) a timetable for
27 implementation; (17) program evaluation and data collection systems to ensure continuous
28 improvement; (18) a description of the learning environment reflecting the state early learning
29 and development standards; (19) a description of the physical structures for the education of the
30 students; (20) a teacher evaluation system and professional improvement program; and (21) a
31 vision and initial plan for serving children from birth to age 3.

32 Grants shall be awarded based on two primary criteria: readiness and need.

33 Readiness shall be defined as the community having in place an EEC-approved plan for
34 preschool expansion. All grantees must meet this criteria. Plans must include 1) detailed

35 assessment of the local early education and care system, including supply of high-quality
36 preschool classrooms, qualifications of teachers, facilities, and transportation, 2) estimate of the
37 % of high-needs children entering kindergarten annually with no prior preschool experience, 3) a
38 profile of family and community needs and assets, including parent perspectives and demand for
39 preschool, 4) list of local resources such as funding or in-kind support, recent early learning
40 initiatives, strategic plans, professional development strategies, and evidence of collaboration
41 within the mixed-delivery system of early education and care, and 5) proposed program budgets.

42 Need shall be defined by the % of high-need students, as defined by the Department of
43 Elementary and Secondary Education, enrolled in a grantee's school district. In any given fiscal
44 year, the department shall award implementation grants in order from highest need to lowest
45 need until that fiscal year's grant funds are expired.

46 In awarding grants, preference shall be given to districts designated as underperforming
47 or chronically underperforming pursuant to section 1J of chapter 69.

48 (c) Each recipient of the grant shall establish a plan to implement the requirements set
49 forth in subsection (b) and any other requirements as may be prescribed by the board of early
50 education and care. Each district shall establish a local governing council to implement and
51 oversee all aspects of the plan. Districts shall provide on a quarterly basis reports to the
52 department of early education and care on all aspects of the plan. The district and the local
53 council shall implement the plan as approved within the period of time approved by the
54 department. Failure to satisfactorily implement the plan within the approved period of time shall
55 result in the termination of the plan and reversion of the grant funds to the department.

56 (d) The board of early education and care shall promulgate regulations to implement the
57 provisions of this act within six months of the effective date including guidelines for membership
58 to local governing councils in each recipient district and evaluation criteria required in the
59 quarterly reports. A grant awarded pursuant to this subsection shall require that recipients
60 undertake ongoing evaluations of the implementation of the plan and all its aspects.

61 The commissioner of early education and care shall annually evaluate the effectiveness of
62 programs established under this section, including the potential for replicating such programs
63 throughout the commonwealth. The commissioner shall also provide technical assistance to
64 school districts seeking to replicate programs funded under this section.